

Grandma's Story

Helen Kem Carstarphen Cox
In her own words

A
Keepsake
and Memories
Album for
Grandchildren



"Grandma, were you born around here?"

"Was that a long time ago?"



Hospital Garfinkle Date 5/26
At Home Year 1955
Time Washington Hour 1:30 PM
County DC
State _____

Grandma's



"How big were you?"

Weight 7 lbs
Length 20 inches
Hair Eyes blue
Skin Hair It brown



"When did you walk and talk?"

I walked at 14 months. Babies were longer dressed then and weren't put down much. I started talking at 2 months.

"Any other facts?"

I crawled backwards.

"What was your whole name? Who did they name you after? Why?"

Helen Kern Carstarphen
I was named for my mother's sister Helen Janney Tamm
& for my father's mother, Margaret Kern

"Anything special happen?"

I came to NYC on the train when I was 2 months old and back to Washington when I was 7 months old. I remember the park where my mother took me in my carriage.



"Did you have a baby nickname? Why did they call you that?"

"Who did they say you looked like? Why?"

My grandmother called me per because I was her pet. I called her Bobby. We were best friends. My daddy and my Aunt Helen. My profile was like Aunt Helen. built like daddy.



Baby Da

"Who were your grandma and grandpa?"

"Were you the youngest? Any brothers and sisters?"

I did not have any brothers or sisters.



Great Grandmother

Name Mary Harned
Birthplace Washington, DC
Date 1822

Great Grandfather

Name George Comp
Birthplace Washington, DC
Date _____

Grandmother

Name Blanche Dorey
Birthplace Washington, DC
Date 1860

Grandfather

Name George Harned
Birthplace Washington, DC
Date 1844

Mother

Name Blanche Tamm
Birthplace Washington, DC
Date 6/4/1887

Father

Name George Kern Carstarphen
Birthplace Harvard, Pa.
Date 4/10/1875



April 29 1923.



1931



"Could you roller skate? Ice skate? Where?"

I liked to roller skate on the sidewalk. I did it a lot. We went ice skating on the tennis court in Jackson Heights. They would flood it when the weather was freezing.



"What kind of games did you play?"

On summer nights we played outside hide and seek, cops and robbers, red light green light, giant steps. I played "little dolls" with my friends in Wash.

"Did you have a tooth fairy?"

I don't remember a tooth fairy. I do remember falling down stairs & knocking out my front tooth when I was 11.



I didn't have too many but loved the one when I was 13. It was a surprise party.



a Little Girl

"What were your favorite toys? Did you have a bicycle?"



Dolls - all kinds, even paper dolls. I had a box of paper dolls that had belonged to my Aunt Edith. All the people were old timey clothes. I had 2 big Teddy bears & I pretended they were my boys.

"Did you get to stay up to watch television? Or to listen to your transistor radio?"

We didn't have TV then. We just had one radio. I got to listen to Amos & Andy & sometimes the Squid Door.



1935



"Did you have your own pet? What? Name?"

I never had a pet of my own but my Aunt Helen and Aunt Edith both had dogs. Jerry was my special dog. He was a white spitz - real pretty and smart. Buddy and Laddy were bigger dogs.

"Did the boys tease you?"

Yes - sometimes I would get teased so I would



who was your best friend?"

Not really - I would daydream instead and think about my grandmother who called Babby and who was my best friend. I she died.

"Did you ever run away or hide?"



In elementary school a girl named Mary Armstrong but she went away to school in high school it was Helen Cree. In Washington my best friend was Betsy Steack.

"Did you have secrets? What?"

Betsy & I made up stories about movie stars we liked. Helen and I had secrets about boys.



"Were there trains and automobiles? Did you ride streetcars? Buses?"

We rode the train a lot - back and forth to Washington. I loved the train. In NY we rode on the subway or a two story bus. My grandmother had an old Dodge auto that would roll away by itself. Then my aunt would bring it home.



"Did you have ice cream? What could you buy for a penny? A nickel?"



Ice cream was my most favorite food. We could get a scoop for a nickel or a double scoop for a dime. We would go to the candy store & get candy for a penny. My favorite was a tootsie roll.

