

# KK's Kin Chronicles



## Mary Frances Collier Case 1908 - 2001

She wasn't fancy, but she was a hard-working, lively, beautiful soul, and was loved by everyone who met her. This is the story of my "Granny", *Mary Frances Collier Case*.

### ■ A Babe in the Ozarks

The Ozark Mountains were beautiful at the time of year my Granny was born. The tree leaves were painted with a brilliant gold, some were orange, some with bright red, and even some with dark purple. The sumac was a brilliant crimson and lined the trails through the wooded hills. It was a beautiful day... and a very special day too, because on October 20, 1908, Mary Frances Collier was born.



*Mary Frances Collier  
Circa 1909*



*Mary's parents, Jesse & Bessie Collier  
Wedding Day, Jan. 8, 1905*

Her Mama's name was Keziah Elizabeth Marsh, but everyone called her "Bessie". Her proud Daddy was Lewis Jesse Collier, and everyone called him "Jesse". Bessie and Jesse Marsh also had a 3-year-old son, a brother for Mary, and his name was Tartan Wright, whose middle name was for his Daddy's Mother's family (the Wright's). But they called "Tart" for short. They had made the perfect American family, nestled cozily on the edge of the Ozark Mountains in a little community called Yancy Mills, in the southern part of Phelps County, Missouri.

### ■ Mary's Mama

Life wasn't easy for Mary, however. Shortly after her birth, her Mama, Bessie, became very ill with tuberculosis. Bessie took baby Mary with her to her mother's [Rhoda Catherine (Baker) Marsh] house for Granny Rhoda's birthday dinner on November 25, 1909. But because Bessie was so sick, Granny Rhoda insisted that Bessie stay with them so that they could take care of her and baby Mary, while Jesse and Tart stayed at their house in Yancy Mills. But Bessie only got worse, and she passed away on January 31, 1910. Little Mary was only 15 months old, and was now without a mother.



*Tart and Mary Collier  
Circa 1911*

It was a sad day for the family when 27-year-old Bessie died. Mary Frances and her older brother Tart was too young for this to happen to them.

The family had a small gathering for Bessie's funeral, and they quietly laid her to rest in the family plot in Weber Cemetery, just west of Anutt in Dent County, Missouri.



*Gravestone of Bessie (Marsh) Collier  
1882 - 1910*



*Mary Frances Collier  
with "Brother Hooker"  
and Her Dolls*

### ■ "Brother Hooker", a Goose Who Was a... Preacher??

Mary Frances loved to play with her dolls when she was young. Since her Granny Rhoda was raising her (along with her many older aunts and uncles), she had no younger siblings to play with. So she often played with her dolls and her pet goose, who she named "Brother Hooker". Brother Hooker was her pretend "preacher" goose, who preached sermons to a congregation made up with her two dolls. What a wild imagination Mary had! In the picture to the right, the goose is supposedly in the wagon, but it must've moved when the picture was taken, because he's only a blur in-between the "congregation" of the two dolls.

### ■ A Love Story

As Mary grew, she bloomed into a fine young lady who caught the eye of a certain young man named Sylvester Allen Case, whom everyone referred to as "Vess". Vess courted Mary in their teen years, and they often met at a special place, a certain tree in the woods not far from their homes. If one of them was at the tree and the other was not, they would lead their horse around the tree to leave footprints for the other one to know that they had already been there.

On July 20, 1927, Vess and Mary were married at the Phelps County Courthouse, in Rolla, Missouri. This was their marriage announcement, which was posted on the front page of the Rolla Times on July 28, 1927:



#### **Case-Collier**

Miss Mary F. Collier and Mr. Sylvester A. Case were quietly married at the Court House in Rolla, Wednesday, July 20, Judge John O. Holmes performing the ceremony. The bride is the only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. L.J. Collier of Yancy Mills. She is a quiet and refined young lady, loved by all who know her. The groom is the youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. Alex Case of the Rhea District. He is a young farmer that is fast making his mark in that profession. They are both classed with Phelps County's best people. Shortly after the ceremony the happy ones went to the home of Mrs. J.B. Marsh of Yancy Mills, where a feast was spread by friends and relatives. On taking their leave for home all wished them oceans of happiness and prosperity in their journey through life.

## ■ Making a Family

Vess and Mary started a family right away. Just ten months after they were married, they became parents with their first son, Jesse Alexander Case, who was born on May 17, 1928 in Yancy Mills.

Twenty months after Jesse was born, their first daughter, Irene Elizabeth, was born on January 12, 1930 in Lecomma. Baby Irene only lived a short time; she died 8 months later on August 8, 1930 from “cholera infantum”, a fatal disease of infants and children possibly due to hot weather. She is buried in Rhea Cemetery.

Their daughter Martha Josephine was born on September 13, 1932 in Yancy Mills.

Then their son Donald Leroy (nicknamed “Bud”) was born on July 16, 1936.

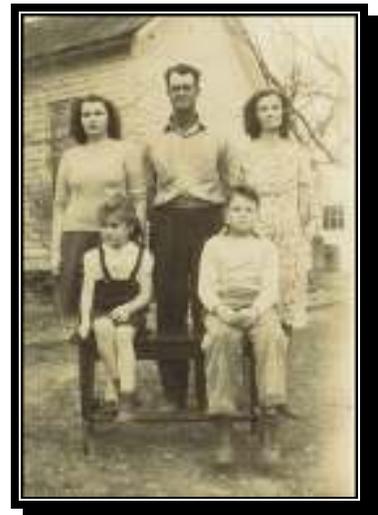
Lastly, their daughter Mary Ruth was born on January 22, 1941.

They were a Christian family who went to the Church of God.

## ■ On the Farms in Illinois



*Jesse, Martha, Bud, Mary & Vess Case  
On the Bridge Farm  
Circa 1939*



*Martha, Vess, Mary  
Ruthie & Bud  
At Aunt Grace's House  
Circa 1950*

## ■ Granny

Granny was so full of energy,.. the woman amazed me. If I wanted something, ANYTHING, she would get it for me. She would literally jump up out of her chair and say “I’ll get you a cookie, Johnny-on-the-spot”. Or, if we wanted to go uptown for ice cream, she’d jump up and say “well goodness sakes, KassyAnn (she always called me “KassyAnn”), just let me get my shoes on, and we’ll go!!”

## ■ Going Back Home to the Ozarks

And so this story ends, nestled back in the beautiful hills of the Ozarks... Mary’s back home.

