

Monroe County youth died of hydrophobia in 1890

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It seems that there was a man in the Terre Haute area who claimed that a "mad stone" from the stomach of a deer when applied to a suspicious wound would indicate where the dreaded rabies germs were present. We may laugh at Lamkins' decision to resort to such a folklore diagnosis, but he may well have felt that it wouldn't do any harm.

According to the *Telephone*, "This (the application of the stone to the wounds) was done in accordance with all the superstitions connected with that peculiar theory, but the stone did not adhere to the wounds as is said to be the case when there is any poison in the system. Satisfied with the result, Lamkins came home, and the boy went to work on his father's farm in Salt Creek Township."

The newspaper's readers must have cringed when reading about the boy's last days. At first, when he became ill, the family took a "wait and see" approach, believing that the sickness could have been one of a variety of ailments.

But when the disease progressed

to the stage of deliriousness and convulsions, they obviously could not deny that what they had most feared was happening before their eyes. The *Telephone* related that, "He was handed a drink of water, when he shrunk back and fought it away."

A Unionville doctor did his best, but he must have known that there was little he could do. "Medicine was administered without effect. When Dr. J.E. Harris arrived, he found the patient strapped about the knees so that he wouldn't harm himself or anyone else. The physician had treated at least three other cases of hydrophobia before, and what he saw in the Lamkins household did not surprise him. Between convulsions, the doctor climbed on the patient's back and managed to get some morphine into him by way of a syringe.

As a footnote to the Lamkins obituary, the *Telephone* informed its readers, "The new branch hospital established in New York for the application of the Pasteur system of preventing hydrophobia has many patients. Scientific men are not yet well persuaded that Pasteur's inoculation is really a preventive."