

A Book Review:

# ***A QUIET MAN HARRY ALLISTER KIRKPATRICK HIS FAMILY AND HIS LIFE***

by

**His Daughter, Helen (Kirkpatrick) Warfel**

Gadco Publications, Vista, California (2001) (ISBN 0-9710618-0-7)

This editor and his wife were recently honored to have received one of the relative few print copies of Cousin Helen Kirkpatrick Warfel's (2001) "hardback" biography of her late father, Dr. Harry Allister Kirkpatrick (1891 - 1982), entitled: *A Quiet Man Harry Allister Kirkpatrick His Family and His Life* (printed by Gadco Publications in Vista, California) (ISBN 0-9710618-0-7). Both of us have now read the volume (almost 300 pages in length with various charts, reproduced family history documents, and many family letters plus numerous photographs, some in full color). It can truly be said that the author has spared not much in expense to publish a truly fine biography about her distinguished father, an award winning scientist and physicist who lived most of his adult life in the Los Angeles area of Southern California.

It is hoped that by this time a few copies, at least, of this excellent book have "made their way" into some of Southern California's better libraries, because, at the end of the day, Helen's work is as much about life in those sunny climes near the beginning and covering much of the twentieth century as it is about late nineteenth century life on the prairies of South Dakota, near Wessington, which is where Harry and his two very talented brothers were born, and where the Kirkpatricks and their kin lived between 1882 and their move to California in 1908.

Helen's mother, Anna Ethel ("Ethel") (Anderson) Kirkpatrick, who married Dr. Kirkpatrick, was a daughter of Richard Thomas Anderson and his wife, Anna Margaret Banes. Richard Thomas Anderson was one of the two Confederate Army Civil War brothers (sons of Absalom (III) and Louisa Priscilla (Woodward) Anderson) from Anne Arundel County, Maryland, who had fought in the same unit, Company "C" (the "Duvall") Company of the Second Maryland Infantry Regiment (part of the Confederate "Maryland Line") which participated in some of the more gruesome Civil War battles, including Gettysburg. Richard suffered severe incapacitating war wounds in his knees while in the trenches surrounding Petersburg, Virginia, toward the War's end. Some years after Richard's death in 1896, initially his oldest son, Ross Banes Anderson, Sr., and soon thereafter all but one of the rest of his immediate family left the Baltimore, Maryland, area, and they moved to California.

## **Star Athlete and Outstanding Physicist**

Harry Kirkpatrick and Ethel Anderson had met each other as early as 1914 when both had joined the Highland Park Presbyterian Church situate in the college town of the same name which was then the campus location of Occidental College, near Los Angeles. Harry was then a student at Occidental. The relationship of the Kirkpatrick family over many decades and now over several generations with Occidental College, which was once affiliated with the Presbyterian Church, forms a large part of the Kirkpatrick story. Two daughters were born of the marriage, Helen and her younger sister, Joann.

Dr. Harry Kirkpatrick was a "decathlon"-type newspaper headline award winning star Occidental College athlete in his youth, president of the student body, and an award winning scientist (as an associate of Dr. Jesse W. DuMond of the California Institute of Technology). While working with Dr. DuMond, Harry invented and developed the multiple crystal spectrometer (an X-ray microscope) and was a pioneer in the early photographic study of X-rays and atomic particles. He was once considered for the Nobel prize in physics. He was one of those

outstanding physicists who was selected to work on the World War II radar innovations at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, at Cambridge, Massachusetts. It was while they were living near Cambridge that his wife, Anna (Anderson), died unexpectedly on January 21, 1943, when daughter Joann was a teenager. (On December 30, 1950, Dr. Kirkpatrick and his second wife, Olive Hutchison, who had been secretary to a succession of Occidental College presidents, were married.)

The volume traces the Kirkpatrick genealogy to one John Kirkpatrick who was born in Scotland in 1763 and came to western Pennsylvania in 1775. John moved from Pennsylvania to Kentucky (at or near Lexington), then to Indiana and back to Pennsylvania where he married Margaret Watson in 1783. In 1804 they moved to Ohio (near Springfield). One of John's descendants, who was a half uncle to Harry, was Civil War Union Lieutenant William Cowan Kirkpatrick, of Oswego, Indiana, who died during the Civil War, fighting in the battle of Chickamauga in Tennessee. (Thus, Helen and her children and her sister, Joann, have Civil War ancestors or relatives who fought on both sides.)

