



Nelcie Combs

May 24, 2026

Courtesy obituary for Nelcie Combs

Nelcie Combs was born on a frigid day, February 29, 1932, during the Great Depression. Times were hard. Her dad, Bascom Mills, delivered mail on horseback for \$21 a month. Her earliest memory was when Grandma Salmons came to live with them.

When she was 9 years old, she received her first store-bought dress and first pair of shoes from Aunt Ef, who took her shopping in West Virginia. Aunt Ef's husband worked in the coal mines and made at least a little money. The dress was a purple print and had triangle-shaped pockets on the front:) She smiled when she told this story.

As a child, her favorite thing was playing in the creek, but there wasn't much free time; all 9 kids worked as soon as they were able. She would hoe corn with her sister Artie, who called her "puny" when she couldn't keep pace. Every time Artie hit a rock, she would grit her teeth.

Every morning for breakfast, her mother, Maude Salmons Mills, would ask, "Who wants an egg?" and Nelcie would always say "No," because she knew there weren't enough eggs for everybody. Maybe that's why she fried an egg for breakfast every day for the rest of her adult life.

The only time she got spanked as a child was when she was playing in the bottom with Ruth Olive. Ruth claimed Nelcie lifted her skirt and so she was spanked for being “brigity.”

She attended a one-room schoolhouse on Trace.

The first time she saw a car was while walking up Trace to church. She considered it a treat to see. Her sisters Beck and Hazel, however, said the first time they saw a car was when they were walking near where Ers’s house is now. They heard a strange noise and saw a “contraption” coming towards them. Beck said they didn’t know what it was and jumped in the ditch until it was gone.

Nelcie said she was still wearing dresses made from feed sacks until she was 14 but when she started high school her mother bought her a wool skirt she was so proud of and she liked to wear it with a pink blouse. That skirt is still in her hope chest at the foot of her bed. Her favorite high school subject was home ec.

Her first job was working at the Tomahawk post office with Haley Crum.

Her second job was as a waitress at the “Sweet Shop” in Inez, KY. She remembered someone ordering “white meat chicken” and she had never heard of such a thing. She told them chicken was just chicken.

Her first date was with Ale’s brother Martin.

She considered her most important life event to be her baptism at age 17 in the creek at Rockhouse by Glen Arwood and Arthur Preece. Grandma Mills was there too. Nelcie led a good Christian life every day since and never said

a bad word about anyone.

She graduated from Inez High School in 1950. In February 1952, she married Bernard Mollett at her sister Irene's house in Tomahawk and moved to Mansfield, OH, and, three years later, to Shelby.

After she was married, she was proud that the sisters went together and bought Hazel a car. Son Gary was born in June 1952 followed by Diana Lynn in 1955. They still have the hospital bill when Diana was born. The charge was \$1.50 per day.

Her saddest time was a bitterly cold day, March 11, 1960, when her precious mother slipped, fell in the creek and died.

As a young bride, she was assistant manager at Amato's Foodland. Later, she worked part-time at Swallen's dept. store and spent 20 years at Autocall in Shelby, OH, building fire alarms.

She attended North Central State College.

She married Savel Combs, a widowed Baptist minister from Shelby, at the old home place in Tomahawk, KY, on August 31, 1986. He was the love of her life.

They traveled extensively out west and had homes in Ohio and Florida.

Nelcie's favorite vacation was a trip to Hawaii with her "baby" sister FloAnn, age 86, who survives.

Her favorite Sunday was the "Church on the Graveyard," an event she hoped to attend this year. Her favorite food was sausage gravy and biscuits, but

date-filled cookies was a close second.

Savel passed in 2009. Nelcie lived with her daughter for the next 17 years. And Nelcie was blackmailed and forced to live with a couple of cats for the last two years.

She was always looking for bargains. If she ever walked away from a companion at a store, she could be found at the nearest "Clearance" sign. (She left behind a collection of gently used Zip-Loc bags.)

Nelcie is survived by her children: Gary Bernard (Diane) Mollett of Gainesville, GA and Diana Lynn Nolen of Mansfield; step-son: Michael (Melinda) Combs; her sister: Flo Ann Wilson; sister-in-law: Betty Mills; and numerous other relatives. Nelcie was also preceded in death, in addition to her parents and husband, by her siblings: Ersel Mills, Rebecca Mills Dalton, Artie Mills Conley, Irene Mills Boyd, Arbie Mills, Louis Mills and Hazel Mills Adams; and her first husband: Bernard Mollett.

She left this life on Sunday, May 24, 2026 after a fall at home.

Her advice to many people was to serve the Lord in whatever you do. Her kindness was an inspiration.

She was a joy and a blessing to many – and 94 years was not nearly long enough.

Family and friends are welcome on Saturday, May 30, 2026 from 11 am to 12 noon at the Penwell Funeral Home, 168 West Main Street, Shelby, where funeral services will immediately follow at 12 noon. Pastor Maurice Mills, Nelcie's nephew, will officiate the services with burial following in Mansfield Memorial Park. While Nelcie loved white flowers, she would be pleased if you

made a contribution to the S.T.O.P. Cat Shelter, 1152 Lexington Avenue, Mansfield, OH 44907.

Condolences may be left on the funeral home's website (PenwellFuneralHome.com) or their Facebook page.