

Malinda Richter, 104, of Roselle

At 104, Malinda Richter was possibly Roselle's oldest resident. Born Malinda Benhart in December of 1894, Mrs. Richter was the youngest of 13 children. Her family was an integral part of Roselle's history since the village was incorporated in 1922. The Benhart family lived in nearby Meacham on the site of what is now the Medinah Country Club Pro Shop. As a child, Mrs. Richter attended a one room school house just a few miles from what was to become her home in Roselle. Mrs. Richter died at home, quietly in her sleep, on Saturday, in the house where she lived for the last 71 years. "The interesting thing is that had Malinda lived to see the millennium, she'd have lived a portion of her life over three centuries", Roselle Trustee Joe Devlin said. "There aren't many people who can say that." In 1928, Mrs. Richter moved with her family into a 30 by 40 foot house at 27 Prospect Street in the heart of Roselle's downtown area. Built in the 1880's as a simple gable front, two story, modified Queen Anne with roofed porch, this style house was popular in both urban and rural areas throughout the United States in the last half of the 19th Century. Over the years, the home became known as the Richter house. In 1971, after the death of Mrs. Richter's husband, Albert, Devlin approached the Richter family to inquire if the village could buy their property to expand the village hall, which was already too small for the growing community. Devlin learned that the then 77 year-old Mrs. Richter loved her home and wanted to stay in it as long as she possibly could. "Given Matilda's age and wishes, I figured we'd just put our plans on hold for awhile," recalled Devlin, who was the mayor of the village at the time. But it wasn't until 1996, 25 years later, when the need for a larger and more efficient village hall had become urgent, that the village finally struck a deal with Mrs. Richter authorizing the purchase of the property while still allowing Mrs. Richter to remain in her home. The decision was made to move the Richter house to a nearby lot, so that the construction of a new village hall could begin. "Aside from being one of the oldest structures in the village, the Richter house is also an American Classic," said Devlin, Director of the Roselle Historical Foundation. "Houses like this are found in almost any village more than a century old. Eventually, the Richter house will become part of the foundation's operations, most likely as an 1890's Home Exhibit, Devlin added. "What struck me most about Malinda is that she was alert right up until the end," Devlin said. "She might not have recognized you right when you walked into a room, but once you said you were Charlie Brown, she'd say, 'Oh yes, I knew your grandfather, an awfully nice man.'" Survivors include her son, Bernard; three grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren. Services will be at 11am Wednesday at Trinity Lutheran Church, 405 S. Rush St., Roselle.

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Malinda S. Richter, nee Benhart, age 104, beloved wife of the late Albert, loving mother of Bernard (Lois) and the late Kenneth (Ann) of California; dear grandmother of David (Vicki), Sharon (Jack) Hiatt, Pamela (Victor) Soto; great grandmother of five. Resting at

the martin funeral home, 333 W. Roselle Rd., Roselle, IL. Tuesday from 3-9 pm. Lying in state at Trinity Lutheran 405 S. Rush St., Roselle Wednesday at 10 am until time of services at 11 am. Interment, Lakewood Cemetery, Elgin, IL. In lieu of flowers, donations to the Trinity Lutheran Church Building Fund would be appreciated.

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