

Man deters train wreck: Was he hero or swindler?

Monroe County has had its share of heroines and heroes.

Among them might the name of James Trabue. Though the *Bloomington Telephone* of July 15, 1898, tried to give the man the benefit of the doubt, there were those who thought his place among the heroic was a trifle tenuous.

Under a headline which said, "HERO OR NOT? Tramp Saves Midnight Train from Wreck and in Jail on Suspicion," the newspaper commented, "The midnight Monon passenger train was saved from a fearful wreck last night — the work of a hero or coward."

Midway between Bedford and Bloomington at a place called "Horse Shoe Bend," the engineer saw a flame waving back and forth along the track in the distance. Pulling the alarm bell and throwing the train into reverse, the engineer



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By Rose McIlveen

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managed to stop it just short of crossties obstructing the track.

Trabue, the man who had given the signal, told the conductor a strange tale — perhaps too strange for the conductor to swallow. According to the young man, he was from a "good" Louisville family. The *Telephone* further related:

"As he (Trabue) was walking along the track slowly, he came upon the crossties, and at the same time noticed two men. He realized

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