



# MCHS News

July 2014

Opening Doors to Madison County History

Vol. 12 No. 4

715 N Main Street  
Edwardsville, IL  
62025

**Hours:**  
Wed-Fri 9 am - 4 pm  
Sunday 1 pm - 4 pm  
Group Tours Available

**Free Admission**

**Museum Phone:**  
618-656-7562

**Library Phone:**  
618-656-7569

**Web Address:**  
madcohistory.org

**E-mail:**  
info@madcohistory.org

**About Us:**  
The MCHS museum complex, consisting of a modern archival library, a museum in the 1836 Weir House and the Helms Collection Center, is owned by the nonprofit Madison County Historical Society and operated jointly with Madison County.

The Madison County Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

## LOVE AND MARRIAGE IN MADISON COUNTY

Wedding and marriage traditions in Madison County have evolved over the years, as can be learned from a visit to a new exhibit at the Madison County Historical Museum. Couples looking to tie-the-knot, both now or in the distant past, have a variety of options, ranging from a large church wedding to a simple ceremony in front of a judge at the Madison County Courthouse.

In the nineteenth century, weddings were for the most part simple affairs where the bride often wore a dark dress since it was considered impractical at that time to purchase a dress that couldn't be used for other purposes after the wedding.

*Continued on page 4*

## JULY - SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

### *New Exhibit*

### **OLD, NEW, BORROWED AND BLUE:**

Wedding Traditions and Customs  
in Madison County  
Madison County Historical Museum

### *Continuing Exhibit*

**KANE FAMILY OF ARCHITECTS**  
MCHS Museum and Archival Library

### *Programs*

Sunday, July 27 - 2 pm  
**PRESERVING YOUR FAMILY ARCHIVES**  
Madison County Archival Library

Sunday, September 14 2 pm  
**VETS AND FEDS IN THE FAMILY TREE**  
Madison County Archival Library

### *Save the Date*

Sunday, November 2  
**2014 DINING IN HISTORY EVENT**  
Alton Lock and Dam



Gertrude Anna Carroll, the daughter of Thomas and Caroline Carroll of Marine, married George Henry Pierson of Alton at her home on September 18, 1905. The couple would begin married life in a new cottage on Troy Road in Leclaire, a village south of Edwardsville.

(Courtesy Carolyn Pierson Dawson)

## MCHS BOARD

Gary Denué, Pres  
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Sue Wolf

## STAFF

Suzanne Dietrich  
Director  
Mary Westerhold  
Archival Research Mgr.  
LaVerne Bloemker  
Archival Research Asst.  
Carol Frisse  
Archival Research Asst.  
Jenn Walta  
Curator

## VOLUNTEERS

There are abundant and varied opportunities for volunteers at either the museum or the archival library. Please call if interested.

## MEMBERSHIPS

Several membership levels are available to those interested in supporting the work of preserving Madison County history through an MCHS membership. Memberships run on the calendar year, Jan 1-Dec 31. Applications are available on our web site, at the MCHS Museum or at the Archival Library.

## PUBLICATIONS

### MCHS NEWS

6 issues annually  
Cindy Reinhardt, Editor

## WEB SITE

[madcohistory.org](http://madcohistory.org)

# ARCHIVAL LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

By Mary Westerhold, Archival Research Manager

## Photos Identified by Library Staff

Sometimes, when a house is sold, the new owners find a few treasures that were left behind. Recently, we were the recipients of a few old photos that were found in a house in Edwardsville. The new owners did not want to throw away the photos, but they had no idea who any of the people in the photos might be.



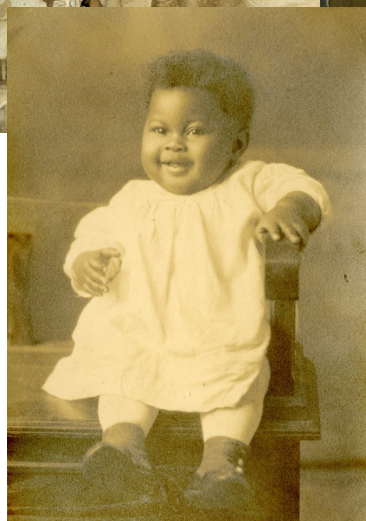
The images were of an African-American family and included a family photo, a young child, a girl about 18 who appeared to be celebrating a graduation, and a young couple. We had no information other than the address of the house and the name of the previous owner, so our search began with the address.

