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### Mingle, Myrtle (Brown) Autobiography - August 12, 1998

Myrtle Mingle

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## Myrtle (Brown) Mingle's Autobiography



August 12, 1998 (Altamont, KS)

For sometime, I've been thinking about writing some of my memories for my children, Billy Joe and Nancy Louise, grandchildren, Kerry and Mark Mingle, Cassandra and Callie Robinson, great grandchildren at this date, Kathryn (Katie) Benson and Brooke Mingle.

Today as I read my devotions - this just popped out at me "Lord, thank you for the gift of memory."

I was born September 1, 1916 on the farm my grandfather Joseph W. Brown homesteaded in 1867. Grandpa (Joseph Wilson) Brown brought his wife, Martha (Williams) Brown and his son (by his deceased first wife) Herschel to Kansas from Iowa. At that time, under the Kansas Homestead Act, a family could claim 160 acres, build a home (their first home was a log cabin), plant some trees, usually hedge and elm, raise some crops and at the end of 5 years pay \$1.00 per acre and the farm was his.

My father Loyd was born February 13, 1884. After Grandma Martha Brown's death in 1913, Daddy and Grandpa "batched", as they called it, until my Mother Mary Bess Robison and Daddy were married November 24, 1915.

At this writing, I don't know when the house and barn were built. Grandpa Brown was a carpenter so he built or helped build many houses in this area. Shiloh School building was built by Grandpa and neighbors. Two of Daddy's brothers, Dallas and Mearl, were good carpenters. My Daddy would rather raise a garden, crops, plant fruit trees and cut weeds. Some of my information is taken from Daddy's diaries. I have yearly copies from 1916 until the late 1950's, a few things I note in the 1916 entries are that usually Sundays were spent with Daddy's brother Mearl and family, or sister Elsie and family or my mother's parents (Ma and Pa Robison) or they came to my parents house. Another item Daddy always wrote each day what direction the wind blew and when it rained. One day they picked 20 gallons of strawberries.

Labette City was our closest town. Although Montana was closer it wasn't as big as Labette. At that time, Labette City had a train station, two grocery stores, a bank, a hall above the bank, post office, school house, at least three churches-Baptist, Methodist, Christian-and a creamery.

At first, we went to Montana to the Methodist Church. In 1921, Rev. V.F. Cloniger held a revival in Labette. Mother and Daddy joined the Labette Baptist Church and we always went there after that. I joined the church on January 7, 1921, and was baptized in the Neosho River that summer.

My Daddy was a very progressive person as a farmer. He belonged to the Grange. He was always adding something to the farm or our home to make it more comfortable. One of the first things was a cistern built on the west side of the house-close enough so that a pitcher pump was installed in the kitchen-Joy! No more carrying water in a bucket. Mother had a nice kitchen range which had a reservoir on the side-so usually there was warm or hot water for dish washing or baths. Speaking of baths, there were taken in a galvanized square or round wash tub. Even in the early 1940's Harry and I used a wash tub for baths.

Not sure when Daddy bought a Delco Plant which was a motor and large batteries for storing electricity. Joy again! Electric lights not only in the house but also barn, chicken houses, smoke house, house over cellar and yard light. We also got an electric iron and washing machine. This was some years before REA (Rural Electric Association) came into being.

To keep food cool, we put it in the cellar. Butter and milk were hung in a well near the house. The water from this well was used to water chickens and for bath water in the summer. I don't recall that we ever drank this water. There was a drilled well (75 ft deep) between the house and the barn. We drank this water. Also used it to water chickens and horses.

After Mother and Daddy were married, Grandpa Brown continued to live with them. However, he did spend time with his other children, Maud, Elsie, Dallas and Mearl. He liked to live at our house because Daddy let him work which was hoeing in the garden, truck patch and around the apple trees. Grandpa was a good baby sitter as Mother and

Daddy had cows to milk. In later years, Mother, Docia (my sister) and I milked the cows while Daddy hoed in the garden or cut weeds. He used a big hand scythe to cut weeds in the yard lot. We had a small push mower to mow the yard-oh but it was hard to push and cut a swath about 10-12”.

