

## Helen Bernadine Coleman Hohn



**Lifespan:** 90+years, 1931--. Born on a farm near Morris, MN, 04/19/1931.

**Locations:** Morris, MN (1931), Herman, MN (1937), Glenwood, MN (1948), Morris, MN (1949), Belford Twp (1954).

**Spouse:** Melbert Peter Hohn, 1932-2002. Born in Ethan, SD. Married 10/6/1952 Morris, MN. Dairy Farmer (address is Letcher, home is NE corner of Aurora Co).

**Helen Hohn Profile:** As a child growing up in the Depression years, Helen experienced both the rewards and hard work of farming life. As a child, she remembers going barefoot all summer, living without electricity, and helping her Dad farm with horses. Helen's mother taught her to love gardening and sewing and to nourish her faith in the Catholic Church. Her father trusted her with all kinds of field and farm work, further cementing her love for all aspects of life on the farm. The adventures and fun she shared with her four siblings made her a joyful individual, able to take daily tribulations in stride. After high school, Helen attended a one-year Normal school in Glenwood, MN, earning her teaching degree in 1949. She then taught for several years in rural schools, educating students grades 1-8, at a starting salary of \$240 per month.

Helen married Melbert "Melb" Hohn, a local farmer, in 1952. She traded in her car for a trailer house. Melb farmed and she continued teaching. Soon after their oldest child, Randy, was born, Helen and Melb moved to Belford Twp, Aurora County, near some of Melb's relatives, Tony and Margaret Goergen of Woonsocket. The farm that they rented from Ray and Wayne Steichen became their final home and a productive dairy farm. At one time, they were milking 35-45 cows, all by hand. By 1965, Helen was the mother of six children. She embraced motherhood, carefully raising her children to be hard-working, productive citizens, imbued with joy in everyday living. They participated in all aspects of farming, helping in the field, raising ducks, chickens, baby calves, lambs, and steers, and planting, harvesting and storing a variety of produce from the big garden. She also made sure all her children took swimming lessons, and her daughters piano lessons. Recognizing the limits of Melb's 8<sup>th</sup>-grade education, they encouraged all of their children to earn post high-school degrees. Helen, ever industrious, and looking for ways to supplement farm income, worked several jobs at her children's two-room elementary school, and then, for years, as an aide at the Storla Nursing Home. She also used sewing skills to make items, like Barbie clothes, to sell or donate to charity. After her husband died, she stayed on the farm, jointly run by her and her youngest son, Kelly. In 2021, all her children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren will return to the homeplace to celebrate her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**Roles/Talent:** Farmwife (very hands-on in the field and taking care of livestock, etc)., mother, grandmother, sewer (still repurposes t-shirts into dresses, diapers, etc. for children in Haiti), quilter (still quilts and is in the process of making sure all the grandchildren and great-grandchildren all have a quilt from her).