LaVerne Bloemker, Archival Research Assistant, began by looking in our Edwardsville City Directories to trace the residents of the house. By the time she had traced the residents to 1930, she had a name to search for in the 1930 U.S. Federal Census.

When she found the residents in the 1930 Census, she was convinced it was the correct family because of one of the children listed in the family. There was one significant clue to the family when looking

in the 1930 census and that was the fact that the previous owner had an uncommon first name - Northa. And guess who was one of the children in the 1930 Census... Northa! In addition, Northa was listed as age 16 in that year. LaVerne then found a newspaper article naming the graduates of Lincoln High School (the African-American School in 1930) and Northa was named there also.

The final pieces of the puzzle fell into place when LaVerne called a former



*Long-lost photos found recently in an old Edwardsville home have now been identified..*

Madison County Historical Society Board member, Charlotte Johnson, who is our “go to” person when it comes to African-American family history. Charlotte stopped by and not only identified most of the people in the photos, but realized they were relatives. We scanned the photos and printed copies for Charlotte for further research.

The final step was to call the donors of the photos and tell them the results. They were thrilled that not only did we identify the people, but we found their family.

# MCHS COMING EVENTS

## Programs Help Organize Your Family Tree

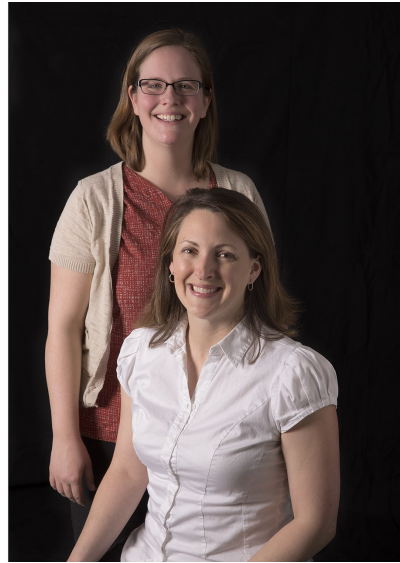
Two programs by archivists at the National Archive and Records Center

### Preserving Your Family Archives

Sunday, July 27 - 2 pm

Madison County Archival Library

Are your family documents and photos stored in the basement in a cardboard box? This is a dangerous game to play with your family's history. Join certified archivist Ashley Mattingly as she discusses what might be threatening your family papers, photographs, film, books and more. She will also explain the best way to store and display your cherished items.



NARA Archivists Theresa Fitzgerald and Ashley Mattingly (front).

### Vets and Feds in the Family Tree

Sunday, September 14 - 2 pm

Madison County Archival Library

Do you have a family member who served in the U. S. military or held a job as a civil servant for the federal government? You may be able to request their individual personnel record from the National Archive and Records Administration in St. Louis. Join NARA archivists Theresa Fitzgerald and Ashley Mattingly as they explain what can be found within personnel records and how to request these historical treasures.

## RECENT NEWS

MCHS staff, volunteers, and guests enjoyed a program on *Route 66 in Illinois* by authors Joe Sonderman and Cheryl Eichar Jett on June 8. The well-attended program offered equal parts of entertainment, education, and humor that were appreciated by the crowd.

After providing an overview of Route 66 history and the reasons for its universal appeal, Joe and Cheryl took us on a virtual trip down Route 66 in the state of Illinois.

♦ ♦ ♦

*Old, New, Borrowed and Blue: Wedding Traditions and Customs in Madison County*, curated by Jenn Walta, opened on June 8 and continues through the summer months. Stop by to see this beautiful and educational exhibit.

♦ ♦ ♦

On June 13-14 MCHS staff and volunteers were at Edwardsville's Route 66 Festival encouraging visitors to post their memories on the MCHS map of Route 66. America's Mother Road ran through Madison County from 1926 until the last signs were removed in the 1960s.

♦ ♦ ♦

Karen Stoeber has decided to return to the National Park Service and has resigned her position as Archival Research Assistant. The vacancy was quickly filled by Carol Frisse, long-time staff member. Carol has been our mainstay Sunday afternoon staff for many years and is looking forward to spending more time at the library. We all wish Karen the best in her new job and are looking forward to having Carol increase her duties with the library.

