April 4, 2009

The Life of Helen E. Hall

• A Memorial Service will be held for Helen Elizabeth Hall, formerly of Groton and Aberdeen, on May 1 at 11 a.m., at the Groton Presbyterian Church. She died on January 20, 2009 at the Methodist Home of Washington, DC.

• Helen Elizabeth Mallett was born on May 2, 1917 in Groton, South Dakota, to Nette Elizabeth (Perry) and Leonard Abram Mallett. Helen started country school near Pierpont briefly. Helen's parents moved to a farm near Andover while she was in elementary school and she attended Andover School until her Senior year when Helen's parents quit farming and moved to Groton. She graduated from Groton High School in 1933 at 16 years of age.

• During the Fall of 1934, the family moved to Aberdeen where Helen worked for Kresge's Dime Store. In 1936, the family moved to Redfield where Helen began working for Montgomery Ward and then transferred to their store in Fergus Falls, MN. After she took a Civil Service test she was called to work in Washington, DC, to tabulate the 1940 U.S. Census.

• Helen arrived in DC in September 1940. She remembered turning the radio on after Sunday dinner on December 7, 1941 to hear that Pearl Harbor had been attacked. Helen said it seemed like all the men in DC who were in civilian clothes on Sunday were wearing military uniform on Monday.

• The war effort and the draft created many jobs for women who were needed to replace men who went into military service. Helen was recruited by the General Accounting Office where she became part of a team which set up Branch Offices in Atlanta and Cleveland.

• In 1944, during a vacation to see her folks in Redfield, Helen heard that her Groton classmate Barbara Hall was living in Aberdeen while her husband Lee Meininger was at sea with the Navy Seabees. Barbara and her younger brother Randy had tickets to a Lawrence Welk dance at the Civic Arena and invited Helen to go along. There Helen and Randy became reacquainted. Afterward, Helen returned to her work in Cleveland.

• That Fall, Randy chauffeured a doctor Barbara knew to Chicago and drove on to Cleveland to court Helen. He sent her a diamond ring at Christmastime, which she did not send back. Helen quit her government job in February 1945 and moved

home to South Dakota. Helen and Randy were married at noon on March 11, 1945.

• Helen and Randy lived at Hall Farm with Randall and Willa Hall for about a year until the elder Halls moved to Groton. The first TV came to Hall Farm in 1954, the same year their daughter Gerri Lynn was born. In 1957, Helen and Randy bought the "Midway Café" building on Main Street in Groton and opened "Randy's TV and Appliance" store. Helen served as bookkeeper and salesclerk for the store until it was sold in 1972.

• In 1974, Randy became a member of the Aberdeen Elks Chorus, and its concert schedule took them to cities across South Dakota and to Minneapolis, Chicago and Seattle. They continued to raise beef cattle on Hall Farm until 1982. Between 1978 and 1982, Helen worked as a part-time cook at the Colonial Manor Nursing Home in Groton. Over the years, Helen was active in the Groton Presbyterian Church and Delphians, a women's club.

• Randy died on April 15, 1997. Hall Farm was sold and Helen moved to Aberdeen in 1998. Between April 2000 and July 2008, she thoroughly enjoyed working as a volunteer at the information desk of Avera St. Luke's Hospital two days a week. She enjoyed theater productions and concerts and eating out with friends old and new.

• Helen enjoyed traveling. She visited much of the USA with her parents as a young woman, and had many camping adventures with Randy and Gerri. She continued to visit Washington, DC, to visit Gerri and her husband David Nickels several weeks each year.

• In 1998 Helen, Gerri and David visited Germany and Austria. In 2000 they toured Switzerland by train. In 2003, the threesome took a scenic road trip through the Canadian Rockies, visited British Columbia, and visited Barbara Hall Meininger in Port Angeles, Washington, once more before she died.

• In 2007, Helen celebrated her 90th birthday twice: first in May with good friends and family from the Aberdeen area, and a second time in July with her late sister Joyce's four daughters and their families.

• In late August 2008, Helen was diagnosed with cancer. She moved back to Washington, DC, to be close to Gerri and David whose daily company she enjoyed until she died on January 20, 2009. She kept her wit and her wits to the end.

• Helen looked forward to "going home" to join the loved ones who preceded her in death: her husband, Randall H. Hall, Jr. and their five babies who died at childbirth; her parents, Nette and Leonard Mallett, her sister Joyce and brother-in-law Arvid Jones; her friend and sister-in-law Barbara and brother-in-law Leland Meininger, her nephew Charles Meininger, her beloved aunts, uncles and cousins.

