



Alta Mae Stewart

November 10, 1921 - April 13, 2020

Alta Mae Stewart, age 98, of Rensselaer, Ind. passed away April 13, 2020 at Franciscan Health AlternaCare of Rensselaer. She was born on November 10, 1921 in Barkley Township, Rensselaer, Ind. to John and Regina (Nutt) Kupke.

Alta graduated from Francesville High School with the Class of 1939. On March 23, 1941, in Barkley Township, she married Robert Joseph Stewart. Robert preceded her in death on April 1, 1998.

Alta was a dedicated homemaker. She was a talented seamstress and enjoyed making numerous articles of clothing over her lifetime. Alta was fond of painting and possessed many artistic talents. She was involved in her community and was a member of the Trinity United Methodist Church. In addition, she volunteered time as a former 4-H leader.

Alta is survived by her children, Rita (Norris) Barnett of Rensselaer, Ind., Diane Evansin of Denver, CO, and Michelle (Russ Hall) Stewart of Chula Vista, CA. Also, surviving are her eight grandchildren, sixteen great-grandchildren, and five great-great-grandchildren.

Alta was preceded in death by her husband, parents, one brother, one sister, a son-in-law, and a great-great-grandson.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, private graveside services will be held at Memory Gardens of Rensselaer with Pastor John Hostetter officiating.

Memorials may be made to the Trinity United Methodist Church of Rensselaer.

Cemetery Details

Memory Gardens of Rensselaer

Memory Gardens
Rensselaer, IN 47978
(219) 866-5125
info@jacksonfuneral.com

Tribute Wall

PV

“ Good time with the Stewart's!!:

I think we all felt that being at Grandma's house was the best place on earth! We had cousins, cousins and more cousins to play with. The sound of our grandparents along with the parents still rings in my ears because of the true fun they shared playing cards. Can't you still hear Grandpa roaring over a good play, my dad and Uncle Bob following along!

The older kids would disappear to the barn, Diane Kris and I would love to walk down the road!

As Grandma got older, Aunt Tootie started having get togethers at their house. There was lots of room with a perfect basement for our dinners. I do remember coming the country roads to Aunt Tootie's and having to call someone to get us out of a snow drift!! I wouldn't miss it for any snowstorm!

Every summer mom would send me to Aunt Tootie's for my annual 4H lessons on sewing. She was so good at that and I learned a lot! Michelle was my little princess, I just loved showing her off and pushing her in the stroller. I guess I knew then that I really wanted to be a Mom. Aunt Tootie was good with that! All moms need a little help!

I've always had a soft spot in my heart for the Stewarts. So sorry I couldn't be with you on this special day but am sending a lot of love! From Pam with side notes from Kris!!

Pam Vogt - July 26, 2020 at 03:01 PM

“ Thank you to all who have shared your memories of Grandma here. It is clear we all loved Bob and Tootie (or as I knew them "Grandma and Grandpa Stewart") very much. It is also amazing how even the smallest details of some of these stories can bring back a flood of my own memories of Grandma and Grandpa, the farm, the house, and the various episodes from my own childhood visits. If I may I'd like to return the favor with a few photos and my own memories.

My first memories of life on the farm were from the early '70s, when as a kid from the suburbs used to eating "lunch" in the middle of the day I had to adapt to calling it "dinner" instead. It wasn't so bad though as Grandma often served corn on the cob, steak, and home made applesauce. Even breakfast was a fascinating experience owing to the cool sliding doors on the cereal storage pantry in the kitchen, containing varieties of cereal with...sugar! (Mom/Rita didn't allow sugared cereals back home). I think my first ever experience with a microwave oven was Grandma's microwave (which is probably still going considering how bullet-proof things were back then).

