

When a taxicab driver assaulted a farmer

Back in the days when most people got around by walking or riding in buggies, the new-fangled automobile was not regarded as a deadly weapon. But it came close to that in May 1914 on the outskirts of Bloomington.

Will Hays, a taxicab driver, appeared suddenly at the Maxwell farm east of town, where lived Thomas Breedlove and his wife. According to the *Bloomington Telephone* of May 26, Hays was excessively angry because he was under the impression that Breedlove had given information to the police about a member of the Hays family. The "tip" concerned Peter Hays and a female, but the *Telephone* in a rare moment of discretion, did not disclose any further details on that score.

Arriving at the Maxwell farm, Hays first encountered Mrs. Breedlove, who was milking a cow. According to the woman, Hays first assaulted the cow with the taxi and then, jumping out, "grabbed and threw her against the fence."

It should be noted that some important details are missing from the *Telephone* article. For example, it related that Breedlove then took



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off across a field to a neighbor's to call the police. It would be interesting to know how many Bloomington housewives — after reading the story — were wondering why Breedlove didn't stay long enough to make sure his wife was all right.

Nevertheless, since he was Hays' real target, the driver returned to his cab and pursued Breedlove across the fields on what must have been a very bumpy ride indeed. The latter managed to reach the home of Samuel Chandler, whose address was given as "east 2nd street." (East Second Street was rural at the eastern end.)

It should also be noted at this point that the *Telephone* had dispensed with the legal nicety of the word "allege" in its account of the incident. Continued the newspaper:

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