

*Loving Memories of
Our Grandmother
Irma Rose*

Oksen-Aldridge-Reaves

Mimi

Happy 100th Birthday

January 15, 2006

*Loving Memories of Our
Grandmother
Irma Rose
Oksen-Aldridge-Reaves*

*In Celebration of Her 100th Birthday
January 15, 2006*

*We Dedicate this Collection of Letters, Poems and Memories
to*

Mimi

*Written with Love & Emotion, Laughter and Tears ~
From your Grandchildren, Great Grandchildren,
Great-Great Grandchildren
and Families*

Together we wish to express our deepest heartfelt gratitude for the gifts you have given to us over the years. You are an inspiration to all of us, not only for your love, but also for your many talents. Your beautiful paintings we will cherish, but especially all of the stories in the books you have written about your life experiences. Our lives, and the lives of future generations, have been made all the more rich because of them. We are blessed indeed!

Thank You.

It is with Great Honor We wish to present this gift

*G*REAT

*I*Rma

*D*Aughter

*N*urse

*F*rien*D*

*M*imi

*R*Ose

*S*is*T*er

*M*ot*H*er

*W*if*E*

*W**R*iter





Mimi

*"Our worth is measured not by the years we've lived,
but by the love and memories we've left behind."*

(Sharing My Memories and Love 1991)



*"It is here I plan to stay until my work on earth is finished.
Then, hopefully, the good Lord will find me worthy enough
to place a little star in my crown."*

(This 'n That 2000)

*The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep
And miles to go before I sleep.*

-Robert Frost, "stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"

*Here's to many more years
and many more miles to enjoy them
as is Gods will.
On your birthday
may you have a moment
to admire the life and love
that is all around
and to feel the warmth from a family
who adores You!*

Memories pressed between the pages of my mind,
Memories sweetened through the ages just like wine
Quiet thoughts come floating down and settle softly to the ground
Like gold of autumn leaves around my feet
I touch them and they burst apart with sweet memories
Of holding hands and red boquets
And twilights trimmed in purple haze
And laughing eyes and simple ways
And quiet nights and gentle days

With You...

Grandchildren:

Creston, Jane, James, Daniel, Kathleen,
Teri, Mary, Diane, Nancy & Mark
Judy & Randy
And
Michele & Eric

Great Grandchildren:

Tammi, Tina, Joshua, Kristen, Matthew, John, Poppy, Emily, Corey, Elizabeth, Eli, Andrew,
Tiffany, Sean, Koreana, Justin
Heather, Cortnie, Kyle, Iso, Hannah, Meg, Tierney, Jonathan, Jacob, Mitchell, Nicole,
Michael, Christopher & Ashleigh
Ryan & Mark, & Tammy, Jason, & Brook

Great Great Grandchildren:

Zachary, Aspen Maren, Phillip, Andrew Sidney & Spencer
Alicia, Angel, Eddy, & Bruce
And more on the way....

With love and gratitude from family & friends

Grandchildren

If I could save time in a bottle
The first thing I'd like to do
Is to save everyday 'till eternity
Passes away just to spend them with
You

If I could make days last forever
If words could make wishes come true
I'd save everyday like a treasure and then again
I'd spend them with
You

(Jim Croce)

January 15, 2006

Dearest Mimi,

Happy 100th Birthday!! I love you very much. I remember all the good times we had. The times when the boys would come over to stay at your house in Ben Lomond. We would usually go someplace for a picnic and pick up rocks to put around your house. I remember the times I would stay at your house on Heatherdale in San Jose and I would mow your lawns. I would get to sleep on the bed in Pappy's den. Sometimes we would go to the Lucky Store to get groceries and maybe (usually) some kind of treat. I remember sitting at the kitchen table in the morning at the ranch, drinking hot chocolate and looking out over the "Lower 40" watching Buck grazing on the grass. I remember all the good food you used to cook and how you taught me how to cook. I'll never forget the Danish cookies and Velvet Crumb cakes you always made for me. Those were my favorites. Of course, all the other foods you cooked were delicious, too. I remember you always had something cool for us to drink in the refrigerator. I loved drinking it from the aluminum cups you used to have. There was one for each of us, with our name on it.

I remember the time you were watching us while Mom & Dad were gone somewhere and Jim took off naked in his little yellow and black pedal truck. I don't remember what he did, but I remember he was in trouble for doing something, and you went chasing after him around the block with a fly swatter. I don't remember the outcome of the chase, but he probably got caught and herded home. I don't think he will ever live that incident down. It will be in the annals of Aldridge history forever.

I remember all the fun times we had at Arroyo Seco with you and Pappy. The hiking to Bat's Cave, swimming at the big rock, King's Hole, and the little pool, the music from Fred's Camp at night when we were in bed at the cabin, going hunting at the dump for ground squirrels, and so many other things we did there. That instilled in me a love of nature and made me want to be a Park Ranger so I could be near it as often as I could.

I remember the warm welcome you gave to Vicki when I brought her over to your house in Ben Lomond to meet you for the first time. I remember all the help you gave Vicki to prepare for our wedding. It really meant a lot to me that you and Pappy took her into your hearts and treated her like your own Granddaughter.

I remember the times we took you and Pappy to Yosemite, and the bear incident at the Upper Pines campground when the bear came by at night and rocked you and Pappy to sleep in the camper, and how beautiful the falls always were. I remember the Smokey Bear hat that you got there for Tammi when she was about three years old and her standing on the deck of our cabin modeling it for us, and how Pappy laughed when he saw her.

Then there was the time in Colorado when you and Pappy came to visit us, and

you had your first white Christmas (our's, too). I remember how Pappy and I shoveled the snow off the sidewalk the next morning so Tammi and Tina could ride their new bikes. I remember you helping Tina ride hers because her feet couldn't reach the pedals, and the snowman we built and put on the top hat and face parts that Pappy made. That sure was a funny looking snowman but Tammi & Tina loved it.

I remember how you and Pappy let us stay at the ranch when we moved back from Colorado. We really enjoyed the time we got to stay there with you. I'm sure the girls would both say that was one of the best times of their lives.

I especially like all the books you wrote about our family roots so that we could know where we came from and the things you did as a child and young adult. I remember the stories of the sad times as well and appreciate your sharing them with us. I'll remember all this and more for the rest of my life. Thank you for all the love and encouragement you have given me throughout my life. I will cherish it always.

Love from your first Grandchild,

Cres

January 15, 2006

Dear Mimi,

So many of my most cherished memories have been with you. On this day, the culmination of 100 years that you have been on this earth, I want to tell you about some of them. I want to thank you for the 56 years of love, support and joy that you have given me. There are very few in this world who have been so lucky as to have a grandmother with them for such a wonderful amount of time.

One of my earliest memories is of walking up and down the driveway at the ranch dragging a magnet on a string. It was amazing to see all the iron shavings that were stuck to it! Sometimes there would even be a nail or some other indistinguishable piece of metal. Everything looked so big at the ranch then – the stone wall around the flower bed near the garage was almost as big as I was and the driveway seemed to go on forever. We would play outside for hours and then you would ring the bell and we would go in for a snack. I used to love to sit in the yellow kitchen, warmed by the open oven door, and be at the table with you. Two of my favorite snacks were the toast from the morning that had gotten really crispy sitting under the pilot light in the oven and your wonderful applesauce, chunky and tasting of vanilla.

Another memory I have is when I was being prepped for the baby beauty contest and I was crying out by the chicken coop. I don't really remember why I was crying - maybe my hair had been trimmed or something - but you came and found me. I also remember walking around the ranch in my cowgirl outfit on the fourth of July.

Some of my favorite memories are of the picnics you took me on. One time, you packed a lunch and took me to a stream near the ranch. I must have been very small. We walked there and wherever it was, was green and magical. I can still remember seeing the sunlight shining through the luminous green of the tree leaves. I can't imagine where that place was; it seemed like a place out of time.

Other times, you would pack a lunch and thermoses of hot chocolate and coffee for our trip back to Santa Clara after I had stayed with you. You and Pappy would take a back road and find a beautiful place with a mountain view to stop and have our lunch. I can see the view in my mind and smell the coffee.

I have learned much of my love of nature from you – whether it was watching you work in that magnificent flower garden you had at Heatherdale or helping you weed your beautiful rose garden, filled with so many varieties, colorful and fragrant – you knew what holiday or birthday Pappy had given them to you on. I remember walking on a mountain trail with you and feeling the fresh breeze in our faces, the change of light under the trees, the fragrance of the woods or stopping by a spring for a drink of water. You didn't have to say much – I learned to delight in the wonder of nature, basking in your delight.

I also loved the way you used to go around the house humming. I liked your sense of

décor too. I remember what fun you had decorating your new house in Ben Lomond and how lovely everything looked.

It was always fun to have a little time just by myself, when I got to visit you and Pappy and be an "only child" for a few days – or at least only one of two! I had such fun with the two of you in the little apartment you had in San Jose one year at Christmas time. It was very cozy.

One year, for my 14th birthday, you threw me a great birthday party! I got to invite a number of friends and we had all sorts of activities and food, but the highlight was pulling taffy! It was an incredible flavor – pepperminty – and very messy!

A few other things I remember were dishes of pretty hard candy at your house, dinner on T.V. trays, – quite a treat! – and that pretty lamp you had that revolved and had a riverboat on it.

Mimi, a thousand more words can not express my gratitude and love for you. I thank you for all the wonderful moments and, most of all, for being there and loving me so much

Happy, happy birthday, Mimi!!

I love you,
Janie (Chickie)

I don't think it is possible to relate a memory or two of Mimi that distills and defines what she has meant to me. Well, there is the story about her chasing me, flailing a fly swatter as I frantically, and apparently successful, pedaled a fire engine around the block. The story stops at that, as there is no recounting I have heard about what happened when she finally caught up to me. Seems like good fodder for some kind of urban legend.

It is the fragments of memories that seem to have made an indelible impact as I recount how our lives woven and intermingled, often shared with others. As I recount, I am inundated with scraps of memories that form a beautiful mosaic of Mimi – bits from Heatherdale Drive, Hihn Road, the Ranch, Kiely Boulevard, Winchester Boulevard, visits, holidays, county fairs, Arroyo Seco, the thoughts, the prayers.

Mimi's chronicles enrich me with her spirit and the history, the personal history written in the inimitable style of the era that forged her life.

There were her efforts to make a stay with her more interesting with field trips, to the old lime kiln, Mt. Hermon, the beach, town. It seemed she saw more sky than road when she drove, but she always got us there and back safely.

Mimi always expects good behavior and did not hesitate with gentle chastisements of "Don't cut up," and "don't monkey."

I can still hear the radio evangelist in the background as Mimi busied herself about the kitchen. Her faith is an integral part of her life. She would even take us to Sunday Mass so our faith would not suffer.