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

### New and Renewing Memberships

April through May 2014 ♦ Thank You for Your Support!

Alton, IL

Norma Glazebrook

Bethalto, IL

Charlotte Heeren

Breeze, IL

Mary Heeren

Champaign, IL

Roy Walker

Edwardsville, IL

Julie Hamilton

Judi Jenetten

William Kaseberg

Ellen Nore

Glen & Mary Pizzini

Mary & Jessica Westerhold

Glen Carbon, IL

Robert & Joyce Williams

## Her Wedding Dress Was Never Worn

Invitations to the June 1901 wedding of Essie Mae Beall, of St. Louis, and Richard J. Eckart, of Collinsville, had already been mailed when Richard contracted a severe case of smallpox. He was in quarantine at the time they would have been married and his fiancée was not allowed to visit him. He nearly died, and Essie, against the wishes of her family, went to see him as soon as he was out of quarantine.

Once she'd seen him, she determined he needed her. It would not have been proper for her to nurse him if they weren't married, so she sent for her wedding dress. Her family refused, saying she had to wait for a proper wedding. The couple, not to be deterred, held a bedside ceremony on July 25, 1901, officiated by a Justice of the Peace. Since her family refused to send her wedding dress, Essie was married in the ordinary white dress she had worn when she came to visit.

Her wedding dress, unworn, was donated to the Collinsville Historical Society by her daughters in 1994.

The marriage of Queen Victoria in 1840 in a white gown is sometimes recognized as the catalyst for change, but change came slowly to the Midwest. With some exceptions, weddings remained intimate ceremonies followed by a family dinner.

Beginning in the late 1800s into the early 1900s elopement became popular. Justices of the Peace and pastors throughout the Midwest would perform ceremonies for out-of-town couples in church parsonages or at courthouses. Edwardsville's county courthouse was a popular destination for eloping couples from St. Louis and surrounding counties. Home weddings were also popular, but the church wedding was still not the usual custom.

A twist on the usual elopement was the secret marriage which was popular in Madison County a century ago. Couples usually left town separately under what appeared to be legitimate reasons, i.e. to visit a friend in St. Louis or for a vacation. They married at a parish parsonage or county courthouse, then returned home to their respective parents and waited, sometimes several months, before announcing their marriage. For some, it was a joke on family and friends but for others a secret marriage allowed the bride to continue working in a job she might otherwise have to give up. Some also waited to tell family until it was too late for disapproving parents to put an end to the marriage.

Another custom in some social circles in the 1800s was the Midwest version of a charivari (shivaree) where friends of the groom would visit the home of the new couple after the wedding and create an uproar in the yard by clanging pans, yelling and sometimes shooting guns until the groom came out and provided them with refreshments.

Notices of church weddings began to appear in the late 1890s as well as descriptions of lavish home weddings. Dresses for the bride and her attendants were generally custom made by a local seamstress, a practice that remained popular in Madison County well into the 1970s. Until recent decades when tuxedo rentals became fashionable, men traditionally wore a good, dark suit except during times of war when many wedding portraits show the groom in uniform.



Three of the gowns on display now at the Madison County Historical Museum include from left, Charlotte Nelson Burroughs's wedding dress, and traveling dress, and (at right) an elaborate dressing gown that was part of Hedwig Wildi Montgomery's trousseau.

A fairly new idea for couples is the hiring of a wedding planner. Some area couples use their services, but according to local bridal shops, four out of five couples prefer to plan their own weddings with the help of books or web sites.

Wedding receptions outside the church hall became popular about fifty years ago, beginning with receptions in a lodge hall where the parent or the groom was a member, a Moose Lodge, IOOF Hall, or VFW. Prior to this custom, receptions were usually held at the bride's home. Today the list of options has grown as hotels and restaurants build venues specifically geared toward the bridal industry.

# MCHS WEDDING GARMENTS & STORIES

The Madison County Historical Society has a collection of wedding garments representing different eras and wedding traditions. Below are notes on just a few of the items in the collection, some of them currently on display in the new exhibit.

