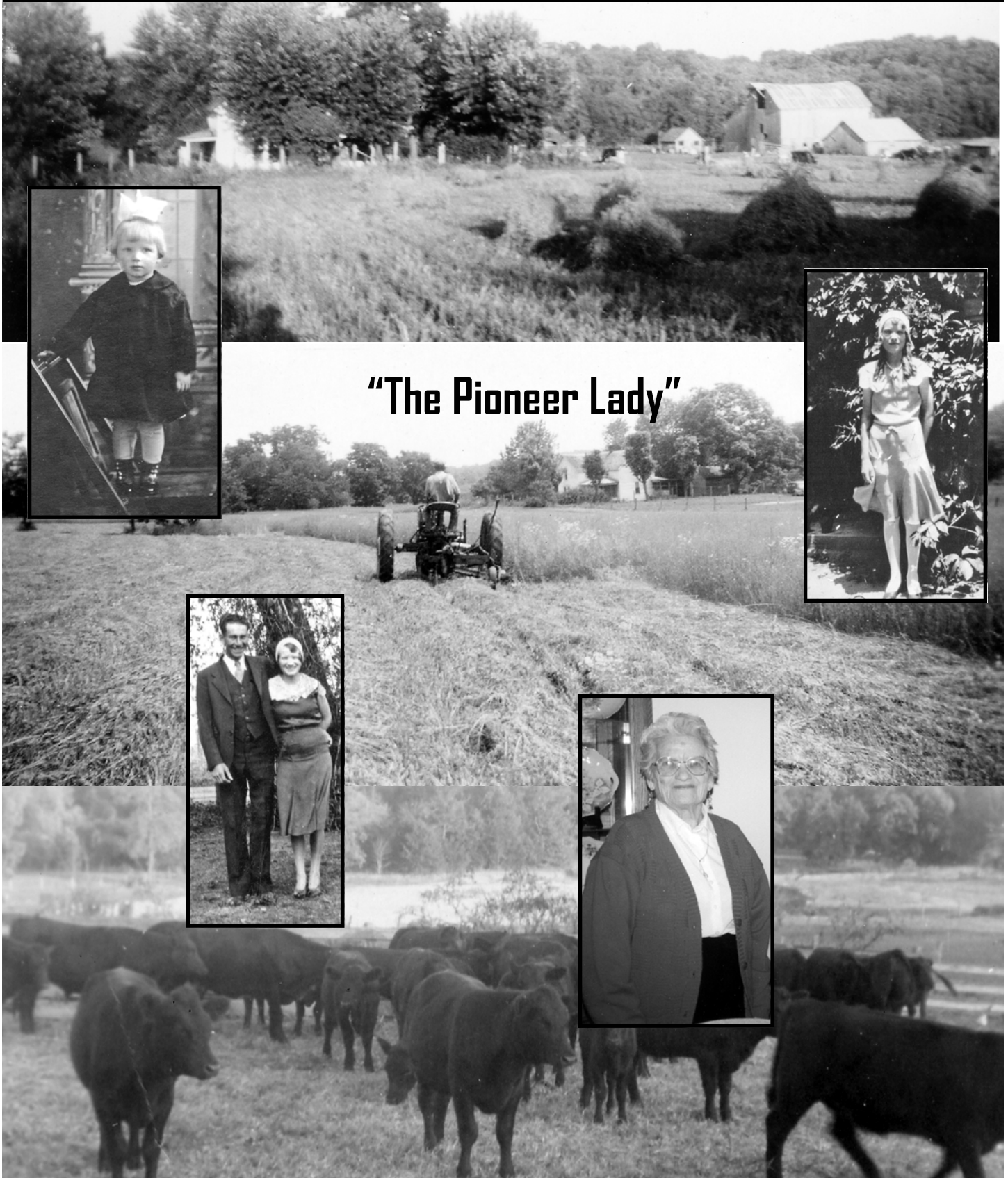


Tribute to Wilma Davis Flynn (1916-2007)



"The Pioneer Lady"



**Written and Compiled by Her Cousins,
Cinita (Davis) Brown and Kenneth Brown**

Wilma Elsie Davis Flynn — January 4, 1916 - June 6, 2007

Wilma Davis Flynn was born Jan 4, 1916, in Fredonia, Kansas. She was the first born child of Neal Segal and Bertha Frances Brown Davis who were married March 9, 1915, in Douglas County, Missouri. She passed away June 6, 2007, in Ava at the age of 91.

