

Valley Falls , KS



Elizabeth Jane “Betty” Kirkham, 89, Valley Falls, died Sunday, April 5, 2015, at Cummings, KS.

She was born May 27, 1925, at Bendena, KS, the daughter of A.T. and Florence Jones Foster. She attended both grade and high school in Bendena.

Betty lived all of her life within 35 miles of her birthplace. She lived in Atchison County until 1968, when she moved to the farm at Valley Falls. She spent her last four months under the care of Jefferson County Hospice, first in the home of her son, Dean, and his wife Mary, “Tossie” Kirkham, Valley Falls, and then at the home of her daughter, Mary Lou, and her husband, Gary, at Cummings.

Betty worked for 20 years at the Horton garment factory in Atchison. She had also worked at the Wilson Egg Plant and Electra Company at Atchison during World War II. At Valley Falls she worked at Harry’s Cafe and later owned Betty’s DoNut Shop. She purchased Sunset Dairy Dine at Valley Falls and operated it for 12 years until she retired in 1991. She was a member of St. John’s Lutheran Church in Bendena, the Lancaster Saddle Club, the Ladies Auxiliary of Post 1175, VFW, at Atchison, and UHNRF (a Garment Workers Union in New York).

She married Jack V. Kirkham March 7, 1942, at Leavenworth. They were divorced. She was preceded in death by two sisters, Sara Tilbury and Frances Reynolds.

Survivors include five children, Mary Lou (Gary) Wilson, and Beverly Jane (Floyd) Nitz, all of Cummings, Nancy Kay (James) Kenny, Palmdale, CA, Jack J. Kirkham (Kathy Holtsclaw), Stark, KS, and Harry Dean (Mary “Tossie”) Kirkham, Valley Falls; 18 grandchildren; 37 great-grandchildren and 16 great-greatgrandchildren; and two sisters, Edith Kurtz and Geneva Dunster, both of Atchison.

Betty loved her family immensely, and enjoyed reading, quilting, crocheting and other crafts. She was a great seamstress, making most of the family’s clothing and western wear. She helped sew costumes for several movies, including a Ray Stevens movie, “Get Serious”.

Family and friends are invited for a time of food and fellowship at the Cummings Christian Church at 1:00 p.m. Saturday, April 18, 2015. Memorial contributions may be made to the Lancaster Saddle Club, Jefferson County Friends of Hospice, or to the Cummings Christian Church, and sent c/o Mercer Funeral Home, PO Box 6, Valley Falls, KS 66088.