When I got old enough (12 maybe?) to help out with some mowing duties around the farm, it fell to Grandma to teach me how to drive the Dixon mower. Unlike the John Deere Cub Cadet, which had a "normal" steering wheel, the Dixon was controlled by two levers so you could turn on a dime and make other tight maneuvers, and it could seat two people. So after explaining how it worked while deftly zipping around the lawn in front of the old house (aka the "Croquet Field"), Grandma handed off the controls to me. The next 30 seconds were a bit of a blur as I immediately put us into a continuous 3G spin, but I'm pretty sure we started at the top of the hill and ended up at the bottom. I was very thankful that Grandma was still on the seat next to me so she could pull us out of the spin, or my mowing career would have ended there. She was very patient though and I went on to become a skilled Dixon pilot and spent many a hot summer day after that mowing the grass along the road and around the farm.

It's nice to have a someone to help when life leaves you spinning :-). I'll miss you Grandma...



Kevin Pettitt - May 05, 2020 at 08:11 PM

JL

“ *Deepest sympathy to the Stewart Family on the loss of your precious mother. She was a lovely lady who leaves us with special memories. We are thankful to have know her and Bob.*



Jim & Dorothy Lefler - April 17, 2020 at 11:17 AM

DS

“ *I remember growing up "across the field" from Uncle Bob and Aunt Tootie in Hanging Grove township. I remember Aunt Tootie being such a hard worker and equally talented as a cook as well as driving a tractor working the fields. I always wondered as a kid how she earned the nickname "Tootie" and to this day that remains a mystery to me. In later years I remember how thrilled she was that my family and I would visit her from time to time, and she would always ask when we could come back again. I also remember in the later years that each and every time we would visit, she would say "I love you, you know that." That will be my lesson from you Aunt Tootie, that when our minds and bodies begin to weaken, that love will always still remain strong. Rest in peace,*

Dave Stewart

Dave Stewart - April 17, 2020 at 09:12 AM

RO

“ Robert & Tootie; and Don & Wanda were a big part of our family's life. Whenever there was straw or hay to be baled, or corn to be shelled, it was a two way street to help each other. If a tractor broke down, Robert or Don rushed right in to rescue the day. I always thought Tootie liked applesauce a little bit too much though. After the third year of helping Tootie and Michelle harvest apples; and bushels, crates and boxes galore sitting around outside the back door ready to be processed, I asked Tootie what she was going to do with all of this apple sauce when finished? "Oh, it won't go to waste she said. We love apple sauce. We will be out by the time fall rolls around ." I told her there were enough apples here to supply all of Jasper County! We helped carry some into the kitchen, and she began the process. I left for home, and Michelle decided she needed to get more piano rehearsal time logged. Tootie began the process of making apple sauce. For many years we spent New Years Eve with each other. Rotating homes so Tootie and Mom could try out new recipes on each other. One time Tootie decided to invent a new recipe. I remember sunflower seeds, chopped nuts in a peanut butter cookie dough and another ingredient. The parents were playing euchre and Michelle and I would venture from games to the TV. Michelle and I had our own cookies, and another table of food was sitting next to the euchre game. At one point Robert made a derogatory comment about the cookies. It got real quiet and Tootie took the cookies to the kitchen and came back. The wild card game ensued, but not another word was said about the new recipe! When we left for home, Tootie made sure the cookies went home with me, so Robert wouldn't be reminded of them! Lots of fond memories of Tootie and Robert returned to me this week, but I will always remember their love and friendship, and special ties with our family. ❤️

Ron - April 17, 2020 at 01:33 AM

NK

“ I have many fond memories of my dear Aunt Tootie. Holiday dinners at the farm and swimming with Diane in the cows' water tank.

I remember Aunt Tootie as spunky, with an indomitable spirit and a great love for her family.

Nancy Kupke

Nancy Kupke - April 16, 2020 at 11:46 PM

SG

“ After becoming part of the Kupke family, one of the first family functions that I remember going to was a large family gathering at Aunt Tootie and Uncle Bob's farm. They were both very gracious hosts and were very friendly to me even though it was the first time I had met them. I found Aunt Tootie to be just as gracious and friendly each time I saw her after that. I will remember her as a gracious friendly person.