Some of the vegetables in our garden were potatoes, sweet potatoes, radishes, green beans, lima beans, both bush and pole. The poles were four poles tied together like a teepee. It was fun to pick beans there-not so hard on the back. We also grew tomatoes, beets, turnips, carrots and sweet corn. In the truck patch were watermelon, cantaloupe, pumpkin and cucumber. There were lots of different kinds of fruit. Apples were the most popular-Jonathan, Winesap, Golden Delicious and Red Delicious. When a new kind came out, Daddy was ready to try it. He sent to Henry Fields in Iowa for the small trees. Other fruit trees were pear and apricot, plums, cherries and peaches. Bush fruits were gooseberries and raspberries. Vine fruits were grapes and strawberry. I earned spending money when I was 10 or 12 years old by picking strawberries and then selling them in Oswego on Saturday night at 5 to 10 cents a quart box. Mother canned lots of fruit. There was always a bowl of fruit on the table. Lima beans and green beans were dried, the beans were hulled. Potatoes and apples were stored in the cellar. Sometimes some of the apples were buried in the ground. In later years, we stored them in the “cold storage” in Parsons.

We had our own meat-pork, beef and chicken, sometimes a rabbit. In the winter, a hog was butchered. It was cured with salt, or smoked, especially the hams and bacon. Sausage was made-cakes were seasoned, fried and stored in lard. Mother made hedge-cheese from parts of the head-so good-and pickled the pigs feet. Lard was made from the fat by cooking in a large iron kettle and storing it in stone jars. Beef was hung to cure. Sometimes Mother cooked it and canned it. We raised our own chickens. Mother usually grew 500 at a time. Thus we could have fried chicken every day all summer-so good. I remember Mother hatching her own chickens in an incubator. The incubator was a box covered with metal (galvanized) and heated with a kerosene lamp. We had to turn the eggs by hand-not sure how often. It took 3 weeks for them to hatch. Of course, sometimes a hen would hide out her nest and come walking in her brood.

Another thing we grew in the garden was peanuts. Daddy loved peanuts-three times a day before each meal he ate some peanuts. We picked the nuts off in the fall, washed them thoroughly and dried them in the sun or on drying scaffolds. Then they were bagged in heavy cloth sacks, in the shell, stored behind the cook stove or heating stove. Mother always made sure that Daddy’s peanut pan had roasted nuts in it. Another favorite food was honey, so there was always a hive or two of bees in the orchard.

Our house was a 2 story home, built by Grandpa (Joseph) Brown. I think probably in the 1880’s or 1890’s. There were 4 rooms downstairs, kitchen, dining room, living rooms and a bedroom. Upstairs were 2 bedroom. The east room had a full window facing east and the west room a full window facing west. Each room had a small window facing south. It was next to the floor so in the hot summer time, Docia and I made a pallet on the floor in front of the window. In the winter time, when Grandpa wasn’t with us, the living

room and bedroom were not heated. The stairs door was opened which made the upstairs bedroom very cozy. The house also had a front and a back porch. *(Note: this house was destroyed by a fire in the 1960's)*

In 1930, there was a siege of measles. Docia had them first on January 6. Then Mother and I came down with them at the same time, January 19. We usually spent about 10 days in bed. Poor Mother was so ill. Docia took care of us. Daddy had all he could do to keep wood for the fires and to milk the cows. Mother was usually the one to take milk to the cheese factory. By this time, we were hauling whole milk to Oswego to the cheese factory. Sometimes the roads were so bad, she hauled the milk in a horse drawn wagon.

One morning it was 30 degrees below zero, so cold that frost formed on the barn rafters over the cows. Poor Daddy milked some of the cows and left the rest for the hired man to milk when he got there. Of course, there were all the cows, calves and chickens to feed and water. Oh yes, he also had to feed and water our 5 or 6 horses.

Sister Docia was born June 15, 1921. Now I had a little sister to help care for and to play with me. We loved to play in the stairway in the winter time. In the summer we had a play house west of the smoke house. We loved to make mud pies. My parents gave me a lovely doll when I was 11 years old. She had hair and the prettiest cheeks. I dearly loved her. I brushed her hair so much that it got pretty thin and I kissed her so much that the paint came off her cheeks and they cracked. I probably was 40 years old when I gave her up.

From the time we were big enough, about 8, we helped with the cooking, washing dishes, cleaning house, milking cows, feeding chickens, gardening, picking strawberries, picking off peanuts, etc. I learned to embroidery and crochet at an early age. When I was ready to start to high school (1930) Mother and I made three news dresses. This was during the Depression Years. Poor Mother and Daddy worked hard and did without so we could go to high school.

