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Departed this life Nov. 26. 1897  
Aged 54. years 3 months and  
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She was a good wife  
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She leaves a husband, 3  
daughters one son, and  
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their loss

(From Carolyn Boyles to Wilma Hiatt)

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Caroline Beamer/The Mount Airy News

**INSEPARABLE TWINS:** Essie Evans (left) and her sister, Bessie Cooke, are celebrating their 83rd birthdays today.

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# Inseparable Twins Like It That Way

By **CAROLINE BEAMER**  
Staff Writer

It was their fate to be twins. After all, their mother and father had two sets of twins in their families. Bessie and Essie Slate were born two years after their twin brothers Roy and Coy were born.

It was January 28, 1918. The family lived in Patrick County, Va., and a winter storm was raging. Attie Mae Slate went into labor and was terrified the doctor wouldn't get there in time. But he made it, and two beautiful baby girls arrived.

Essie Cooke and Bessie Evans, their married names, had eight other brothers and sisters, but they were especially close to each other, and still are.

The sisters are celebrating their 83rd birthdays today. There have been only two other birthdays in years past that they didn't spend together. They visit or speak on the telephone each day and have always been pretty much inseparable.

"When she goes, I go," Cooke said with a laugh.

Her sister nodded seriously. They don't want to live in the mortal world without one another.

They wear their soft gray curls the same way, share many of the same mannerisms and both have a quick smile.

"Sometimes we know what the other is thinking," Evans commented.

Many times when the two get together,

"we'll be wearing the same thing or the same colors," Cooke remarked.

The sisters had a scare with breast cancer, the diagnosis for one coming exactly a year after the other's. They're cancer-free now.

Growing up they never considered themselves angels.

"We could be devils," Cooke said with a grin.

"But we've never had a cross word with each other," Evans added.

They were striking looking, with trim figures and auburn hair.

"I can remember getting off the school

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bus and sometimes the two would be standing there together, and the sun would glisten off their hair," said Shirley Martin, Evans' daughter.

Evans was the first to marry. She was 21 and left home with her sister feeling like her life had ended.

"I remember the next day going out to look for chinquapins, and the others said, 'why are you crying?' I just told them I had allergies," Cooke said. "I didn't want them to know the truth."

A couple of years later, she herself married. While Evans' husband was in the service, the sisters lived long distances apart, but when the World War II ended the families were reunited in Surry County. Later, the two couples lived across the street from one another.

"Sometimes I'll call her up and say, 'What are you cooking for dinner?' And she'll answer, 'Cabbage and cornbread.' I'll say, well, that's what I'm fixing, too." Evans said.

Their hobbies are gardening, canning and freezing, and of course, spending time with one another.