

Rash of local burglaries ended in tragedy for teen

Early in 1907, Bloomington was troubled with a series of burglaries. When there was a break-in at the Kahn clothing store, the evidence at the scene pointed to 14-year-old Charles Carr.

The boy, who lived with his family at 214½ W. Kirkwood, had been in trouble before. He had been arrested for malicious trespass when a rock was thrown through the window of one of the buildings in the Tournier block at the corner of Fourth Street and College Avenue. He was out on bail.

In the week of March 15, 1907, Bloomington Chief of Police Ed Johns got a phone call from Lois Perring who lived at 120 E. Sixth St. She said she had heard someone walking around on the back porch of the house.

Johns and Policemen William Shinn, Peter Norman and Theodore Moore responded. The Bloomington *Telephone* described what happened next. "Running to the Perring home, they surrounded the house. Policeman Shinn went in the front door and ran through the house out of the back door. As he opened the door, young Carr was on a ladder, either looking in or attempting to gain entrance through the transom."



Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

Seeing Shinn, the Carr boy jumped to the ground and ran. Shinn shouted, "Halt!" but the boy kept on running. Shinn and Johns fell over brush heaps. There were two shots, the Carr boy was hit by the second one as he was attempting to climb over the back fence.

He was seriously wounded in the lower abdomen and was carried to the office of Drs. Rogers & Rogers in the Hotel Bundy. The wound was described by the newspaper, "The bullet had entered the pit of the stomach, plowing its way through the boy's body and was under the skin of the back." Since Carr's heart was becoming weak because of internal bleeding, the doctors injected strychnine as a stimulant.

Doctors used an experimental method for repairing the damaged intestine, but the next morning he died. On his deathbed,

Carr had insisted that he had been walking through the alley when he was the shot. Shinn was arrested for the shooting.

The officer was indicted by the grand jury and resigned from the police force. At his trial in June of 1907, the Perring girls and police officers all agreed on the witness stand.

There was disagreement about how dark it was in the Perring's back yard. This point was particularly important because of an accusation made by the Carr boy's half-brother, Roy Fatzinger.

The *Telephone* of June 28 explained. "At this point the state attempted, but failed, to get in evidence three letters, which it is alleged, were written to Ida Hampton, a 14-year-old girl, by Policeman Shinn. These letters fell into the hands of Mrs. Carr, and it was the intention of the state to show that Shinn was afraid that these letters would get him into serious trouble, and that they were being held over his head. Mrs. Shinn tried to secure possession of these letters and failed. The state was banking on showing that this angered Shinn and for this reason he was laying for the boy."

The judge disallowed the introduction of

that evidence, and the trial went on. The prosecution had one other point to make: "that the Officer Shinn had no legal right to shoot anyone under such conditions and under such a charge and therefore the charge of manslaughter must be in effect."

The jury composed of Frank Eller, Elmer Buskirk, Stewart Lanum, James Hughes, George W. McKnight, Harmon Creech, William Stephens, Marion Burch, Homer Butcher, Ira Coffey and Carroll Ray, deliberated for 10 hours. The first ballot was eight to four for acquittal.

On July 2, the *Telephone* reported that at the "not guilty" verdict, "Shinn jumped to his feet and shook hands with each of the jurors and the court." He never returned to the police force. The 1909-10 *City Directory* lists Shinn as a Monon Railroad employee. The Carr family was living at 214½ W. Kirkwood Ave.

The term "gang" was not used in the 1907 articles about the Carr boy, but there was a significant piece of information in the one on March 15. "At another time the police rounded him up and several other boys of about the same age and took the revolver which they had been carrying away from them."

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