Sandor Goldstein

Sandor Goldstein - April 16, 2020 at 11:24 PM



“ 1 file added to the album *Graveside Service*



Jackson Funeral Chapels - April 16, 2020 at 07:00 PM

ZN

Thank you very much for making it possible to "attend" this special tribute to a very special lady. Cousin Alta Mae was 15 years older than I, and was gone from home before I came along, but perhaps that made it more special as we looked up to her. I've stopped by this burial site on various occasions over the years to reflect on Bob and other precious relatives. It's hard to believe that I couldn't be there on this day of tribute, but I am so very thankful for this video. Blessings and comfort on all. Ziden Lee Nutt

Ziden Nutt - April 17, 2020 at 08:34 AM

JH

Thank you so much for posting this. Aunt Tootie was so very special to us. We loved her dearly. Praying for the Lord's comfort to all. Brian and Joetta Harvey & family

Joetta Harvey - April 17, 2020 at 12:22 PM

PV

Thank you so much for sharing this with us. This was our family growing up and we loved them so much! Aunt Tootie was a wonderful hostess and nothing was too hard for her to do. Love you all. Cousin Pam

Pam Vogt - April 17, 2020 at 12:48 PM

RI

Those in attendance were Pastor John Hostetter, Rita and Norris Barnett, Cheri (Barnett) and Sam Lehe, Pam (Barnett) Phegley, Nancy (Barnett) and Tom Phillips, Ron Jordan, Nikki and Jayden Lehe.

Rita - April 17, 2020 at 02:12 PM

PG

“ *What delicious lunch breaks we enjoyed while working on the Stewart Farm. Aunt Tootie was a fabulous cook. I would have worked for nothing just to enjoy her cooking. But she and Uncle Bob paid as well. Aunt Tootie and Uncle Bob were sticklers for accuracy. Once riding with them to Lafayette, they couldn't agree on the time they left. We arrived before they agreed upon the time. Many fond memories continue. With her passing, we have lost the last of our aunts and uncles.*

Paul Gutwein - April 16, 2020 at 05:48 PM

KK

“ *I have such fond memories of Tootie in the Hanging Grove community. She was a delightful woman! My deepest sympathy to her family.*

Kristel Kaye - April 16, 2020 at 11:55 AM

DA

“ Lisa, that applesauce was made from Lodi apples. Just the name sounds cool, right? I loved that applesauce. It was kind of greenish yellow. My memory is that there were one or more trees growing near the tenant house on the farm. I was also fascinated that they had a tenant house (like who were those mysterious tenants?), not to mention that original farm house. Speaking of that farm house, I remember getting into serious trouble when me and a certain cousin of mine (you know who you are!) threw rocks through the old windows and broke some glass. Although I think most of the retribution came from grandpa, not grandma. She was probably too busy making applesauce! ;>)

As a small youth visiting the farm I remember feeding the non-pet cats with Grandma, including one we named Pajamas - which was probably verboten since, you know, they weren't pets, but I so treated them like pets, especially the kittens. I remember they often got to eat kitchen scraps from a skillet that she would add (powdered?) milk too. Man, those cats loved those meals. It actually kind of looked tasty and I was a choosy eater!

Speaking of cats, I remember Grandma and Grandpa had bought a trailer and they let me sleep in it when they had it parked in the crib. I believe I was alone and then in the middle of the night I was awoken to the most horrific caterwauling, except I didn't know that it was cats and I thought it was people killing each other. I believe Grandma assuaged my concerns the next morning.

And speaking of naming animals, I remember with the cousins we had fun naming the cows in the south pasture after our aunts and uncles (sorry Michele!).

And I also remember her fondness for the word “supposably” which she would pepper throughout her sentences. When I was younger, I remember her being fairly strict (did I mention I was a choosy eater? That was certainly a foreign concept to her and grandpa and she certainly never made rice krispy treats for us when we were little!!!),

and I even remember a story about how she killed a rattlesnake, that was infringing on the farm yard, with a garden hoe. That's gangster.