One summer after I had been sick the doctor said I should get a lot of sun. That was the best summer. We went to the beach every week. When I was a teen ager I went with "Did you go swimming? Where? Who with?" my "guy".



"Did you ever have stitches or broken bones?"

I had two stitches in my lip after my tooth went through it. It wasn't bad but it was bad to have a false front tooth. I broke my arm once when I was skating.





May 26 1924



MAY 26 - 1926



Sept 10 1923

Helen Kem Carstarphen



The House Where I



"What kind of house did you grow up in, Grandma?"

I really grew up in two houses. We had an apartment in Jackson Heights N.Y. which was very nice. My room was really the sun parlor. It had its own bathroom. We were allowed to play in the gardens if we were very quiet. I liked my grandma's house in Washington better. I slept in the room with her until she fixed up the upstairs back porch for me. It was fun but I still liked to sleep with her. She told the greatest stories in the world.



"Did you have a secret hiding place?"



Sometimes I would go into the attic. I liked it there when it rained. I also liked to play under the umbrella trees - then lightning struck one of the trees and it wasn't as good.



Grew Up

"Did you have a fireplace to keep you warm?"



There was an imitation fireplace with gas logs in the apartment. I don't remember it being used. The fireplace was in the corner of the parlor in the Webster Street house. My Aunt Helen liked it a lot. Later we had a house in Jackson Heights. It had a real pretty fireplace.

"Did you have your own bedroom? Bathroom?"

When I was 15 we moved to 3438-83rd St. in Jackson Heights. The Webster Street house had been sold by then. I had a really truly room of my own. But pretty soon I went away to school.

I was living on 83rd St. when I met Grandpa.



Place



"How did you keep your soda cold?"



When I was real little we had an icebox and the iceman would send the cake of ice up on a dumb waiter. Then we got a frigidaire but it was not very big.

"What kind of lights did you have?"

Electric lights. Some of our lamps looked like these. Others had 3 switches and one sent the light up to the ceiling.



"Did you have jobs to do around the house?" I always set the table at 5 o'clock. I took the dishes off. When I was bigger I took care of my room and helped on house cleaning days.

We always spent summer in my grandmother's house in Washington. She pulled all the shades in the afternoon and somehow the "parlor" stayed cool. We sat on the porch in the evenings and it was



"How did you keep cool in the summer?"

real hot, we took a ride - sometimes we got to go through the sand in Back Creek Park. We ate a lot of ice cream. Sometimes we slept on the floor.

"Did you have an attic? A basement?"

There was both an attic and a basement at my grandmother's house. The attic had a tin roof and it was lovely up there. The basement was called a cellar and it was not fun - it was dark & dreary. At our apartment there was a basement which was spooky. I did not like the janitor. When we moved to a house, my parents fixed up part of the basement as a play

"Who lived with you, Grandma?"

Just my mother, my father and me when we were in N.Y. But my grandmother always came when I was sick. There was In Washington, my aunt Helen, my Bobby and sometimes Aunt Edith & Uncle Bill.



"Did firemen or police ever come to your house?"

No. But after I was married we rented a house in Battle Creek, Michigan and early one morning it caught on fire. All kinds of fire engines



came. Grandpa was at the field and by the time he came home the things were gone but a bunch of strangers were there.



Me & Helen Cree

"Grandma, do you remember your first Christmas?"



I remember all of my Christmases but I'm not sure which was the first. We all climbed into my grandma's bed and opened stockings and little presents. We did not get to see the tree until after breakfast. The doors to the living room were shut but you could peek through the crack and know it was there.

Holidays

"Did you hang stockings and decorate the tree?"

We always hung our stockings in the upstairs hall. Mine was long and black. There was always an orange and an apple which made big knobby places. Santa decorated the tree after we went to bed on Christmas Eve.



"Did you bake cookies and make candy?"

We baked sugar cookies and decorated them. Best of all was fudge and licking the spoon.



I guess so but most of all was when he came to our house on Christmas Eve. I would wait and wait and finally hear his bells. Then he would knock on the front door. One time I was sick and he came upstairs to see me.

"Did Santa give you what you asked for?"



