

Horse and hog get lots of newspaper ink in 1912

Animals made the news in the spring of 1912. Both stories in the *Bloomington Evening World* were off-beat, but the resemblance ended there.

The bell clanged in the Bloomington fire station at 10:15 on the evening of March 6. "John," one of the most loved members of the department staff, was literally undergoing treatment by a veterinarian, because in the previous day or two John had been too sick to stand.

The *Evening World* of March 7 described what happened after the fire bell rang. "Quick as a dart the horse arose to his feet, and when the door was opened, was under harness in a jiffy."

John knew what he was supposed to do. His duty was to pull the horse and ladder wagon to the fire, which was at the Showers Brothers saw mill.

The problem was that John's training exceeded his energy, considering that he was



LOOKING BACK
By Rose McIlveen

ill. Continued the newspaper, "After he had reached the fire, he was too sick to stand on his feet and started to lie down in the mud."

The fire chief, whose name was Shinn, assigned someone to unharness John and lead him home to his nice warm stall. The *Evening World* reported that the horse was "unable to rise to his feet until this morning."

John, nine-year veteran of the fire department crew, was unaware that he had made the front page of the *Evening World*. The newspaper also noted that there was only slight damage at the Showers mill.

The other animal who made the front page of the *Evening World* was not as lively as John. In fact, the animal was a dead hog stolen

from John Schovel's slaughterhouse on the North Pike.

The dead hog, valued at \$16, had been missing from the premises of the slaughterhouse since the end of February, according to the newspaper of March 18.

Thieves had pried loose some boards on the side of the slaughterhouse and lugged the 200-pound hog to a buggy.

It is apparent in the article that the police had no clues about the missing hog or the culprits until an anonymous caller tipped them off.

The caller directed Officer Hugh Hinkle and Sheriff James Browning to a hole in the ground near the Star Quarry northwest of town.

The partly butchered hog was covered from view by a washing machine. It had already been cut up into hams and side meat.

On Thursday and Friday nights the offi-

cers set up a stakeout at the site, which was about a half mile from any houses.

It must have been chilly waiting in the dark on a March night. Apparently the thieves got some more meat from the carcass on Saturday night when the officers were not there.

Finally, what was left of the carcass was carted away and returned to the slaughterhouse. Meanwhile, the officers interviewed the neighbors in the hope of picking up some new clues. They men did learn who owned the washing machine.

The officers told the *Evening World* they expected to make an arrest in the near future. If they did, the news was not prominently displayed in the *Evening World*.

Presumably the thieves' families benefited from the daring robbery.

And, no, the meat didn't spoil, because Monroe County had had an unusually cold spring.

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