

Marriage went to press at Telephone office in 1889

In these days of marriage ceremonies in hot air balloons, at the bottom of swimming pools and the like, one may be inclined to believe that unorthodox wedding sites are a modern phenomenon. Not so.

Consider the marriage of two hopeful young persons in a place least likely to be the list of places with romantic atmosphere. In the spring of 1889 — March 9 to be exact — two persons exchanged wedding vows in the pressroom of the Bloomington *Telephone*.

The wedding account in the edition of March 12 contained all of the flowery descriptive terms typical of any other wedding account of the time. It began, "The *Telephone* office was the scene of a brilliant wedding last Saturday afternoon,



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1½ hours after high noon — the regulation time for such occasions. The high contracting parts were Ulysses Grant Runyon and Miss Martha Arthur.

Apparently the couple had dispensed with music for the ceremony, organs and pianos taking up considerable space in a pressroom. But the newspaper reported that Squire James F. Morgan was "equipped in his wedding gown."

Continued the article, "Without

wedding march or even a note, the happy couple, arm-in-arm, appeared from the sanctum of the office, attired in the usual costumes for such occasions. Elmer Nixon, chief pugilist used for backing the fighting editor, appeared as the groom's best man, and Miss Rachel Lease, employed in the business department to take down the names of new subscribers, acted as bride's maid, while Bert Fesler, managing editor of the university department and proofreader of standing advertisements, gave the bride away."

According to the newspaper, some 50 persons attended the unusual wedding. And the reception followed immediately in the pressroom.

The *Telephone* informed its read-

ers that there were some prominent local people in attendance — William P. Rogers, Henry Bates and James Karsell, who "introduced the friends." Continued the newspaper, "It may be remarked that this wedding did not differ from all others in that 'the happy couple received many handsome and valuable presents.'"

If the perhaps tongue-in-cheek article can be believed, a collection was taken up on behalf of the couple. In a record-setting run-on sentence, the *Telephone* related:

"From near 50 spectators that had been invited to attend the marriage, and put in an appearance, a small collection was taken up with which a sack of Collins & Karsell's best flour and a half side of side

bacon was purchased, and after the nuptial knot had been securely fastened, William F. Rogers very solemnly informed Mr. and Mrs. Runyon that they could not live upon love alone and presented the groom with the flour and the bacon to the bride when they started out in the cold world, each carrying their 'useful and valuable present.'"

The *Telephone's* readers were not being deceived by this strange front-page story. It is recorded in the Monroe County clerk's office that the marriage of Miss Martha Arthur and Ulysses Grant Runyon did indeed take place on March 9, 1889. There is a possibility that the wedding had been planned for an

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