I Remember

We almost always had snow. We would ride our sleds down a big hill behind the club house. Sometimes they would flood the tennis courts and we could ice skate. When I was real little there was a toboggan near our house but it was gone before I got to go down it.

"Did you have snow, go sleigh riding or go skating?"



Place snapshot here and file additional stories, photos and keepsakes in pocket on left.

"Did you go to your Grandma's for Thanksgiving?"

We never did much on Thanksgiving when I lived in New York but when I was in Washington we went to my uncle Irving's house. After we moved to Texas we always had Thanksgiving with Grandpa's sister, Ruby, lots of people - aunts, uncles and cousins would be there.



"How did you trick or treat on Halloween?"

They started Trick or Treat when I was about 12. Before that the big kids did really mean things like marking up cars, turning in false alarms and hitting each other with flour sacks. Most of the time we weren't allowed to go but one time I remember being out and being scared.



"What did you do on the 4th of July?"

That was fun. We all went to my Aunt Edith's and Uncle Bill's in Maryland because you couldn't have fireworks in Washington. At night the kids had sparklers and the grown ups shot fireworks and



"What were your family traditions?"

We always had codfish cakes for breakfast on Christmas morning. I thought the grown ups would never finish them.

We always had a watermelon party at my grandmother's in August.

We always went to a party at my Aunt Nanny's on Christmas afternoon.

After Grandpa and I got married we made some traditions of our own like always going to church on Christmas Eve.

"Did boys send you cards or candy on Valentine's Day?"



Everyone on the block was in on it. Then we had a big watermelon party.

Mostly Valentine's Day was when you were grown up. Grandpa always gave me candy on Valentine's Day. One time a boy who was away sent me flowers.



All the babies were baptized in the family Christening dress.

I went to PS 69 in Jackson Heights and Newtown High School in Kilmhurst. The high school was so big that I did not like it so I went to Washington & lived with my aunt. I went to A.W.U. Later on I went to Queens College and then to North Texas State University.

"Where did you go to school, Grandma?"

School



"Did you like school?"

Yes. The school believed in children skipping grades so I went through elementary school very quickly. I was only 11 when I started high school. I did not like it at all but I loved all three colleges that I went to.

"How did you get to school?"

I almost always walked. Very occasionally the minister would drive us in his Model T Ford. There was a bus we could take to High School but it was so crowded we didn't use it much.



"What classes did you like? Hate?"

I liked reading, writing, history, geography and math. I did not like art, music and p.e. much because I did not think I was any good at them. In college I liked everything but zoology.



Days

I was never any good at sports or thought I wasn't and I got embarrassed. But I did like to skate (roller skate & ice skate).



"Did you go out for sports?"

Yes. I did not know much about it when I went to G.W. but loved to cheer anyway. I learned more after we moved to Texas.

"Were you a football fan?"



"Were you given lots of homework?"

A lot in high school. By the time I got to college I knew to keep up with it.

"Ever play hooky from school?"

Not in elementary or high school. In college you were allowed to cut classes and in my first year I cut too many so my grades went down.

"Were your report cards good? What was your best?"

I got all As in elem school and graduated with honors from high school. I did not do as well my first 2 years of college but As & Bs after that.



After we moved to N.Y., we went back home (to Washington) every vacation and all summer. After my grandmother died, I went on two trips with my Aunt Helen - to mountains in N.H. and out west. Later we always came to Texas.



"Did you ever go fishing or camping?"



When our children were little we had a cabin in the Catskill mountains.

"Where did you go on vacations, Grandma?"

Every year I was just six months old when I made my first train trip. I loved riding on the train and having everybody in the family meet us at Union Station.

"Were you ever on a train trip?"



My Vacations

"What was the longest trip you ever took?"

Out west with my Aunt Helen. We drove all the way to California and back. We stopped in Chicago for the World's Fair and spent three days at Black Swan Lake in Minn. Then we went through Glacier National Park, Sequoia National Park, Yosemite National Park, Grand Canyon and Mesa Verde. We stayed with friends in Bremerton, Wash.; Los Angeles and San Diego. We were gone almost 2 months.

"Did you used to go to the fair or carnival?"



lots of times. We went to the New York World's Fair a lot. My girlfriend worked there and I would meet her and then we would go to the rodeo and the midway. We had carnivals come to our town too and most of the kids would go.

