

"The Gormans & The Taylors"

Great-Grandpa William (Bill) Gorman & Great-Grandma Helen Taylor Gorman



My grandparents on my mother's side are William (Bill) Harrington Gorman and Helen Sarah Taylor Gorman....your great-grandparents! Bill was born in Albany, New York on September 20, 1900. Helen was born in Bloomington, Illinois on May 16, 1902.

The entire time that I knew them, they lived at 1614 Bel Aire Dr., Glendale, CA 91201. Grandma Carol and her two sisters grew up in this house, although, Grandma Carol was actually born in

Sacramento, CA.

Bill and Helen had three daughters, Grandma Carol (Helen Carol Gorman Kemp), born January 8, 1929, Diane Mary Gorman Hydorn, born October 14, 1932, and Gaye Ann Gorman Hazelwood Shaffer, born November 16, 1939. During my lifetime, Grandma Helen's mother lived with them. Her name was Frances Ellen Lyons Taylor. She was born in Colorado on March 9, 1880. By the time I was born, she was 75 years old. When I reached the age of 10, she would have been 85. Therefore, my recollections of her are of an older woman sitting in an armchair in my grandparent's living room. We always called her Nanny Taylor! I am not certain, but Nanny may have evolved from Franny many years earlier. Nanny had three daughters, Grandma Helen and her two sisters Lucille and Litta. Nanny's husband, Albert Taylor, worked for the railroad in Illinois. He was some type of foreman in charge. One day another employee was drunk on the job. Albert fired him then and there. The employee went home and got a gun and returned to the railroad yard and shot and killed Albert Taylor. Nanny raised her three daughters on her own. I received some information from a distant relative that indicates that the railroad gave Nanny Taylor a job which she kept until she retired. Grandpa Bill had three sisters, Kathrine, Esther, and Dorothy.

Grandma and Grandpa Gorman's house was one level at the front and two levels in the back. The driveway sloped downhill, under a porte-cochère (covered portion of the driveway) toward the back of the house. The main level had three bedrooms, two bathrooms, living room, formal dining room that opened to the living room, formal breakfast room and kitchen. There was a very steep stairway, without a top landing, no handrails, that went down to the basement. There was a dutch-door (split top and bottom door) to the stairs that you accessed from the hall. It was a little scary going down the stairs as any fall would have been painful! Grandma and Grandpa's bedroom had two beds in lieu of a large queen or king. I always remember a framed photograph on their dresser of a woman that was topless sitting on a rock at the edge of some water. I don't know who the woman in the picture was. Nanny Taylor had one of the bedrooms and the third was set up as a den with a convertible daybed for guests. The basement had a door at grade to the backyard. There were two areas of the basement, the laundry area with a bedroom/playroom behind. All of us kids spent much of the time playing in the basement bedroom.

Nanny Taylor was moved to a convalescent home late in her life where, based on some research information that I obtained, she passed away on March 6, 1970, which was just shy of her 90th birthday. (My memory always felt like she passed away while I

was younger in elementary school, however, the records of this date appear correct.)

Our family would drive across Glendale to visit at the Gorman house somewhat regularly, similar to how you kids visited your grandparents. When I was young, we typically would go to their house on Christmas Eve. Often, my cousins, the children of Diane Hydorn and Gaye Hazelwood Shaffer would be there as well, which is what we looked forward to. On occasion, Grandpa's sisters, Katherine, Esther, and Dorothy would be there. The sisters all lived in Sacramento. I don't recall if Grandma's sisters Lucille and Litta would be there, but I know I would hear their names at times.

When we got to my grandparents house, we would always go look for Grandpa Bill to ask if he had candy for us. Grandpa Bill loved his sweets! Generally, he would have some wrapped hard candies in his pocket, which he would hand out to us. He sometimes had a breath candy called Sen Sen, which was very strong tasting, and not really sweet. I looked and found that Sen Sen is still a manufacturer of candies today. The Sen Sen that Grandpa had may have been a licorice, but I'm not certain. I do know it was not as good as the hard candies!

