

# Gaddis went 'insane' in county jail

While Tobias Gaddis waited in the jail at Bloomington for his trial to begin, allegations of his previous activities in Greencastle were received in Bloomington. (Gaddis had been charged with stealing jars of preserves in the Victor area of Monroe County, but charges in Lawrence County were also pending.)

J.F. McGregor of Greencastle wrote to the authorities in Bloomington, and he was quoted in the Bloomington *Weekly Courier* of Oct. 4, 1907. "About five months ago, Tobias Gaddis and wife and child and his sister-in-law, Fannie Jones, came to Greencastle and remained three days. They moved into a house two and one-half miles south of Greencastle, owned by a Mrs. Carver. After they left Greencastle there was a horse missing, but it was returned by the nephew of Gaddis, Oscar Knight."

The horse was not the only thing missing. Farmers in that area missed a woodsaw, pliers, 20 bushels of oats, vinegar, chickens and other items. In addition, there was the matter of some unpaid bills with Green-



## Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

castle merchants.

According to McGregor, Gaddis had a double-barreled shotgun, and the writer added, "If that is the gun he used in Monroe County (to shoot a whitecapper), I would like to have it back."

McGregor also noted that possibly Gaddis was not married to his "wife." "I have been sure that he is a slick citizen and should be looked after. They have been at Shelbyville and Muncie. If Monroe County wants to care for him, make him prove he is married."

At that point it looked as if Gaddis had all the trouble he could handle. And apparent-

ly he didn't handle it. The *Weekly Courier* of Oct. 8 related to its readers that the man was "a raving maniac in his cell," refusing to eat or speak to anyone.

Inasmuch as one man's insanity may be another man's eccentricity, a physician, Dr. Fred C. Batman, was called to the jail to make some kind of determination about the matter. Explained the newspaper, "Gaddis refuses to eat anything, and when anyone enters his cell, he runs to the dark corners and crouches down like he is afraid . . . If his condition does not improve by Monday, a commission will be held to declare Gaddis insane and make application for his commitment to the Central Insane Hospital at Indianapolis."

Was the prisoner aware of the consequences of being "insane?" Perhaps, but before any evaluation could be made, his "wife" suddenly resurfaced and gave the local news reporters another facet of the story to write about.

"Mrs. Gaddis" turned out to be 16-year-old Ruth Emenheiser of Muncie. At the

home of her mother she sobbed and related that she went willingly with Gaddis on the evening when he assaulted her mother and stole her property. The girl's account was printed in the newspaper on Oct. 15.

If the readers of the *Weekly Courier* were confused about the sequence of events in the busy life of Tobias Gaddis, consider the problem of the authorities in sorting out which court got jurisdiction first.

Meanwhile, Ruth Emenheiser was not disillusioned with Gaddis. She was quoted as having told a reporter, "Whatever Tobe may have been, he provided me with a home, clothes and food, when others were unwilling or unable to do it. I want to deny that he killed Robinson in a fight. There is absolutely no truth in that story."

Back in the Bloomington jail, Gaddis' sanity suddenly returned. The timing may have had something to do with the fact that commitment papers were shortly expected from Central Insane Hospital.

Next week: What became of Tobias Gaddis.

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