



Helen Jewett's Quick Chocolate Cookies **By Martha Jewett**

Helen Isabell (Gott) Jewett, my father's mother, was the oldest child of Belle Shoaf (Mock) Gott and William Thomas Gott. She was born on 8-28-1897 in Farlinville in Linn County, Kansas. In the photo, Helen is 79 years old. She is at Linda Jewett's wedding in January of 1977, escorted by her grandson Rob Jewett. Fortunately for us, Helen wrote "Autobiography by Helen Gott Jewett," which is rich in details.

Helen earned a BS degree in 1919. Her diploma reads, "Kansas State Agricultural College. Know all men by these presents that Helen Isabell Gott has been granted the degree of Bachelor of Science Home Economics with all the honors, rights and privileges of that degree. In testimony whereof this diploma is conferred at Manhattan Kansas this fifth day of June in the year of our lord nineteen hundred and nineteen and of the college the fifty-sixth." Kansas State Agricultural College later became Kansas State University (KSU). Helen

met Lea Nathan Jewett in college and they married in 1921. Lea had served as a medic in World War I. Her sons, Raymond ("Ray") and Arthur ("Art"), served in World War II. A month after President Roosevelt declared war, Helen was widowed at age 44 when Lea died after being thrown off a horse on the Rosebud Reservation near Mission, South Dakota.

Thus began the rest of Helen's life. I know I am not alone in remembering her as formidable. Living up to her expectations was not for the faint of heart, especially because she could do most anything and do it well. She had grown up on farms, where even by her own account there was always more work to do, and she didn't understand relaxation. Her daughter, Frances (Jewett) Feeter, who at the time was raising young children and working as a school bus driver, remembers sitting down to take a break and Helen asking, "Are you a lady of leisure?" Helen lived with Frances, her husband, Bill, and their four children, from about 1963 until her death at age 90, except for a couple of years when she stayed in Patagonia, AZ, while Bill did graduate work at Colorado State.

Helen had a collection of sayings aimed at our general improvement, which we heard often. "Get your elbows off the table, Mary Ann," (which was sung). "You're a bad egg" (for kids misbehaving). "NOW, you're really going to town" (for kids who were minding her, listening, and getting their chores done). "What should we be doing now?" (said upon entering a room in which people weren't doing much at all). "If you're not early, you're late." "It's time to go to bed." This last one was accompanied by her turning off the lights, even if you were still sitting in the living room. I can remember my mother, Mary Jewett, getting uptight about visits from Helen to our homes in the Scotia/Schenectady area in New York, where Art and Mary lived from about 1949 until 1965. Mary told the story of how Helen interrupted her piano playing one Saturday morning, "I think it's time for you to read the paper now, Mary." I remember playing Gin Rummy with Helen and cheating by looking at her hand, reflected in her glasses.

Music was a lifelong passion for Helen, who was talented in that department. Her twin grandsons, Clay and Kurt Feeter, remember Helen picking them up after school in Sonoita, AZ, in her Chevy Coupe, and taking them to choir practice at the Patagonia Methodist Church, about 12 miles away. True to form, Helen was not only choir director but also the accompanist. Clay remembers Helen “bribing” them with delicious cookies. The boys were allowed to each have just one when they got off the bus and they always tried to pick the biggest one in the tin. The rest of the cookies were for the choir.

Ray describes himself and Art as “mama’s boys” who were close to their mother growing up. I always thought that my Art, my father, adored Helen all his life. He remained surprisingly sensitive about how she might react. When we bought our first home in Montclair, New Jersey, Art told me Helen would probably be unhappy about it. He explained that a car he and Helen had been driving (in the 1940s?) had broken down in Jersey and she had experienced some difficulty in the state. Instead, Helen was delighted. Art never talked about Lea or about any of Helen’s jobs after he died, except for the one as housemother at the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority at KSU. It was a job she was ideally suited for . He used to brim with pride as he described how Helen ruled the roost at the Kappa house. It was a shame Helen had to give it up after her heart attack around 1961 at about age 64.

Helen remained vital well into her senior years. She remained active in her Methodist Church in San Jose, California, which had about four women’s social “circles.” When asked to be president of all the circles, a large group, Helen demurred, “You know, I’m 80 years old.” The ladies were astounded, and let her off the hook. Later, she participated in a ski/run/windsurf triathlon at Lake Tahoe. Kerry (Feeter) Laubach did the ski leg, Helen and Frances walked the run leg, and Bill did the windsurf leg. Helen was a little upset by an article and photo which appeared in the San Jose paper because it gave her age.

Helen died on March 22, 1988, in Los Gatos, California. She had a contract with The Neptune Society to have her ashes scattered at sea, and used to joke that Frances and Bill would windsurf over her one day. But when the time came, California had prohibited sea scattering within its controlled limit, so her ashes were scattered in the California desert, according to Raymond and Frances.

Here’s the recipe for the cookies Helen gave to Kurt and Clay and shared with the choir.

Quick Chocolate Cookies

1/4 cup cocoa
1/4 lb. butter or margarine (1 stick)
2 cups sugar
1/2 cup milk
3 cups quick oatmeal
1 t vanilla
Dash of salt

Mix cocoa, butter or margarine, sugar, and milk in a saucepan and bring to boil. Boil 4 minutes from time it first starts to boil.....no more! Add oatmeal, vanilla, and salt. Drop by spoonful on wax paper...no baking.