Some of Mother's special dishes were grape pies. I liked the ones with meringue on it- Daddy called it calf slobbers. She made a delicious applesauce cake and put ever so delicious caramel icing on it. I loved the way she cooked beefsteak in the oven. She rolled it in flower, browned it in a skillet, and then placed it in the oven to finish cooking so tender. Once a year we had mutton. When we filled the silo in August it took 20-25 men to help. Uncle Mearl and Daddy would butcher a lamb. We had fried and baked mutton. With no refrigeration, meat had to be consumed quickly and it was. In the winter time we made popcorn balls and ever so good taffy. Daddy always helped pull it to get the right consistency. Mother made our bread-delicious hot rolls, biscuits and cornbread.

I started to school when I was 6 years old-no kindergarten-I loved to read so had no problems. My elementary teachers were Mrs. Minnie Cook, Marty Bennett, George Dove, Lucy Gullet and Lela Carson (Shaw). Lela is still living (8/17/98). George died in 1997. I went to a one room school (Shiloh) with all 8 grades. Some of the fun things from the classroom were softball, Blackman, anti-over, dare base, hide-'n-seek. There was a

draw nearby. We could hide in the tall grass. Indoors in the winter or rainy times, we played fruit basket upset, giant step, checkers and dominos. On special Friday afternoons we had ciphering matches, spelling bees and geography matches.

To graduate from elementary school one had to take state examinations in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. If you didn't pass the exams in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade you could take them over in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Subjects tested were Reading, Arithmetic, Grammar, Geography, Civics, Agriculture and history. We learned authors of many stories and poems and 2-6 lines of different poems, the preamble, Gettysburg Address, 4 breeds of dairy cattle, 4 breeds of beef cattle, kinds of wheat and corn, etc. Also the Presidents in chronological order. I graduated from Shiloh elementary school May 24, 1930.

As I have said, Daddy was a progressive farmer and took good care of his animals. He added a shed on the west side of the barn for milk cows. There were 8 or 10 stanchions. This really made it nice. Before that, we milked in an open area where you might get shoved around. The barn Grandpa built had room for six horses. When Daddy built the milk shed addition there was a room for the separator. This separator (turned by hand) separated the cream from the milk. The by-product called whey was fed to the hogs. Cream was used for cooking and to sell for Mother's groceries.

Another shed was attached to the cow shed for the sheep. We had a large flock of sheep which required a great deal of care during lambing period. It was nothing for a little lamb to be brought to the house, warmed behind the stove, fed some milk with a nipple on a vanilla bottle.

Then there were two big tile barns built. One was for Mother's laying hens. It had a semi loft where grain and straw were stored. A nice stairway to the loft to get grain for the chickens. The other tile building was for Daddy's sheep. It was built in 1929. It also had a loft for hay and grain. There was a silo at one end where Daddy could pitch the silage down for feeding the sheep and the cows. He had to use a wheelbarrow and tubs to take the silage to the cows. There was a partial tile building with cement floor for the hogs. This was later used for small calves. There were sheds and building to protect animals from the cold. Watering cows and horses in the winter time took a great deal of effort. So more cisterns were built. At the barn there was one on the south side and one on the north side.

At different times Daddy hired men to help-mostly in the summer time. One of Mother's brothers, Wayne Robison, Daddy's nephew Ralph Burton and Uncle Mearl always helped with the haying. To get the hay in the loft, there was a hay fork attached to a rope and pulleys to lift it to the loft. A horse was used at one end of the rope to pull up the hay in the hay fork. Mother helped a great deal at haying time. She drove the team hitched to a mower which had a sickle 6 feet long. That cut a nice swath. I think she raked the hay also and drove the horse the pulled the fork to the loft. As I grew older, I drove the horse. I remember one time driving a team of horses to harrow (smooth) some ground to prepare for planting corn. My, it was a long way across that field.

Later, Daddy hired a man who had a family. He would rent a farm with a house for the family so there was more land to farm. He also bought another 160 acre farm and Harry and I bought 80 acres. Daddy bought his first tractor in 1939 or 40. Harry ran the tractor. Daddy continued to use horses.