## Whittington – Aitch Wedding

An ivory satin wedding gown with shoes and headpiece worn by Miss Cora Whittington when she married Herman Aitch on October 12, 1894, in Franklin County, Missouri, was donated to the Society in 1979. The family believes the ensemble may have been sewn by Miss Whittington for her marriage. The Aitches, whose parents were born into slavery, lived in Union, Missouri, in Franklin County until Herman's death in 1937. The following year, Cora moved to Madison County to live with her daughter, Alma. Cora's wedding garments were donated to MCHS by Mrs. Alma Aitch Jackson, a highly respected teacher at Lincoln School on Main Street in Edwardsville before the school was desegregated.

## Dake – Love Wedding

The wedding gown worn by Anna Margaret Dake at her marriage to Cyrus Love on September 30, 1897, was donated to the society by a descendant in 1973.

Anna was born in Nebraska where her father, Orasmus Dake, a former Madison County school teacher, had been hired as one of the first four instructors at the University of Nebraska. He was described as "the most interesting, not to say picturesque and eccentric, character in that little band of institution builders (and) possessed the scholarly taste and refined manners of a typical clergyman of the Protestant Episcopal church." He taught history and literature at the new school. After his death in 1875, his widow, Amanda Eaton Dake, returned to Madison County with her children to be near family and friends.

Cyrus Love was the son of William and Katherine Pittman Love, a wealthy farmer who lived near Carpenter in Hamel

Township. After their marriage, Cyrus and Anna established a farm on Hillsboro Road (Route 157) near Quercus Grove, also in Hamel Township.

Anna's mother was born in Madison County in the late 1830s and her father was called a pioneer teacher of Madison County. The newspapers often reported that either Anna or her mother were hosting programs on different aspects of Madison County history for the Quercus Grove Women's Club. Their interest in history was likely a reason for the donation of Anna's wedding gown to MCHS.

## Nichols – Byron Wedding

Sandra Nichols and Wayne Byron were married November 2, 1957, at St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Maryville. It was the first formal wedding in the new church that was still void of landscaping. Two-and-a-half-year-old Lynn Reinhardt, their flower girl, walked down the aisle in her green velvet dress and matching white fur muff and hat. The green dress (pictured below) was donated to the museum several years ago and is currently on display. The flower girl didn't appear in any of the formal wedding pictures taken that day in 1957. Walking down the aisle was enough trauma for the little girl who refused to cooperate for the photo session.



## UNUSUAL WEDDINGS

### Wedding Difficulties

"Holding his father at bay at the point of a revolver William Wells, of Collinsville, was united in marriage with Miss Annie Brendel, of Troy."

In Oct 1904, the young couple above obtained a marriage license, the groom giving his age as 21 and his bride-to-be 18. When William's father heard about the license, he obtained a warrant for his son's arrest, stating that the boy was only 19. The father took the warrant with a constable to the home of Annie's parents where the wedding was taking place

He arrived just as the young couple were getting ready to say "I do." He demanded that his son leave, at which time the groom drew a revolver to "manifest his determination to thwart his father's wishes...The expectant bride grasped the old gentleman about the knees and pleaded for his consent to the wedding," but to no avail.

After the irate father left the scene, the Squire proceeded with the ceremony, while "the wedding guests were in a quandary whether to extend congratulations or sympathy."

### War Brides

The term “War Bride” originated in the late 1890s and initially referred to a woman separated from her husband shortly after their marriage as he left for military service. But by World War I the term also referred to a woman from another country who met and married her husband while he was serving in the military overseas. That definition was reinforced by the War Brides Act of 1945.

A few war brides came to Madison County after World War I, but far more arrived following World War II, including women from Belgium, Australia, France, England, Germany and other countries.

One of the earliest War Brides to come to Madison County was Gisele Combaudon of Paris, France, who married Harmon Coffman of Kane, Illinois, on August 7, 1920. Gisele was an orphan. Her father was a military man who was killed in the months before the armistice was signed. Her mother fell ill soon after and died, so Gisele stayed in France long enough to take care of the estate before finally joining her husband in America. She arrived in Edwardsville in January 1921. Soon afterwards the couple settled in Alton where Harmon had a job as an engineer at Owens Illinois. Mrs. Coffman was fluent in English when she arrived. She often gave programs about customs of her native country and on at least one occasion

*Continued on page 7*

## MCHS WEDDING GARMENTS & STORIES

### Nelson – Burroughs Wedding

When Charlotte Nelson, daughter of manufacturer N. O. Nelson, married Edwardsville dentist, Edward Burroughs, in 1911, it was called “one of the most elaborate church weddings of the season.” Charlotte was in the upper echelons of not only Edwardsville society, but also St. Louis, so the wedding was widely reported. The family donated her wedding dress to MCHS in 1985 along with a beautiful blue beaded dress that she used for her wedding trip.



