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## Celebrating 100 Years

AUGUST 14TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

### Celebrating 100 Years

**Bernie, Missouri** - Toots McGowan, a Bernie resident, recently celebrated her 100th birthday on the 4th of July.

Laverne "Toots" Wilson-McGowan was born on July 4, 1916 in a log cabin in Black Oak, Arkansas in Craighead County.

She had four brothers and two sisters who were all born at home back then. She was the fifth in her family to be born in the lo cabin. Her father was a barber in Caraway, Arkansas about five miles from their home. They would walk regularly to and from the barber shop. Along with his job, the family farmed a portion of their 40 acres.

When she was 17 she married Raymond McGowan. He was from Bernie, Missouri about 80 miles north of her hometown. Together they had six children. All sons and all with the names beginning with the letter J - Jimmy, Jerry, Jack, Johnny, Jeff and Jan. Jimmy passed away.

Those six sons produced 18 grandchildren and there are now 37 great-grandchildren, and 26 great-great-grandchildren.

Her husband, Raymond, died at the age of 55 from complications from high blood pressure. She decided to work outside of the home and worked for Brown Shoe. When she was 70 she began babysitting in her home until she was 90 when her eyesight began to fail and she decided to give it up.

Toot credits her longevity to just plain old fashioned clean living and walking. She

never smoked and she never drank alcohol.

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