

# Family's domestic difficulties made big news in 1903

"C.R. Worrall, the pension attorney was placed in jail at 11 o'clock this morning on a peace warrant sworn out by his wife. This is the culmination of domestic difficulties that have been disturbing the Worrall home for the past year."

— Bloomington Evening World, May 13, 1903.

According to the newspaper, the last straw was when attorney Worrall marched into the dining room at supper time, grabbed a chair and smashed it against the table, breaking most of the dishes. Next he attacked the china cupboard with the same results.

What had led to his violent behavior?



## Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

According to the *Evening World*, "Mr. Worrall was not under the influence of liquor when he went home last night. He says he broke the dishes because he did not want his wife to keep boarders."

Standing in the debris of broken crockery, Worrall's wife decided to put a stop to her husband's "temper

tantrum." The newspaper related that her solution was to go to the office of H.A. Axtell for the purpose of getting a peace warrant. Worrall was picked up at 9 p.m.

After his arrest, Worrall experienced a moment of frankness he may have regretted later. According to the *Evening World*, "Worrall admitted that he not only broke the furniture, but that he had also threatened to take his wife's life."

The local legal establishment took him seriously — so seriously, in fact, that they set his bond at \$500, a large sum in those days. Refusing to ask anyone's help with that amount, Worrall sat fuming in

a jail cell.

The newspaper informed its readers that the china-smashing incident was not the first sign of discord in the Worrall marriage. Explained the *Evening World*, "Mrs. Worrall sued for a divorce about six months ago, but through the efforts of mutual friends the couple decided to live together again."

Apparently, her idea of raising additional income by providing room and board to Indiana University students did not set very well with her husband. The first sign of his displeasure had happened a week earlier when he "went into

the house, poured two sacks of flour on the floor, dumped into the pile all the groceries he could find, poured some water on the mess and stirred it with a baseball bat."

The newspaper article also indicated that Worrall's outlook had been clouded by a problem worse than mere occasional outbursts of temper. "The friends of Mr. Worrall are forced to believe that he is temporarily demented, and they can excuse his strange actions in no other way. Mr. Worrall told one of his friends this morning that he was mentally unbalanced. One minute

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