Daddy bought the homestead farm from Grandpa Joseph Brown and the heirs. This meant borrowing money from the bank and from his life insurance policy. When the Kansas Ordinance Plant came into being in 1941, the government bought all of our property. This was a great heartache for Daddy but in a way a blessing as he was able to pay off his debts and buy another farm west of Labette City. Also it was a blessing for Harry and me as we bought a small farm acreage (40 acres) with a house.

Two catastrophes as I remember when a girl-one night when we came home from church in Labette, Mother saw fire in our house. Daddy said the hardest thing he ever had to do was to go in that house not knowing what he would find. The Lord was really taking care of our home. A fire from a kerosene lamp on the dining room table burned a corner of the table and table cloth, a hole in the floor and the back of a chair. There were papers on the end of the table but the fire never reached them.

The other catastrophe was that a dog with rabies got in the sheep pen one night and bit and killed several sheep. It took weeks to find out if we'd lose all the sheep. Every day or so one or two would froth at the mouth. Daddy would kill them and burn them. Daddy locked up our dear collie dog but because of us girls, he decided to kill the dog, too. We were really sad.

There was always work for a farmer no matter the kind of weather or season. Weeds to mow, hedge to trim, barns to be cleaned of manure, corn to shuck by hand, caffir to top (good chicken feed, like our milo today). (Noted in Daddy's diary November 1926 that "Pa" (meaning Grandpa Joseph Brown) and Mary topped a load of caffir corn in the p.m. In the diary of December 1926, Daddy bought a radio.

By 1929 or before, the folks were hauling their milk to Oswego to the Kraft cheese factory. There was a big truck that could come everyday to the farm to haul the milk-but that meant two sets of milk cans and sometimes the milk would sour. So my folks chose to haul their own milk to town. Roads weren't too good in the rainy season so sometimes the milk was hauled in a lumber wagon or a spring wagon pulled by a team of horses. Mother was usually the "milkman" as there were so many other chores for Daddy.

In the fall of 1930, I started to high school at LCCHS (Labette County Community High School). Some of my classes were English, Algebra, General Science, Art, Piano and Violin. My violin teacher, Elsie Mae (Velman) Dennison is living today (Aug 21, 1998). I visited her at Presbyterian Manor last Tuesday. She has a very alert mind. It's a joy to visit with her. Louise Lynn from Labette and I roomed together in one room at Willie Watsons. There were four rooms upstairs and eight of us girls there. We cooked our own breakfast and supper on a gas hot plate. We heated our room with a small gas heater

which we turned out at night as it wasn't ventilated. We brought most of our own food from home.

In the fall of 1931, I roomed at Mrs. Cook's with Verna Mae and Dale Atwood, cousins of mine. We had a two room apartment and cooked our meals in Mrs. Cook's kitchen. Since this room was eight blocks from school it wasn't very convenient on rainy, cold days. I worked at the high school cafeteria for my lunch. Classes were English, Geometry, Government, Piano, Orchestra and PE.

In the fall of 1932, I roomed at Alta McCunen's home. There were four boys and four girls there. She cooked our breakfast and our supper. We ate lots of fried potatoes. She pieced quilt tops. Flower garden pattern was her favorite. We were across the street from the school-very convenient.

In the fall of 1933, Verna Mae and I roomed at Mrs. Lee's again across the street from the school. This was a lovely place. I really enjoyed it here. Since I wanted to teach elementary school, I took Normal Training. There were special classes to prepare you for teaching. Also you had to take a state examination to get at Normal Training certificate. All well and good except it was the time when there were more teachers than schools. So in the fall of 1934, I went to Parsons Junior College.

My social life in high school was pretty nil. Mother had ordered no dating-that word got around pretty fast. I went to a few football games, basketball games, class plays and out of town plays. In the fall there was a skating rink in town. We girls would go for awhile. I never skated as I never learned how nor could afford it. Mother gave me one dollar a week. I had to use it for food we might buy, pencils, paper or game tickets. Since I took piano and violin, I spent hours practicing and studying. For our senior trip we went to Fayetteville, Arkansas, in private cars. It was fun!

I roomed with Helen (Ferrier) Carter in Junior College. It was close to school. I took Rhetoric, Algebra, and French the first semester. The next semester I took Rhetoric, Analytics, and Trigonometry. Mr. Guthridge, my math teacher, was determined that I would be a math teacher since I had 13 hours of math-all A's. I still wanted to go back to the elementary school to teach. So in the spring of 1935, I applied at schools again and was hired at Sherman City teaching 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades for \$50 a month. Probably one of the biggest mistakes I ever made. I could have done another year of Junior College, gotten 60 hours of college credit, which would have taken me half way through my college courses.