### Over the Old Oregon Trail

From Oswego and Remington, Indiana, the Kirkpatricks (one of the witnesses to the Kosciusko County, Indiana, Will of Thomas W. Kirkpatrick was Presbyterian Minister John Anderson), Harry's own father and a cousin drove a mule team to Oregon over the old Oregon Trail (1876 - 1878), working in the Oregon lumber mills, visiting California, and returning to Indiana by rail after two years. In 1882, when land was being offered for homesteading in South Dakota, Harry's father and other closely related family members relocated there to Grand Township in Hand County at Wessington. (This migration was not unlike that about the same time by the two youngest sons of Absalom (III) and Louisa Priscilla (Woodward) Anderson, Absalom (IV) and James Williams Anderson, who came from Maryland by way of Kansas, where they stayed with Disney relatives near Ottawa, Kansas, before settling near Vermillion, South Dakota. Later Absalom and his family moved to Saskatchewan, Canada.) At Wessington, Harry and his two brothers (who also had outstanding academic and professional careers) were born. The family first lived in a sod home on the prairie. Helen is named after her Kirkpatrick grandmother, Helen Iowa Harmon, the schoolmistress who had been born in Iowa. Harry's father, Alex Kirkpatrick, served for six years as South Dakota's Railroad Commissioner. He was active in the Populist Party (of which he was one of its founding members). The book is full of anecdotes about life on a South Dakota farm during this period and contains many family letters.

Alex Kirkpatrick and several partners organized the Wessington Land and Cattle Company, a land development venture. When later the Kirkpatricks moved from South Dakota to California, Alex Kirkpatrick continued a career in real estate development and sales near Los Angeles. At that point (1908) Harry was a high school student at Heron College at Heron City, South Dakota.

Following residences at Gardena, Glendora, and Alhambra, California, by 1912, the Kirkpatricks were settled at Highland Park, where Harry had been enrolled at Occidental College for two years. In 1911, Alex Kirkpatrick's Southern California real estate company, formed by investors from South Dakota, planned to sell 12,800 acres of farm land in the San Joaquin Valley in 20 acre tracts. Portions of this acreage have remained in the Kirkpatrick family ever since.

### Generational Connection to Occidental College

Occidental College had been under the able leadership of a Harvard graduate, Dr. John Willis Baer, since 1906. A new Occidental college campus, at nearby Eagle Rock, was opened by 1914, and the Kirkpatricks constructed a new home there, which would remain in the family through four generations until 1954, located at the foot of the new campus. This home - known as the Swiss Chalet - was later (and may now still be) the home of the Kappa Sigma fraternity at

the college.

Space constraints prevent a recital of Harry's numerous sports achievements and of the many, many athletic awards which he won while he was a student at Occidental College. On this subject, the volume is complete with photographs of many newspaper articles and of sports awards. Following their subsequent graduations from Occidental, younger brothers Paul and Bruce Kirkpatrick taught and coached for a year or more at Hangchow College in Hangchow, China. On May 17, 1917, at Ganesha Park, Pomona, California, Harry and Anna Ethel Anderson were married. Pertaining to her mother, and her mother's family, Helen writes:

Ethel Anderson, born Anna Ethel Anderson, December 2, 1889, in the state of Maryland, came to California sometime before 1912 with her widowed mother, Anna Margaret Baner Anderson, one older sister, Cornelia Beall<sup>1</sup> and one younger brother Richard Arthur Anderson. Her oldest brother, Ross Baner Anderson was married and living at the time in Alameda, California. The youngest sister, Eva, lived in Maryland where she had been raised by an aunt. [Later, Eva also relocated to California and married.

Sister Cornelia ("Corrie") Beall Anderson, born with a severe hearing impediment that remained with her throughout her life, from time to time served as the very loyal, dedicated, and much loved housekeeper for the Kirkpatricks and other family members.]

Her father, Richard Thomas Anderson, a Civil War veteran born in 1842, died in 1896<sup>2</sup> when Ethel was five years old. Left a widow with five children and no income from the insurance company which reneged on the life insurance policy held by Richard, Anna ran a small boarding house in Baltimore, Maryland, to support her family. (The insurance claim was honored many years later in California when an agent of the company, trying to sell insurance to her, was confronted with this background information by Ethel.) Richard had run a business importing fine fabrics from London.

Members of the Anderson family were early residents of the State of Maryland. I have seen Anderson genealogical charts from the 1600's and Anderson farms from the 1700's - some still existing and composed of many beautiful acres. Anderson "Grasslands" was, in 1993, listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Here a slave cabin remains which, at this writing, is being preserved by an "Above Ground Archeologist."

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<sup>1</sup>Cornelia ("Corrie") Beall Anderson never married. She was an accomplished seamstress. She received her first and middle names in honor of (a) one of her father's favorite first cousins, Cornelia ("Nellie") (Anderson) Disney, of Linthicum Heights, Maryland; and (b) her uncle (by marriage) Judge Lemon Beall, Sr., of Davidsonville, Maryland, who had married Richard's sister, Ann ("Annie") Regina (Anderson) Tucker Beall.

<sup>2</sup>When the Richard Anderson family were living in Laurel, Maryland.