Wilma's maternal grandparents were James Lihu (1873-1935) and Amanda Melvina Morris (1877-1959) Brown. Her paternal grandparents were John T. (1854-1926) and Rebecca Herndon (1860-1927) Davis. Wilma's ancestral families were among the first settlers in the south central section of the Missouri Ozarks migrating to the area from Kentucky, Tennessee, South Carolina and Virginia.

Soon after Wilma's parents, Neal and Bertha, married in 1915, they moved to Fredonia, Kansas, along with other members of the Davis Family. The family had gone there to work in the cement plants and the brick factories.

Neal and Bertha's next three children, Lloyd, Jesse, and Geraldine (Gerry) were born in 1920, 1922, and 1928 respectively. During these years, Neal and Bertha lived either in Missouri,



1923-24-Wilma, Jesse and Lloyd



Nebraska — ca 1930 (L-R); Jesse Brown Elmer Davis, Lloyd, Wilma & Jesse Davis; Neal Davis (holding Geraldine), and Bertha (Davis) Brown

Nebraska or Kansas.

In the late 1920s, Neal and Bertha decided to move their family to Valley, Nebraska, where they lived until 1943. Barbara, their last child, was born December 25, 1931, in Nebraska.

In 1930, Wilma met Kenneth Flynn, a native of the Platte River Valley, Nebraska. They were married February 18, 1931, and they started married life farming. Remember, this was "Depression" time, and Kenny and Wilma worked the farm raising corn and caring for pigs, sheep and guineas. When the WPA began hiring men, Kenny was right there to work and earn his \$1.00 a day.

Wilma and Kenneth's first child, Norma, was born September 17, 1932. Five years later a second daughter, Nancy, was born on February 21, 1938. These two daughters grew to adulthood -- Norma married Owen

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Denney and Nancy married Ronnie Breshears.

Owen and Norma farmed on Cowskin Creek upstream from Wilma and Kenneth's farm. Meanwhile, Ronnie and Nancy spent their years in the Tulsa, Oklahoma area. Norma and Owen Denney have three children: Charles, Carol (Mrs. Daniel Mork), and Beverly Williams. Nancy and Ronnie's two children are Debbie (Mrs. Sam Dalaeli) and Cindy (Mrs. Tony Ullrich). Wilma was very proud of these grandchildren as well as eighteen great-grandchildren, and nineteen great-great grandchildren.

Both the Neal Davis Family and the Kenneth Flynn Family continued farming operations and living in Nebraska until 1943. All that time, the Ozark Hills began calling Neal and Bertha, and they bought their Cowskin Creek Farm and returned to Douglas County.

As a result, Gerry and Barbara completed their education at Ava High School. Gerry went on to marry a Crossroads boy, Edwin Hailey. Barbara met a young evangelist, Clint Mitchell, who was holding a revival meeting at Gentry Church in 1948. He became her life's companion and they spent their lives in



1940s—Kenneth & Wilma



1948 — Jesse Davis with the truck in which the family moved to the Ozarks in the 1940s

church pastorates and evangelism in Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas. Barbara finished her life's labors and moved on to be with the Lord on Labor Day, 2006.

Lloyd married Grace Betts in Nebraska and they moved to Seattle, Washington. He later established the Davis Construction Company and built filling stations from Seattle to Alaska. He died in 1982.