You can't omit the love she put into her cooking and baking. From pancakes or cereal in the morning to tuna sandwiches for lunch to tomale pie, chicken cacciatore, lemon cake and, more than the others, her homemade applesauce.

These are only a very few fragments of memories, but what I remember is her example of love and caring and integrity.

Happy Birthday, Mimi.

Love,
Jim

**The Infamous
Pedal Truck
of
Arthur Road**



Mimi

It's so hard to put down on paper all the love shared over a life time. I suppose the first memories of Mimi have to include food. Mimi and Pappy would make the drive over to Mom and Dad's for the many birthdays or holidays. I feel fortunate that Mimi and Pappy were able to spend so much time with us. She always brought food. Tamale pie, applesauce, cakes, pies to name a few (coffecake was my favorite),

They lived on Heatherdale in San Jose for several years. Mimi and Pappy would have me over to visit for a few days at a time. Sometimes with Cres and Jim. They always had flowers and potted plants where they lived. There was a huge oak tree in the backyard at Heatherdale. One time I was over there and Mimi had a bowl full of rocks on the coffee table in the living room. She took one and put it in her mouth and pretended to eat it. I knew she didn't till she showed me it wasn't in her mouth anymore. She took another one and did the same thing. I couldn't believe my eyes. My grandmother was eating rocks. I was thinking, how could you do that without breaking your teeth? She let me in on her secret that the rocks were really candy that looked just like rocks. Then she shared the rock candy with me. I enjoyed them thoroughly. I would go shopping with Mimi to the Lucky store on Bascom Ave. It was just down the street and down the block from Heatherdale. Sometimes we would walk there and back. Don't ask me why that sticks in my mind but I used to enjoy these trips to the store.

I enjoyed going to visit Mimi and Pappy wherever they lived. They moved to Ben Lomond when I was 8-10 or so. I would ride over in Mimi's 1940 Chevy (I believe that's the year). That was such a cool car with the yellow body and tan roof. I can remember it raining pretty hard on 17 on the way over to Ben Lomond to stay at their place. I loved riding in the rain watching the water run over the car and the sounds it would make. Mimi would be humming songs a lot. Not just while driving but around the house. She must have quite a love for music I would think. I didn't know many of the songs but every once in a while she would start singing the words. Mimi took us to the San Lorenzo River on one of our visits. There was a pool made by damming up the river in Boulder Creek (I believe). I loved to swim. On another adventure we went to Fall Creek. Mimi was visiting a friend and Cres, Jim, and I went for a hike (My mind is a little foggy but I think Cres was with us). We hiked up a trail along the creek to a mine. I come to find out later that it was the Fall Creek Limestone kilns. It was such a great place to me. I can remember the bricks laying around. We carried back a big piece of burl and Mimi ended up taking it home. It was such a chore to carry it back to the car. Jim and I would go over to spend time visiting at Ben Lomond. It was a different world back then. Kids could wander around and explore/play without the fear for someone bothering them. Jim and I traveled over the sand hills, forest, and river exploring. There weren't as many homes in the area as there is now. We would come back hungry and thirsty. Mimi always had some great food for us. Another place Mimi would take us to was the beach. We used to explore the tide pools and beaches for rocks and shells playing in the surf.

This might come as a surprise to some of you but Mimi was the one who taught me to whistle. I was at a Boy Scout meeting and was waiting with her. We were sitting and somehow she ended up showing me how to whistle like a dove. I couldn't get it. I practiced for weeks and nothing came out. One day I was working at whistling and out it came. Mimi taught me how to take a cutting of a plant and put it in a pot to make it grow. She loves geraniums. I was amazed that it was so easy to start a new plant. And it works with many types of plants I came to find out.

Mimi always seems to have a smile to share. I always enjoyed visiting and sitting around the table listening and sharing. It seemed she always had time to share a cup of tea or coffee, some food, and a story.

Love,
Dan



Mimi.....she's my grandma. She taught me what a grandma is. She created an atmosphere of heart and care.

When we went in her car, she always made sure we covered our legs so we could feel warmth. We were young and energetic and didn't need the blanket but this was Mimi. When Mimi was around, we used a blanket in the car.

At her house, we were promptly fitted with a pair of slippers. If there wasn't a pair that fit, we used heavy socks. Again, we never used slippers at home and we never felt cold but this was Mimi. When Mimi was around, we used slippers.

After dinner, our special treat at her house was jello and ice cream. I never even cared that much for vanilla ice cream. But this was Mimi's treat and it always tasted good.

At Mimi's house, going in the car was special, especially if it rained. To this day, I think of Mimi when I am driving in the rain because Mimi loved it. I never noticed much in the car when I was young but when it rained, because of Mimi, we felt like the world belonged to us.

Christmas....Mimi made the season. She would find anything to wrap up for us just so we could feel loved. And when Mimi and Pappy drove up on Christmas, there was a scramble around the house that Santa's here. The bells would somehow ring. Of course, Santa would only come if all little kids were behind the closed door. More bells. A few ho ho ho's and whoala....Santa must have come because the tree had lots of presents. When we got older, we helped bring in the presents that filled Mimi and Pappy's car and sometimes the trailer.

Many times, we were treated to a stay over at Mimi and Pappy's house after Christmas. This particular sleepover always included a stop at some store, don't remember which store it was but the store

had the 50% off on all the Christmas stuff. It always amazed me that Mimi could be thinking of the next Christmas season when it was just the day after Christmas. But that was Mimi. Mimi knew how to bring love and joy to the season.

And buttons....that was Mimi's everlasting job. She always had a button that matched no matter what size or color you needed. If it didn't exactly match, she made it feel like it did. She taught me the technique she called, "Sewing on a button you never have to sew on again!" And did I tell you she also sewed up socks for us... Yep, she sewed our socks. She even found ways to knit up holes in sweaters. You see, Mimi noticed these things and she cared.

I bet Mom loved when Mimi came over because she always brought food. I also remember her cleaning the house. Oh yeah, she taught us the formal way to tuck in sheets and make a bed without creases or lumps. And do you know what...? It was fun because that was Mimi and she made it exciting.

Food is one of the ways Mimi showed her love for us. I especially will miss her apple sauce and the different ways she cut up the toast for us. Not only did she cut the toast vertically and diagonally but she cut it different ways into fourths both diagonally and vertically. It was always fun to eat just because...Mimi made it and it went well with the hot chocolate she still calls "cocoa" and besides she never ran out of marshmallows.

When we lived at the ranch recently, that red couch still reminded me of sitting down religiously each evening at her house to watch a show or two on TV. Mimi and Pappy had a constant squabble over their two favorite shows: Lawrence Welk (Mimi) and Wrestling (Pappy). I didn't care for either one so I just watched the fascinating lamp that had a shade that seemed to move and I tried to figure out how. It didn't matter what was on TV, we were at Mimi's and Pappy's house, with the blanket over our laps and our slippers on. I still think of Mimi when I fly on airplanes and put the blanket over me. It's not the warmth that is always the reason....it's just the love

and care you feel.

It's amazing how one person can stir up memories on the simplest thing in life but that's just Mimi and that's how it is.

Love,
Kathy

Dear Mimi,

While growing up, I have so many good memories of you. Looking out the front window, waiting for you and Pappy to drive up, was a happy anticipation. Spending the night at your house on New Year's Eve was always fun and exciting; whether it was in Ben Lomand or at the ranch in Watsonville. But one of the warmest memories that I can think of was much more recent. When Heather, Cortnie, Kyle and I would spend the night at your house at times, I always enjoyed setting on the side porch with you. We would sit and relax while taking in the warm sunshine. We would talk about anything and everything under the sun, often with one or more of the kids at our feet. At the time you told me that you and Pappy would do the same thing each afternoon. I was honored to be able to share that special time with you, as Pappy did.

Now, I enjoy reminiscing about times past with you. I like hearing stories over again, because often there's a little tidbit that I had previously missed. And even now, after listening to what I thought were all of your anecdotes, you sneak one in that I never knew about before.

Mimi, I feel so fortunate that our family has been able to be with you for so long, and that my children have been able to grow up knowing you. Not too many people have such an experience with their grandmother, great grandmother, and great great grandmother. Happy, happy birthday. Thank you for all the memories. I cherish them. I love you, and God bless you.

Love,
Teri.

Mimi,

Being one of ten children I have treasured the special place you made for me. Early on I became your shadow; following ever close. In Ben Lomond Pappy made my very own stepping stool to help you in the kitchen. I was never a picky eater but there were a couple of things I didn't care for, or as Pappy taught me, "were interesting". The day you caught me plugging my nose to drink milk I thought you would be very disappointed but you weren't. On the contrary you were surprised that I cared so much for your feelings that I wouldn't confess my dislike of milk. Your compassion extended year after year as you made a special corner of the cake with no walnuts (another dislike). I watched you make sure that everyone knew that piece was just for me. It made me feel special because knowing your frustration with picky eaters you showed compassion for my flaws. I learned later in life that it is the thin skin on the walnut that I don't like. I'm sure glad I didn't know that back then because it would have been a lot of work for you to peel the thin skin off of all those walnuts.

I loved staying at you house. Every night we would say prayers and you would tuck me in with a blessing. The same blessing my Daddy gave me, and I now give you when ending our visit. Even as a young adult beginning college you took me into your home balancing caring for me with my destined independence.

Mimi, you taught me lessons of life. Not just cooking and painting but you shared your experiences of love, relationships and marriage. You talked with me about boys, and sex, and drugs. I have to admit it was awkward coming from my grandmother, but I knew you cared deeply. And yes, you taught me to worry. I hated the way you and Dad worried so much but truth be told the first thing I said when Hannah was born was, "Now I know why Dad worries so much". My children were doomed! You taught me about God and faith and the joy of the simple gifts in life.

The books you wrote of your life and Pappy's life are a treasure now and for generations to come. I am delighted and grateful that you have passed on your lives and memories for my children and their children and their children's children, and on and on. Mimi, you are 100 years old!!!! Your life continues in each of us and our offspring. We are so blessed.

Snoozy Suzie sits at my bedside with her peaceful dreamlike smile and new "doo" that Tierney gave her. She wears her cap at night when I sleep. Not everyone sees her beauty but when I tell them about her life with you she is the most beautiful doll in the whole wide world. I hold her tightly when I want to be close to you and though the distance between us is miles away I am right there with you. Even without Snoozy Suzie, you are forever in your own special place

in my heart that I carry though this world and influences who I am. My deepest gratitude for your contribution in making me the person I am. What a wonderful gift you have given our family, even those not yet born. A gift of self that lives in each of us, giving us a sense of home and belonging.

Holding you in my heart,
Suzie (Mary Susan Aldridge Genoar)

Mimi

By Diane (Aldridge) Robinson

I'll always treasure the memories I have of visiting Mimi at "the Ranch". She always made it a special time in so many ways. I wanted to share some of those that are etched in my mind when I think back on the time I spent with my Grandmother as a child. Here is a day in the life at "The Ranch" with Mimi.