I don't remember her not digging us playing in the basement, I mean heck, they had shuffleboard down there, how could you not want to play that???

In my later years, I think she softened (maybe I finally got some rice krispy treats?) and I like to remember her expressive, full-body chuckle when she heard something silly. Like when I told her I was hauling several hundred pounds of pit rocks back to Virginia in our station wagon. Although she was probably more confused than anything. But those rocks sure do look pretty in my yard! It's a reminder of the hard work they endured shaping the land. ;>)

I guess in the end Grandma was a bit like a farm cat. Enjoyed the sweet things in life, loved by grandkids, but knew how to survive in tough circumstances, and indeed thrive.

We love you grandma. You can rest now.

I'll leave you with a haiku:

Sacrifice

*Deep roots, endless work
Tireless resolve, fearsome rules
We owe her so much*

Damon - April 15, 2020 at 11:08 PM

LW

I love this! Thanks Damon. Hopefully we can all get together to celebrate Grandma soon.

Lisa Evansin Wade - April 16, 2020 at 12:30 AM

SL

“ Although Alta came into our life later, it didn't take her long to become part of it. We never knew her as Tootie, but the minute our Dad married Rita, she became Grandma Alta. She was funny, even though sometimes she didn't know it. She was caring. She was selfless, never wanting to be a burden to anyone. And you could always count on her for Rice Krispies cookies and deviled eggs at family dinners. We're going to miss you, Grandma Alta. Thanks for welcoming us into your family and being a part of ours.

Sam and Cheri Lehe - April 15, 2020 at 10:30 PM

MJ

“ Mike And Jane Jordan lit a candle in memory of Alta Mae Stewart



Mike and Jane Jordan - April 15, 2020 at 08:29 PM

JM

“ Jerry Miller lit a candle in memory of Alta Mae Stewart



Jerry miller - April 15, 2020 at 05:53 PM

PG

“ I have wonderful memories of good times at the farm with Aunt Tootie and Uncle Bob. They may be gone now, but the memories of those wonderful days will be with me always.

Phil Gutwein - April 15, 2020 at 05:22 PM

DG

“ *Alta was a wonderful neighbor!! 💕💕 We enjoyed our visits with her over the many years. She will be missed. Tom and Denise Gillespie*

Denise Gillespie - April 15, 2020 at 03:02 PM

LW

“ My Grandma showed me how to be a strong and independent woman. She always planned ahead and used only what she needed. She had a spunk and feistiness about her, and she would tell it like it is! She saved for the future. She had a sweet tooth, and she kept a stash of chocolate and Lorna Doones, which happen to be my favorite.

I remember making applesauce with her, and she taught me the correct apples to use- yellow transculant apples, because they were the best. She always had blueberries in the freezer. She was great at playing cards, and I have fond memories of plaining card games over the last 30 years. I also remember playing in the basement at the farm, but I don't think she liked us down there!

She taught me sewing and cooking and I remember playing on the farm with the farm cats, and Grandma would remind me they are not pets. This was foreign to me, as we had house cats! I'm grateful that I got extra time with her when we both lived in Arizona while I was in highschool. She took me to my first Trader Joes, which is also my favorite, and she was great at thrift store finds.

I'm also grateful we got to celebrate her 95th Birthday together! She lived a long, beautiful life.

I know she was welcomed into heaven into my Grandpa's open arms. I can imagine him saying something like 'what took you so long?'

Rest in peace Grandma Tootie.

Lisa Evansin Wade - April 15, 2020 at 12:45 PM

EG

“ Aunt Tootie (as we called her) was always a gracious host along with Uncle Bob as we played cards in the basement, yard games outside and ate of the bounty on Sundays. One memory I just can not erase from my mind happened in 1954 when Aunt Tootie was delivering eggs to us in Monon. Somehow she took one of the highway curves too fast and wound up with broken eggs all over the car. She was not hurt but the car required a major cleanup. Now the last of that generation is gone. Thank goodness for the memories



emil gutwein - April 15, 2020 at 12:15 PM

RI

Ed, I think Uncle Bob was driving the car and I can tell you which curve it was in the road. Rita

Rita - April 15, 2020 at 09:48 PM



“ Our sincere sympathy to all of you. Alta was such a beautiful lady.
Love,
Don & Gloria



Don Waymouth - April 15, 2020 at 12:01 PM

RI

It is wonderful to hear from you two. Hopefully you are OK!!

