

1909 news: believe it or not

(Continued from page 1)

crime" had been committed.

Six weeks later, nonplussed by the very ordinary explanation for the presence of the clothing, the *Telephone*, in a front page story, reported blandly: "The tragic element had disappeared with the discovery only yesterday that it was a plain case of theft — a suitcase stolen from Miss Mary Proctor of Waveland at the Monon station and spirited to the neighboring back lot where its contents were emptied."

Miss Proctor, a former Indiana University student, had stopped off overnight on commencement weekend to visit Mrs. Jennie King at the B.F. Adams house on South College Avenue. Since she needed only one of her two suitcases for an overnight visit, she left the other (presumably checked) at the Monon station. During the night it disappeared.

It was not until much later that Mrs. King found out that the clothing found in the barrel had been given to the Charity Association drive. When the chairman described the clothing, the "mystery was unspectacularly solved. The suitcase, which bore Miss Proctor's name and contained some sheet music, was never recovered.

It must have been on a slow news day at the end of July, when the *Telephone* had another "sensational" case to report to its readers. And what was the crime that warranted the arresting headline: "Boy Steals Teeth?" Well, it seems that Mrs. Julia Storms, "a boarding house lady on West 8th Street, had reported that her false teeth were missing.

Actually, the *Telephone's* account of the case is typical of that period. The newspaper related: "Johnny Clemons, for whom a warrant has been out since Saturday charging him with purloining a set of false teeth, belonging to Mrs. Julia Storms . . . is now behind the bars of the county jail, awaiting trial and a possible workhouse sentence."

According to the *Telephone*, the young man — who was described as "about 18 years old" — after the theft, had a sudden wish to visit Gosport, but was arrested when he returned to Bloomington. No doubt the readers of the *Telephone* were curious about his motive for the alleged theft. Fortunately, the newspaper supplied it. "Mrs. Storms in her affidavit charges him with visiting her house while she was away and taking the teeth with the ostensible purpose of selling the gold in them."