

# Horticulture picnic of '15 rated a newspaper fanfare

The annual picnic of the Monroe County Horticultural Society was an annual affair — one that was marked on calendars early and looked forward to by part-time gardeners with a green thumb and hard core farmers alike. In 1915, the picnic had been postponed once because of “inclement weather.” The site was Joseph Henry’s grove on the Whitehall Pike opposite the Cross Roads Church.

The *Bloomington Evening World* was obviously a big booster of the horticultural picnic. Beginning with Aug. 12, almost every day there was an article about the affair, even if it didn’t take up much space on the front page.

On Aug. 14, there was a big headline on the first page of the newspaper. It said “BIG COUNTY PICNIC — Special Program for Gathering to Be Held at Henry Grove.”

Began the article, “Everybody is hoping that Wednesday, August 18th will prove to be a nice day, as farmers and city people general-



## LOOKING BACK

By Rose McIlveen

ly want to attend the annual all-day picnic ...”

The article gave only a glimpse of the program. “The committee in charge announce a program worth while to all who will attend.”

What did the committee have in store for the attendees? Well, apparently it was all pretty homespun. There was to be a talk by a county agent from the northern part of the state. His topic was rather an odd one — “The Value of an Agricultural Office.”

The children wouldn’t have sat still for a long-winded speech, so there were other activities, as well.

Explained the newspaper, “Other features

of the entertainment program are music by a city quartet, readings galore by experts, sack and wheelbarrow races with good prizes for the winners.”

In case any of the readers of the *Evening World* might forget the picnic the newspaper featured it again on the front page. The story said in part: “...it is expected that a large crowd of farmers and city people will attend the affair.”

Naturally, for such a special event there was a planning committee, and they were given credit for their work in the newspaper. They were Turner Wylie, chair of the Bloomington Farmer’s Institute; Homer L. Curry, president of the Monroe County Horticultural Society; and Fred Burch and Dow Porter, prominent county farmers.

Once the picnic got under way, there were readings by Mrs. Fred Marxson, Ralph Wellons and Fred Marxson.

“A quartet from the city has been engaged

and will render a number of selections. (It was a long time before newspaper reporters quit using the word “rendered” in place of presented musical selections.) Greased pig contests, three-legged sack races, greased pole contests, etc.” were on the program.

How did the picnic fare? It was reported on Thursday, Aug. 19, in the *Evening World* that the rain had threatened, but did not succeed in canceling the picnic. Apparently, local citizens were determined to go, rain or shine.

“Tables were spread out under the big shade trees and ample justice was done to the many tempting things at the noon hour. After dinner a male quartet stepped to the front of the crowd and began singing. They were Fred Marxson, Ralph Wellons, Sam Harrel and J.W. Hughes. Sam Harrel’s children sang a duet.

Concluded the *Evening World*, “The picnic was voted a big success and will be made a permanent affair in the future as a means of bringing the city and county folk together.”

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