When I was little it was going to Washington but it was more like going home. My trip out west was great. When I got married, Grandpa was in the army so we traveled a lot but it wasn't a vacation. Later we had a lot of favorite vacations.

"What was your favorite vacation?"



& Trips

When I was a grandma, I took Mike and Jonathan to Disneyland. Before that I took my children and their friends to Six Flags.

When I was little, I went to Coney Island & Glen Echo.

"Did you ever go to Disney-land or Six Flags?"



Summertime - Washington

"Grandma, how old were you before you could date? Who was your first date?"



Sweet

We all went together in a crowd that I got in at church when I was 13. Nobody was allowed to date but sometimes a boy would ask to walk you home. That was almost like a date I think.

"What were your slumber parties like?"

The first one who asked me was Bob Glenn. Then Bill Cagney who I had a big crush on.

We didn't have slumber parties but just a girl over to sleep. My girl friend Helen Cree spent most weekends at my house.



"What's the latest you ever stayed up?"

All night long after I got to college and worked on the newspaper. I would get to the sorority house about 4:30 AM and "die".



"Who was your favorite boyfriend?"

I had different favorites at different times. First it was Bill Cagney - then Tommy Tynch.

I went with an older guy for a while but he was never a real favorite. A boy named Haynes Mahoney was more of a favorite friend than a boy friend. But



Grandpa came along & he was my real terror.

"What did you and your best friend used to do?"

Sixteen



"Did you have your own car? Ever go to drive-ins?"

No car until after I came to Texas and inherited family car.

We went to Drive Ins quite a lot. They were very popular.

"What was your nickname?"

Carstop and Canzi after I went to college.



"What used to make you mad?"

I would get my feelings hurt and then I would cry and then I would get mad because I couldn't stop crying.

We were together every day after school and on weekends. We would go to the drug store and then go to watch the boys play ball and maybe they would ask us. We would take long walks and eat pickles and ice cream. We usually went to the movies on Sat afternoons and to the JYP league at church on Sunday night.



High School age 15

first married age 19

It was just before the war started. A lady from the Church asked me to go to a party to entertain soldiers at school at Laguardia Field. I had just finished college & come back to

NY and I thought I was too sophisticated to go to such a function but she talked me into it. The funny part was that Grandpa didn't want to go either but his Colonel said that some boys had to go since the Church ladies were being so nice.

I met several soldiers but I liked Grandpa best. We talked for a long time. Then I went to the library to find out more about bras and airplanes.

When Grandpa

We went to a movie on our first date and then to an ice cream parlor. I don't remember the movie but remember they were playing "Elmer's Tune" on the jukebox. The next night I had a date with a boy from work and spent the whole time thinking about Grandpa so never dated anyone else after that. We had been going together for

"Where did you go on your first date? Did you like him right away? Did he write you love



letters? Did you ever get mad at Grandpa while you were dating?"

*How did you meet Grandpa?
How old were you?
Did Grandpa have any rivals?"



months when war was declared so we decided to get married pretty quick. He had to go back to his base. I wrote him a lot of love letters. I was so scared that he might have to go overseas that I wouldn't waste any time being mad. My folks liked him a lot but my mother thought we should wait.



Came A-courtin'

"Where and when did he ask you to marry him?"



We were walking alone Fillmore Ave. and he said he would have to go back to his base now. We knew we didn't want to be apart so we both said "let's get married and go home together and we did."



Bud May 1944



Savannah, etc



Bud & Helen Cox
Savannah Georgia - 1944

Cougar in the H.C.



Sept 1, 1944



August

Mr. and Mrs. Orey Ken Carstaphen
request the honor of your presence
at the marriage of their daughter
Helen Ken

to
Mr. Butler R. Cox
on Saturday, the twenty-eighth of March
nineteen hundred and forty-two
at five o'clock
Community Church
Jackson Heights, New York

"When did you get married?
What was your wedding like? Who
was in your wedding?"



"Where did you go
on your honeymoon?"



