## Bessie's Motorcycle Kidney Belt

Bessie bought a Harley Davidson motorcycle in Washington DC in June of 1941. She ordered her motorcycle belt on July 15. The belt is leather and is meant to protect the kidneys from all the jouncing and vibration while riding a motorcycle. It might also be called a kidney belt. The leather is stiff and must have been rather uncomfortable. Modern kidney belts are made of a fabric.

She made a trip to South Dakota on the motorcycle in August 1941. Bessie can be seen wearing the belt on a visit to South Dakota. Jeannette died April 9, 1942.



Bessie on left wearing the belt with Anne and sister Jeannette.

The signatures from her Johnson and Lawless families were very likely made on her August 1941 trip.

## This is the whole belt:



The belt is unique in that Bessie had friends and relatives sign it. The following pictures show the actual signatures and some drawings on the belt. The signatures and pictures are not touched up on the belt itself. Some photo adjustments were made when the marks are difficult to see. Some of the marks are worn. Some of the marks almost overlap. Notes by each picture identify who signed it and what the relationship is.

Notes – ID, relationship	Picture
This section has several names. Following are closeups of these names.	Honold 5 Bred Wis ARM
Carlos Rosario (Ramirez?) The last name is not very clear. It sort of looks like Ramirez. Bessie took Spanish classes in DC, so this might be someone she knew there.	
Donald S. Breed U.S. Army  He was Bessie's boyfriend about the time she met Ray. She cared for him. This is from her diary, December 10, 1940:  "Got a letter from Don saying we had to forget our love. It hurt me & I cried a lot."	Donald S. Breed U.S. ARMY
Anna Marie John Lawless Macy Neb.  John Lawless was Bessie's uncle, the brother of Anna Lawless Johnson. Anna Marie was one of his daughters. They lived in Macy NE, a small town close to Decatur NE. It is near or on the Omaha Indian Reservation.  John died in 1956	Contract of the second

Notes – ID, relationship	Picture
Joe (Wings) Kiker USNAC – U.S. Navy Air Corps The name is carved in the leather with a knife in two places. He drew wings in one place that indicate he may have been a pilot – along with the nickname.  Wings was probably someone Bessie knew in DC. Bessie worked at the War Department and also went to the All States Club dances. Nothing else is known about him.	A STATE OF THE STA
The lower picture with the wings has the caption: Wings Kiker.	Cerry 17 3
James Johnson Arthur Frank Ryan Cheyenne WY  James Johnson was Oliver's brother.  Art Ryan was probably a boyfriend or just a friend. They also appear to be friends even after Bessie married Ray. They exchanged many letters.	The State of the s
Nan Johnson Pierre SD  Probably not a relative. Bessie lived and worked in Pierre SD for a time after she got out of high school.	of the state of th

N I I I I I	D'
John Pugh Miller S.D.  Johnny Pugh and Bessie may have had a relationship before Bessie moved to D.C. They were also motorcycle buddies.  John lived in Miller the rest of his life.	Picture Picture
Arnold Johnson Lyons Nebr. Laura Johnson Lyons Nebr Anna L Peterson  Arnold was James Johnson's son, Bessie's first cousin (Oliver's side). Laura Johnson, James Johnson's wife, Arnold's mother. Anna Peterson was a relative of Laura (Peterson Johnson) (maybe a sister?). Dorothy is Bessie's sister and her full signature is shown in another picture.	Soura godnoon borto that
Dorothy Johnson Mary Johnson Miller S.D. John Christiansen Miller S.D.  Dorothy and Mary were Bessie's sisters. They signed before they were married. Mary married John Christiansen September 16, 1941.	Mary Johnson
Evelyn Johnson Lyons  Evelyn was James Johnson's daughter, so Bessie's first cousin on Oliver's side.  There is some wear, but the name can be seen.	