Two houses west of my grandparent's house was Winchester Avenue. This street had a downhill slope with a sidewalk. We

would take a wagon from our grandparent's house over to the corner. One or two of us would sit in the wagon and coast down the sidewalk to the next corner, which would pass about 17 houses. At a very young age, I remember that my Uncle Kenny (Gaye's first husband) would take us out on wild animal safaris, making us duck down, walk, and then run, while looking out for tigers and bears. Sometimes, a group of us would walk up the hill to Brand Park. I don't remember much about the park except that there was a Brand Family Burial area as I recall.

At Christmas, my grandparents always had a large Christmas tree in the large front window. The tree would be decorated with the medium size Christmas lights in various colors. I think there was tinsel on the tree and lots of shiny ornaments. We would all get to open presents from our grandparents on Christmas Eve.

Grandpa Gorman liked Cadillacs. I know he had a Cadillac from the 1950's that he later gave to my Aunt Gaye. He had a 1963 dark green Cadillac with fin tailights. In 1970, he bought a maroon Lincoln Town Car which he had until he passed away. Eventually, Grandma Gorman let me have the Lincoln which I drove for a while after we moved to Chino Hills.

My understanding is that Grandpa Gorman worked for the California State Public Utilities Commission. Grandma was a stay at home mom. I believe, but not certain, that Grandpa retired in

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1965, which would have been at the age of 65. He collected a pension that continued to go to Grandma Gorman after Grandpa's passing in 1984 until Grandma's passing in 1996. With the cost of living adjustments, I believe that between 1965 and 1996, they likely made more money then Grandpa made in all of his working years.

A few stories that I remember about them include some that I listened to or some that were related to me....

When Papa Dick was dating Grandma Carol, he was invited to the Gorman's house for dinner one evening. Grandma Gorman had included a large bowl of whipped turnips as a part of the dinner meal. When Papa Dick saw the bowl, he mistook it for mashed potatoes. He scooped a large spoonful of the turnips onto his plate. When he took his first bite, he was surprised to find they were not potatoes, but rather turnips which apparently are quite bitter! Papa Dick suffered through eating them all! I say that I think they were bitter, as I have never tasted whipped turnips.....I believe Papa would never allow Grandma Carol to fix turnips for us.

Grandma Gorman was for years a smoker! I have heard stories of her working in the kitchen preparing a meal with a cigarette in her mouth with a long burned ash over an inch in length hanging from the cigarette.

Grandma Gorman also had apparently lost some level of her taste buds as she aged. There was a story of her preparing a lemon pie for dessert. She kept adding lemon juice by taste and kept believing that it still didn't have enough flavor, so added more. When the dessert was served, everyone who tried it squinched up their eyes from the tartness of the amount of lemon she had added.

Grandpa Gorman told a story of his younger years that I remember hearing, but could not confirm with Grandma Carol in the last year of her life. I think Grandma Carol just didn't recall it anymore. Grandpa Gorman told me that when he was young (I'm assuming around 1912-1913) he had a donkey. There was still a significant amount of gold mining going on in the Sacramento area. Grandpa said that he would take his donkey and would go to the post office and pick up the mail of a large group of miners. He would then go up into the mining area and deliver the mail to the miners. He charged them each a nickel for the delivery. It was my understanding that the young entrepreneur, Bill Gorman, was making more money than many of the miners!

I remember staying overnight at my grandparents house one time. In the morning, I recall going into the breakfast room for breakfast. Grandpa Gorman was sitting at one end of the glass top breakfast table reading the newspaper. When Grandma Gorman set a cup of coffee in front of him, Grandpa started

putting teaspoons of sugar into the cup of coffee. It seemed like he placed at least 6 teaspoons of sugar! Between the sugar, candy, and who knows what other sweets Grandpa enjoyed, he ended up with diabetes. At the end of his life, the doctors told him he would have to lose one of his legs due to the diabetes. They performed the amputation, however, Grandpa Gorman never recovered and passed away in the hospital on October 3, 1984. We all felt that he just couldn't stand losing his leg and kind of gave up on life following the surgery.

