

Personal ads, 1913: Potential groom seeks brown-eyed Bloomington bride

The auto thief from Union City who was arrested in Bloomington was not the only unusual visitor from that Randolph County community in 1913. A second one was a young man who came here with a rather unusual request.

On Aug. 15, 1913, the Bloomington *Telephone* reported that a "bride hunter" was in town. Explained the newspaper, "If her mother is willing, a Bloomington girl is likely to be the chosen bride of Ancil Alexander, the farmer from near Union City, who has been advertising for two weeks for a bride. . ."

Apart from his understandable preference for a young girl, rather than a middle-aged matron, he had one very particular preference. His ad, which appeared in the Indianapolis *Star*, specified "Age 17 to 24, height 5 feet 2 inches to 5 feet 7 inches, weight from 115 to 140, must have brown eyes."

Intrigued by the latter specification, the *Telephone* dispatched a reporter to find the would-be bridegroom for an interview. He obliged the reporter by disclosing that he had just come from Connorsville, where he had gone to have a look at



Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

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another female who had answered his ad. Though she was 5 feet 7 inches, her weight was apparently too much for Alexander's taste.

Asked about his preference for brown eyes, Alexander replied, "Brown eyes are the main thing. 'Brown eyes for love' is an old saying, and I don't want to take any chances on getting a girl who won't love me."

Alexander had found that photographs enclosed with the girls' replies certainly made his search easier. He claimed to have "a whole pocketful of love messages and pictures of applicants."

His checking out of applications had taken him to visit a dozen girls in Ohio and Indiana. At Findlay, Ohio, the suspicious police chief had telegraphed Union City to see if he was honest and trustworthy. According to the *Telephone* inter-

view, "The Union City authorities gave him a clean bill and the newspapers of that town give him a good standing in the community. He offers his bride a good country home and will not be particular whether she is a town or country girl, providing she is willing to live on a farm."

Alexander was unwilling to give the *Telephone* reporter the name of the Bloomington girl he was considering. He commented that "she is a nice little girl" and everything will be over if her mother doesn't object.

The *Telephone* article concluded with, "Alexander, despite his favorable impression last night, is still open to conviction. The 'little girl with the brown eyes' fills all the other qualifications, but there may be others. He says he will come back to this city if any other girl who positively knows she can make the requirements, wants to try for him. But girls, don't forget this, whatever else you do — she must have brown eyes. Mr. Alexander says that any letters addressed to *The Telephone* will receive special attention."