Notes – ID, relationship	Picture
These were Bessie's Friends – Carl Labor, Miller S.Dak. Georgene Kuebel, Pierre, S. Dak Jas. K Norfolk Jr., Wash DC Laurence F Maeler(?), Washington DC Carl and Bessie rode motorcycles together. She mentioned him in some letters.	Miller Bak Georgene Hicker Prema sa state
Victor Johnson  Bessie's older brother.  The little holes originally had brass studs.	
H.R. Gibbs McLean Va Note the diamond ring beside his name. Bessie and Ray were engaged by August 1941. Married April 4, 1942.	CHARLES OF
Bertha Cable Stigler Oklahoma  Bessie's roommate for a while in DC during the time she and Ray were courting.	Stigler Oxlahom
(?) "Houda" (?) Washington DC Friend	Windle "

Notes – ID, relationship	Picture
Bernice Maock (?)	
Pierre S. Dak	
Possible friend from Bessie's time in Pierre.	
Marilyn Gibbs	
Pratts, Virginia	777 (west Commence of the 100
Ray Gibbs' youngest sister.	Marilegeo Filter 50
Bessie with a rope tied in a knot.	
Symbol of her marriage to Ray?	Buner
Harry Penshasky(?)	
Teacher	
Eileen Johnson	51.
Miller S.D.	The Common of the
Bessie's sister.	The land to the second
Mary Eileen Lawless	
Daughter of John Lawless. Bessie's first cousin on her mother's side.	Mary Hills