We spent two nights at
the PISCADILLY Hotel in NYC
Then we took the train to
Fort Wayne, Ind. Grandpa had
to go to the base so I
rented a room for us



We had a very small apartment in Ft. Wayne,
Indiana. The people were very nice. Then
we moved to a larger apartment
and fixed it up a little. This was
during the war and we moved
a lot. Finally we got a little
house of our own at 4008 Bull
St., Savannah, Ga. We lived
there for 2 1/2 years. Kenny
was born there. Dad shipped out
when he was 3 weeks old.
I went to my father's house
in Jackson Hts. N.Y. About a
year later we



"Where was our house
bought a big old
house in
Springfield Gardens,
Linda was
born there and
lived there
years. Then
moved to
Marlton, Tx.
here we still
live in 1984
in a house
of logs
Savannah
Pleasant
a space
more
50 acres.

"Where were your brothers born?
Who were they named after?"

Ken was born in
Savannah, Ga. He was
named Kenneth because
we liked the
name and
Palston for
his dad.

Linda was
born in Spring-
field Gds, NY.
She was
named Linda
because we
liked the
name & Blanche
for her



grandmother





Springfield Gardens, N.Y.





"How did you learn to cook?"

My sister-in-law Leha showed me how to do a lot of things other than that I just followed recipes.

Recipe

"Did you have to help in the kitchen?"

My mother really did not like anyone else in the kitchen but I liked to help and did with my aunt Edith who made real good chocolate cake.



"What was the first thing you cooked?"

A chocolate cake. The cake was good but the icing got so hard you couldn't cut it. My mother was sick but my daddy said it was good and ate it.

During the war we had to give ration stamps for meat. I ran out and the butcher gave me a pig's tail. You should have fried it to make the grease come out but I boiled it. Then I put in potatoes I threw it out.

"Do you remember any disasters?"



"Did you have a garden?
Did you can?"

Days

apple sauce
After we had house at farm I had a flower garden and liked working in it.



We always had tomato plants. We also had a peach tree, an apple tree and a pear tree. I made preserves and canned some peaches, pears, tomato juice and

"What was your favorite recipe?"

roast leg of lamb
spaghetti
chicken & rice
brownies
chocolate cake
home made ice cream

Our first Christmas I cooked for neighbors

"What was Grandpa's favorite?"

vegetable soup
roast leg of lamb
apple pie made with brown sugar
pear preserves
peach preserves
corn bread
chicken and rice
home made ice cream
fudge



Linda Blanche Cox
b. March 15, 1950
Springfield Gardens
N.Y.





Hotel Piccadilly

presents

in the Piccadilly Circus Bar

THE THREE SUNS

Singing and Playing Nightly

For DINNER and SUPPER

Did you have your own
stereo and tapes?"



The Music

"What were your favorite songs? Singers?"

Always

'Til We Meet Again
Somewhere, my love
White Christmas
I'll Be Home for Christmas
In the Garden
Standstill
Good night, sweetheart
Only Make Believe
Peen Barrel Polka
Partners
Waiting Across Texas
Yellow Rose of Texas
Tie a Yellow Ribbon
Let There Be Peace
On Earth



"Grandma, did you have to take music lessons?"

For a little while my aunt
Leontine taught me. Then my
grandmother died and the
piano was sold. Much later
I took a music course at
Queens College and learned
to read a little music.
I practiced on the
church piano.



"Do certain songs
bring back memories?"
I've Told Every Little Star
Thanks for the Memory
Fall in love - Says my heart
Always
Anniversary Waltz
Thank you for touching
my life



in My Life

"Do you
remember
your
first dance?
Who with?
What
dances?"



We had dances at
our church and I
danced with lots of
boys. One time I
went to a big party
and I danced with
the captain of the
basketball team. He
was a very good
dancer. We danced to
Over Somebody Else's
Shoulder and Dancing
Queen.

Later on I danced
with a friend who
taught me how to
titterbug.

"Did Grandpa
sing
or dance?"

He played
the piano
by ear and
played a
mouth organ.
He waltzed
beautifully.
We didn't
dance much
but he
was a
good dancer
and I liked
to dance with him.



