May Wilkins moved to Fort Collins with her husband, newspaper editor Don Wilkins in 1937.

The Wilkins spent their lives here, staying for nearly 30 years in the Kensington Apartments before building a house on South College in the mid-1960s.

May became an active member of the Fort Collins China Doll Club with a collection of over one hundred dolls. When May passed away in 1999 this collection was split between the doll club and the Fort Collins Museum.

ownelf & lat on hundage. steak last night. I will loving a few things back such as I would auguet Poor of Me, Good of Dog: M Carn, Clan Rumphin and things can't buy to Baught a bottle of flavoring May Wilkins (1902-1999) Vaturday - called Chacovan acalate flavor and vanila late cake much neur ton . pre Wilking Pre Courier Reep your thin up darling 20 the care gourse my love, Deet from mom Car accurs & he waching all right now. Have it lasta, Tham and I had a good

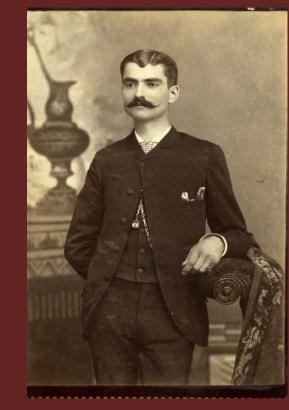
Along with her doll collection the Museum received a huge variety of things gathered from May's home: newspaper clippings, over 500 letters, clothing, photographs and more.

Everything in this slide show about May's life was revealed by this collection.



May started life as Anna May Darlene Dolies on June 2, 1902 in Washington County, Iowa. Her parents were Anna Theresa and Frank Dolies. Anna had a portion of her family's farm and Frank worked in a variety of businesses – including secondhand buggy sales.



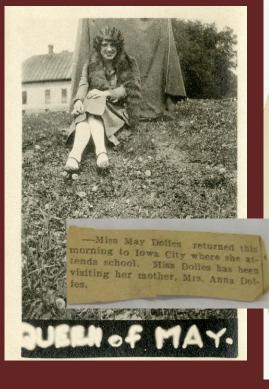


May was the youngest of three children and the only girl. Her parents divorced sometime during her childhood, and her father moved away.



May left home to attend high school in Iowa City, graduating in 1921, one day after her 19th birthday.

While there May established herself as a talented musician; she played the piano and the saxophone with a band that traveled the area and performed on radio programs.





ОВЕТНОС А. МИН ООКТИТ БСАНКО ВОНИА БИНКО К. Т. ТАНС М.Ц.Е. ТИЧЕНКИ К. Т. ТАНС М.Ц.Е. ТИЧЕНКИ К. Т. К. МИТЕ ОУЧЕТА. L. WIREL ЕВИАНС ZECHA

CHARLES E. CHAPE

FLORENCE E. DODT

EDITH L. CRONE

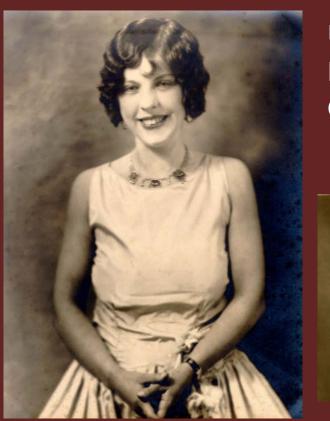
AVIS FENTON RACHEL E. FORAKI

ANNA HINRICH

JOHN P. JOHNS ADA V. KOSER

MARY E. L. MILLE

WILLIAM RUSSELL I

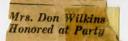


University High School Iowa City, Iowa Graduation 1921





Cliy to attend the graduation of her daughter May. She will remain there a week. May's marriage to Donald Wilkins on November 18, 1929 in Des Moines, Iowa is noted in a newspaper clipping she saved though, puzzlingly, not in a single photograph. The only other wedding mementos in the May Wilkins collection are May's wedding handkerchief and a pair of Kewpie doll cake toppers.