Jesse lived with his mother after Neal's death and died in Ava in January



1940s — Nancy, Wilma, Kenneth & Norma

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2006. Gerry and her husband Edwin live in south Ava on their beautiful Ava acreage called Fox Meadows which they have developed. Now Gerry is the last surviving one of the five Davis siblings.

After Neal and Bertha's move to Douglas County, Missouri, it must have seemed lonely for Wilma and Kenneth in Nebraska, and they began thinking living in the Ozarks too. In 1946, they purchased the "Old Brixey Place" on Cowskin Creek just a mile or so up the creek from Dad and Mom (Neal and Bertha). In January of 1947, they moved to this beautiful spot that the family has called "HOME" for the last sixty years.

Kenny worked hard at farming and improving this farm and adding adjoining acres as they became available for purchase. At first he did dairy farming



Five Generations — ca 1953

Back: Wilma Flynn & Norma Denney; Front: Bertha Davis, Charles Denney & Grandma "Mel" Brown

but in later years changed to beef cattle. He died in a farm related accident on Jan. 4, 1991, (Wilma's 75th birthday and a month before they would have celebrated their 60th anniversary).

Wilma always worked! For years it was at Kenneth's side on the farm as well as gardening, canning, cleaning and doing the countless tasks that a mom does. In 1956 she decided to join the outside work force and began working for Tobin-Hamilton Shoe Factory in Mansfield. She worked there for the



Seated: Bertha and Neal — Back (L-R): Barbara, Jesse, Geraldine, Lloyd, and Wilma



L-R: Mike Davis, Charles & Carol Denney; Roger Hailey, Debbie Breshears; Diana, Linda & Joyce Mitchell, Cindy Breshears and David Hailey

next twenty years retiring in 1976. Wilma enjoyed her years that she spent on this job. She especially enjoyed the many friends that she made while working there. Many of these remained life-long friends.

Another one of Wilma's special interests was the Douglas County Democratic Organization. She served as various officers in this organization and was a faithful member. You never had to guess where Wilma stood politically!

Wilma was a member of the Gentry Church and was very loyal to it.

After Kenneth's death in 1991, Wilma continued to operate the family farm. (Owen and Norma were close by, and Nancy and Ronnie came often.) She regretfully sold her cattle a couple of years ago, but moving to town and giving up the farm were unthinkable to her! And, thank God, she was able to remain independent and live in her own home until about two weeks before her death.

She had lost most of her eyesight. And not being able to drive and read was a real "bother" to her but it did not get her down. She certainly kept up with what was going on in her family, her neighborhood, her community, Missouri and the country. Constantly, she listened to the radio and the scanner at her home. Her mind was clear and her memory remarkable up until the day that death called.

Many of us thought of her as the "matriarch" of the family. In family discussions you often heard the phrase, "I'll ask Wilma," or "Wilma will know." Gerry called her, "The Pioneer Lady."

The Davis-Brown family has lost a huge chapter of "Our Family History." She was truly one of a kind, and our loss is Heaven's gain.



**Wilma, Kenneth and grandchildren — ca 1960
L-R: Cindy & Debbie Breshears, and Carol and Chuck Denney**

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Five Generations — June 3, 2007
Back: Owen Denney, Carol (Denney) Mork, and Jared Mork; Front: Norma (Flynn) Denney with Hailey Mork, and Wilma (Davis) Flynn, and a little friend



Five Generations — June 3, 2007
Back: Carol (Denney) Mork, Owen Denney, and Stephanie Mork; Front: Norma (Flynn) Denney holding Nicholas, and Wilma (Davis) Flynn



June 3, 2007 Reunion — Front: Norma, Denney, Geraldine Hailey, Hailey Mork, Wilma Flynn with Nicholas, Christopher Naugle, Beverly (Denney) Williams with her twin boys and husband.
Back (L-R): Debbie Dalaeli, Nancy & Ronnie Breshears, Danny, Jared, Carol & Stephanie Mork, Owen Denney