Rita - April 15, 2020 at 09:49 PM

DU

“ *Diane Underwood-Seton lit a candle in memory of Alta Mae Stewart*



Diane Underwood-Seton - April 15, 2020 at 11:43 AM

AK

“ *Anna Kupke lit a candle in memory of Alta Mae Stewart*



Anna Kupke - April 15, 2020 at 10:37 AM

JH

“ *Janice HopkinsMalchow lit a candle in memory of Alta Mae Stewart*



Janice HopkinsMalchow - April 15, 2020 at 10:17 AM

ML

“ *Martha Langley lit a candle in memory of Alta Mae Stewart*



Martha Langley - April 15, 2020 at 09:52 AM

KG

“ *Kate Geleott lit a candle in memory of Alta Mae Stewart*



Kate Geleott - April 15, 2020 at 09:31 AM

TF

“ *The Victor Liersch Family lit a candle in memory of Alta Mae Stewart*



The Victor Liersch Family - April 15, 2020 at 08:54 AM

RP

“ *Ralph And Lisa Pizer lit a candle in memory of Alta Mae Stewart*



Ralph and Lisa Pizer - April 15, 2020 at 08:33 AM

RW

“ *Many fond memories of Alta. Condolences to the family.*



Regina Warfel - April 15, 2020 at 07:35 AM



“ *Cindy Stath lit a candle in memory of Alta Mae Stewart*



Cindy Stath - April 14, 2020 at 10:30 PM

AL

“ *Prayers and hugs.*



Angie Blackburn Lawrence - April 14, 2020 at 10:24 PM

RP

“ *You have my deepest sympathy. I have fond memories of having Sunday lunch with our group with Alta. Prayers are with all of you.*



Ruth Paulsen - April 14, 2020 at 09:26 PM

GF

“ *Greg & Kara Fishburn lit a candle in memory of Alta Mae Stewart*



Greg & Kara Fishburn - April 14, 2020 at 07:30 PM

GW

“ *Glen & Linda Wood lit a candle in memory of Alta Mae Stewart*



Glen & Linda Wood - April 14, 2020 at 06:25 PM



“ *Many fond memories of Alta. Prayers for y'all! Deb (DeMoss) Allen*

Debra Allen - April 14, 2020 at 05:50 PM

DE

“ *Enjoyed taking care of your mother. Prayers for your family during this time.... 🙏❤️*



Deb Ellis - April 14, 2020 at 05:48 PM

RN

“ *Rose Nesius lit a candle in memory of Alta Mae Stewart*



Rose Nesius - April 14, 2020 at 05:21 PM

ML

“ *Marilyn Lowry lit a candle in memory of Alta Mae Stewart*



Marilyn Lowry - April 14, 2020 at 04:51 PM

JM

“ *So sorry about Tootie's passing. My sympathies to the girls and the rest of her family. Have many great memories playing with Diane. Those were the days.*



Judy (Sheffer) Mitchell - April 14, 2020 at 04:32 PM

RI

Those were the days. I probably have a picture of you playing in the yard. Where are you now? It is great to hear from you. Rita

Rita - April 15, 2020 at 09:52 PM

KG

We have so many wonderful memories of Aunt Tootie! She was so positive and was such a blessing to our family. I fondly remember her driving to Lafayette to see a marching band performance that our daughter participated in. Aunt Tootie drove to Lafayette on the interstate to come to the competition and couldn't believe how many cars were passing her, even though she was driving 55!

Kaye Gutwein - April 17, 2020 at 11:57 AM