A memory that always brings a smile to my face was of a time when Grandma and Grandpa Gorman visited us at the house I grew up in, at 453 Devonshire Ln., Glendale, CA. Grandpa Gorman, Papa Dick, and I were sitting at the dining room table talking. I was probably a teenager at the time. I used to talk like an old man to my Dad in a kidding way. While we were talking at the table, I started in with my old man imitation. Next Papa Dick started talking like an old man. Finally, Grandpa Gorman started talking like an old man. I started laughing so hard because as Grandpa Gorman tried to imitate an old man's voice, he sounded like his normal self....an old man!

One time after Grandpa Gorman had passed away, I was visiting with Grandma Gorman at her house. During our conversation about having children, Grandma Gorman told me that she had always wished to have another child after Carol, Diane, and Gaye.

I loved hearing her talk about her feelings of loving having her children.

After Grandpa Gorman passed away, Grandma Gorman continued to live in their house until she passed away on August 29, 1996. Your Grandma Carol and her sisters kept watch over Grandma Gorman, hiring help to be there to give her in-home care. Grandma Gorman had given directions that she did not want to be resuscitated were she to go into failure. One day, the caregiver called Grandma Carol in a panic stating that Grandma Gorman was struggling breathing and was not responsive. Grandma Carol instructed the caregiver to call 911 for emergency help. They transported Grandma Gorman to the hospital where she was fully revived and conscious. When Grandma Carol talked to Grandma Gorman, Grandma Gorman asked Grandma Carol basically what part she hadn't understood about not resuscitating her? The last years of Grandma Gorman's life consisted of sitting in her chair in the living room and nodding off for hours at a time. She had lost much of her hearing, therefore, I believe she had decided she was ready to leave this life to be with Grandpa Gorman.

Bill and Helen Gorman were very much like your Papa Dick and Grandma Carol! They loved their entire family very much. They had many friends and over the years either held gatherings at their house or attended other's homes to spend time with friends

and/or family. Krista and Dustin were born before Grandpa Gorman's passing, however, probably don't remember him much. As seen in the one photo, Krista, Dustin, Lindsay, and Scott appear in a photo with Grandma Gorman. You would have really enjoyed them had they lived longer!



Helen, Lucille, and Litta Taylor as young girls in Illinois approximately 1909



Helen and Bill Gorman's Wedding Day 1927



Helen Taylor Gorman, Carol Gorman, and Diane Gorman

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Diane, Gaye, Helen, and Carol Gorman in front of the Gorman's house at 1614 Bel Aire Dr., Glendale, CA, January 1940



Back Row Standing: Bill Gorman, Marshall Hydorn, and Dick Kemp

Front Row Seated: Helen Gorman, Diane Gorman Hydorn, Gaye Gorman, Carol Gorman Kemp, and Frances (Nannie) Taylor



Helen and Bill Gorman's 25th Wedding Anniversary

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Esther Gorman Hargrove, Bill Gorman, Helen Taylor Gorman,
and Katherine Gorman Seidel

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Great-Grandpa and Great-Grandma Gorman's 50th Wedding Anniversary Celebration 1977



Gaye Gorman Shaffer, Carol Gorman Kemp, Diane Gorman Hydorn, and Helen Taylor Gorman in 1992



Shelley Broman Kemp, Dustin Kemp, Krista Kemp, Lindsay Kemp, and Scott Kemp with Great-Grandma Helen Gorman approximately 1991

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Grandma and Grandpa Gorman's house at 1614 Bel Aire Dr., Glendale, CA today!

Scott

I really have to say I am loving these stories Dad! There is so much that I am learning about our family history and where we all come from. I am so happy that it is only week 2/52.

Lindsay

Love love love these stories!

I had no idea Grandma Carol's real name was not Carol...how I missed that? I do not know.

I loved hearing the story of you, Grandpa and Great Grandpa talking in old man voices LoL

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For some reason I always thought the “Kemp look” (I think sums up the eyebrow/entire brow area) came from Papa Dick, but now looking at the picture of young Grandma Carol in the light pink dress...WHOA! There it is! Haha

Like Scotty said, it’s great to know a bit more about where we come from but also to know a bit more about you, Dad. And all the other “grown-ups” in our lives.

I love you all so much 🥰 HAPPY 4TH of July ❤️🎉

Krista

Wow Dad! The detail is awesome. I’m so glad you’re enjoying this.