

'Misfortunes' of justice differed in the 19th Century

The year 1896 was not a good one for some men from Bedford. Their "misfortunes" were chronicled in the *Bloomington World*.

The first one, dated Jan 30, began, "There was a tragedy in three acts played in Mitchell last Sunday in which a Bedford dude and a handsome young Mitchell belle were the principal actors."

There were actually three young men from Bedford who hopped on the train and made a trip to Mitchell "to see how many hearts they could capture belonging to the young ladies of that town." According to the newspaper article, one of the men was "more pompous than his companions and with his hair parted in the middle, a la college style..."

The unnamed man encountered an attractive female described as a member of one of the most prominent families in Mitchell. The opening (and next to last) remark he ever made to her caused her to blush. The man earned a not-to-be-misinterpreted frown before she passed on down the street.

Apparently, the female hunting in Mitchell was not as rewarding as the men



LOOKING BACK

By Rose McIlveen

hoped it would be, and they walked to the Monon depot for a return trip to Bedford. While they were waiting for the train, the door suddenly flew open, and four women, including the one accosted on the street, entered.

The *World* related what happened next. "With a glance about the waiting room her eyes alighted upon the Bedfordite, and she walked quickly to his seat and grabbing him firmly by the coat collar she raised him just as quickly to his feet. Her eyes blazed and her bosom heaved with suppressed excitement as she shook that dude as a dog would shake a rat."

She had not retaliated sufficiently, in her estimation. The newspaper went on to entertain its readers with the observation that the young woman "compelled" him get down on his knees and ask for pardon.

The men and women involved in the spectacle were not the only ones in the waiting room. According to the *World*, "A smile flitted over the faces of some half dozen drummers (traveling salesmen) that were in the room."

Having taught the young man some manners, the lady took out a handkerchief and dusted her hands. In her wake as he left the depot the salesmen were clapping.

Moralized the *World*, "The young man is well known in Bedford and no doubt received a much needed lesson, and it is safe to say it will be many days ere he goes to Mitchell again."

And then there was the case of Harry Kelly, a young Bedford lawyer. In late February or early March he seemed to have gotten himself into the kind of trouble an attorney should avoid at all costs. He was alleged to have embezzled \$102 from Miss Cora Myers, a client of his from the same city.

Explained the *World*, "The money had been paid into the county clerk's office of Lawrence, and it is claimed Kelly drew the money and appropriated it to his own use."

There had already been a trial in regard to

the alleged theft of Cora's money, and Kelly had been fortunate enough to have friends who cared enough to come up with the missing money. Perhaps he did not take seriously the agreement at the end of his trial. He was to leave the county permanently.

The Lawrence County sheriff heard that Kelly was in Huron and rearrested him. The case was venued to Monroe County, and the young man's lawyers were John R. East of Bloomington and George Iseminger of Bedford.

The two attorneys claimed that the indictment was defective and wanted it quashed. Prosecuting Attorney Edmondson was infuriated because there was a witness he needed who had to be brought up from Bedford.

Well, if the readers of the *World* were curious about the disposition of the case, they were disappointed, because the *World* didn't report it.

But the newspaper couldn't keep itself from concluding the article with a bit of sentiment. "He (Kelly) attributes his downfall to whiskey, and it was plain to see that he had the sympathy of the large crowd present as well as his brother attorneys."

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