I had a job that year at Junior College-checking typing papers for Mr. Koontz. It paid well at \$15 a month. Mother and Daddy had sacrificed so much for me that I felt I should start supporting myself.

I don't remember any specific events those 5 years, my teenage time. It was go to school on Monday morning-come home on Friday evening, do my laundry, help Mother with the baking for school and weekend. We always went to Sunday School and church. Sometimes we had relatives in on Sunday.



In the summer we were so tired that we usually slept on Sunday afternoon, but we also attended church Sunday evening. We did have a youth group at church and sometimes we went to neighboring churches for rallies. Summertime was a busy time with garden, planting corn, caffir, oats, beans, picking apples, cherries, peaches, making hay, and of course cows to milk and mowing weeds in pastures.

I remember one summer that is was so hot and dry that Daddy hauled water from the Neosho River to water the fruit trees. He had a big water tank on a lumber wagon pulled by a team of horses. Docia, Mother and I milked cows while Daddy hauled water. That summer we put hay in the loft at 4 in the morning to avoid the heat.

In my first year of teaching-fall of 1935-I was nineteen. There were 4 girls and 12 boys, 4 5<sup>th</sup> grade boys, a boy and a girl in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, 6 boys and 2 girls in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and a boy and a girl in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. They were Maurice Smith, John Harley, Jr. Zwahlen, Dempsy Walker, Clara Ferenback, Wilford Pool, Fred Brooker, Keith Harley, Harvey Zwahlen, Owen Brooks, Delbert Beeman, Paul Duncan, Betty Watson, Mary Louise Walker, Chester Cook and Jeanette Brader. Two of the board members were Nick Walker and Buss Smith.

In those days, school began at 9 a.m. and closed at 4 p.m., with a 15 minute recess in both the morning and afternoon and one hour for lunch.

Some of the highlights were a box supper and program in October, attend fall festival in McCune, usually take a float, and the Christmas program. Usually we would have two days off for Thanksgiving and perhaps a week for Christmas. The school term lasted eight months so we were out in April.

I did my own janitor work, washing blackboards once a week, sweeping floor everyday using sweeping compound of board floors and, of course, dusting desks before school each morning. Water was carried in and put in a crock cooler fountain. Each child had his own cup. In the winter time, a fire to build in a large stove. Coal was used for fuel. The boys were good to help bring in the coal. But, oh, that huge cinder pan. It was bigger than I. Boys helped with that, too.

*(Note: Mother's autobiography ended here. We found this material written on a yellow legal pad when we were closing out her house after her death in August, 2001. I will attempt to furnish some additional anecdotes to complete her story. Bill Mingle, 2011)*

Mother taught at Sherman for only a year, 1935-36. In May of 1936, she signed a contract to teach at her own grade school alma mater, Shiloh, District 8. Her salary would be \$75 a month. Her copy of that contract is the album "Education". Mother signed the contract along with three members of the Shiloh School board. One of the board members was a young, bachelor farmer named Harry Mingle, who lived a mile east of the school. He was the board treasurer. Four years later, they would be married. Mother had just turned 20 when the 1936-37 school year began.

Our family's investment in Shiloh goes back to the school's beginning. Joseph Wilson Brown, my great-grandfather, was on the first school board at Shiloh in 1869, when classes were taught in a rough-hewn log cabin. A frame building was built by members of the community in 1871. One of the carpenters was Joseph Wilson Brown. In my "Education" album is a copy of a school survey done in 1917. It is signed by the clerk of the Shiloh board, John Henry Mingle, Harry's father.

In either the fall of 1939 or 1940, Mother would move on to teach at Stover School, east of Altamont, before taking several years leave beginning in 1942 to have her children, Nancy (born in 1945) and me (1942).