Mrs. Don Wilkins of Des Moines, a recent bride, was the guest of honor at a miscellaneous shower siven by Mrs. R. W. Hughes at her home, 18 North Dodge street, on Monday evenink. Mrs. Wilkins who formerly lived in Iowa City, visited her mother at Washington, Ia., over the week-end and came to Iowa City on Monday, leaving here Tuesday afternoon for her home in Des Moines. Games of bunco were played during the early part of the even ing with Mrs. Wilkins winning high score and Mrs. George Kron

At the close of the party the bride received many lovely gifts from her friends and dainty refreshments were served by the hostess. Shades of pale pink and pale blue were carried out in the luncheon appointments. A wedding cake bearing a miniature bride and bridegroom formed the attractive centerpiece.

Guests at the party included Mrs. F. Rosenberg, Mrs. George Kron, Mrs. William Edwards, Mrs. Vern Chaney, Mrs. Dolles of Washington, Ia., mother of Mrs. Wilkins, Mrs. Grover Mahanna, Mrs. Ed Pellock, Miss Kate Ruess and Miss Ruby Potter.

Don and May Wilkins November 18, 1929 Des Moines, IA



e MAY DOLIES MARRIED at IN DES MOINES MONDAY

Miss May D. Dolies, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Dolies, of this city, and Mr. Don Wilkins of Movile, Iowa, former city editor of the Iowa City Press-Citizen, were married at six o'clock Monday evening, at the Univerity church of Christ at Des Moines. The single ring service was read by Dr. Charles S. Medbury pagfor of the

church. Mrs. E. B. Peilock of Iowa City and Mr. Theodore Ashby of Des Moines Were attendants at the ceremony.

Mrs. Wilkins was associated for several years with the Miller-Wohl store of Iowa City. She is a musician of much ability and has played with some of the leading orchestras of this section of the state. She attended the local schools here, but of late has lived in Iowa City.

Mr. Wilkins was graduated from the University of Iowa and is a member of the Sigma Delta Chi, honorary journalistic fraternity. He was city editor of the Iowa City Press-Citizen for four years and is now city reporter on the Des Moines Tribune Capital.

The happy couple will reside in Des Moines. The best wishes of their many friends here go with them. Soon after they were married a newspaper job for Don took the Wilkins to Moville, Iowa, where May apparently developed her needle working talents: her sweep of the competition in multiple quilting, embroidery, and knitting categories at a local fair was celebrated in an article in the Sioux City Tribune in the summer of 1934.



In a defining moment sometime between this needlework victory and the Wilkins' move to Fort Collins May became a blond. Throughout the rest of her life, May's bright cap of hair helped define her vivacious personality.



In 1944 May joined the more than 200,000 American women who became Red Cross Volunteer Nurse's Aides during World War II. In letters to her mother and to Don May agonizes over her decision to become a nurse's aide.

In a letter dated March 25, 1944, May wrote to her mother:

Mrs. Don Wilkins. Ft. Collins, Colorado Dear Mrs. Willdins:

Laurel Cores

"I haven't made up my mind about taking nurse's aid. The uniforms are 3.00 dollars each -have to have two. I have to buy them. I think it would be nice to have the experience but with all the time and no pay –I sometimes think I should get a job part time that I could make a few cents.

The nurses aids -have to work hard. I would be relieving a nurse for other things. Give baths and make beds, take temperatures, feed people and the like. I guess I could stand it somehow I had thought I would like the knowledge of training."

I wish I could talk to you mother and get your advice about taking nurses aid. They are so short of nurses here -I thought I would be doing my bit for the war and get the practical experience besides."