One of my earliest memories is waking up in the mornings at Mimi's house. I would feel the chill when I got out of bed and made my way to the kitchen. The kitchen door would always be closed keeping in the warmth. As I drew near to the kitchen I could smell breakfast and feel the warmth coming from the potbellied stove that Mimi would get started every morning. When I opened the kitchen door the cozy atmosphere greeted me. It was nice and warm and breakfast was always sizzling on the stove. Mimi would be bustling around in the kitchen always humming a catchy tune. She must have been up early because I would always have a nice home cooked breakfast waiting for me. As I look back, I really appreciate the time she spent and the love she put into each meal she would prepare for us. Mimi always made meals special occasions. Pappy would be right there helping with the meals also. But only one of them could be in the kitchen at one time so I think they shared kitchen duty.

After breakfast it was time for Mimi to tidy up the house and we would be told to go outside and play. We would help Pappy around "The Ranch" working with him in the greenhouse, picking the apples in the orchard, taking our trips down to the basement to check on the preserves or look for a tool, and getting the occasional tractor ride on the "back 40". Soon we would see Mimi come out to tend her garden. She loved gardening. I will always remember the array of flowering plants she had around her house especially the beautiful roses.

The mornings would pass in no time with all the fun we had outside playing. Soon we would hear the clanging of the "lunch bell" that Mimi would use as a signal to Pappy and all of us to come in and wash up for lunch. No matter where we were we could hear that bell and come running. There was always something to look forward to when we heard that bell because surely a feast would be waiting for us.

After lunch we would help Mimi with the dishes, she always appreciated the help. We could then spend some time looking at her toy cabinet where she kept toys and antiques that she had when she was a little girl or that Dad had when he was little. They were all displayed in this cabinet where we could look but not touch! We would also go into her spare bedroom and look for the Monkey. We knew the stuffed Monkey was in the closet but every time the closet door was opened I would get startled and jump just from the sight of that scary Monkey. I think Pappy enjoyed showing that to us.

I also remember seeing Mimi's lovely paintings hung on the walls. I was always

amazed at her creative ability to paint. I wish I had some of her talent.

After a little play time inside Mimi would want us children to get some fresh air and shooed us outside again. We found plenty to keep us occupied outside. Mark, Nancy and I would play for hours whether it was playing in our make shift tree house inside the eucalyptus trees, having fun in the orchard, petting & feeding the horses or pestering Pappy.

We would soon hear the dinner bell that Mimi would ring to call us all in. We would all look forward to a nice warm meal that Mimi had prepared for us. After the meal we would wash up and get into our pajamas. Then we would all sit in the living room watching TV. Some of Mimi and Pappy's favorites were The Wonderful World of Disney, Hee Haw, and Lawrence Welk. Any animal documentary would be enjoyed too. I wonder whose favorites these shows were theirs or ours?

Then it was off to bed in the wonderful spare bedroom Mimi had at the far end of the house. I remember one evening we were just put to bed when there was an earthquake. Nancy and I both thought someone was under our bed shaking it. We ran as fast as we could to Mimi and Pappy and it was quite some time before Mimi could convince us to go back to bed.

As I have spent time looking back on all the wonderful childhood memories I have with my grandmother, Mimi I realized what a treasure those memories are. I also realize what a blessing Mimi is in my life right now. She has given me so much through the years that neither time nor distance can ever take away. Mimi, you will always be close to my heart and loved deeply.

When I think of Mimi it invokes more of a collection of memories and feelings rather than a specific event that stands out among the rest. As I suspect like most people, these thoughts usually take me back to the ranch because that is where I think of Mimi as her most comfortable.

Staying at the ranch was like the epitome of childhood lazy days. Oh, once in a while, I would talk Mimi into letting me work for money. This would consist of raiding the garden for snails at ten cents a bucket or sweeping off the porch for a nickel. But mostly, I would just be able to do whatever I felt.

There were times I would play with Diane and Mark all day outside and when I say "I" it usually was with one or both of them. We would play house in the old eucalyptus tree or taste a variety of delicious fruits from the buffet in the orchard. The times spent outside were usually with Pappy but there were many times Mimi invited me to follow her to the hydrangea bush, the front garden, or, as a special treat, her prized rose bushes to pick flowers. Knowing not to touch Mimi's flowers without permission (which, of course, I *never* did), I would wander to the lower forty and bring her a bunch of mustard greens filled with the beautiful, tiny, yellow flowers. Mimi would proudly place them in one of her vases and treat them as if a special delivery from the florist had arrived. There were many days I just would swing on the hammock on the front lawn looking at the birds dipping their beaks in the birdbath, or reading a book or just taking a summer nap.

Whether the cool, Watsonville fog had lifted or not, we would sometimes eat lunch outside on the front lawn at the picnic table. Mimi would serve one of her specialties I love such as tamale pie or Spanish squash. Or maybe we would dine on the sandwiches I helped Mimi make. Mimi would always compliment me on the outstanding sandwiches even though to an outsider it looked like ordinary turkey and lettuce.

Spending time in the house with Mimi was always a special treat. I looked forward to the times when she would bring out the box of toys she used to play with as a child. I loved playing with her baby doll and rocking it in the cradle. Mimi also would show me how to sew. She helped me practice threading the needle and taught me how to make the knot by wrapping the string around the end of my finger and twisting it off. Once in a while, with Mimi by my side, I was allowed to carefully hold the delicate items displayed in the case in the sunroom.

As I write, I remember more and more little, seemingly insignificant details that make up my collage of memories; too many to jot down here. I suppose the moral or summary after dwelling in this history of many types of memories and feelings is that today when I visit with Mimi, she makes sure I feel loved.

Love,

Nancy

I originally wanted to write something as memorable as possible. Unfortunately, I found myself stuck without much thought. Then I realized, what is more important than simply having a fond memory of someone?

Everyone affects one another in some way, and we each give and take memories and experiences with every person who enters our realm throughout life. Mimi has provided so many memories that stay with me and are part of my day to day experiences. Below are snippets that form a part of my existence.

The warmth of the kitchen at the ranch when waking in the morning. I think of the times I used to spend the night at the ranch and walk on the cold floor through the house in the morning. But I knew as soon as I reached the kitchen it would be warm, cozy, and inviting for a sleepy and hungry boy. Mimi would be preparing something on the stove and immediately greet me by asking what I'd like to eat for breakfast. The smells were wonderful and the feeling inviting.

When I turned thirteen, Mimi presented me with a gift. She told me to go look in her closet, and there I found an old but well kept BB gun. Wow! I felt so proud to have the responsibility of owning a BB gun. I still have the gun and it shoots as straight as ever.

Corned beef with homemade horseradish -- yum. I don't eat most meat anymore and this is definitely one meal that sometimes tempts me. I will always associate it with Mimi since she would often prepare it for supper. It was one of my favorite meals. Again, the smells of the kitchen, the warmth of the dinner table, the love of grandparents remain with me.

One time I spent the night at the ranch and it was extremely dark. So dark in the middle of the night that I literally couldn't see my hand in front of my face. Needless to say, this was a bit overwhelming for a young child. The next day I somewhat reluctantly presented my problem to Mimi. She asked, "What light is it that you have at home?" Confused, I replied, "I don't know.... Maybe a streetlight?" I really didn't know why it wasn't so dark in my room at home. Mimi chuckled, "Ok we'll set up a streetlight for you so it won't be so dark." For the rest of my visit, and subsequent overnight visits, I had a small light to ease the uncomfortable feeling of complete darkness. Another warm feeling Mimi gave me to take with me in life.

The thriftiness of Mimi is also a quality that sticks with me. I still get a chuckle from this one. When I was young, Mimi gave me a cough drop -- I believe I had a small cough or cold. She gave me the cough drop and said, "Keep the wrapper in your pocket. When you are halfway finished sucking on the cough drop, put it in the wrapper and save the rest for later." Well, the cough drop tasted so good that I forgot to save some of it. Later, Mimi asked me if I kept half in the wrapper. Whoops! I sheepishly informed her that I had forgotten, and was expecting some type of reprimand. From what I remember, she didn't really say anything and let it go. Phew!

Once when I was a boy I told Mimi a joke. "What goes up but never comes down?" She gave up. "Your age!" She didn't laugh, hmmm. "Don't you get it?" I asked. She nervously replied, "I'm afraid to ask why the answer is 'my egg'; I don't know if I want to know." A simple miscommunication, but a funny one at that.

Poor Mimi, the victim of an innocent young toddler. Not me, but my son Christopher. Mimi had a power chair when she stayed with Mom and Dad. It assisted her to sit down in and get up from the chair by way of an electric motor. The chair was plugged into a GFI outlet in the sunroom and Mom & Dad were babysitting Christopher. He was probably about three years old and intrigued by the colorful buttons on the outlet. Apparently he pressed the 'Test' button while Mimi was sitting in the chair and Mimi was stranded! The circuit was closed so the chair could no longer perform its function of rising up and down when needed. No worries though, Mom and Dad soon rescued her and 'reset' the outlet so the chair would work again. Dad and I still have a laugh about this one every once in awhile.

These are just a few of the colorful memories that Mimi has provided me over the years. I love you Mimi, you are always in my prayers -- and happy 100th birthday!

Love,

Mark

MIMI,

THE HOUSE IN SAN JOSE HAD A BIRDCAGE AS YOU WENT IN THE FRONT DOOR. I CAN REMEMBER LOTS OF GREEN IN THE BACK YARD.

THE HOUSE IN BEN LOMEND IS WHERE PAPPY HAD A WORK SHOP DOWN UNDER THE BACK. THEY HAD A BIG WOOD TABLE AND CHAIRS IN THE DINNING ROOM, I WOULD SIT ON THE FLOOR UNDER IT.

THERE WAS A DAY AT THE RANCH, WITH A LOT OF PEOPLE, FAMILY AND FRIENDS. WE WERE RIDING 'BUCK'. THERE WERE ABOUT FOUR OF US ON HIS BACK WHEN HE THREW US. I THINK THAT SCARED US MORE THAN ANYTHING.

A COUPLE OF THINGS AT THE RANCH WERE A LITTLE SCARY FOR A LITTLE GIRL, SUCH AS THE MONKEY IN THE CLOSET AND EVEN THE ELK HEAD IN THE LIVING ROOM. WHAT WAS FUN WAS CLIMBING IN ALL THE TREES,

WHEN I WAS ABOUT 10 OR 11 YEARS OLD, I MADE APRONS FOR MY GRANDMOTHERS FOR CHRISTMAS. I DID THIS FOR TWO YEARS. I MADE A YELLOW ONE FOR MIMI.

