



Letha May Cowell

August 26, 1922 - April 28, 2026

Letha May Kinslow was born on August 26, 1922, near Urbana in Hickory County, MO, the sixth child of Joseph and Allie May (Dryer) Kinslow. She passed away on Tuesday, April 28, 2026, in Buffalo, MO after a life of 103 years guided by faith, service, humility, integrity and courage.

Letha was descended from sturdy pioneers, some of whom came to America in the early 1700's and included veterans of the Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and Civil War. Letha grew up on a farm during the Great Depression where the virtues of hard work and thrift were practiced. As older children left home, Letha filled the void by assuming more of the farm work until she, too, left home. Many women were called into the work force during WWII and at age 20, and because she could drive a truck, Letha was hired to operate a crane at the Mare Island Shipyard near San Francisco. As she was climbing up to the cat bird seat on the crane for the first time, her supervisor called out to her, "Don't look down, Letha!" She recalled the horrific damage to the ships that were brought for repair. Other jobs that Letha held included working in a Kansas City aircraft factory where she riveted doors onto airplanes. In the years following the War, she worked in sewing factories in Ventura, CA and Kansas City. Her last vocation was as a physical therapist aide in nursing homes. After 'retirement', Letha continued in service to the 'elderly', many of whom were actually younger than she.

Letha met the love of her life, Robert Cowell, while working in Kansas City. Later, they made their home in Clay Center, KS and finally Pittsburg, KS. They enjoyed many happy years until Robert's passing in 1999. Letha excelled in the art of quilting and shared many hand quilted beautiful examples of her work with family. Her hands were never idle!

Following Robert's death, Letha moved to the Urbana area to be near her niece, Connie Kinslow Bishop and husband, Ralph and other family members. A woman of deep faith throughout her life, Letha worshiped at Pleasant Ridge Free Will Baptist Church after moving back to MO.

Letha was the last surviving member of her immediate family. She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband; her siblings, Virgil Kinslow, Thomas Kinslow, Idra Kinslow Percival, Alvin Kinslow, Helen Kinslow Walker, John Kinslow; an infant brother; as well as nephews and nieces, J. B. Kinslow, Marlene Kinslow Fieker, Carl Percival, Irvin Percival, Jerold Wayne Maxwell, Connie Kinslow Bishop and Kathy Kinslow Cooke. Letha is survived by nieces and nephews: Alice Kinslow Kugler, Linda Kinslow Bridges, Gene Kinslow, James Kinslow, Janice Maxwell Schumacher, Donnie Kinslow, Debbie Kinslow Woodyard and Bill Cowell and other family members.

Graveside services for Letha will be held Saturday, May 9, 11:00 a.m. at Hopewell Cemetery southwest of Urbana where many of her ancestors are buried. Officiating will be Ralph Bishop. Services are under the care and direction of the Cantlon-Otterness & Viets Funeral Home of Buffalo.

Cemetery Details

Hopewell Cemetery Polk County

Polk County, MO

Previous Events

Graveside Service

MAY 9. 11:00 AM - 11:45 AM.

Hopewell Cemetery Polk County
Polk County, MO