



*Gerry
Hailey
Travels
On
(1928-2009)*

**A Tribute from her cousins —
Cinita (Davis) Brown and Ken Brown**

Geraldine (Davis) Hailey Travels On (1928-2009)

Thelma Geraldine Davis Hailey was born on January 29, 1928, in Fredonia, Kansas. She died on February 26, 2009, in Ava at the age of 81. Gerry, as everyone called her, was the fourth of the five children born to Neal Siegel Davis and Bertha Frances Brown Davis. Her parents were married March 9, 1915, in their native Douglas County, Missouri.

THE KANSAS-NEBRASKA YEARS—

Before the start of the World War, it was very hard for a young married couple to establish a home and earn a living in the Ozarks.



Both Neal and Bertha were hard workers and independent. They knew that work was available in the cement plant and brick factories in and around Fredonia, Kansas. The bosses who did the hiring for those plants knew about the work ethics of “the boys and men from Douglas County.” Others members of the Davis family, including Neal’s sister, Anna, and her husband, George Durham, had already moved to Fredonia. Thus, soon after their marriage in 1915, Neal and Bertha moved to Fredonia, Kansas.

1916—Sister Wilma is born -Wilma, Gerry’s oldest sister and Neal and Bertha’s first child, was born in Fredonia on January 4, 1916.

1920-Brother Lloyd is Born -Sometime about 1920 the family moved to Nebraska, and Lloyd was born there in 1920. Some of Bertha’s brothers and cousins, children of her Aunt Frances (Frankie) Squire, lived and worked there. Lloyd was born in Nebraska in 1920.

1922--Brother Jesse Born -Following Lloyd’s birth the family returned to Douglas County, Missouri, the land of their roots. After all, the family roots of both Neal and Bertha were some of the first “white roots” put down in Southwest Missouri. Jesse was born in 1922 while the family was still in Douglas County. Soon after Jesse’s birth, the family returned to Fredonia, Kansas.

1928—Gerry is Born in Fredonia KS —Before the move was made, Geraldine (Gerry) was born in Fredonia on January 29, 1928. In the spring following her birth, Neal and Bertha decided to move their family to Valley, Nebraska.

1931—Sister Barbara Born in Valley< NE— The 1930 United States Census shows the family living in Douglas County, Waterloo township, Nebraska. In 1931, two notable events occurred in the Neal and Bertha Davis family. February 18, 1931 Wilma married Kenneth Flynn, and on Christmas Day of 1931, Barbara Jean, the last child in Neal and Bertha’s family, was born. Kenny and Wilma started farming and Neal and Bertha continued farming.

1943 —MOVE BACK TO MISSOURI—Both families continued their farming operations in the Platte River Valley in Nebraska until 1943. At that time, Neal and Bertha made the decision to return to Douglas County. Wilma and Kenny also moved with them. Neal and Bertha bought a farm on Cowskin Creek, and Wilma and Kenny bought a farm just north of them. Both Neal and Kenny were good, hard working farmers.

Once back in Missouri, Gerry and her younger sister, Barbara, attended Ava High School, and Gerry graduated with the Class of 1944. Gerry had excelled in Mrs. Trellis Dewhirst’s business classes at Ava High School, and immediately after graduation, Superintendent C.W. Parker hired her as his secretary. Mr. Parker was an excellent administrator, but a great practical joker. Gerry had to be on her toes to keep ahead of him, and she accomplished this with her young grace and charm.



GERRY AND EDWIN MEET AT CROSSROADS SCHOOL FUNCTIONS — Gerry attended Sunday School and other functions at the Crossroad School House. During this time a handsome, young, farm and neighbor boy, Edwin Hailey, became an important part of her thinking and plans for the future. They were married August 21,

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Dad Neal Davis's Family

Neal was the eighth of the twelve children born to John Thomas (Whole Root) Davis (1854-1926) and Rebecca Ellen Herndon Davis (1860-1927).

John T's grandparents, Robert Davis (1799-1867) and Sarah Mary Davis (1804-1863) came from Tennessee to Ozark County early in the 1840s. Their son, William Davis (1826-1875) and Mary Jane Piland Davis (1828-1903) was the father of John T. Davis and his four siblings including Nancy Ann Willard, great-grandmother



Oren Alcorn. The Piland, Norris, Davis and Herndon families established the first General Baptist Church west of the Mississippi River. Rebecca's parents, Stephen C. (1821-1897) and Phoebe C. Fredrick (1821-1862)

of Herndon along with Stephen's parents, George and Hannah Cox Herndon came from Virginia to Ozark County, Missouri in the early 1840s. Stephen C. Herndon was among the earliest office holders in Ozark County.

Neal's Siblings:

- **Uncle Webster Davis**
- **Uncle Stephen Davis**
- **Uncle Coma Davis (Cinita Davis Brown's father)**
- **Aunt Annie Durham**
- **Aunt Minnie Reeves**
- **Florence (died in infancy)**
- **Uncle Elmer Davis**
- **Uncle Enoch Davis**
- **Troy (died in infancy)**

- **Uncle George Davis**
- **Uncle Fred Davis (died in Fredonia KS)**

Fredonia Tragedy

Neal's youngest brother, Fred, either accompanied them or soon followed them to Fredonia. Neal and Fred were both working in the cement plant when an explosion occurred killing Fred. This was in October of 1926. No doubt this was one of the reasons that Neal and Bertha began thinking of farming in Nebraska where members of both the Brown and Davis families had settled and found work earlier.

