

Police sought motive in mysterious 1902 assault

Second of two parts.

Any police investigators worth their salt know that the "why" of a crime is important to finding the "who" of it. In their search for the person who hit Ida Weimer over the head in the early evening hours of Oct. 26, 1902, Marshal Johns and Officer Morgan were literally following a cold trail.

The crime didn't make any sense. Weimer wasn't carrying a purse or wearing a watch. She was not due to be paid for her job as a telephone switchboard operator for a couple of days.

Having heard that a couple of



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By Rose McIlveen

tramps had been seen loitering in the McDoel railroad yard, the officers went in search of the two. Both the Bloomington *Telephone* and the *Courier* reported the outcome of that particular investigative tack. Related the *Courier*, "The tramps were questioned this morning and

released, after the officers were satisfied that neither of them were implicated."

The *Telephone* had a more colorful way of putting it. "Two suspicious tramps were seen at McDoel earlier in the evening, and they were found and placed under arrest. They were put through the police 'sweat box' this morning, but told a straight story, and as there was no evidence of any nature against them they were turned loose."

As Weimer's head cleared, she was of no help to the officers, not having actually seen the person

who hit her on the head with a hickory club. A thorough search of the old Indiana University campus area turned up her handkerchief, comb and hairpins. There was some debate about a depression in the ground. Was it caused by her fall, or was she dragged some distance from the walk?

One thing was certain. When she found sanctuary at a house on South Walnut Street, her shoes were full of water. To get from a walkway near the railroad tracks to the house where she turned up, she had to have crossed the creek that today emerges from under the pave-

ment at the intersection of First and Walnut streets.

Though there was an election coming, and both newspapers devoted a great deal of space to their respective favorites in the campaign, the editors kept up with the investigation as it progressed. Speculated the *Courier*, "Why was Miss Weimer so brutally assaulted? This question is puzzling the officers. The young lady did not have her pocketbook with her, and the pay for her week's work was not due until tonight" (Oct. 28).

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