

'Granny' to be 100



She faces the sunshine
Mildred Gasaway, better known as "Granny," is pictured in her apartment. Her family calls this room, "Granny's sunflower kitchen." They say it reflects her sunny outlook on life. Comet photo by Jennifer Archibald

By Jennifer Archibald
Staff writer

"I feel wonderful," said Mildred Landes Gasaway of Flora, who will celebrate her 100th birthday in July. "I don't have an ache or pain anywhere."
"I still have my right mind. Thank God for that."
"I'm called 'Granny' by almost everyone in town," she said. And she calls almost everyone in town "honey."
Granny was born on July 11, 1906, in Chili, Ind., near Peru.
She said this little town of 75 people had more than 10 businesses and two churches.
Seven of those 75 were in her family - her parents, her four brothers, and herself.
"We were a happy family," she recalls. "My dad worked for the railroad. He made \$2.50 a day, and we got along fine."

One of her earliest memories is the family's first vacation - when she was five.
"We went to Lukens Lake in a 'gypsy wagon,' and we took a tent. It was 12 miles away - a big trip. All the churches went there for picnics."
She said when she was 10, her grandparents got their first car.
"My mother was 89 when she died, and my dad was 74 when he died, and they never owned a car."
The birthday she remembers most was when she was 12. "It was a surprise, and the whole town was invited," she said.
"We had homemade ice cream and more than one cake."
There was a telephone office in her town, but she said only about a dozen people had phones.
"We used our neighbor's phone," she said.

"When I was 13 or 14, I decided I wanted a part-time job in the summer."
She got one at the telephone office, making 10 cents an hour. She remembers the day she went home and told her parents that a local person wanted her to put a call through to Chicago, and she did it.
"You would have thought I really did something," Granny said.
"I went two years of high school in Chili, and then when I was a junior, we moved to Peru."
She said the next summer she got a job as a secretary/bookkeeper and was paid \$8 a week.
"That was good money," she said.
"I thought I was going back to finish high school, but my parents said, 'We don't think you need to go back.'"
She had a steady boyfriend, Ted.
"My mother wanted a big wedding," Granny said, "but Ted didn't."
So Ted and Granny eloped when she was 18, in 1924.
"We went to Chicago and then took a boat to St. Joe, Mich.," she said.
"We went to Michigan because we didn't have to have our parents' consent there."
When they came back, they didn't tell their parents, and they lived apart.
She said married women seldom worked back then, but since their marriage was a secret, she continued to work.
The secret had to be told when she found out she was expecting. That was the end of her job because she said pregnant women never worked.
They had two children, Bonnie Gasaway Stephan, and Ted Jr. Their son died in 1950 in an accident when he was home on leave from the service. They later lost a grandson who was killed in an accident while he was in the service.
Granny and Ted lived in the same house in Wabash for 32 years before moving to Flora in 1966. Ted died in 1970.
Granny was used to working. Among other jobs, she had worked in their own tavern and liquor store. She's quick to point out that she worked in those establishments, but she didn't drink.

"And I've never smoked a cigarette in my life," she added.
After she and her husband moved to Flora, her son-in-law, Bob Stephan, asked her if she wanted a job at his IGA store. She took the job as a cashier, and worked there 12 and a half years.
"A lot of people know me from the IGA," she said.
She's also well-known in her church, the Flora Presbyterian. She proudly announces that her church is reaching a milestone this year, too. It also will be 100 years old.
Granny has a lifetime of stories, and one of her favorites is about the time she went hat shopping in Marion. She and other ladies were trying on an assortment of hats.
Granny looked at one woman and said, "I wouldn't wear that hat to a dog fight."
The woman looked at her indignantly and said, "I wore this hat in here and I intend to wear it home."
Her grandson, Trent, of Flora says Granny has a better memory than he has.
"And she has a better attitude and outlook on life than anybody I know," he said.
One room in her home exemplifies her sunny disposition. Her family calls it Granny's sunflower kitchen. Sunflowers can be seen everywhere in the decorations.
Granny said sunflowers are her favorite because "they're so alive."

Birthday open house
Mildred Gasaway of Flora has a daughter, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren. Her family will have an open house to celebrate her 100th birthday. It will be held at her church, Flora Presbyterian, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on July 9, and all well-wishers are invited.

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Looking Back

From the files of Hoosier Democrat, Delphi Journal, Journal-Citizen and Carroll County Comet.

10 YEARS AGO

Two Carroll County teenagers both had "an experience of a lifetime" last week serving as Olympic torchbearer escorts.
Lindsey Payne and Jeremy Duff were chosen by the Kokomo Coca Cola district to escort Olympic torchbearers when the Olympic Torch Relay passed through the area.
Payne escorted four torchbearers, running approximately three miles through Frankfort. Duff escorted eight different torchbearers for about five miles. Payne and Duff were both given the opportunity to carry the torch by the people they were escorting.

25 YEARS AGO

Perfect Fit, a full line fabric store featuring custom sewing and alterations, opened this week in Flora.
Owner Vickie Ayres will be in the store along with two full-time employees, Beulah Blocher and Linda Grant. Both Mrs. Blocher and Mrs. Grant have been sewing for many years.
"We will carry patterns by McCalls, Simplicity and

Butterick but the fabrics will not be available until August," said Mrs. Ayres. Plans are for sewing classes to begin this fall.

50 YEARS AGO

Mickey and Minnie, two mighty mice, decided that they had been around the city building long enough that they deserved their share of the payroll. So when city clerk Jesse Patrick made out two checks and put them in a desk drawer for safe keeping, Mickey and Minnie appropriated the funds for building themselves a home.
Turned out the checks were tax withholding payments awaiting due date, but when Pat went to get them, he found some one had withheld them from him. Giving serious study to the strange disappearance while at home that night, Pat put on his Sherlock Holmes hat and returned to the office. Removing the bottom drawer of the desk, he discovered his checks, barely recognizable, in bits, made into a comfortable honeymoon cottage.

75 YEARS AGO

SR39 is to be now a practically hard surfaced road. The substance that is being put on the road is a mixture of tar and stone that will give the road a real re-surface. The part that is

already finished is almost dry and traffic is now able to pass between Delphi and Pittsburg. When finished, the road will practically be a paved road.

Fishing season opened with numbers at the lakes. Many tourists passed through Delphi during the past week to participate in the annual fishing on lakes Freeman and Shafer. SR39 was lined Saturday and Sunday with fishermen. The Oakdale Dam was almost one solid mass of budding Izaak Waltons. There was hardly room enough to throw one's line in most places.

100 YEARS AGO

Let the eagle scream! Let the old bird flap its wings and once more demonstrate to the world that we live in the land of the free and the home of the brave!
Let every true American patriot give vent to his feelings, turn out on Independence day and give Flora and Carroll county a shaking up such as she has not experienced in years!
Nothing will be left undone to make the day a memorable one in the history of Carroll county. Good speeches, fireworks and everything that goes to make a genuine old fashioned 4th of July celebration will be on the program.

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