Talk about global warming — try summer of '36

Unusual weather is not all that unusual in Monroe County. A case in point is the heat wave of the summer of 1936.

Local newspaper readers were reminded of the seriousness of the problem in the July 14 edition of the *Bloomington Telephone*. "Indiana has had no rain of any consequence for two and one-half months, and the drought has cost farmers millions of dollars."

On July 5 the temperature in Monroe County climbed above the 100 mark and stayed there for 12 almost unendurable days. The consequences of the extreme heat were reflected in the local newspapers.

Complained the *Telephone* on July 10, "Apparently determined to continues its record breaking high temperatures, a relentless sun started out with a vengeance this morning to give Bloomington and the surrounding territory the highest mark of the summer."

The "U.S. government" thermometer at Indiana University was the official marker for all local articles.

LOOKING BACK
By Rose McIlveen

The heat wave affected Monroe countians in several ways. The newspaper reported that "many persons wait until a late hour before attempting to retire for the night."

It should be recalled that central air conditioning was not available, but the "lucky" ones who had electric fans were only moving hot air around their rooms.

An International News Service wire story on July 10 indicated some serious consequences of the prolonged drought and heat — insects and forest fires. The fires were eating up forests in South Dakota, Wyoming and Montana.

Remarked one farmer, "Even if the rain comes, (that) does not help the growing crops, the grasshoppers and bugs will get them before the summer ends." Bloomington's two municipal swimming pools reported sudden increases in attendance. (The pools were in the Third Street Park and the Cascades Park.) Noted the *Telephone* of July 11, "Every available swimming suit was called into use today to take care of the children who were not fortunate enough to have their own. Mrs. Nelle Weaver, pool supervisor, stated this morning that the pool would appreciate donations of discarded suits that Bloomington people have around their homes."

Carl Martin, who was visiting in Indianapolis, died of the heat while walking along the sidewalk at New York and Meridian streets. He was only 43 years old.

The heat took its toll on the superstructure of the county. The *Telephone* reported that Ind. 45 near Duncan's Orchard southwest of Bloomington "blew up" because of the heat. And in town, city workers had to repair similar damage to Third and Henderson, Third and Washington and the 1000 block of South Rogers Street.

On July 15, downtown merchants gave their employees the afternoon off. Not so Showers furniture factory. There Carl Lawson, age 27, who operated a spraying machine, was overcome with the heat and taken to Bloomington Hospital. He joined Tom Davis who had been stricken by the heat while working on North Walnut Street.

Another problem created by the heat wave was the production and delivery of ice. Some Bloomingtonians depended upon delivery of ice to keep their ice boxes cool. But meat markets, taverns and hotels were also affected. There were three local ice companies: the Bloomington Ice Company, Kenney Ice Company and Layton Ice Company. They were facing restrictions on production and delivery.

Mercifully, on Thursday, July 16, rain fell on Monroe County. It did not bring total relief, but helped considerably. The mid-morning temperature on July 17 was only 88 degrees!

A second rainfall pushed the noon temperature on July 18 down to a comfortable 72 degrees.

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