RYAN AND MARK REMEMBER GOING TO THE RANCH AND PLAYING IN THE GARDEN OR HELPING PAPPY GATHER VEGETABLES. FEEDING THE HORSES AS WELL. THEY BOTH REMEMBER THE MONKEY IN THE CLOSET! MARK THOUGHT IT WAS COOL.

LOVE,

JUDY (REAVES) COLE (04-01-54)

DONALD COLE (01-23-54)

RYAN COLE (04-02-81)

MARK COLE (11-27-82)

We have many fond memories with Mimi, our family spent countless afternoons at the ranch with Mimi and Pappy. Jason and I always following Pappy around the yard while Gail, Tammy, and Brook sat inside the house with Mimi listening to all the stories about when Mimi was a girl, and looking at pictures, just visiting and having a wonderful time laughing and carrying on. These are the happiest memories I have of Mimi because she is such an amazing person and has touched the lives of my family and I in a way that we will always be grateful for.

Love,

Randy

To My Godmother Mimi
for her 100th birthday.

Dear Mimi,
Thank you
for loving my dad
and contributing to his smile...
for embracing him and caring
when he was just a child.

Influenced by his raising
dad learned to love and live,
now I am blessed
and benefit
from the generous heart
he gives.

When dad brought us
out to your ranch
to see you
and to visit,
you always wore an apron
and I rarely saw you sit.

I know I tried your patience
on more than one occasion,
like when my parents
simply needed
a well-deserved vacation.

You made the best grape juice
I ever got to drink.
I saw you work
so long and hard
right at your kitchen sink.

I loved the way
the pantry looked
all filled with pretty cannings,
a wealth of food
prepared with love
and fit for even kings.
To pick the fruit
right from the trees
and harvest vegetables
was fun but
not as interesting
as being in your stable.

The smell of hay and horsehair
has always been alluring
I guess some things
just never change –
which can be quite assuring.

Though our visits were infrequent
they left lifelong impressions
of self-reliant country life,
of family and traditions.

The legacy you share with me
of grit and fortitude,
and the encouragement
you gave to me
I feel such gratitude.

Love from Your Goddaughter

Michele

Great Grandchildren

Time as I've known it doesn't take much time to pass by me
Minutes into hours turn into days, turn into years they hurry by me
Still I love to see the sun go down and the world go 'round

I love to see the morning as it steals across the sky
I love to remember and I love to wonder why

I hope that you will think of me in moments when you're
Happy and you're smiling
And that these thoughts will comfort you
On days that you are lonely and feel like crying

And that you'll love to see the sun go down
And the world go 'round and around
Around

(John Denver)

Memories of Mimi

From the time I was a baby, to today, my Great-Grandmother, Mimi, has always been a guiding light in my life, and an inspiration. She is one of the most interesting people I have ever known, and has a tenderhearted, gentle spirit. She has always been a person that I have looked up to, as a good example, of how I should live my life, how to think, and how to behave. She is a very special person, and I will forever appreciate all that she has taught and given to me.

The first story I remember Mimi telling me, was about the time she and Pappy took care of me, and she taught me how to walk. I even have a picture of her holding my hand as she walked me down the sidewalk in front of our house. That is a story I have heard time and time again from Mimi. She was so proud to know that she was the one who taught me to walk. A memory I'll never forget.

The second story, was about when she and Pappy came to visit our little family in Colorado. How they woke up on Christmas morning to snow all around. Her first white Christmas! Pappy and Dad, also shoveled the snow along the walkways, and built a snowman. Then, once the sidewalks were cleared Pappy and Dad taught Tina and I how to ride our brand new bikes from Grandma Pasty and Pop. Mimi remembered watching with my Mom, and feeling so happy to be there with us. We were happy they were there, too.

Then there is the third story, the one about our trip to Yosemite, and the bears. We had all gone to Yosemite, and stayed in the campgrounds there. Well, anyone who's ever been to Yosemite knows about the bears, and when we went to bed the first night, we slept in the tent, while Mimi and Pappy slept in our camper. During the night we awoke to creaking sounds, and looked out to see the camper shaking. Mimi and Pappy were inside the camper of the truck, and our food was in the front seat. (Mind you, this was before the bears got too smart, and they had to put in bear boxes.) The camper was shaking, because a bear smelled the food inside and was trying to get to it. Luckily, something scared him off, and everyone went back to sleep. At least that's what Mimi and Pappy said was going on. Wink! Wink! Nudge! Nudge! Say no More! The next morning we all got up and went outside, and noticed that the car across the road, had been broken into by one of the bears. It's side window was peeled down like a banana, and there were gum wrappers leading all the way to the trash cans.

Mimi has always been concerned with and encouraged me in everything that I have done in my

life: in school, in work, in my relationship with my husband, Sharon, and our health. Her books will leave a legacy for all of us, and have inspired me to find out more about my family's history. She has always made everything she talked about seem so interesting, and every story about our family so fascinating.

I remember going to the ranch, as a little girl, and having such a fun time riding in the tractor, feeding my Dad's horses, playing in the eucalyptus tree by the road, smelling Mimi's roses, drinking fresh spring water from the drinking fountain, picking apples in the orchard, sneaking into the back bedroom to peek at the scary monkey in the closet, hearing Mimi ring the dinner bell to let all of us know that it was time to eat. I remember the food she would fix, and how good it would taste. She was such a good cook. She was the one who taught me to eat scrambled eggs with ketchup and toast. Another memory I have, was of the little knick knacks she had around the house. But, my fondest memories were of the night I went home with Mimi and Pappy to spend the night. I slept in their room, next to the window. The house was dark, and quiet except for the radio playing Paul Harvey on KGO. It helped me fall asleep. Then, there was the rosewater soap or lotion that Mimi would use. That scent is now my favorite, and I use it all the time. She also treasured her roses in the front yard. I now have roses of my own in my yard, because of her. In addition, I have planned to name my little girl, when I have one, Rebecca Rose Boxer. Rose, to name her after Mimi.

I remember staying at the cabin at Arroyo Seco with Mimi and Pappy, and sitting in the front room listening to John Denver, and Peter, Paul, and Mary. Pappy and Dad would go outside and barbeque something for us to eat, and we would go to Big Rock to swim. Both Mimi and Pappy were avid lovers of nature, which is where I'm sure my Dad got his love of nature from. Then, he passed it down to Tina and I. I remember going to Pinto Lake to feed the ducks and play. Mimi and my Mom would always pack a good picnic lunch for all of us.

I know a lot of memories I could tell you about, but they would probably fill a book of my own. I would just like to thank Mimi for everything she has ever done for me, and to let her know how much I love her, and am thankful to God for letting me have known her for as long as I have. I wish that my children could know her as I have, but I will be sure to tell them all about her. Happy 100th Birthday, Mimi! God bless You!

Love,
Tammi

Dearest Mimi,

Do you remember these...

The smell of nasturtiums in the window box, the toy chicken that laid eggs in the nick-knack case, the old coTtage pot belly stove in the sunroom where I branded my arm with a "T", "Vicki darling", "Cres dear", "how are the kiddies doing" and "Oh for pity sake!" I remember these...

Cold drinks in the aluminum cups, the squeak of the old back porch screen door, Tammi and I riding in the back of Pappy's tractor, chewing on rhubarb from the garden, and horses whinnying in the pasture. I hold all these dear...

The smell of sawdust and sweet apples in the basement, the ringing of the dinner bell, your whistle to Pappy, "Suffer N' Succotash!", the patio swing in the shade and your maiden hair ferns. It's like it was yesterday...

The hallway filled with books, the Hawaiian ukulele you played for me, Tammi and I sneaking sugar from the candy cabinet, picking apples in the orchard, making cider in the kitchen and a cool drink of water from the fountain in your rose garden. These childhood memories are etched into my heart...

How wonderful it was to bring my children, Zachary and Aspen to meet you, their great great grandmother and watching you lovingly hold them. They will share in the memories I have of you throughout their lives and learn from lessons you have taught me. I have already begun to read them your books, starting with, A White Christmas in Colorado. Such a sweet memory from my childhood. Thank you Mimi for taking the time to share your memories with us through your writings, I will treasure them always.

I could never tell you in words of the love, deep respect and appreciation I have for you. It is an honor to be your great granddaughter. You are an inspiration to all of us. You will forever hold a very special place in my heart.

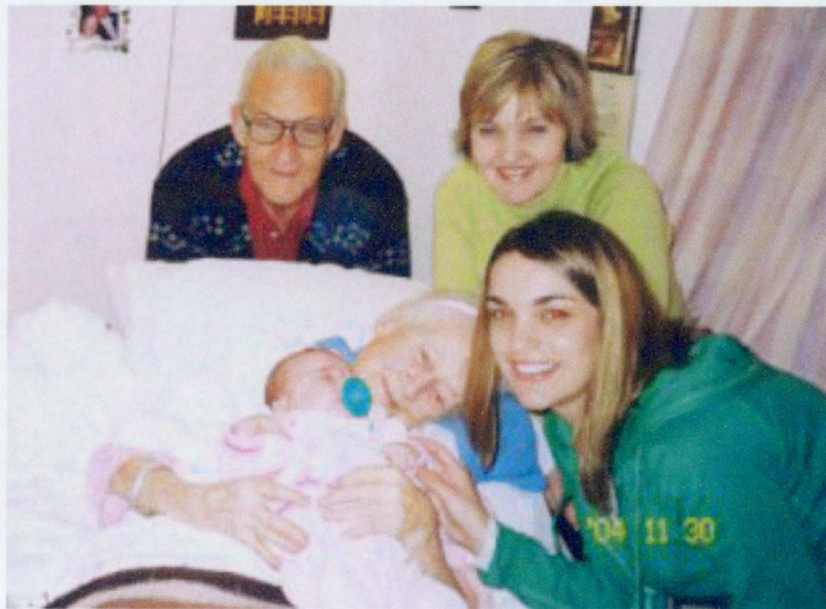
Happy, Happy 100th Birthday Mimi... I love you...

God bless you

Tina Jean







Mimi,

Happy Birthday 100 times over! We are all so blessed to have you in our lives. One of my most special memories that I will hold forever close to my heart is the day you met Maren. How special to bring you daughter to meet your Great Grandmother, her Great Great Grandmother. I treasure the picture we have of you, Grandpa, my Mom, Maren and myself – five generations – now that's a legacy.

When you hear Great Grandmother you think of a rocking chair, some knitting needles and maybe even some tea. Let me tell you about my Great Grandmother Mimi. It was 1984 when we moved to Watsonville with Mimi and Pappy. It was the fall; time to harvest the apples, gather the walnuts and the start to a new school year. With this time of year also comes Halloween. Being the new kid on the block I had to find the perfect Halloween costume, one that no one else would have ever thought of. I knew just who to go to.