ARMY SERVICE FORC'S DERVIR OFFICER PROCUREENT DISTRICT 25 August 1944 The fact that you have taken the Red Cross Murse's Aide Course training is your certificate of 100% Americanian. The Armed Forces fiel they can depend on you, and so we call on you to make still further solution to give a chance for useful lives to the fighting men who met enemy gunfire in their job of protecting Amarica. Surgical and Medical Technicians (Nurse's Aides) are urgently needed in Army Hospitals, especially now because our casualties are mount-ing with the length of our battle lines. This help will continue to be needed for six months after the final victory over Japan, and will be rendered by members of the Women's Army Corps - real American Volunteere. The Army needs you, and if you counct possibly affer your own services, it needs your help in enlisting others. Please consider yourself a committee of one to assist in this program the best way you can. Description of the program given below (other Army Hospital jobs are shown on attached sheet): TIES - To assist in the care of sick or injured soldiers in Arry H is, as members of the Moments twoy Corps, under the supervision of dical Officers and Registered Nurses. IFIC/TIONS - Graduation from high school, plus either at least six training in a school of mursing, or graduation from Rod Cross Harse's Aide Course, and a sincere desire for this type of work. Are 20 to 49, and in good health. HAFWY - Directly to an Army Mospital as Technician after the five toks' basic training given all Wacs. an National Red s who earnestly desire this ty UNITED SYNTES CITIZENS DEFENSE CORPS ining before assignment if not ican woman has the right to off tly needed by the Army. Red Cross Home Nursing Army Officer Procurement Office th Street, Denver 2, Colorado, e Station. Very truly yours, 1. Flichui Je WM. F. GUTHRIE, JR., Major, AGD, OIC.

From the spring of 1941 until her mother's death May Wilkins spent two months each spring and each fall helping her mother with the family farm in Iowa. During these months apart she and Don exchanged letters almost daily. Though these letters rarely discuss World War II directly, they are full of references to the strong impact the war has on daily life.

1944, June 23, Don to May:

"The office of defense transportation today made an order to authorize railroads to cancel reservations and force passengers to yield space to wounded men whenever necessary. The army is flying the wounded back from Europe and they get priority over everyone on the way to the hospitals. It probably won't be long until the government will require all of us to change underwear Tuesdays and Thursdays, at the rate orders go out nowadays."

see it before we go into Stomach has grown over A Mrs. Anna Dolles has for her take an apron and lest, her daughter, Mrs. Don Rescure hale large . Daid should Wilkins of Fort Collins, Colo. May Dolies) to you and a handa line be 10 intestine bulge out slack home acke couldant take it . in the uplure and her suplure. 7 this P.S. og a kink it and said it the Friday, 9 p.m. Dear May, Rhe coreald Finally, after two days and anight, the snow has ceased. house be have eight or nine inches on the level, and plenty met. Hope the storm and have & on right dissipates itself before it gets to Iowa. allay and Mr. Don Wilking Hope Joe is OK by now. He probably ate something that poisoned mite hat bother at once with him. azel 96 Express Courier Lois and JM VanSant were here to see me this afternoon. They had a the lowel. been out the to the spartment and were quite disapointed to find you her da not at home. They are living now at Reddings. Calif., and were home on a it were negle anytime at the Collens last visit before gasoline rationing, etc. JM said he is IA in 🐽 the draft and may have to go before long. Lois slad she didn't know what she It can't be I as week die would de if he leaves, but that she would not come back here. Thought I was sunk last night. When I took my glasses off to Can the get ready for bed one of the lenses fell out. It didn't break, though and he only thing it a turned out that all that was wrong was a break in the frame. alone help would be love home and talk it some mederice for lening some other Roxlor

One of the war's most direct impacts on the people at home was the rationing and shortages of many of the things people used every day. Food prices were monitored by the Office of Price Administration (OPA) and about one third of civilian food items were rationed. Don and May's letters hint at the ingenuity and humor these circumstances could provoke.

1944, Nov 22, Don to May:

"Tilton had some butter hidden under the counter and Fred and I each got a quarter of a pound. Just like the old prohibition days. You have to be in the know to get the goods. I was in Hutchinson's pharmacy this afternoon to get some Mercurochrome and while Mrs. Hutch was wrapping it up Carl handed me a small package. When I got it open later it was two packages of cigarets [sic]. I guess as long as my friends take care of me I will be all right."