Anna Johnson Old Brown House Bessie's Mother  Oliver Johnson Bessie's Father His last name is very faint.  Cecelia W Hlebanja Hayes South Dak. Bessie's best friend until the 1940s. Writing is very faint.  Jeannette Johnson Bessie's youngest sister. About age 8 at the time she signed  Kathleen Johnson O.B.H. (Old Brown House) Miller So. D. Bessie's Sister	Notes – ID, relationship	Picture
Bessie's Mother  Oliver Johnson  Bessie's Father His last name is very faint.  Cecelia W Hlebanja Hayes South Dak.  Bessie's best friend until the 1940s. Writing is very faint.  Jeannette Johnson  Bessie's youngest sister. About age 8 at the time she signed  Kathleen Johnson  O.B.H. (Old Brown House) Miller So. D.  Bessie's Sister  Florence Eilers Pierre S.D.	Anna Johnson	
Oliver Johnson  Bessie's Father His last name is very faint.  Cecelia W Hlebanja Hayes South Dak.  Bessie's best friend until the 1940s. Writing is very faint.  Jeannette Johnson  Bessie's youngest sister. About age 8 at the time she signed  Kathleen Johnson  O.B.H. (Old Brown House) Miller So. D.  Bessie's Sister  Florence Eilers Pierre S.D.	Old Brown House	Come John Ha
Bessie's Father His last name is very faint.  Cecelia W Hlebanja Hayes South Dak.  Bessie's best friend until the 1940s. Writing is very faint.  Jeannette Johnson Bessie's youngest sister. About age 8 at the time she signed  Kathleen Johnson O.B.H. (Old Brown House) Miller So. D. Bessie's Sister  Florence Eilers Pierre S.D.	Bessie's Mother	Control of the second
His last name is very faint.  Cecelia W Hlebanja Hayes South Dak.  Bessie's best friend until the 1940s. Writing is very faint.  Jeannette Johnson Bessie's youngest sister. About age 8 at the time she signed  Kathleen Johnson O.B.H. (Old Brown House) Miller So. D. Bessie's Sister  Florence Eilers Pierre S.D.	Oliver Johnson	
Cecelia W Hlebanja Hayes South Dak.  Bessie's best friend until the 1940s. Writing is very faint.  Jeannette Johnson Bessie's youngest sister. About age 8 at the time she signed  Kathleen Johnson O.B.H. (Old Brown House) Miller So. D. Bessie's Sister  Florence Eilers Pierre S.D.	Bessie's Father	
Hayes South Dak.  Bessie's best friend until the 1940s. Writing is very faint.  Jeannette Johnson  Bessie's youngest sister. About age 8 at the time she signed  Kathleen Johnson  O.B.H. (Old Brown House) Miller So. D.  Bessie's Sister  Florence Eilers Pierre S.D.	His last name is very faint.	LOUIS ROLL OF THE PARTY OF THE
Hayes South Dak.  Bessie's best friend until the 1940s. Writing is very faint.  Jeannette Johnson  Bessie's youngest sister. About age 8 at the time she signed  Kathleen Johnson  O.B.H. (Old Brown House) Miller So. D.  Bessie's Sister  Florence Eilers Pierre S.D.	Cecelia W Hlebanja	
Writing is very faint.  Jeannette Johnson  Bessie's youngest sister. About age 8 at the time she signed  Kathleen Johnson  O.B.H. (Old Brown House) Miller So. D.  Bessie's Sister  Florence Eilers Pierre S.D.	Hayes South Dak.	
Writing is very faint.  Jeannette Johnson  Bessie's youngest sister. About age 8 at the time she signed  Kathleen Johnson  O.B.H. (Old Brown House) Miller So. D.  Bessie's Sister  Florence Eilers Pierre S.D.	Passia's hast friend until the 1040s	6
Jeannette Johnson Bessie's youngest sister. About age 8 at the time she signed  Kathleen Johnson O.B.H. (Old Brown House) Miller So. D. Bessie's Sister  Florence Eilers Pierre S.D.		
Bessie's youngest sister. About age 8 at the time she signed  Kathleen Johnson O.B.H. (Old Brown House) Miller So. D. Bessie's Sister  Florence Eilers Pierre S.D.	withing is very famou	
Bessie's youngest sister. About age 8 at the time she signed  Kathleen Johnson O.B.H. (Old Brown House) Miller So. D. Bessie's Sister  Florence Eilers Pierre S.D.		The second second
Bessie's youngest sister. About age 8 at the time she signed  Kathleen Johnson O.B.H. (Old Brown House) Miller So. D. Bessie's Sister  Florence Eilers Pierre S.D.		
Bessie's youngest sister. About age 8 at the time she signed  Kathleen Johnson O.B.H. (Old Brown House) Miller So. D. Bessie's Sister  Florence Eilers Pierre S.D.		NOT WELL
Bessie's youngest sister. About age 8 at the time she signed  Kathleen Johnson O.B.H. (Old Brown House) Miller So. D. Bessie's Sister  Florence Eilers Pierre S.D.		
Kathleen Johnson O.B.H. (Old Brown House) Miller So. D. Bessie's Sister  Florence Eilers Pierre S.D.	Jeannette Johnson	
Kathleen Johnson O.B.H. (Old Brown House) Miller So. D. Bessie's Sister  Florence Eilers Pierre S.D.	Paggia's voungest sister. About age 8 at the	
Kathleen Johnson O.B.H. (Old Brown House) Miller So. D. Bessie's Sister  Florence Eilers Pierre S.D.		a child was an included
O.B.H. (Old Brown House) Miller So. D. Bessie's Sister  Florence Eilers Pierre S.D.	inite bite signed	The state of the s
O.B.H. (Old Brown House) Miller So. D. Bessie's Sister  Florence Eilers Pierre S.D.		<b>一个人们的人们的人们是不够</b>
O.B.H. (Old Brown House) Miller So. D. Bessie's Sister  Florence Eilers Pierre S.D.	Vothloon Johnson	42
Bessie's Sister  Florence Eilers Pierre S.D.		Mithlierin and
Florence Eilers Pierre S.D.	Miller So. D.	The second
Florence Eilers Pierre S.D.		01.12
Pierre S.D.	Bessie's Sister	
Pierre S.D.		
Pierre S.D.		
	Florence Eilers	
Friend	Pierre S.D.	or long
The state of the s	Friend	
Ministra and	THERE	The state of the s
A Designation of the second		and the same
		The state of the s