"Hmmm..... Maybe a dragon, we could paint some boxes green." Mimi just kinda looked at me, obviously not impressed. "Matt could jump in with me and we could be a really BIG Dragon," I said trying to think outside of the box. But Mimi was still not impressed. She said "I have just the costume for you". We went to her closet and she pulled out a black dress made of sequins and rimmed with tassels. It was stunning. A flapper – why didn't I think of that?

Still to this day I do not know what is more astounding; that Mimi let me a fourth graded borrow such a special dress or that a fourth graded fit into the same dress Mimi wore in her twenties. I know one thing for certain. I had the best Halloween custom I will ever have and I was the new kid on block who felt like a million dollars.

Mimi, thank you for living a life full of adventure and style and sharing it with all of us. I love you.

Love,
Kristen

I have always hated onions. I'm not sure why, but it is a fact and I go to extreme lengths not to eat them. What does this have to do with Mimi you may ask? Well, let me tell you the story.

We (me, Kristen and Matt) moved with my mom from Los Angeles to Santa Cruz when I was going into 6th grade. For about a year (I think) we lived with Mimi and Pappy on the ranch. It was a great place to be young, with lots of space to run around and secret places to discover. I remember feeding crab apples on a stick to the horses with Pappy while he told us stories about how he had 'broken' one of them when they had been an untamed foal. According to him, he had placed a pillow on the young horses back and jumped on and ridden until either the horse got used to it or he was bucked off. In the latter case, he hopped back on and kept riding until he had tamed the 'cotton-picker' (maybe not PC, but that is what he called the horses and anyone who accidentally tromped through his garden). Most of my memories of Mimi coalesce around the kitchen table. We would come in from playing and hang out around the table while Mimi served us cold drinks; usually some sort of colored sugar water which really hit the spot after a hard day of running through the orchard. She would tell us stories and gossip while we sat there enjoying our drinks; a very pleasant, even idyllic way to wind down after cavorting around the ranch for a day.

We would also eat dinner there. As much as I appreciated the post play gatherings, I dreaded having to sit down at the very same table for dinner. I had made it clear to Mimi that onions were not my preferred vegetable. Apparently, Mimi decided to use Pappy's horse breaking strategy to rid me of my onion aversion. At first she would put them in the meal in plain view and try to make me eat them. This usually resulted in me sitting at the dinner table for a while after everyone had left and staring at a plate empty of everything except a pile of onions. This was not a very successful strategy, as I was a stubborn foal who was not that easily broken and my feelings about that vegetable were unchanged. At some point however, I noticed that we had not had onions in our meals for some time. This worried me. It was very unlike Mimi to give up that easily and, according to Pappy's plan for horse taming, this would not have been a good way of bringing me around to the pleasures of the onion. I started to suspect that something sinister was going on. At our next meal I used my fork and knife to perform a dissection.

It is well documented in the scientific literature that memories storage is greatly enhanced during intense emotional experiences. I don't remember what Mimi served us that evening, but what is emblazoned in my memory is that the dish contained microscopic pieces of onions. Apparently I had been eating onions for some time without my knowledge. Mimi got a real kick out of this.

Unfortunately, this story does not have a happy ending. I am still a wild horse (albeit not a foal anymore) and shy away from onions. Maybe she would have broken me of my onion problem if she would have had more time, but we moved out soon after that. I do appreciate, however, Mimi's concern about my eating habits and love to think about how satisfied she must have been in her onion dicing plan. Thanks Mimi for trying better my life. I may not have appreciated it at the time, but it makes for a great memory now.

Happy Birthday Mimi, I love you!
Maybe next time I visit I'll bring you a home cooked meal. Tell me again what foods you don't like...

Love, Josh

Of the many memories I have of Mimi from growing up, there are two that stand out the most. The first, is that I remember going through an old photo album of her younger days, and I remember thinking that the bathing suits she wore as a young woman were so funny (mainly because they didn't look at all like the bathing suits I was used to seeing). Anyway, when I started laughing about them, I remember her saying to me, "Yes, I know those bathing suits don't look like they'd be very flattering, but I still looked good in mine". Another strong memory I have of Mimi, was of the times I visited her at the ranch. She had these tiny seashells on one of her display shelves, and I used to love them! I was littler, so they were perfectly my size. When she moved out of the ranch, I remember going to Grandma and Grandpa's house, and they had some things from the ranch that were assigned to specific family members. For me, there were these beautiful tea cups and saucers, and also a small white box. Grandma told me that Mimi made it clear to her that the contents of that white box were to be given to me. What was in the small white box? The tiny shells that I had loved so much growing up. Mimi had remembered how much they meant to me. Happy Birthday Mimi!

Emily

If I had picture in my head of my great-grandmother Mimi and me, it would be an old photograph of her holding me when I was just a baby. One of my fondest (and most recent) memories of her would be when we visited her. As usual, she told humorous stories of different people and herself in the years gone by. This trip though, she told us about when my dad was being a little rascal at the Ranch. The details are a little cloudy, but I remember that she had told my dad to stay put (or something of the sort) and he ended up running down the block butt naked, with Mimi in hot pursuit. Although my father denied it, I'm pretty sure it was true because of his troublesome reputation (according to all his siblings). Other memories were of Christmas at grandma and grandpa's house. These memories included being a little deviant along with the other kids playing on Mimi's mechanical chair, with Grandma and Mimi warning us to get off. Whether it be the warm, loving arms, the false threats of "a good whoopin'", or the humorous anecdotes of years before my own, Mimi will always have a special place in my heart.

With much love,

Corey James Aldridge

Dear Mimi,

First of all, it gives us great pleasure to wish you a happy hundredth birthday. Our years are only a fraction compared to your vast century. Your life is full; it has seen the old made new, farms turned to factories then to malls, war time and peace time, life given and life taken. It has also seen the joy of an immense family of which you are the surviving leader. From just one of your children came a group so numerous that not one of us can feel alone. Your memories over the past 100 years are of so many that they could twist around ours forever. So as you remember what your life has seen, we wish to recall those memories of you that we hold so dearly. The first reminiscence from our treasured collection is from Meg and Tierney:

Because of the many miles that have always separated our homes, we did not get the chance to spend as much time with you as we could have hoped. However, in an attempt to better get to know you, Meg has read some of your books. Her favorite one is the one about all of the pets that you and your family have had over the years. From it she has learned what a caring and loving person you are, and she was able to absorb a few of the infinite pieces of your life. She hopes to read the rest of your collection of writings as time goes on.

Tierney remembers the days when we would visit Grandma and Grampa's house. We would enter the family room and you would be there, sitting in your big chair with a box of chocolates.

Both of us will always remember visiting you at the Mission Skilled Nursing Center in Santa Clara. We took pride in being the great-grandchildren that you asked to sing for you every time we visited; and every Christmas we looked forward to caroling up and down the halls in honor of you. The songs we sang will stay in our hearts forever, alongside the love and memories you gave us.

By living such a warm and cheerful life, you passed on many heartwarming memories, not only to Meg and Tierney, but to Elizabeth as well. Here are her recollections:

I recall the countless visits my dad and I made to you at your house on The Ranch in Watsonville. As we would walk up the steps to your house - a house that has witnessed so many changes and so much history - the harmonious tunes played by the wind chimes would greet us and fill our hearts with happiness. I remember listening with my childish curiosity as you and my dad talked about everything there was to talk about; from long ago memories to the trees in the orchard. As I listened, my eyes wandered around the sunroom to the walls, admiring your beautiful paintings that you had painted in years long past.

As the years passed by you moved away and our visits became less frequent. In an attempt to continue our cherished connection, I would chat on the phone with you every time you called for my dad. Those wonderful visits and conversations will stay in

my heart forever.

Like Elizabeth, Koreana had the pleasure of living on The Ranch that you and Pappy made such a beautiful home. Her memories, too, center around the house.

I look back on the afternoons when you would sit on your daybed with us gathered around you in the sunroom. You would sing beautiful songs as we listened and watched in a curious daze. We would attempt to remember the words of "The Boy Who Had A Goat" and practice all day so that we could recite it back to you and see the joy in your smile as you listened.

From the memories that we had at The Ranch, we will cherish them in our hearts and spirits forever. I still take pleasure in visiting you at the Mission Skilled Nursing Center.

After personally experiencing painting, I am in awe of your extraordinary talent and grand ability in art.

I am eternally grateful to you for providing me with so many wonderful memories.

Along with these memories comes our undying gratitude to you for all that you have given us. A family to love and be loved by, to talk to, and to confide in. You gave us cousins that are now our best friends; you passed on the tradition of our annual trip to Arroyo Seco that has been and will be followed for many years to come. It is difficult to express how thankful we are for these things, but we present this letter to you as a small token of all you've done for us. We hope that these gifts will continue to help us add to our collection of wonderful memories. Thank You, Mimi.

With Much Love,

Meg Kelsey, Elizabeth Rose, Tierney Claire, & Koreana Hope

HAPPY BIRTHDAY MIMI!

All these years I loved your smile and your love to everyone.
Listening to your stories about when you were a kid were very
inspiring. I remember when I was two years old and you lived with us
at the ranch. Those were wonderful times, and even now I'm glad to
see your smile.

Congratulations MIMI!
And Happy birthday!

From,
Justin.

Where artists and writers
create with style,
simplicity and elegance.
Where design is inspired
by fresh colors,
intriguing textures,
and handcrafted details.

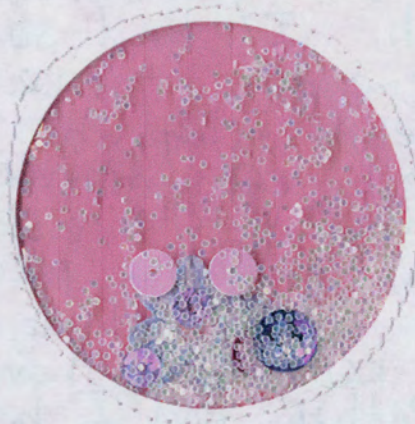
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Some women
are too special
for words...



Happy 100th Birthday Mimi!

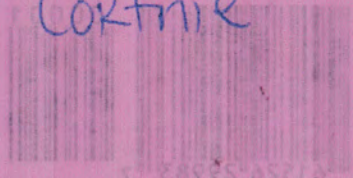
I have such great memories of spending the night over at your house on the ranch. I had so much fun spending time with you, especially when we would all eat dinner together in the kitchen, or sit and relax on the porch, with all that wisteria hanging over us. I remember how much fun Heather and I had looking at all the little knickknacks you kept in the glass case in the sun room. Mostly I just enjoyed spending time with you, and I always loved going to visit you. I still enjoy visiting with you and talking with you, and even though I am in Massachusetts, I think about you a lot. Have a wonderful day - I hope you get some yummy cake and other goodies!

...and you're
one of them.

