

Cecelia Bucknum to reign over St. Pat's festivities



Cecelia (Kenny) Bucknum. Antique rocker and secretary were owned by her parents Michael and Mary Kenny, early Morrow Co. homesteaders.

Her Irish eyes were smiling ... and their twinkle was just about as bright as the sunlight bouncing off the hand-polished antique furniture. It's obvious that Queen Cecelia Ann (Kenny) Bucknum puts a lot of love, pride, and elbow grease into her World War I era home. Niece Gwen Healy jokes that her children say they need sunglasses when they visit their great aunt Cecelia - her home is the epitome of Irish hard work and cleanliness despite an injury Cecelia received as the result of a fall.

Cecelia Ann Kenny was born to Michael and Mary (Doherty) Kenny on the Kenny ranch twelve miles from Heppner in 1905. Michael, who emigrated to Morrow County from the County Leitrim, Ireland, in 1878, worked at various ranches until homesteading in Milk Canyon, in the eastern part of Sand Hollow. Mary, of County Donegal, Ireland, came to the U.S. in 1883. On December 16, 1884 Mary and Michael were married. Eight children were born to the Kennys - John Francis, Sarah (Farley), Roseanne (Healy), James Thomas, Michael Edward, Emmett, Joseph Bernard, and Cecelia, the youngest. Emmett only six months old died in 1901 and Edward died in a haying accident in 1907 at the age of 12. James died of diabetes in 1922. Cecelia is the only child of the Kenny family still living.

For a time the Kennys and their children taught at their ranch. The mother of Rachel Harnett, curator of the museum for many years, was their teacher. Cecelia's brothers and sisters also went to school at Buttercreek, but the family moved from the farm into Heppner so that Cecelia could attend high school there. After Cecelia's graduation, the family returned to the ranch and Cecelia moved to Portland to attend Bencke Walker Business College.

While attending college she lived at the all-women Martha Washington Hotel, which is now occupied by the followers of the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. But after a year of college, she returned home to help her mother, who was in ill health.

On Christmas day, 1929, at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Heppner, Cecelia married William J. Bucknum. The couple made their home at Cecelia's parents' house in Heppner. Two years after they were married she began working for J.C. Penney Co. in Heppner. The store was first located where the LeBush Shop most recently has been. The J.C. Penney store was then moved to where the old Heppner Post Office building was. Cecelia worked for the company for 10½ years until her mother died on March 23, 1940 at the age of 76. Cecelia had taken a six months' leave from her job, but never returned. She cared for her

father until his death on November 25, 1940, at the age of 81, just eight months and two days after the passing of his wife.

Recalling her youth, Cecelia speaks of early days in Morrow County. "I remember when I was small, my mother and father were struck by lightning. Our hired man and my brother went out with a lantern looking for them. Those were horse and buggy days. I'll never forget it us kids were crying. It (the lightning) burnt the shoe off my father's foot and killed one of the horses."

"My dad helped a lot of Irishmen get started in Morrow County," said Cecelia. "Times were real hard. We did without all of these modern things."

Cecelia has lived in one of her parents' homes for 37 years. The original Kenny ranch, a 100-year old farm now, is still in the family and owned by her nephew, Bill Healy.

St. Patrick's Irish Festival Dinner & Entertainment

Saturday, March 16

4:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Menu:

Ham, Scalloped Potatoes,
Green Beans, Salad, Rolls,
Milk, Coffee, Tea & Pie.



Adults **\$4.00** Family **\$12.50**

10 & under **\$2.00** 3 & under Free.

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