In the album "Farm Life" that I have assembled, there is a clipping from an Oswego newspaper from the winter of 1922-23. The item says 6 yr. old Myrtle Brown had been seen at the Labette County Courthouse in Oswego recently to claim a bounty for several sets of rabbit ears she brought in. The article did not say how the rabbits were killed but they may have been trapped. It is unlikely that they were shot. In the early times, county governments frequently paid a bounty for rabbit and coyote ears and pelts. Those animals were considered more than an annoyance. They could do great damage to gardens, crops, chickens and small livestock, important sources of a farmer's income. The item in the paper said that Myrtle seems quite self assured and went on to say that she was "quite a little business woman". The item was prophetic. Mother was quite good with numbers and figures. She was the long time clerk of Labette Baptist Church. At the time of her death, she was keeping the books for the federally assisted low income housing project in Altamont. She had also served as treasurer for Labette School Board and for several professional/church women's organizations to which she belonged.

When Mother and Daddy were married on August 20, 1940, there was insufficient time to take a honeymoon trip before the fall school term began. So they took a honeymoon trip to Colorado in the summer of 1941. Mother kept a daily log about what they saw along the way. And they were accompanied by Uncle Mearl and Aunt Edna Brown. There are several photos of Mother and Daddy taken in Colorado on that trip. Mother would teach one more year, 1941-42, before taking a 6 year hiatus to have Nancy and me.

In the late summer weeks of 1947, just before her 31<sup>st</sup> birthday, Mother took another long trip. Accompanied by her parents, Loyd and Mary Brown, her uncle and aunt Mearl and Edna Brown along with Nancy and me, she drove the entire round trip distance between SE Kansas and her Aunt Minnie (Brown) Holman's home in the state of Montana. I have some faint memories of that trip, including roadside picnic lunches featuring a daily menu of bologna on white bread. We stayed in small uncomfortable "tourist cabins" since this was long before the days of plentiful, comfortable motels. Daddy stayed at home to tend the farms and the livestock, wisely preferring the solitude of the country to a car packed with relatives and two pre-schoolers headed half way across the country.

Mother returned to Shiloh school to resume her teaching career in the fall of 1948, when I started first grade at Labette. Nancy, who had just turned three years old, was cared for by our dad or by Grandma Brown.

I believe that Mother taught at Shiloh only one year before moving back to Stover, located east of Altamont. Within a year or two after she started at Stover, the district consolidated several one room schools into a brand new two room school complete with a kitchen to serve hot lunches. Located approximately 2 miles south of the Stover building, the new school was called Fairview. It was considered quite a step forward in school facilities. Other than her year at Sherman, it would be the first time in Mother's career that she was not teaching alone in a one room school.

In addition to the kitchen, Fairview had a modern heating system. No more coal stoves to feed. There was no air conditioning, though. But there were, for the first time in Mother's career, indoor rest room facilities. I believe that Fairview opened around 1952 or 1953. Mother taught grades 5-8. For at least one of the years at Fairview, my aunt Docia Parker taught grades 1-4. I believe that was in 1957-58.

Mother was totally dedicated to her students. She helped the more gifted students by challenging them to study hard and to achieve more. But this was not done at the expense of less gifted students. Mother worked very hard to help those students develop their potential as well. During my high school years 1956-1960, I remember going to bed many nights with Mother sitting at the kitchen table grading what seemed to be an unending stack of English and Math papers turned in by her students. I cannot imagine anyone with more passion for teaching and for helping her students develop than Mother.

In addition to Mother's gift for teaching, she also was a hard-working farm wife and mother. Although she did not operate tractors or machinery, Mother often drove pick-up truck loads of grain to town at harvest time. She also milked cows, especially when Daddy was working the evening or midnight shift at the Kansas Ordnance plant. Mother maintained a strong interest in growing a garden. She spent considerable time each summer canning much of the garden produce.

Even before Nancy and I were old enough to join a 4-H club, Mother and Daddy were the adult leaders for a 4-H club that met at the Labette School. Mother also helped teach Vacation Bible School each summer at the Labette Baptist Church.

Because Mother had started teaching after attending only one year of college, she placed a priority on completing studies that would lead to her Bachelor's degree. During the 1950's, she would take a college course or two each semester. During the school year, she would go to Oswego High School one evening per week where Pittsburg State University faculty would teach college courses. She often took summer school courses on the campus at Pittsburg State, which was known then as Kansas State Teachers College.

When Mother took the college classes offered at Oswego, Nancy and I would often have piano lessons on the same evening. After our lessons, Mother would take us to a local diner to eat dinner. Then Nancy and I would stay at our Grandma Mingle's house until Mother's class was finished. When Mother went to summer school, I sometimes got to go

with her. I would go to the college library and read while she was in class. This helped advance my interest in history.