Happy Birthday

Love,

Cortnie



CP507VE 054 AZU
CANADA 550 TCOMPTC

Dear Mimi,

I have been thinking of all of my best memories of you, as well as of Pappy, and most of them are from the ranch in Watsonville. Cortnie, Kyle, and I used to have so much fun there, both because we got to visit you and because it was a place we could do things we didn't normally do living in the city. It was always a good time for us being able to run around and climb trees, pick berries, feed and pet the horses with Pappy, and eat your wonderful home-cooked meals.

I remember Cortnie and I used to explore the old ranch house, pretending it was a haunted house like in a movie. We used to imagine that there would be a trap door under the hallway rugs that we could fall through any time we walked over them, or that the scary stuffed monkey in the unused bedroom would come to get us at night. We knew none of this was real, but the ranch was such a great place to pretend!

I think one of my favorite memories of you at the ranch is being allowed to play your piano that was in the parlor. I always enjoyed playing all of the new songs I learned for you, while you sat on the sofa or completed daily chores.

All of these times with you were such bright points in our childhoods, and I definitely cherish the memories I have of you growing up.

Congratulations on your 100th birthday, you are a special part of all of our lives!

Love,
Heather

Dear Mimi,

Though I am having trouble recalling specific, detailed memories, I can think of many snippets of the great times I used to have at the Ranch and elsewhere. The one constant in all of these thoughts is the warmth and love I've always felt from you and Pappy too. So here are a couple short vignettes that I recall:

One of the best memories I have is one year when you and Pappy came to Arroyo Seco for the annual camping trip. There was, as always, that warm and relaxed atmosphere amongst the oak trees. And of course, there were the ground squirrels! Being a young child still, I was of course full of energy and decided to chase the squirrels. You and Pappy just watched and, I'm sure, mused at how I could possibly still be chasing these little critters. Finally, Pappy added fuel to the fire by offering me a dime for every squirrel I caught. So what did I do—run faster of course! Though I never did make a single dime...

More memories I have center around life on the Ranch. I always remember looking forward to visiting, since I could shoot BB guns, feed the horses with Pappy, help pick apples, ride around on tractors, or climb the big eucalyptus tree out front. But the most memorable parts of these visits are the times when we all sat around the yellow Formica kitchen table and ate dinner together. I always cherished the family meals at the Ranch.

And finally, I remember when we came to visit you shortly after the 1989 earthquake. We were experiencing a lot of aftershocks throughout the visit, but one was so strong that it knocked over the bookcase in the front hall. Talk about excitement! Luckily, we were all just fine, and of course had a great story to write home about.

These are some of the fondest memories of time I've spent with you Mimi, though there are many more. I wish you a very Happy Birthday, and I love you.

Love,
Kyle

I don't have that many memories of Mimi before she was in the convalescent, because I was so young. However, the convalescent home did not stop memories from happening. I have many memories of Mimi, none of them bad. I love talking, singing, and listening to her. I have learned many exciting and interesting things. My favorite memory happened a while ago. My mom and I went into to see her and she was having a wonderful day. She decided she felt up to going outside with us. It was the most perfect day and we were the only ones out there. We smelled flowers, listened to the birds, and described how beautiful it was to her. Before we knew it, it had been more than an hour and it was time for us to go. Never again have I witnessed such a beautifully perfect day. Thank you Mimi for all that you have given me. I love you and God Bless.

~Hannah~

Dear Mimi,

We are very blessed to have a great grandmother your age. I don't get to see you very often but I still love you very much. You have lived through some of the most famous periods of time and experienced so much and every time I see you I am amazed at your kindness and positive attitude. May God Bless you in everything you do.

Love Jonathan.

MIMI

Congratulations!! You are a hundred. It is really cool to have a great grandmother that is 100 years old. I wish I was alive whenever you lived on The Ranch. It sounds fun to live on a ranch. I wonder what it would feel like to have horses to ride everyday. God bless you. I am blessed to have a 100 year old great grandmother.

Love Jacob

Dear Mimi,

Birthday cake \$15

Party hats and goody bags \$20

Panda shaped piñata \$16

A hug and kiss from someone you love priceless.

Just wanted to say, "Happy Birthday" and I treasure all the hugs and kisses you give me. And "Are you my boy?".

Love, Mitchell

Dear Mimi,

I just wanted to say, happy hundredth birthday. I've seen all your pictures of you on the walls by your bed and you look so pretty. But you are just as pretty now. I think it is cool that you made it to one hundred. I want to live until one hundred, too. So again, happy hundredth birthday.

Love, Nicole

Mimi was quizzing me on the sounds that animals make when I was 3 or 4 years old. This was when she lived with Grandma and Grandpa. I knew most of the animal sounds but I didn't know what sound the donkey made. She explained it to me and told me a story about a donkey at a farm.

Aunt Teri and I were visiting Mimi at the nursing home and Mimi told us about how they used to put candles on their Christmas tree. She said a couple of people's houses had burned down because of placing candles on the tree. I thought that was a crazy idea because the tree could easily catch on fire.

Love,
Christopher

Great ~ Great
Grandchildren

My Hands

*These hands are gnarled and crooked,
You might think from abuse, but they are
Gentle, loving hands, that
God has put to use*

*They are not tapered fingers bedecked
With jewels fine, but they are hands that*

Serve the Lord

I'm glad to say

"They're mine."

*By: Irma "Mimi" Reaves
1979*

~ OUR HANDS ~
THESE ARE THE HANDS OF THE FUTURE
NOW TINY, SMALL AND FRAIL.....
BUT EVERYDAY THEY'RE GROWING
AND YOU CAN NEVER TELL.....

THEY MAY BE THE HANDS OF A WRITER, A PAINTER OR A
NURSE
BUT ONE THING IS FOR CERTAIN, WHAT EVER THEY MAY DO.....

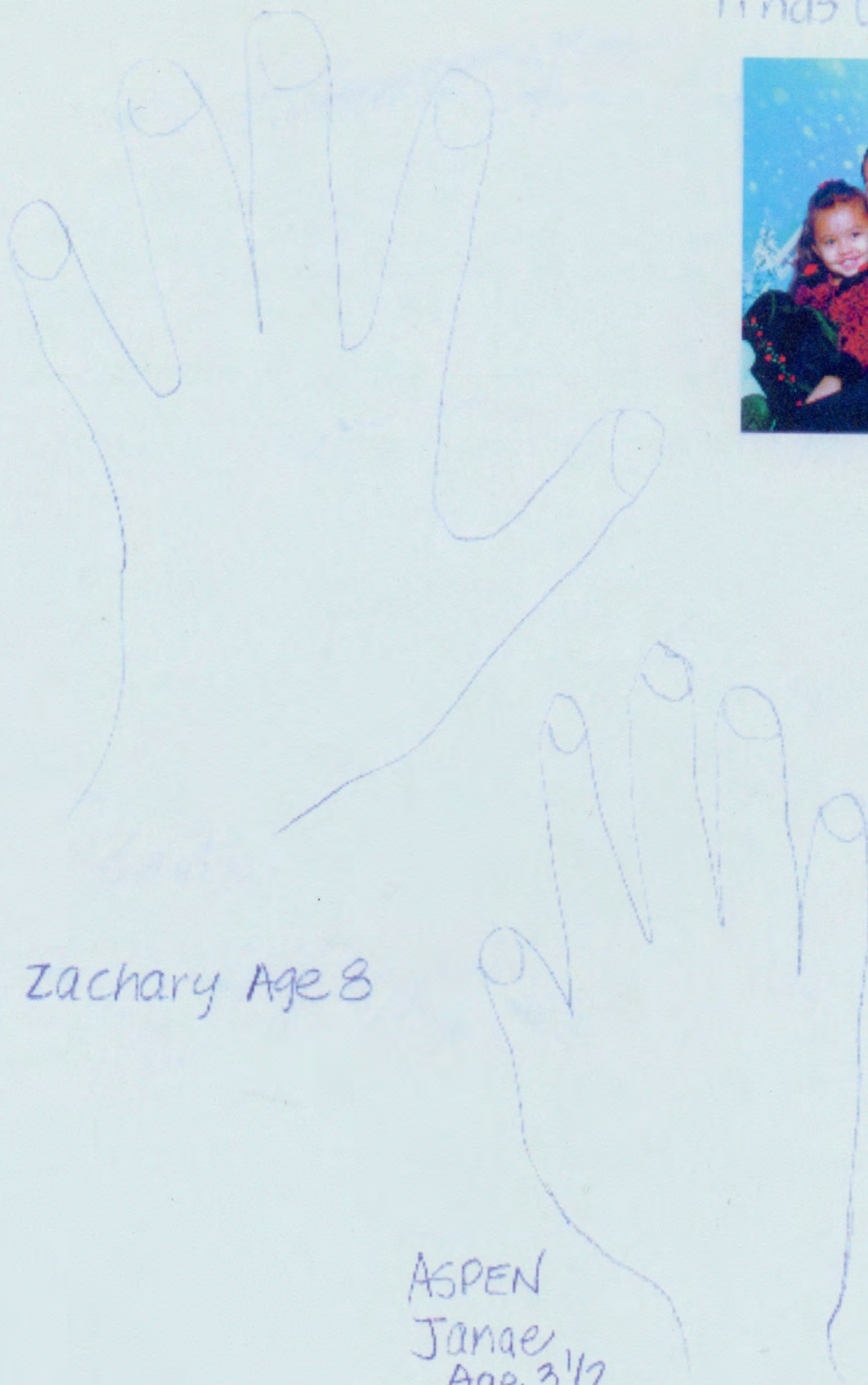
~ DEAR MIMI ~

WE HOLD THE FUTURE IN OUR HANDS
JUST BECAUSE OF YOU.....

FROM: YOUR GREAT, GREAT, GRANDCHILDREN
2006

~ WITH LOVE ~

Tina's Children



Zachary Age 8

ASPEN
Janae
Age 3 1/2

Thank you Mimi

For my great grandpa Bob

Because he gave me my Papa, cress

Who is very special to me.

He is my Buddy and shows me the right things to do.