Thay 19, 1943 - Velnerday owelf & eat on hundage. glad quare getting along all right steak last night . I will loving a watch it carefully . nothing an uprove Mean Rom: I would suggest for the caused staff and staying well. Too had I have to few things back each as a can ag this down lamp weather. The pour farmers land pleat all in a Liperime in the same doind a can of carn, Clas or bete - string Wich I could see you . This is another Rumphin and thing Seand buy there rainy gloomyday, There have been a the cause is relation you find - a can Baught a bottle of flavoring IT'S AN ILL WINI cincapple - slices or chucke an Friday ching day for weeks . met rains to the Can either . This a fuck spon time. Started in lest night again and have gaterday - called Chacovan .-In of tomato Parte - enall can of GAS AND RUBBER SAVING WAS PRETTY DISCOURAGING, BUT WITH Mom brught tomato and labbage Pl her at it all marning . Star 2. P. M. - stell Part charalate flavor and vaniela it for salade. on other funt - some Jeterday. It never will dry up us SPEED CUT TO THIRTY-FIVE dark and cloudy but the rain he styped for ell can's of my kind of front piece, Curght to be cruell for practing on a little bit . We can't ener go & the from law plant them, Aave a few and D BE ONE OF MY I Sui back Dean get it . Whenever prin charalate cake . BEST CORNERS. hulens I want I have the lave a near garden thing & claut get. are in Attelles you brack take have hat much neuro don. They teller from the elay and gravel. Rection Stand all the do is sit in the when it spin. Hate as & got it all many kitchen and moan about The Cheatte are very Poar . Sand tell gon here In coved get proverel cheese fite so duty going there when the range Carolan . caught a big fish . no lucacher that to get a half ton of coal to speed that comes in a like we all elong. Heek of a builday "my he delivered tomarrow, Caght & he & do anything , had a cand from iss. some of it is 15 & - some I. get a cute both day cand from the re. If you all marchmallow pur mother, She said she wrote Hoing some war ward, Mull, and Thought it me nice of her to rememberte a Package . (no Pointo on them) and lave good intentions . tate and she . Red a cand furne bearing Jun a letter . I'll need cature to them I get Thom gat me a lovely slip and this of This setting would keep me Take care gowned . it is rational und the Points gh cate Panta . I don't feel any allen then reduced, afraid In gaining again Mout spend all your noncy getting in spite of engling all day long va . You coald buy something ach all my love, Thay. The all each hauge on derid day Reed to do mare yand work. Deis in the you go in the store . I go it is a lat letter to it has great dig some dandelions yesterday the 10-29 -hui an my head now-nace runa on one side, I'm cougling a lat too. her it use your meat compone - long Deet from mom ... If gon care about buying a few get walmon or such with them , thing. & lice your Points you wand Think Collins' bad weather han tached to an accurs to be warking all night now. Make it laste , bal enough & see the Ode. May get a can of time the 274 kind Than and I had a good and some wham in something for

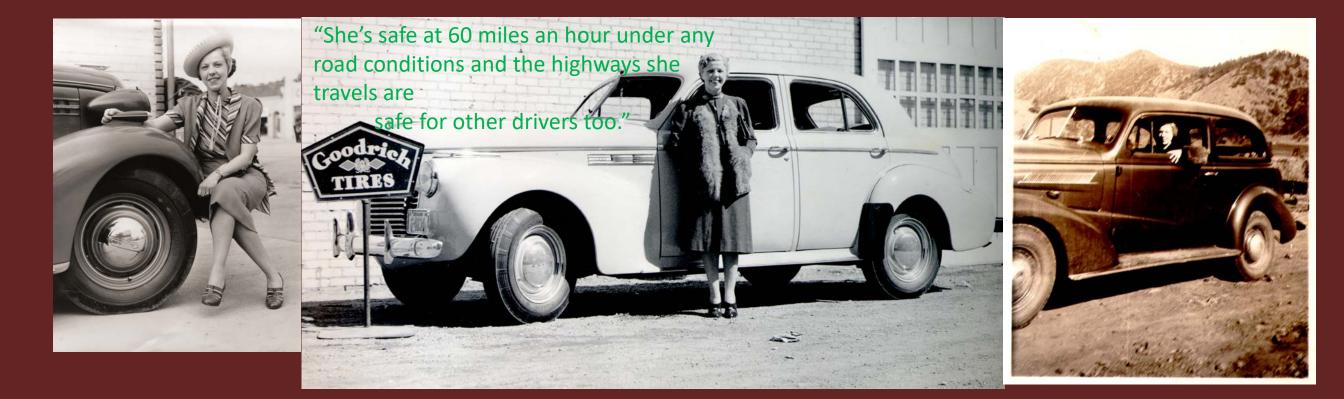
During World War II the federal government encouraged Americans to grow food in "Victory Gardens" and preserve their home-grown vegetables. May's mother maintained a large garden which provided plenty of work for her and May and a bounty of food to can and sell.