These are *My* a few of *Favorite Things*

Color <u>Rose</u>	Restaurant <u>OU San Francisco</u>
<u>Blue (medium)</u>	<u>Steak House</u>
Book <u>Gene with the Wind</u>	City <u>Washington, D.C.</u>
	<u>San Francisco</u>
Movie <u>Waterloo Bridge</u>	Actor <u>Jimmy Stewart</u>
Actress <u>Katherine Hepburn</u>	Game <u>Bridge</u>
Song <u>Plays</u>	Bird <u>Bluebird</u>
Radio Program <u>Ray Kaiser's</u>	Flower <u>rose</u>
<u>College of Musical Knowledge</u>	
TV Program <u>Double Jeopardy</u>	Pet <u>cat</u>
Ice Cream <u>chocolate</u>	Candy <u>chocolate</u>
	<u>caramels</u>
Jelly <u>strawberry</u>	Month <u>October</u>
Soup <u>Home made vegetable</u>	Season <u>Fall</u>
Sandwich <u>chicken salad</u>	Tree <u>Sweetgum</u>
Toy <u>doll</u>	Magazine <u>Southern living</u>
Hobby <u>embroidery</u>	Cartoon <u>Mickey Mouse</u>
Spectator Sport <u>basketball</u>	Automobile <u>Monte Carlo</u>
<u>baseball - foot ball</u>	
Participation Sport <u>miniature golf</u>	Vegetable <u>spinach</u>
Vacation Place <u>Cruise ship</u>	Time of Day <u>morning</u>
Cookie <u>sandy</u>	Dinner <u>steak & baked pot</u>
	<u>fried chicken</u>

I like horse racing best
of all spectator sports.



"How many different homes have you had?"

3442-80 Street Jackson Heights, N.Y.
 1521 Webster St. Washington D.C.
 3438 83 Street Jackson Heights, N.Y.
 4520 Conn. Ave. Washington D.C.
 714 Richmond Ave. Silver Spring, Md.
 Fort Wayne, Ind.
 Thunderbolt, Ga.
 4008 Bull St. Savannah, Ga.
 13706 219 St. Springfield Gds. N.Y.
 1820 Spring Hood St. Carrollton, Tx
 1801 Spring Ave. Carrollton, Tx
 log house, Rt. 5, Highway 67
 Mt. Pleasant, Tex.



"Ever had any family reunions?"

When my grandmother was alive, Christmas was our reunion time. Every body came to her house on Christmas Eve and stayed over to Christmas night.

After the war I always had some of our family - always Aunt Helen at Christmas. Our own family always gets together for birthdays, at Mother's Day and Fourth of July. We have a big reunion of Coxes at log house in October (around the time of Grandpa's birthday).



"Where are all your relatives living now?"

Linda & Jonathan - Lewisville, Tx
 Lee, Janice Mike - Ft. Worth, Tx
 Lona Yates - Omaha, Nebraska
 Baby Cox Pierre - Mt. Pleasant, Tx
 Kate Cox Thomas " "
 Alford Davis, Bill Cox " "
 Mary Frances Cox " "
 Pam Kay, Larry Thomas " "
 Lisa Cox Thomas " "
 Lora, Albert Silver, Anna Ming
 Tracy Jean, Pamel, Sylvia, Spence
 Ernest Alton, Hilda, Tx
 Sandy, Larky - Waco, Tx
 Joe Corley " "
 Pamela Corley " "
 Joyce Thomas Mt. Pleasant
 Mary, Jack, William, Earl K.
 Jack, Thomas, William
 Mary, William, William
 Randy, William Jr. Virginia
 Edna, John, William, Fla.
 Ed, George, Hilda NYC
 Pam Virginia

More Memories



My son never played football but our daughter did



"Did you ever work
besides at home?"

I always or almost
always worked
outside home. In
summers & right after
college I worked
for Home Ins. Co. NYC.
During war I

worked as Bookkeeper for Bass Foundry,
Manson Ford Agency in Ft. Wayne & Liberty Natl Bk
in Savannah, Ga. When Linda was 3, I went
back to school at Queens College & became
a teacher. I taught school for 31 years in
NY and Carrollton, Tx. After I retired I
became a part time instructor at
Brookhaven Junior College which I am still
doing.

More Memories

Patio at Log House, Mt. Pleasant, Tx
Grandpa & Mike