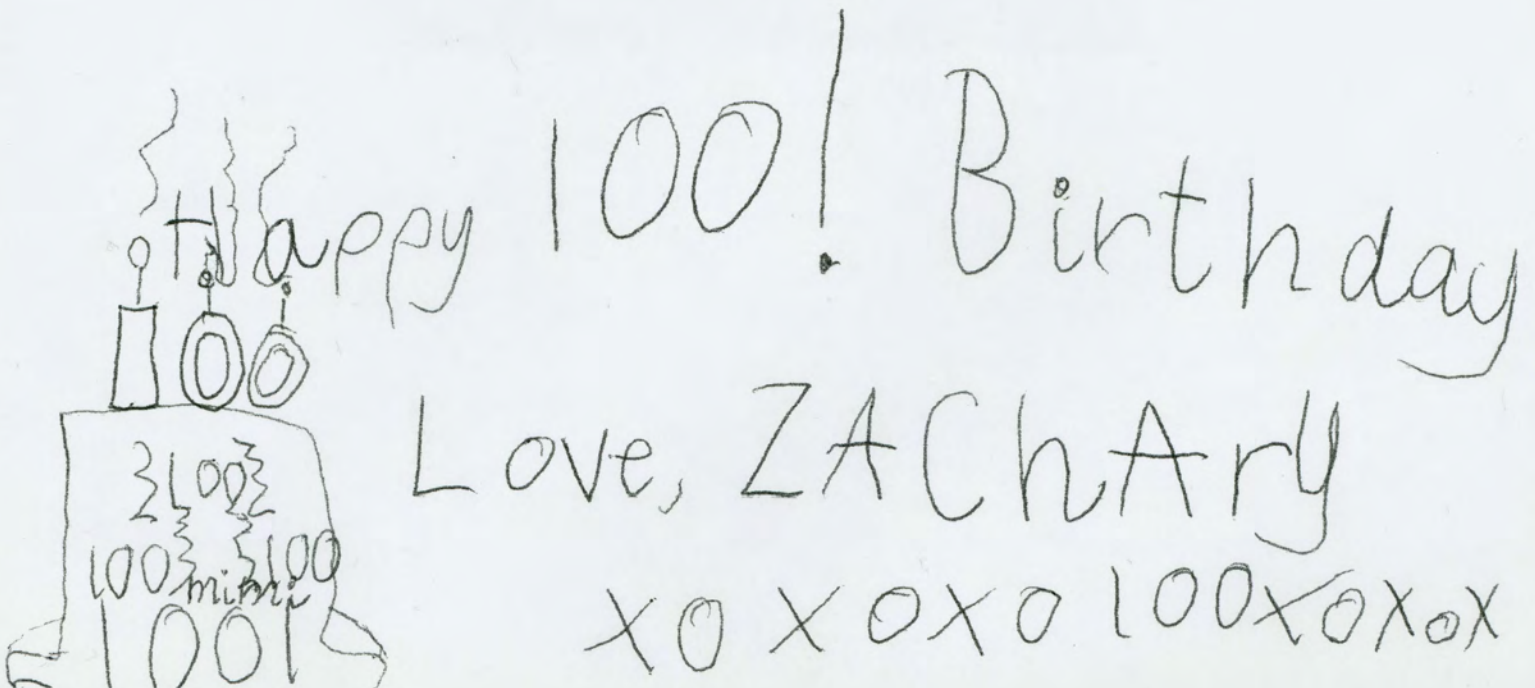
I heard about this from my Mom, Tina.

She said, my birthday is on the same day as your Dad's was

(He is my great-great-great grandpa OKsew)

December 27th.

I think that is pretty cool! I just turned 8 years old..



Maren Sheesley
(Kristen's Daughter)
Age 1



Family and Friends

Dear Mimi,

HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY!

It seems like yesterday that I first met you. You were so kind, caring and giving. You made me feel so welcome the day that Creston first took me to meet you and Pappy, at your home in Ben Lomond.

It has been over 35 years ago now, time goes by so fast. Thinking back, our days on this earth are so precious, and those special people God places in our path along the way bring us precious memories. There have been so many days spent with you that I will forever treasure. Although I was fortunate to have had two loving Grandmothers of my own, I grew to feel the same love for you. Thank you for being a Teacher and a Friend.

I remember when...I met Cres when I was 18 years old, and I couldn't believe how kind he was, it took some time for me to trust that he was for real. He was what I had been praying for. When we told you about our engagement, you were so happy for us, it made me feel that I was truly valued and accepted. You & I immediately began to talk about the wedding. You said, you would love to arrange the flowers for us, I was honored, and so we planned a trip to buy flowers.

At my surprise bridal shower there you were with Grandma Rex and Janet all giggling when I walked in embarrassed & surprised! You had made me a bridal bouquet out of serving spoons, spatulas, forks and all sorts of other things I could use in the kitchen, and it was adorned with lace, ribbon and a bride & groom on the top. It was the hit of the party!

Our wedding day at Villa Montalvo in Saratoga came, and there you were when I arrived, putting the final touches on the beautiful flowers in the white baskets. And who found a knife to cut the cake when I forgot that little detail? You did! You also arranged for Uncle Sonny's quartet to sing for us. They sounded beautiful as we came in to say our "I do's." What a day of love with our families all around.

I am reminded of all the carefree days Cres & I spent in the early years of our marriage. We made almost weekly trips to the ranch in Green Valley, to spend the weekend with You & Pappy. What fun we had! When Tammi was born, we brought her over to meet you on the 3rd day of her life. I remember how thrilled you were to first hold her in your arms.

Cres went away to camp for the National Guard, and you came to stay with Tammi & me the summer before her 1st birthday. I remember after trying and trying to get Tammi to stand on her own and walk, I came in to see you holding her by the hand, and then she began walking on her own. You started to laugh and say that she was waiting for her Great Grandmother to teach her to walk. I was so surprised!

When my dear younger Sister Connie died suddenly at the age of 17, I felt such a void without her. I thought I could never get over it. You were there to comfort me, more than you will ever know. I felt you truly understood, because you had lost many so dear to you. Thank you.

I remember too.....Cres & I came home one day from shopping, when we lived in Santa Clara, and there You & Pappy were in our front yard, planting some of your beautiful burgundy colored chrysanthemums, from the Ranch, in our flower beds! Who does that ?

There were trips we all took to the beach in your car, with the stickers on the dash to remind Pappy to drive friendly! And we were treated to your wonderful, one of kind potato salad to eat with our barbeque, once we found our picnic table on the shore. There were picnics at Pinto Lake, spending time with you in Arroyo Seco at the cabin, and camping trips to Yosemite.

In 1976 Cres and I moved to Lakewood, Colorado. We loved it at first, but soon felt lonely without family near. We would always look forward to trips to the mailbox, to find your letters waiting for us. On a cold snowy day in November, I remember, I opened your letter to say that Uncle Skip had bought you tickets to ride Amtrak to Denver for Christmas, and then you would fly back home. Cres & I were so happy!

We got to the train station in Denver to see you eagerly getting off. We asked you how your trip was, and you told us that you had to ride from Wyoming to Colorado backwards. So you were more than happy to finally be headed home with us. We spent time getting our Christmas surprises together on Christmas Eve, Tammi and Tina entertained us by singing some carols. Tammi, who was only five, started to sing The Twelve Days of Christmas... It was a rather long drawn out song, but we gave her our full attention. She got to "ten ladies dancing"... then she belted out... "eleven Lords a- *leaking*" (instead of leaping) you began to laugh so hard you cried! Poor Tammi didn't know what so funny so she continued singing. Each time it came up in the song, she innocently sang the same thing... and we all laughed again!

We went out to pick up a few things for Christmas dinner and it began to snow as we drove home in the car, what a delight. It was our first white Christmas. We were all like children, so excited! It was a magical time with "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas" playing on the radio. We were so happy you were with us, the time passed so fast! Then it was time to see you off at the airport. We were so excited for you to have your first plane ride, though, after we returned home it seemed so quiet and lonely.

Your last trip to visit us in Sacramento was so special to all of us. We were so happy to show you where Cres worked as a Park Ranger. You seemed so proud of him for doing what he always wanted to do. I know his love of nature is because he was taught by you, to respect and take care of what God has loaned to us, the earth.

Now Cres & I are grandparents, and now we understand a different love than any other we've known. Grandchildren take a special place in our hearts. As Grandparents, we hope we will show the love to Zachary & Aspen, our Grandchildren, that we saw demonstrated through our own grandparents. We have deep respect for the old ways. We honor those who went before us to make a better way for us and our families and their families in the future. You will live on through them as we tell them about the times of struggle and times of prosperity. Teaching them as we were taught that, as God's children, He will never give us more than we can bear, and that He is always as near as a prayer. We will pass the books down that you have written about your life, as a lasting legacy to future generations.

Thank you, dear Mimi, for the inspiration of your faith in God, and your gentle, happy spirit as a witness and love for Jesus Christ. I know how much you trust in the Lord, and that you realize how much he loves you. Your reward for a life serving others in love is waiting for you when you get home to Heaven.

Love,
Vicki Aldridge

Happy Birthday Mimi

What an honor and a pleasure to write to a dear friend on her 100th birthday. I have seen and heard of the love that you have for your family and friends. You are so caring and giving. What a great lady you are.

I know you have the love of Jesus in your heart, therefore you love like Jesus loves...as Jesus has loved us! You have lived your life thinking of others and going about doing good and being kind to all. You are a beautiful gracious soul.

I ask my Lord to help me be more like Him each day, and as I am reminded by your example, I will add your name to my prayer, to love not only as He has loved, but also as Mimi lives and loves.

If I don't see you again here on earth, I will see you in Heaven.

Jesus loves you and so do I.

Patsy
(Vicki's Mother)

Mimi,

I thank you for the recipes you shared with me.

I enjoyed our companionship for good food and the enjoyment we share in the consuming of it.

I'll always remember the time when we were at the ranch, and Emily said "Daddy" as clear as a bell, when she was only two months old, and we just looked at each other in disbelief.

Many memories, Many good times.

Love,

Colette

I remember the first time I met Mimi. It was the spring of 1988. Dan had made plans for us to have lunch with Mimi and Pappy, and Bob and Janet at the ranch. I remember feeling a little nervous about meeting Dan's grandparents. Well, as it turned out, I didn't need to feel nervous at all. Mimi and Pappy were both so friendly and welcoming and hospitable. After lunch I was alone with Mimi for a bit, and Mimi said to me, "Let me find something to give you, so you can remember the first time we met." She went into the other room and rummaged around for a short time. When she returned she had a small bowl type vase that sits on a pedestal. It is made out of green glass, and it is a lovely little vase for camellia or magnolia flowers. I still have that vase, and it is special to me, not because it's a lovely little vase, but because whenever I use it, or even just catch a glance of it when it's in the cupboard, I remember Mimi's kind, thoughtful gesture of giving something of herself to me to mark the day that we first met.

I remember another visit to the ranch about a year later. Dan and I were married by then, and I was pregnant with Elizabeth. Mimi, Pappy, Dan and I ate lunch together and visited for awhile, and then Dan and Pappy went outside to do some chores or something. I guess I was at that stage in my pregnancy where I often felt very tired, but I wasn't going to admit that to anyone. Well, after Mimi and I visited for a bit more, she asked me if I was tired and if I'd like to rest for awhile on the daybed in the sunroom. For a split second, I worried that it would be rude of me to take a rest instead of visit some more; but Mimi was so encouraging, and she made me feel right at home, so I told her yes, it would be very nice to rest a bit. She got a blanket and a pillow for me and really pampered me. I remember this visit because I really appreciated that Mimi was so understanding, accommodating and kind.