*Charlotte Nelson Burroughs*

The wedding took place at the old St. Andrew's Episcopal Church on the corner of Hillsboro and North Buchanan Streets (building replaced with a larger edifice in 1917). The *Intelligencer* reported that the bride wore “a beautiful becoming gown of white satin with a long court train. The entire gown was artistically embroidered with pearls. The waist was of rose point lace and the traditional full length veil was clasped with a wreath of orange blossoms. She carried a shower bouquet of lilies of the valley.”

The altar at the church was banked with ferns and huge baskets of white chrysanthemums, but the decorations were most prominent at the Nelson home on Jefferson Road that hosted a reception for approximately 150 people. The *Intelligencer* reported, “The decorations of the house and especially the dining room were beyond description. In the center of the table in the dining room was placed a basket of long stemmed Richmond roses, surrounded by smaller vases of lilies of the valley and potted ferns. Enormous bunches of white and long stemmed chrysanthemums were placed all through the house and the effect was very pleasing.”

In addition to Charlotte's wedding gown, the Society also has an elaborate inlaid wood sewing box made by local craftsmen at the N. O. Nelson Manufacturing Company, and given to Charlotte's sister, Julia, as a wedding gift.

### Pierron - Beck Wedding

The December 6, 1906, edition of the *Highland Journal* reported on the marriage of a popular teacher, Aurelia Pierron, and a “promising young St. Louis businessman,” Alois Bock. Miss Pierron was “handsomely attired in white silk and carried bouquets of natural roses.” Her wedding gown was a 1972 donation to MCHS.

### Wildi - Montgomery Wedding

A different kind of wedding garment came to the society from the Montgomery family in 1978. The garment is a white robe that was part of the bride's trousseau.

Hedwig Wildi, the daughter of John Wildi, a wealthy Highland businessman, married John F. Montgomery on September 7, 1904. Montgomery was an advertising manager for Helvetia Milk Condensing Company of Highland, where Miss Wildi's father was a shareholder and officer. He later accepted a position with a large Chicago firm where they set up housekeeping after their marriage. The beautiful Victorian robe, packed for use on their three-week honeymoon to Canada, is one of the garments pictured on page four.

# MOLLOY WEDDING DRESSES AT MCHS

Continued from page 6

In 1999, the wedding dress worn by Alton resident Ellen Hinderhan was donated to Madison County Historical Society. Ellen's wedding ensemble consisted of a separate bodice and skirt made of practical dark blue silk suitable for use on other occasions. Ellen married a widower, John Molloy, on Sept 12, 1893 at the Cathedral in Alton.

As was the custom, the coming nuptials were announced before the ceremony. On September 4, 1893, a notice in the *Alton Evening Telegraph* said, "The approaching marriage of Mr. John Molloy and Miss Ellen Hinderhan was announced yesterday."

John had two young sons from his previous marriage, ten-year-old James and eight-year-old John, who needed a mother. John and Ellen would add two more children to their family, Henry and Helen.

When their son Henry married Irene McCleery in 1921, the couple eloped to Springfield, Illinois, and it is assumed no dress specific to a wedding was worn. Irene, who was born in the Oklahoma Territory, had lived in Alton only a short time when they slipped away to be married.

Irene's dress was not donated to the museum, but her granddaughter would bring wedding dresses of the next three generations of the family to the museum.

Henry and Irene's daughter, Bernice Molloy, was married on August 30, 1944, at



Carl Krueger and Erin Bardon, Sept 10, 1994  
(Courtesy of Donna Bardon).

the Cathedral in Alton. As was typical of the time, her groom, David Yates, wore his military uniform. Bernice wore a beautiful formal wedding gown and her bridesmaids wore matching dresses, but each in a different hue, pink, yellow, blue and lavender. Each attendant carried flowers to match her dress.

