

Clarence Herbert "Pete" Ratliff

August 1, 1918 – December 3, 1979

(From - Peru Tribune December 4, 1979)

Man's Failing Health Blamed For Peru Murder And Suicide

PERU — Peru City Police ruled the deaths of a Peru couple were an apparent murder-suicide.

The bodies of Clarence (Pete) Ratliff, 61, and his wife, Bernice 59, of 272 N. Grant St., were discovered late Monday morning by police.

Peru Det. Capt. Cary Dewalt said the deaths were ruled murder-suicide "due to the husband's fear of his failing health."

Police went to the Ratliff residence after a neighbor, Grace Dove, voiced her concern about the couple. She said the couple's car was in the garage, but there was no response at the door when she knocked.

Dove called police at 9:50 a.m. Monday. Police officials forced their way into the house through the rear door.

They found the couple in bed, each with a single bullet wound in the head.

Police said a handgun found near the husband's body was used in the incident. They theorize Ratliff shot his wife and then himself.

Following an autopsy Monday, the time of death was set around midnight. The couple had been married 34 years.

Born Aug. 1, 1918, in West Virginia, Clarence Ratliff was the son of James and Mary Miller Ratliff. His wife, Bernice, born Feb. 8, 1920, in Gary, was the daughter of Ignatius and Helen Buchek Opydo. The couple was married Feb. 23, 1945.

He was a retired Norfolk and Western railroader, while she was a retired Square D employee. Both were World War II Marine veterans and members of

St. Charles Catholic Church. He was a member of the Moose Lodge, while his wife was a member of the Ladies of the Moose and Daughters of Isabella.

Surviving are three sons, James, Indianapolis; Mark, Plymouth; and Jeffrey, a student at Indiana State University, Terre Haute; one daughter, Judy Olson, Milwaukie, Ore.; and four grandchildren. Also surviving is the sister of Mrs. Ratliff, Josephine Dravet, Gary.

Joint funeral services will be at 10 a.m. Thursday at St. Charles Catholic Church with Rev. Paul W. Deliner officiating. Burial will be in Mount Hope Cemetery, Peru.

Friends may call after 2 p.m. Wednesday at the Eikenberry-Eddy Funeral Home. The Rosary will be recited at 8:30 p.m. Wednesday.