Mom Bertha Brown's Family

Bertha's parents, and thus Gerry's maternal grandparents, were James Lihu (1873-1935) and Amanda Melvina Morris Brown (1877-1959).

"Uncle Jim" parents were Jesse Brown (1842-1900) and Mary Burton Brown.

Jesse's parents, Elihu and Elizabeth Hall Brown

settled on Bryant Creek near the Brown's Cave in the mid 1830's.

Like her Davis ancestors, her Browns were among the very first settlers in this Ozark area of Southwest Missouri.

Bertha's Siblings:

- **Uncle Sherman Brown**
- **Aunt Rosie Davis**
- **Uncle Jesse Brown**
- **Aunt Bessie Snook / McDowell**

- **Uncle Everett Brown**
- **Vernie (died young)**
- **Uncle Louis "Doc" Brown**
- **Uncle Orville "Jake" Brown (Ken Brown's dad)**
- **Aunt Lulu Shrum**
- **Uncle Charlies "Woody" Brown**
- **Uncle Leroy Brown**

Little Vernie Brown above died in the 1918 flu epidemic that killed millions around the world.



The Hailey Family

Like Gerry's, Edwin's roots were also firmly implanted in first in Webster County and then Douglas. Edwin's parents were Homer and Hattie Ellison Hailey.

Homer's parents, and Edwin's grandparents were, Joseph B. Hailey (1858-1936) and Nancy McAadoo Hailey.

Joseph was one of the fourteen children born to Tavener Hailey (1794-1866) and Joyce Thomason who were married in 1815. They

moved to Webster County, Missouri in 1839. Hattie Ellison Hailey, Edwin's mother, was the daughter of Achilles Maurice and Letitia Bralley Ellison.

Edwin had three sisters: Mona, Geraldine, and Katherine.

Geraldine Hailey never married and was a social services agent in Ava for many years before her death in 2003.

Kathleen Hailey married Glenn Harndon, and they farmed for many years on Cowskin Creek west of Ava.

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1945 at the Ava Methodist Church. Edwin was a Lieutenant in the United States Army. After their wedding she accompanied him back to Camp Hood Texas where he was stationed.

Post-War Farming—Edwin was discharged in 1946 and he and Gerry returned to Douglas County to their roots and their people.

After returning to Douglas County in 1946, Edwin and Gerry built a home on Highway 14 and across the road from Edwin's parents. They farmed with Edwin's parents until 1948 when Edwin took a field representative job with Producer's Creamery in Cabool. While they were living in Cabool, Roger was born in 1949. In 1952, they returned to the Hailey Family Farm and David was born in 1955.

Agricultural Equipment Business—In 1959, to better serve the farm community Edwin and Gerry went into business in Ava as a John Deere Dealer. Dairy equipment was also part of the business.

In 1963, Edwin and Gerry purchased 70 acres on high-



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way 5 in south Ava. They built their home on a portion of this land that they subdivided as Fox Meadows.

The business was moved to this new location. Deere Farm Equipment was dropped in 1964 and they began specializing in dairy equipment only. In 1983, Edwin and David incorporated as Hailey's of Ava, specializing in the sale and installations of business telephone systems.

Gerry always worked with Edwin and was bookkeeper for any business they operated. Both sons worked with their parents and played important roles in the success of the family businesses.

GERRY, THE HOMEMAKER —

Gerry was proud, loving Grandmother of five granddaughters; April Algaier, Tiffany Baird, Alicia Hailey, Abby and Anna Hailey as well as two step-granddaughters; Lori Moore and Leigh Frampton. She also had one great-grandson, Connor Baird.



Gerry, like her mother Bertha and many of the Brown women, was an accomplished seamstress. She loved creating beautiful things for herself and others. Her home was always beautifully decorated. She liked growing flowers and gardening. As a young bride, she often won blue rib-

bons at the County Fairs for her handwork and canned fruits and vegetables.

Truly she made any house they lived in a "Family Home." Edwin and Gerry celebrated 63 years of married life in 2008. During recent years her health had limited her activities but she had been active in the Wesley Circle, Ava Art Group, and PEO.

TRAVELING ON — On February 26, 2009, Gerry was called home by her Lord and her body was released from its suffering. Her memorial service was held March 2 and her final earthly resting place was in the Ava Cemetery. ♦



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Neal & Bertha's Grandkids (Early 1960s):

Front: Cindy Breshears, Joyce & Linda Mitchell, Debbie Denney, David Hailey, and Diana Mitchell (holding Curtis Mtichell)

Middle: Mike Davis, Carol & Charles Denney

Back: Roger Hailey and Mary Ann Davis



Circa 1990 — Bertha's Birthday at Ava Nursing Home

**Left to Right:
Kenneth Flynn
David Hailey
Tiffany Hailey
Rosa Brown Davis
Gerry Davis Hailey
Bertha Brown Davis
Wilma Davis Flynn
Jesse Davis**

Circa 1990

**(Left to Right):
Lisa Shrum (Lulu's granddaughter)
Gerry Davis Hailey
Lulu Brown Shrum
Wilma Davis Flynn
Rosa Brown Davis**

