

Summer of '15 was a hard time for local women

Some of the language that passed between the women was repeated in the court, but was too profane and obscene for publication in a 'decent' newspaper. — Bloomington Evening World, Aug. 19, 1915.

From most any point of view, the women didn't seem to be faring very well during the summer of 1915 in Monroe County. Mrs. Candace Dowling (of West Wylie Street) and Mrs. Minnie Evans (of South Rogers Street) got into a back yard brawl that ended in a courtroom confrontation. The Aug. 19 issue of the *Bloomington Evening World* tried to explain what happened.

"From the testimony given it seems that Mrs. Evans was in her garden and Mrs. Dowling came over to look for her children. Words passed, and then Mrs. Evans stepped from her garden to an unimproved street where the fight took place." Testimony during their day in court indicated that it was not the first verbal confrontation between the two women.

Witnesses for each side testified that the other struck the first blow. When Justice Rhodes rendered his verdict, Mrs. Dowling was fined \$1 and costs. The court may have become exasperated with the women before



LOOKING BACK

By Rose McIlveen

the dispute had finally be settled. According to the newspaper, "Mrs. Dowling charged Mrs. Evans with 'provoke.' Mrs. Evans pleaded guilty, paid her fine and then charged Mrs. Dowling with assault and battery. Mrs. Dowling, to make matters even, filed a damage suit for \$3,000 for slander against Mrs. Evans."

Divorce cases

Meanwhile, other women in the community were filing for divorce, using what was standard terminology at that time—cruel and inhuman treatment. The most financially ambitious petition was that of a woman who asked for \$1,500 in alimony and \$50 per month support for her maintenance. In addition to charges that her husband had cursed her, nagged and made fun of her, he is reputed to have said "... he had associated with other women and would continue to do so and that she could not help it and that it was

none of her business anyway."

Disappointed wife

Two Chicago women were disappointed after they stepped off the train in Bloomington. They had been, as the *Evening World* of Aug. 11 put it, "duped" by a man in Chicago.

Adolph Barth had deserted his wife in Chicago, and she had inserted an ad in a newspaper, offering a reward for information about her husband's whereabouts. A man, who said his name was Burman, called on the deserted wife and told her that her husband was working in Bloomington. Burman even had a name for the company where the husband worked.

Burman urged the wife to come to Bloomington with him so that she could be reunited with her husband. She took the precaution of having her mother ride with them on the train to Bloomington. The *Evening World* printed what happened next. "This move (bringing her mother along) evidently displeased Burman, for when the train was nearing Gosport he told the women that he thought he would go into the smoker for a few moments."

That was the last time the women saw Burman. In Bloomington they found there

was no Goodman & Co. and no husband. Commented the newspaper, "As Mrs. Barth is quite good looking and wore about \$1,000 worth of diamonds, it appears that Burman might have had robbery for a motive ..."

Women only

Any males who were planning to attend the Monday, Aug. 16 matinee at the Princess Theatre would have been turned away. It was a women-only presentation of the makers of Gossard corsets. Chirped the *Evening World* of Aug. 12, "This will be a great disappointment to their male patrons, but as the seating capacity will be taxed, as the film is of direct interest to women only, men will have to forget this matinee." The corset advertisement on film was partially disguised in a "beautiful story entitled 'How Marjorie Won a Career.'" Local women could pick up passes to the film at Campbell & Co., show sponsor.

Did the writer have his tongue in his cheek when he ended the article with "Moving pictures are certainly covering a wide range of activities, and there is no telling what one will see next at the movies."

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