

The Ladies House

Missao de Chissamba

June 4, 1949

Dear Mum, Olive, Ruby, Frances, Ralph

What a beautiful granddaughter, niece, and cousin you have. She really is handsome, bright, plump and as someone has remarked – intelligent looking. The night she was born she cried tears. She cried most of the night because she was hungry and all they would give her was water! It just didn't stay by the rib. Right now she is doing a big bowel movement in her pants when she is certainly through I'll change her. That is right now!! Says she. Excuse me

June 5, 1949

Susan is sleeping. Yesterday after her bowel movement she decided she wanted some cuddling. Then it was time for her to eat. So, here I am 24 hrs. later writing again to you all. I have eaten my soup and mashed potatoes, buttered carrots, and roast pork and am waiting for the dessert. Susan is sleeping lazily. Her father was in after church and rocked her. We are using the newest and latest method with her – feeding her when she's hungry, cuddling her when she wants it and is it fun! I have plenty of milk to nurse her. Isn't that wonderful! I had a very easy time with her. I went to the hospital between 2:30 and 3:00 and she arrived at ten minutes of four. Max held my hand most of the time – bless him! He was quite thrilled with the whole performance – being able to watch it and everything!

They put me on an air mattress in the back of a jeep station wagon and brought me down to the ladies house to the room next to the nurses. Tomorrow Susan is one week old and we are going home. Tom and Ken come in everyday and peek at the baby and touch her hand and give mummie a kiss. They are proud as punch. Ever since Genevieve Steed arrived they have been anxiously waiting. They and Daddie are having supper at the ladies house tonight.

Susan has had loads of presents – 3 bars of ivory soap, a pink wool blanket, a heavy white flannel one with flowers embroidered on the edge, a pink crocheted wool sweater, 3 white ones, crocheted shoes, three pairs of bootees, four nighties, a kimono, 3 blankets (one blue, two pink) with bunnies and stuff on them, a crocheted shawl, a lined flannel jacket, two cans of powder, three bars of baby soap, a tray with jars the covers painted pink. (One of the jars was an ink bottle.) Ki Henderson fixed this up for her. Each jar was filled with the proper stuff like cotton, boric acid, etc. four pairs of plastic rubber pants. The elders of the church gave her an Umbundi name Susuana (Susan) Kasova (the first girl after 2 boys) Chissamba (because she is born here).

Now she is awake and calling.

Love, Betty