

Gatlin brothers had to face the music over shooting

One of the inexplicable injustices of life happens when an outsider — for the right reason — intervenes in a family quarrel and ends up as the one who gets hurt. Such was the case in July 1911.

George Alexander, who lived on North College Avenue, was enjoying a bit of evening air with his family on their front porch. Enter the Gatlin brothers, William and Frank, who were having an argument that sounded like it might get out of hand at any moment.

In fact, their verbal disagreement took place in front of Alexander's house, and it was loud enough for



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his family to hear. According to the *Bloomington Weekly Courier* of July 14, Alexander asked the Gatlins to move on and have their argument elsewhere.

Continued the *Courier*, "... one of them spoke up and said, 'We are brothers and we can settle our trou-

ble without your interference.'" Though the two young men should have taken the suggestion, they resumed their heated discussion.

Their offensive language was too much for Alexander, especially since his wife was still on the porch. He stepped out to the sidewalk and repeated his request.

Alexander, who had been relatively calm up to that point, was hit for his pains by one of the Gatlins. Said the *Courier*, "... he (Alexander) rushed back into his house, calling to his wife to get him his gun. She clutched him by the coat and begged him not to return to the

fight, but he brushed her aside and upon returning to the walk, was fired upon by one of the Gatlins."

Alexander also fired his gun. In all, according to the newspaper, seven shots were exchanged, and Alexander was the loser.

The newspaper informed its readers, "... one of them (the shots) struck Alexander below the breast bone, going to the left side. The wounds look as though he had been shot twice, but both holes were made by the same bullet."

Alexander's wife, who was described as hysterical, was not too distraught to drag him into the

house. Actually, he believed the wound was fatal. At that point, he had some specific instructions in mind. Said the *Courier*, "He directed his friends concerning his lodge receipts and asked that his pocketbook and other belongings be turned over to his wife."

The newspaper reporter who covered the incident, discovered that there were plenty of witnesses — google-eyed neighbors who scrambled to safety when the shooting began. "A number of men and boys in front of the Baugh livery

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