Little did I know that about a year later, Dan, Elizabeth and I would come to call the ranch our home. It was definitely an adjustment for me (and probably for Mimi, too, to have us living there); but after awhile I felt settled and adjusted to life on the ranch. My little kitchen in the mobile home was visible and within shouting distance to Mimi's kitchen. Mimi came up with a special term of endearment that we both started using: "my neighbor". If I called her on the phone, she would ask "How's my neighbor?" If Dan and I would drop in for a visit, I'd say "Hello neighbor!" One Christmas Mimi had a small package for me. It was a little mug that had a picture of a house on it and the words "you are a very special neighbor". This is another time that I appreciated Mimi's thoughtful, giving gesture, and I think we both had fun calling each other "my neighbor".

I remember one time when Mimi helped me to not take life so seriously. It was sometime between 8:00 and 8:30 a.m.. I know that because that's when

there is a fair bit of traffic on Green Valley Road and Wheelock Road because parents and students are driving to Monte Vista Christian School at that time. From inside the mobile home, I could hear some out of the ordinary traffic sounds. Cars were stopping suddenly and honking their horns. I looked out the window just in time to see Prince, Cres' horse that lived at the ranch, in the orchard across the street from us. He was just leaving the orchard, and he galloped across the road, back into the lower forty and then up the hill to his pasture. (This only took him a few seconds.) Well, I was both concerned and relieved that he was okay, and I hurried out to his pasture to check the fences. After making sure that he couldn't get out again, I went to tell Mimi about it. (Dan was at work, so he wouldn't hear about it until later.) I was still feeling somewhat alarmed and distressed about the whole thing. Mimi calmly listened to everything I had to say, and then she said "Well, maybe he wanted to taste the apples across the street for a change." I don't know why, but this memory of Mimi always give me a little chuckle.

This isn't really a specific memory about Mimi, it's just me sharing what I feel when I think of Mimi. What comes to mind first is that Mimi inspires me. She inspires me because of her resourcefulness and creativity. Many of the stories from Mimi's books illustrate the many ways that she was resourceful. I find it so interesting to read about what Mimi's life was like starting from when she was just a young girl in the early 1900's and continuing on through to when she was a much older person. Also, I really appreciate that Mimi took the time and energy to create a written record of many years of her life and experiences so that my family and her great grandchildren (and even future generations) can have a record of what life was like because times have changed so much, and they keep changing, and because it's special to know some personal stories about your elders.

So these are a few of my memories of Mimi. I am inspired by Mimi's resourcefulness and creativity, and I really appreciate Mimi's books, and especially Mimi's loving, giving spirit. Happy 100th birthday Mimi! I love you, Rita (Dan's wife).

I feel God really worked with Mimi allowing us to stay with her at the ranch when we first came out to California. It was so amazing to sit around the table and listen to her stories and journeys. She never missed a beat. Her memory was so great.

We also have a great memory of Mimi teaching the kids songs. The kids loved singing songs to her and she enjoyed teaching them the songs she knew. There were moments when the music went beyond age, experience, and even sight.

Every time we visited Mimi at the nursing home, she always found something to give to us. Mimi always has such a giving heart. Even though she had only a small area to live, and she couldn't see or walk well anymore, she still gave. This will always stay in my heart.

Mimi is a treasure and a blessing to all who meet her.

Thank you, Mimi,

Ray

P.S. If President Bush, himself, calls you on your birthday, we would like to be hear about it. If we have a chance, I'd like to talk to him too.

Mimi Memories.....

While Mimi's memory is a steel trap, mine is more of a steel sieve. Exact words are hard for me to recall. I hold onto images and feelings. My images of Mimi are suffused in feelings of warm confusion and joyful curiosity. At the Ranch, I had a couple of opportunities to sit with Mimi, just the two of us, in the kitchen-dining room. We talked about nothing.

"How are Kendall and Susan?" "Where is that picture on the wall from?" "Gene, would you like some tea?" "Yes, thanks Mimi; no I'll get it." "How about a sandwich? A cookie?" "How old is that dog, Mimi?" "The Arroyo Seco Historical Society asked for a copy of my book, and I sent them one." "I would love to write a book."

Just pleasant meandering I always felt welcome.

Thank you Mimi. I love you. Happy Birthday. God bless.

Gene Aldridge Genoar
January 5, 2006

Mimi,

One hundred years and going strong! You are going strong in mind, spirit and legacy. Your children, grand children and great grand children have you to thank. They have benefited from your wisdom, enjoyed your company and laughed at your good humor. We each hold in our minds the rich memories of our time with you, Pappy and the Ranch and we hold in our hands the colorful tales and family histories in written form told by yourself over the years in your treasured books. The impact of your encouragement, inspiration, and faith on all those you have touched may never be known, at least not on earth. Thank you Mimi and God Bless you.

Love Gary

Dear Mimi,

We love you so much! We are so happy you have reached 100 and look forward to many more years. Thank you for all you have done for us. You are always in our hearts. Have a wonderful, happy birthday.

Love,

Jeff

Mimi

Here we end our Tribute

With quotes that we Love from some of Your Books.

Arroyo Seco Camping Days 1986

"Lord, grant me neither poverty nor riches, but let me live my life to the fullest and enjoy the beauty of the treasures of nature that You have put within our reach." I thank my Dear Parents for their love of nature which they instilled in me during my childhood. It is not necessary to travel the universe to witness the vastness and splendor of God's grandeur. It is within the realm of us all – if we will only seek.

Big Sur Forest Service Days 1987

It has been said, "When one starts to reminisce, it is a sign that they are growing older." Well, if that is true, I'm happy to grow old. Years have a tendency to wrinkle the skin, but to give up one's memories will wrinkle the soul. It has been such a great pleasure to relive those days of the past, as fond memories keep the past ever present. To my dear family and wonderful friends: May all of you have enough rain and sunshine in your lives to create a lovely rainbow; and just enough clouds to make a beautiful sunset.

U.S. Doodle-Bug Travelers 1989

As we sit reminiscing
Of days in the past,
And looking at pictures
With memories that last
May we share with you dear ones,
Our wish and our dream,
Of yesterday's journey
With "The Doodle-Bug Team"

Memories: Living Treasures of Yesteryears 1996

Memories, Memories,
Days I live anew
Over' seas of memories,
I'm drifting back to you.
Childhood days, wildwood ways,
Amongst the birds and bees
You left me alone,
Yet still you're my own,
In my beautiful memories

From: Creston Aldridge <aldridge91270@comcast.net>
Subject: **Fwd: Mimi's 100th**
Date: January 9, 2006 11:32:40 AM PST
To: Aldridge Creston <aldridge91270@comcast.net>



From: MICHELE OKSEN <overtheridge@sbcglobal.net>
Date: January 8, 2006 5:45:07 PM PST
To: Creston Aldridge <aldridge91270@comcast.net>
Subject: **Re: Mimi's 100th**

Cres, I just remembered more words of wisdom from Mimi...she said

**No matter how humble
your home may be
when you go away
keep the key!**

Another addition for the book from the Oksens could be the quote Mimi said about

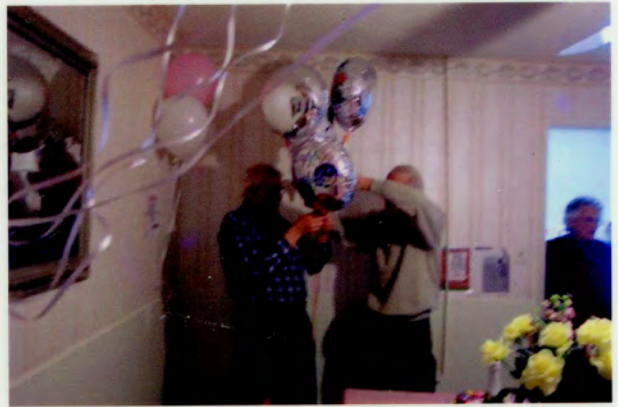
"Apple pie without some cheese is like a kiss without a squeeze!"...

Love, Michele





dent



ins



ov



FRIDAY

Register

Pajaronian

Century mark

Watsonville native
Irma Reaves
celebrates
her 100th
birthday.
Page 5



PAJARO CORRALITOS

AROMAS

CASTROVILLE

LA SELVA BEACH

APTOS

ROYAL OAKS

ELKHORN

MOSS LANDING

News leader of the Pajaro Valley

UCSC custodians rally



Mother of slain soldier appeals ruling

Amick continues push to have
Jason Hendrix's body exhumed

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WATSONVILLE — A mother who lost a lawsuit seeking to exhume the body of her dead soldier son and have it moved to his hometown in California is appealing the judge's decision.

Renne Amick filed the appeal on Dec. 29 in the 6th Appellate District in San Jose challenging the lower court's ruling that prevented the body of Army Staff Sgt. Jason Hendrix from being moved from his father's home state of Oklahoma.

See HENDRIX, page 2

Your Community



Watsonville native Irma Rose (Oksen) Reaves celebrates her 100th birthday Sunday at her senior residence in Santa Clara. Contributed

Watsonville native celebrates 100th birthday

Irma Reaves recorded a wealth of knowledge about life in the Pajaro Valley

By AMANDA SCHOENBERG
OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

Former Watsonville resident Irma Rose (Oksen) Reaves celebrated her 100th birthday Sunday surrounded by family and a bouquet of 100 roses at her senior residence in Santa Clara.

Reaves' 12 grandchildren, 35 great-grandchildren and 11 great-great-grandchildren also prepared a book with their favorite memories of the family matriarch.

"I don't have enough words to show my appreciation for all the love and kindness that was be-

stowed upon me during my 100th-year party," Reaves told family members.

Reaves, who was born a century ago at her parents' home on Locust and First streets in Watsonville, spent years documenting life in the Pajaro Valley in a 19-volume set of memoirs compiled by her son Bob Aldridge, available for review at the Pajaro Valley Historical Association.

Reaves lived most of her life in Watsonville before recently moving to Santa Clara to live with family.

Jane Borg, a volunteer with the PVHA, recorded an oral history with Reaves more than 20 years ago, when Reaves lived alone in an old house in Green Valley.

"Usually, people were very reluctant, but she called me up and wanted to be recorded," Borg said. "It was delightful."

Topics range from tales of Reaves' children growing up in the Pajaro Valley, where they used to swim in the Pajaro River, to the Watsonville Annual Apple and the history of Reaves' grandmother, who is from Stuttgart, Germany.

Borg remembered Reaves talk about living in the woods near San Simeon when her husband worked on construction projects, carrying all his materials by mule.

Aldrige said his mother began writing her memoirs in 1980, after she started going blind and wanted to record her memories. She now is blind and suffers from several ailments, but her mind is very acute, her son said.

"She was very interested in her family and the history of Watsonville," he said. "She still has good memories of Watsonville."

