

Roy White
Margaret McKee

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Together

Brother And Sister, Both In 90s, Die Within Day Of Each Other

FAYETTE, Mo. (AP) — They spent nearly a century together.

When he lost his sight, her eyes became his. When she lost her hearing, he listened for both of them.

Roy White, 95, and his sister, Margaret McKee, 93, moved into a nursing home in New Franklin, Mo., about two months ago, leaving their beloved family farm.

Each fell ill with pneumonia on the same day and were taken to Cooper County Hospital in Boonville. She died Oct. 19. He died the next day.

"It's nice they went the way they did," said McKee's daughter, Daisy Jacobs.

Jacobs said that in the fading hours before White died, he raised his hands toward the ceiling as if reaching for something — or someone. Jacobs likes to think it was her mother.

"She would always say, 'Come on Roy, let's go.' I think that's what she was saying then," Jacobs said.

They were buried side by side Tuesday in the Walnut Ridge Cemetery in Fayette.

"We didn't tell him she had died, but he knew," said Jacobs, 67, of Fayette. "My kids asked me, 'Do you suppose they'll be like an old farm team — when one dies, the other lays down and dies, too?'"

"Well, it was kind of like that."

White and McKee were born in Howard County. They moved in 1915 with their parents, William Stone and Annie Crews White, to a farm seven miles southeast of Fayette. The back two rooms mark the original log cabin that opened to a dirt road, where as children White and McKee watched horses and bug

gies pass.

Stone and Annie White were farmers. Young Roy White found his place on the land, growing crops and raising livestock. He never married.

His sister married and became a teacher. But after five years she and her husband divorced, and she returned to the farm with her two children. Jacobs was 6 at the time. Her brother, Jerry McKee, was 3.

While White farmed, McKee taught in country schools. Their parents watched over the children.

"Mom would go and stay with patrons of the school during the week and come home on the weekends," Jacobs recalled. "She was paid \$35 a week."

McKee taught school in numerous locations, retiring from Midway Heights Elementary at age 70.

Living together never seemed a problem for McKee and White. "They were both fiercely independent," Jacobs said. "He had his own car and money. She had her own car and money."

McKee was also a devout member of the Ashland Christian Church, where she attended services all her life until the church closed in September. She attended the last service.

The Rev. Greg Robinson, a minister at the church from 1970 until 1982, remembers McKee and her brother as regulars in his congregation. McKee was the tall, proper woman who always wore gloves and a hat; White was the consummate farm bachelor, who wore a cap and drove a faded-orange Chevy pickup.

"She was a lady, and he was Uncle Roy," Robinson said.