Donna Yates, daughter of David and Bernice Molloy Yates, was married in a white mini-dress, to Thomas Bardon in 1968 at SIUE's Newman Center. The Newman Center at that time was at the old St. Mary's Church on Park Street in Edwardsville.

In 1994, their daughter, Erin Bardon, married Carl Krueger in the geodesic dome of the Religious Center at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. She wore a classically beautiful floor-length off-the-shoulder white gown.

The four Molloy family gowns, representing five generations of one family, create a collection that accurately reflects the times when they were each worn.

reached out to another war bride arriving from France.

Margaretha Kerstens of Antwerp, Belgium, was the war bride of Vincent Noto in World War II. The couple met while he was stationed in Belgium and she was one of the Belgian girls hired by the U. S. Army as support staff. The 18-year-old was fluent in English, French and German in addition to her native Flemish. They were married in Belgium on November 29, 1945. When it was time for Vincent to return to the States, he prepared her paperwork before he left on Feb 17, 1946, arriving home in early March.

In the April 3, 1946, *Edwardsville Intelligencer*, it was reported that



Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Noto

"Vincent C. Noto of this city appeared just about as excited today as he probably was on any occasion while spending two years in the armed forces to defeat the Germans... This morning he received word that his war bride... would arrive Thursday night at 9:18 on Wabash Train No. 21 from Chicago."



Wedding of David and Bernice Molloy Yates, Aug 30, 1944.  
(Courtesy of Donna Bardon)

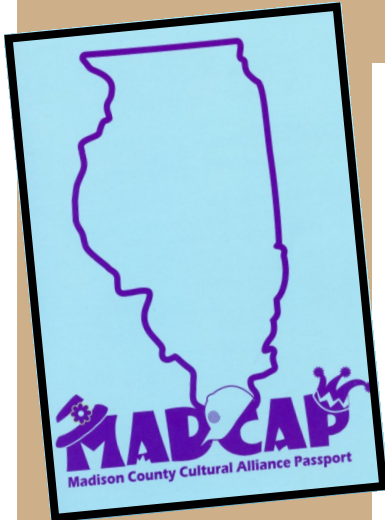


## Madison County Historical Society

715 N. Main Street  
Edwardsville, IL 62025

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## SUMMER FUN!

MADCAP, the Madison County Cultural Alliance Passport is coming soon! Featuring fifteen sites emphasizing local history, education and nature, the Passport will be available later this summer at the Madison County Historical Museum and Archival Library as well as at other sites listed in the booklet. Madison County has a lot to offer for kids of all ages!

## THE SECRET FORSHAW WEDDING

One of the more extreme examples of a secret wedding was the marriage of Miss Hattie Herder and Mr. Nathan Forshaw. Both were residents of Leclaire. Mr. Forshaw, an Englishman, was employed at the N. O. Nelson Manufacturing Company. Hattie was employed in the office of the County Clerk.

The couple was married on May 11, 1909, and eight months later, in February, 1910, her father stumbled across the marriage license, discovering their secret.

In their case, there were a couple reasons for the secrecy. The couple were plan-



ning to marry when Miss Herder's mother passed away. Out of respect, they didn't want to hold a large joyous occasion at that time, nor did Hattie want to leave her father immediately. Also, she had what was considered a good job, but married women were not permitted to work in the office. The local paper hints that her boss, the Circuit Clerk, may have held the paperwork so it was not immediately recorded.

The Forshaws built a new house and were just completing the furnishings when their secret was discovered. Once found out, the couple left immediately on their long-delayed honeymoon.

## MARY'S RESEARCH TIP

Finding an obituary of an ancestor in the local newspaper can provide clues to missing relatives. However, don't stop with the obituary! Depending on the newspaper and the time period, there may an article after the funeral mentioning those who attended the funeral, and especially those who "attended from afar." What if you can't find the obituary? Sometimes the fu-

neral home would include in the newspaper a notice of upcoming visitations. In addition, in a section in the Classifieds called "Card of Thanks" there might be a short thank you from the family of the deceased for sympathy, flowers, etc. Once you have a death date, be sure to check the newspaper thoroughly!