• Memorial gifts may be sent to Groton Presbyterian Church, the Avera St. Luke's Foundation, or the Aberdeen Humane Society.

Helen E. Hall, 92

A memorial service will be held for Helen Elizabeth Hall, formerly of Groton and Aberdeen, 11 a.m., May 1, 2009 at the Groton Presbyterian Church. She died January 20, 2009 at the Methodist Home, Washington, DC.

Helen Elizabeth Mallett was born May 2, 1917 in Groton, SD, to Nette Elizabeth (Perry) and Leonard Abram Mallett. Helen started country school near Pierpont. Helen's parents moved to a farm near Andover, while she was in elementary school, and she attended Andover School, until her Senior year, when Helen's parents quit farming and moved to Groton. She graduated from Groton High School in 1933 at 16 years of age.

During the Fall of 1934, the family moved to Aberdeen, where Helen worked for Kresge's Dime Store. In 1936, the family moved to Redfield, where Helen began working for Montgomery Ward, and then transferred to their store in Fergus Falls, Minn. After she took a Civil Service test, she was called to work in Washington, DC, to tabulate the 1940 U.S. Census.

Helen arrived in DC in September 1940. She remembered turning the radio on after Sunday dinner, December 7, 1941 to hear that Pearl Harbor had been attacked. The war effort and the draft created many jobs for women who were needed to replace men who went into military service. Helen was recruited by the General Accounting Office where she became part of a team which set up Branch Offices in Atlanta and Cleveland.

In 1944, during a vacation to see her folks in Redfield, Helen heard that her Groton classmate, Barbara Hall, was living in Aberdeen, while her husband, Lee Meininger, was at sea with the Navy Seabees. Barbara and her younger brother, Randy, had tickets to a Lawrence Welk dance at the Civic Arena and invited Helen to go along. There Helen and Randy became reacquainted. Afterward, Helen returned to her work in Cleveland. That Fall, Randy chauffeured a doctor, whom Barbara knew to Chicago and drove on to Cleveland to court Helen. He sent her a diamond ring at Christmastime, which she did not send back. Helen quit her government job in February 1945, and moved home to South Dakota. Helen and Randy were married at noon, March 11, 1945. They lived at Hall Farm with Randall and Willa Hall for about a year, until the elder Halls moved to Groton. The first TV came to Hall Farm in 1954, the same year their daughter, Gerri Lynn, was born. In 1957, Helen and Randy bought the "Midway Café" building on Main Street, Groton, and opened "Randy's TV and Appliance" store. Helen served as bookkeeper and salesclerk for the store, until it was sold in 1972.

In 1974, Randy became a member of the Aberdeen Elks Chorus, and its concert schedule took them to cities across South Dakota and to Minneapolis, Chicago and Seattle. They continued to raise beef cattle on Hall Farm until 1982. Between 1978 and 1982, Helen worked as a part-time cook at the Colonial Manor Nursing Home, Groton. Over the years, Helen was active in the Groton Presbyterian Church and Delphians, a women's club. Randy died April 15, 1997. Hall Farm was sold and Helen moved to Aberdeen in 1998. Between April 2000 and July 2008, she thoroughly enjoyed working as a volunteer at the information desk of Avera St. Luke's Hospital, two days a week. She enjoyed theater productions, concerts, and eating out with friends.

Helen enjoyed traveling. She visited much of the USA with her parents as a young woman, and had many camping adventures with Randy and Gerri. She continued to visit Washington, DC, to visit Gerri and her husband, David Nickels, several weeks each year. In 1998, Helen, Gerri and David visited Germany and Austria. In 2000, they toured Switzerland by train. The threesome took a scenic road trip through the Canadian Rockies in 2004, visiting British Columbia, and Barbara Hall Meininger in Port Angeles, Wash., once more before she died.

Helen celebrated her 90th birthday twice in 2007: first in May with good friends and family from the Aberdeen area, and a second time in July with her late sister, Joyce's four daughters and their families. In late August 2008, Helen was diagnosed with cancer. She moved back to Washington, DC, to be close to Gerri and David, whose daily company she enjoyed, until she died January 20, 2009. Helen looked forward to "going home" to join the loved ones who preceded her in death. Her husband, Randall H. Hall, Jr., and their five babies, who died at childbirth; her parents, Nette and Leonard Mallett; her sister, Joyce and brother-in-law, Arvid Jones; her friend and sister-in-law, Barbara and brother-in-law, Leland Meininger; her nephew, Charles Meininger; her beloved aunts, uncles and cousins.

Memorial gifts may be sent to Groton Presbyterian Church, the Avera St. Luke's Foundation, or the Aberdeen Humane Society.