1942, October 27, May to Don:

"Mom canned her kraut this a.m. to bring with us. I'll have nearly a bushel of white spuds –half bushel of sweet spuds she raised, bushel walnuts, apples, cabbage –few turnips and carrots. We'll have couple dozen eggs too and other things. Where we will put it all I don't know. I'll be glad to have the stuff –it will help a lot. Al will grind me a quart of horseradish too. He hasn't even a teaspoon of sugar. So we're taking couple cups to him"

| | | | States. | |
|-------------|------|--|--|--|
| Lucit | 3 | Relish | | - a series and marked and have a series a |
| in st | 12 | Spiced crabs | | 31, generes Phum Jell |
| <u></u> | 13 | in syrap crabs.) | | 15. And " Crab Jell |
| N 11 | 4 | Sated Brets | | 82 " " Curnerets Jell, 1,28 glasses & Jell |
| 19 11 | 7 | tomato chilla sauce of | All and a state of the second state of the | 6. Pints spiced onions |
| 11 11 | 11 | tomatas a) | | |
| il II | 12 | Grafie Juce | | I think I am well supplyed for the with with . |
| | | and the second | | formation of the second of the |
| | ing. | Fruitleftown from other years | | ARG |
| Luarts | 15 | tomates | | |
| <u>n 11</u> | 4 | Praches | | |
| 0 17 | -7] | Goosbarnies | A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A | |
| 11 11 | 5 | Strawbarry Jam | | |
| 11 11 | 11 | Goosbarry Jan | | |
| 12 11 | 31 | Pluring F | | |
| 11 11 | 60 | Seeded chamiles | | |
| | 3 | Reliste | | |
| 11 18 | 7 | Raspberry Jam | A Standard Standard | |
| 11 11 | 8 | crubs to 199 | | CALLYZ LONGES TO XIS CALLY AND CALLS |
| 11 11 | 5 | apple sauce Quarts total 1.92 | | |

Car travel helped set the tempo of the Wilkins' lives for several years, as May drove herself from Fort Collins to her mother's home and back twice a year. Her solitary car travel seems to have increased May's reputation for worldly independence.



The many things May Wilkins saved reflect the affection and humor in her marriage to Don.

1942, Oct. 25 , Don to May

"You will have to accept the fact that we are all going down hill, not only the older folks at home, but you and I. I can certainly tell that I am not the man I used to be and I resent it, but I don't know what to do about it. I don't think even eating a lot of lettuce would help."

1943, April 30, May to Don:

"Wish I was with you tonite. I couldn't ever live without you for long my dear Donald. Wonder if all wifes love their husbands so! Wonder what you will be doing tonite. Probably not a great deal without the car. Well, be a good boy and take it easy. Keep your spirits high like you own the world."



The documents and objects in the May Wilkins collection allow us glimpses into Don and May's experiences: as a couple, as Americans experiencing World War II, as local community members for over 60 years.



May titled this photo "May Wilkins & Family"



The Wilkins' involvement in their Fort Collins community continues today through this collection and in the form of the Don and May Wilkins Charitable Trust. Don and May created the Charitable Trust (1999) to provide support for cultural, charitable, historic, and educational purposes in and around our town.

