

Eulogy for Helen Irene Gardner, August 12, 1996



Helen Irene Gardner died peacefully in her bed at Osceola Leisure Manor on Thursday, August 8, 1996. She was the daughter of George and Alice Schaffer and was raised on the Schaffer farm in Clarke County. She was the youngest of nine children (six brothers and two sisters). She attended the Barnard country school, but when the family moved to Osceola, she finished her education in the Osceola schools; she graduated high school in 1929. She was a telephone operator until March 1932, when she eloped to Maryville, Missouri, with Dale Gardner.

Dale shared with the family some of his memories of his and Helen's early years in Clarke County. The first dust storm Helen and Dale saw was in 1934. They were farming two miles north of Ottawa. Helen came out of the house and Dale was in the field with three horses on a seven-foot disk. Dale saw the dust cloud coming, unhitched the horses and beat them to the barn. Helen and Dale watched the big dust cloud and went in the house. Cinch bugs took their oat field and then ate their corn field. They used creosote oil but had no crops in 1934.

When they lived north of Ottawa, Dale was working on a road crew. Helen was home when the corn/hog check came in the mail. She ran to the neighbor's, borrowed their horse, went galloping toward Dale to tell him the check had come. All the other workers figured they had their checks, too, so they all took off for home.

Helen and Dale moved to town in 1934 but could find no work. They moved to a farm north of Weldon in 1935. (On one of their farms, Dale said Helen used to come out in her bathing suit to bring cold drinks to him. Nearly drove him crazy.) They had a wet spring in 1936 and moved to town that year to work in the Puritan Café. Helen was the waitress and Dale was the cook. They worked the night shift for \$9.00 per week. They worked seven nights a week.

In April of 1935, Dale had an offer for a Civil Service appointment in Washington, D.C. When they arrived in Washington, Dale had the mumps and was quite ill. The position he had been offered was a probationary indefinite appointment, but he couldn't take it as he was too sick. Helen walked from their basement apartment to the Veteran's Bureau building to report Dale's condition. The Veteran's Bureau assured Helen that Dale would be given a permanent appointment when he recovered. That was a nerve-wracking experience for Helen, in a big city by herself, for the first time.

When their son was born, the baby was coming early and Helen was having a hard time of it so Dale called an ambulance. It was raining hard and Helen was on a stretcher with the rain falling on her face. Each rain drop left a white spot. They got Helen in the ambulance and then couldn't find Dale. He was in the basement, behind the furnace, crying.

Because of the floods, the ambulance had to make a route change, and on the way the doctor told Dale that he didn't think the baby would survive, and he wasn't sure about Helen. The hospital would not admit Helen, when they finally got there, because of their financial condition. The doctor vouched for Helen and they admitted her. The baby survived and so did Helen.

In 1940, Dale was assigned Inspector in the Alcohol Tax Unit of the Bureau of Internal Revenue. This led to posts in Omaha, St. Paul, and Clinton. Dale's subsequent posts were in Omaha, Muscatine, and Minneapolis. In 1968, after more than 32 years of Civil Service, Dale retired and the couple settled in Osceola.

Helen was a wonderful wife, mother, and grandmother. She liked to stay home and manage the housekeeping and care for her children. She also was a wonderful baby-sitter for her grandchildren and other children as well. She loved them like they were her own. Helen and Dale had a long and happy marriage of over 64 years.

All of her grandchildren have shared their memories of her warm and loving smile. That is what they remember best about an always hospitable grandmother who had room in her heart and home for everyone.

Helen was a member of the First Christian Church and, although physically unable to attend, kept her Bible by her chair.

Helen is survived by husband Dale; son Stanley, who lives in Ohio; daughter Dalene Riggs, who lives in New York; sister Lela Yates, who lives in North Carolina; five grandchildren – Jeffrey, David, Christopher, Virginia, and Matthew; six great-grandchildren – Jessica, Rachel, Joshua, Jacob, Adam, and Rebecca; and a host of relatives and friends.

She was and is loved – she will be missed. A piece of our hearts is gone but we will share stories of her life as long as we continue seeing each other and being reminded that she is part of us forever.

-- Judy Conn

#### Eulogy for Lawrence Dale Gardner, January 22, 1998



Lawrence Dale Gardner died peacefully in his bed at Clarke County Hospital in Osceola on Friday, January 16, 1998. He was born on July 12, 1909, in Weldon, Iowa, the son of Williams Gardner and

Jettie Short Gardner and was raised on the Gardner farm in Clarke County. He was the second of three children (older brother, Lloyd, and younger sister, Marie). Dale was educated in Clarke County Schools, and played basketball on the Osceola High School team.

On March 3, 1932, Dale was united in marriage to Helen Schaffer in Maryville, Missouri, and two children were born to them: Stanley Alan and Dalene Marie. Following their marriage, Dale and Helen farmed for four years in Clarke County.

In 1936, Dale started his career with the Civil Service in Washington, D.C. Most of his career was with the Alcohol Tax Unit of the Internal Revenue Service, leading to positions in St. Paul, Minnesota; Omaha, Nebraska; Clinton, Iowa; Muscatine, Iowa; and Minneapolis, Minnesota. He moved his family 22 times during his working years. Dale retired in 1968, when he and Helen took up residence in Osceola.

Dale was a member of the First Christian Church in Osceola, Iowa.

Those preceding Dale in death were his parents, his brother, and in 1996 his wife Helen. Remaining to cherish his memory are his son, Stanley Gardner and his wife Sondra of Cleveland, Ohio; his daughter, Dalene Riggs and her husband Russell of Monsey, New York; his sister, Marie Kimmel of Osceola, Iowa, five grandchildren and six great grandchildren as well as many other relatives and a host of friends.

Dale's grandchildren each said a few words in memory.

- Jeffrey Gardner: some of our earliest memories involve the family gathering for the Fourth of July. Grandpa set a good example, creating a base for growing as a family. Dale and Helen were a second set of parents. We mourn, but we also remember, and we honor him. We celebrate because he has gone before us to a far better place than we can even imagine. I thank God and you all for a special time of coming together for Grandpa and for us.
- David Gardner: Although saddened at the loss of our grandfather, we are comforted and joyful with the assurance that our grandparents are no longer suffering and are together again in the presence of God. We know he was proud of us, and we are proud of him.
- Christopher Gardner: We will miss you, your wisdom and wit, your sharing of your stories and our history. Some of our best memories are of the home-made ice cream you made, the aroma of the Swisher Sweets cigars you liked to smoke, the poems you memorized. It was pretty special for our own kids to be with you, too.
- Virginia Gardner Coady: Some of my favorites are the special times like reminiscing with him about Grandma, watching his face light up over a piece of coconut cream pie, and his inventiveness – remember the TV remote control he made with string wrapped around the volume knob stretched across the back of the couch so he could “mute” without getting up?
- Matthew Gardner: Our grandfather was the literal foundation of the reality we have defined for ourselves. Here we return, once again ... and as far afield as we have all spread, we will always adhere to this man – our root, our strength, and our lifelong inspiration.

-- From Dale's funeral program supplemented by notes from Jeffrey Gardner