**Anna, too, was the daughter of early Maryland settlers. We have visited the site of her father's farm and nearby church and graveyard<sup>3</sup> where Banes ancestors are buried.<sup>4</sup> As a young woman Anna is said to have attended, in Philadelphia, a "Finishing Academy for Young Ladies" which at that time and in that part of the country was a desirable thing to do.**

**Letters from Harry to Ethel, the full color formal announcement of their wedding, the Los Angeles newspaper article reporting the wedding, and Ethel's wedding picture are all included in Helen's book. Helen Margaret (named after her two grandmothers) Kirkpatrick (later and now Mrs. C. Guy Warfel) "arrived" some two years later as the older of the two daughters born of the marriage. Interestingly, as her book brings out, when she was in her teens, Helen, her younger sister, and her parents resided in Hawaii during the Depression years, while her Dad was on the faculty of the University of Hawaii at Honolulu. An especially interesting chapter in the book details life in Hawaii during that period soon before the outbreak of World War II.**

**This editor and his wife feel privileged to have been included among the "short list" of those who have been fortunate to have been able to read Helen's very fine biography of her quite modest, but very accomplished, father and his two equally successful brothers. The volume will be among those many books at the Cora Anderson DuLaney History Room at Severn Cross Roads, Millersville, Maryland, where readers may see and read it. At the end of the volume is included a "pull out" Kirkpatrick family genealogy chart. This is just one of many illustrations and attachments contained in the book. This reviewer may be permitted one "editorial comment" that the best in America over the generations were those who were brought up on the farms and in the rural areas where there were no idle hands.**

**Among the personal tributes written about Dr. Kirkpatrick (following his death) is the following from one of his nieces (by marriage), Mrs. Barbara (Anderson) Riffe (daughter of Ethel's brother, Richard Arthur Anderson):**

**Knowing Uncle Harry's situation and age I have tried to prepare myself these past few years. Nonetheless the word hit me hard - the finality - for he was my favorite uncle besides being an absolute standout among human beings of the highest level.**

**For a man to live 90 years, accomplishing so much in so many endeavors all the while remaining the constant, quiet, patient person we all loved and admired for his strength - that's unusual!**

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<sup>3</sup>At Marriottsville in Howard County, and at nearby historic Wards Chapel United Methodist Church, on Liberty Road (Md. Rte. No. 26) at its intersection with Marriottsville Road, near Randallstown, Baltimore County, Maryland, respectively (both near the Howard County line at the Patapsco River). Civil War Veteran Richard Thomas Anderson and one daughter, Emeline Louisa (named after her two grandmothers), who died when she was quite young, are interred together in the well marked Banes cemetery lots near the front of the cemetery facing Marriottsville Road. The Banes farm, near the Church, was situate close to the farm in adjoining Howard County that was then owned by the older (first) Isaac Cord Anderson (son of Thomas, and grandson of Absalom (I), Anderson), a wealthy bachelor. The proximity, at Marriottsville, of these farms (Banes and Anderson) provided the social occasions which resulted in the late nineteenth century Anderson marriages of several of the children of Absalom (III) and Louisa Priscilla (Woodward) Anderson, namely, Richard Thomas Anderson and Anna Margaret (Banes) Anderson, Isaac Cord Anderson, Sr., and Lucy Caroline (Gaither) Anderson, and Matilda (Anderson) Gaither and Samuel Gaither (of Frederick City, Maryland). Lucy and Samuel Gaither were siblings, as were Isaac and Matilda Anderson.

<sup>4</sup>Including George Washington Lafayette Banes (Anna Margaret's father) so named, according to the Banes genealogy, because his father had participated, as a militia soldier or officer, in the guard of honor at the parade(s) held *circa* 1826 when the Marquis de Lafayette was honored upon his final return to America from France.

**Some of my fondest memories are of the outings your Dad took us on as unpredictable children. Remember the rowing experience in the canals of Naples, across from Alameda Bay? He showed no excitement or anger when we dropped an oar. And when I fell down a rocky slope during a hike to Mt. Wilson, he was so calm and reassuring.**

**One parent/uncle in a million! It was thoughts of uncle Harry's patience and calm that came to my aid during my child raising years. When I told him this, he was almost embarrassed.**

**Truly, Uncle Harry's life is one to be celebrated, not his death to be mourned. He left us so many memories of his virtues; an inspiration to improve ourselves and our lives.**

(Identified on the photograph of Dr. Harry Allister Kirkpatrick and his second wife, Olive, from left to right, first row: Granddaughter Margaret Helen ("Marty") Warfel Ziegenfuss with her three sons: Christopher Michael Welch, Alexander Stewart Welch, and Darren Allister Welch, seated next to Dr. and Mrs. Harry A. Kirkpatrick; second row: Grandson-in-law Michael Dean Welch; Grandson Chester Guy ("Chet") Warfel, III, and his wife, Rebecca ("Becky") Lee Weir Warfel; and Daughter, Helen Margaret ("Helen") Warfel, and her husband, Chester Guy ("Guy") Warfel, Jr.)