

# Grisly discovery along the railroad track a mystery for Bloomington police in 1909

In the annals of Monroe County history there is a companion piece to the story of the decapitated man — the one found by the railroad track in the northwest part of Bloomington in 1909.

Twenty-six years earlier, three railroad men — Thomas Hermet, John Warner and Bee Everman — were walking to the Clear Creek water tank to get some water for the engine. Appropriately, the time was midnight. As they walked along the track they stumbled over something and on the way back, stopped to have a closer look.

To their horror, they found the head of a woman between the tracks and the rest of her body nearby. "A MID-NIGHT TRAGEDY. A Woman Cut to Pieces on the Railroad With Strong Suspicion and Considerable Evidence of Foul Play," screamed the headline in the *Bloomington Telephone*. With one eye on his writing and the other on



## Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

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the newspaper's circulation figures, the reporter told his readers, "It was thought probably that the woman had been murdered by her husband, who put her across the track to conceal his crime; or he had purposely left her in insensible intoxication, upon the track to be killed by the train."

What followed the discovery of the body was enough to make any competent law officer shudder. It seems that, upon returning to town (the reporter didn't say which town), the men telegraphed the discovery for instructions, "and

were directed to take the body to an undertaker's establishment and ask for a coroner's investigation. They then went down and gathered the body together, and brought it to the undertaker's."

Considering the possibility of foul play, even Sherlock Holmes would have been dismayed by the removal of the body and footprints all over the scene. One piece of evidence that posed a curious question for the authorities was the fact that a great quantity of the woman's blood was found at the cattle guard, some distance from the body.

Her identity — unlike that of the decapitated man — was not a problem for the authorities, since the acting coroner, W.W. Harrold, J.P., found a letter on the body. She was Anna Seamon, nee Artman, who had brothers in "Dakota" and Chicago.

Seamon — her husband — was arrested in town in an intoxicated

condition. He had gotten off the train to look for his wife, inquired at the roundhouse "what his wife was doing there" and appeared at Lucky's Restaurant, where he was "taken through the house to satisfy him that she was not there."

The police had to sober him up before they could get any sense out of him. According to the *Telephone*, Seamon was shown a piece of his wife's dress and replied, "it made no difference." When asked if his wife had new pair of shoes, he said it was "nobody's business."

Joseph Henley, a local attorney, tried his hand at questioning Seamon. The lawyer reported that the man didn't seem to be the least disturbed, and that if she was dead, "that was all there was of it." Though he admitted he had been quarreling with her, he claimed to have seen her alive after the argument.

Next Week: Seamon's day in court.