After years of taking a class or two each semester, building college credits slowly, Mother finally reached her goal. In the spring of 1961, Mother graduated with her Bachelor's of Education degree from Pittsburg State University.

In the fall of 1960, Mother transferred to the newly constructed Meadow View School, located just south of Parsons. Initially, she taught 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade home room, language arts and music. Later in her career, she became a reading specialist, assigned to give specialized, individual attention to students who experienced reading problems. I believe Mother found great satisfaction in this assignment which came after 19 years of teaching in one or two room schools.

Mother had planned to retire from teaching in the spring of 1978. But after Daddy died in April of 1978, Mother decided to extend her career one more year. She retired at the age of 62 in the spring of 1979, but continued to accept substitute teaching assignments for several more years. She taught in Labette County for 39 school years. Before her career ended, she was teaching grandchildren of students she had taught early in her career.

Mother was a very social person. She enjoyed participation in church, education and community groups. She often was elected to serve as an officer in those organizations.

After Daddy's death, Mother showed great resilience. She wisely took her time about deciding on the course for her remaining years. Although Nancy and I had some concerns about her living alone on the farm, Mother remained in her home for a year after Daddy died. In the fall of 1978, Mother had a "farm sale" to liquidate her farm machinery and tools. In the summer of 1979, she purchased a small home at 100 South Wells in Altamont, where she resided the remainder of her life. She continued to attend Labette Baptist Church which she had joined in 1921 at the age of 5, a membership lasting 80 years. She attended church faithfully and had been at Sunday services at Labette the day before she died unexpectedly of a heart attack.

She passed away on Monday, August 13, 2001, a little over two weeks short of her 85<sup>th</sup> birthday. We had Mother's memorial service on Friday, August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2001, at First Baptist Church in Altamont. We wanted it to be a celebration of Mother's life and a testimony to her faith in Christ. I believe that we were successful in that regard. Several days later, one of my associates at the hospital who had attended the funeral, told me he had never seen a funeral so uplifting as Mother's service.

With Mother's passing came the end of an era in our family. For the first time since 1867 there was no member of our family residing in Labette County, Kansas. And for the first time since 1921, there was no one from our family in the membership at Labette Baptist Church.

Mother left an impressive legacy, both with her family and her community. The first 50 years of her life encompassed some very difficult times, as she grew up on a farm during the Great Depression. Children who grew up during that time never forgot that assurance of having a secure home and food supply could be measured in days or hours if events turned against you. Like many who grew up during that time, Mother was quite creative and diligent in business affairs, and very conservative when it came to food and to money.

However, once Nancy and I were out on our own, I believe that financial pressures were reduced for Mother and Daddy. After Daddy passed away and after Mother sold the farm, she managed her resources very wisely. She was quite generous not only with her family, but also in helping others in her church and community. I believe that when a person helps others in that fashion, that God is also being honored. And that when a person, like Mother, honors God by faithful service and generosity, they are making deposits into their family's account that enables God to bless others in their family line in generations to come.

Bill Mingle, 2011



Labette County Community High School in Altamont, built in 1895. It was the main building where Mother attended high school. The building was still in use when I started high school in 1956, but was torn down in 1957 to make way for a new classroom and administrative building.

Red Eye. The light of the flash reflects off the back of the eye and appears as red nurple in the pupil.

4 Megapixel Images	16	32	24	48	96
5 Megapixel Images	12	24	48	96	128

• Digital Zoom was used to take picture. Digital Zoom crops the picture in the camera resulting in a smaller picture with fewer pixels (Use Optical Zoom).  
• Image was cropped too much prior to printing. (Example: If you take a 4

Mother with her parents Loyd and Mary Brown a few months after her birth Sept. 1, 1916.

Later, as a young woman, I believe Mother came to resemble her mother at the time of this photo.

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Mother and her sister Docia, probably in 1925-26. They enjoyed a close, loving relationship their entire lives.

Their childhood was fairly typical for their time and place they were reared. Both worked hard on the farm, as farm children did in the 1920's and 1930's. They had few toys but enjoyed playing together at every opportunity.

They lived lives characterized by hard work, persistence and helping others. Both became dedicated career educators who found great joy and satisfaction in teaching.