

# Eva McGown Was Everybody's Friend

Fairbanks will never be the same without Eva McGown, a little wisp of Ireland transported from the old country as a mail order bride 58 years ago.

Her whole life was devoted to kindness and she never knew a stranger.

"And the top o' the mornin' to you, Howard Rock," she would say.

She loved everyone, native and non-native alike. Your day was always just a little bit brighter after seeing Eva and hearing her friendly greeting.

Many people thought she had kissed the Blarney Stone. But Eva did more than that. She carried a hunk of it around with her so that she could cheer everyone up.

In the Nordale fire on George Washington's birthday, Eva died as she had lived—by helping others.

Her last act of calling for help was enough to wake up a man in a nearby room and save him from burning to death.

He tried to save her—but the smoke and flames were too thick and all he could do was save his own life.

A few days before the fire, a friend tried to get Eva to move into the Pioneer Home, but Eva would have none of it.

"I've lived here at the Nordale



EVA MCGOWN

(Photo by C. H. Darby,

courtesy Fairbanks Daily News-Miner)

for 20 years," she said, "and this is where I'm going to die."

Of course, those who knew Eva know that she would not die—but merely turn into a hap-

py Leprechaun, continuing to spread sunshine to any who will think about her and remember her many acts of kindness and share them with others.