

# Hurry-up reporting needed correcting in 1914 death

The *Bloomington Telephone* editor bragged in the March 4, 1914, edition about the speed with which the staff got out the story of the double Hardin shooting. The crime occurred at 2:30 in the afternoon, and the newspaper reporting the event was "put on the street" at 3:07.

Unfortunately, the *Telephone* staff sacrificed accuracy in favor of speed. In subsequent issues they were obliged to correct errors made in the March 3 edition.

Thomas Hardin, who was separated from his wife, did not drive the wagon to her house on South Rogers Street after all. He was driven there by Homer Eads, an employee in the Hardin grocery. Eads proceeded into town to do some deliveries.

Hardin's excuse for going to see his wife at his mother-in-law's house was to work out some financial arrangements associated with their separation. There is evidence that Hardin had been keeping close watch on his wife, if not actually stalking her.

One day not too long before the shooting she had gone to Martinsville to visit her uncle, Richard Miller. When she returned on the



## LOOKING BACK

By Rose McIlveen

train, Hardin was waiting for her on the platform.

Aside from the accounts of the shooting, there is the matter of libel, which might have been pursued by the supposed "other man." The *Telephone* identified him as Ralph Gillison, who had a wife and children in Bedford. After Hardin had been arrested for the shooting on South Rogers Street, a reporter asked him, "Who was the Southern Indiana Power man your wife kept some company with after you were separated?" The newspaper printed the question.

On March 4 the *Telephone* printed this: "In regard to the relations of Mrs. Hardin and Superintendent Gillison, Hardin is said to have told that before their separation Gillison brought Mrs. Hardin from Clear Creek to the

city to attend a party ... Neighbors say Mrs. Hardin and Gillison had been out driving since she lived in this city."

The March 5 edition carried vehement denials of a relationship between Mrs. Hardin and Gillison by her relatives. Gillison refused to comment.

The funeral for Jessie Hardin was at the home of her grandmother, Mrs. N.M. Miller, on South Lincoln Street. A minister of the Christian Church whose name was Smith conducted the service. Music was provided by Mrs. Sherman Wright, Mrs. William Smith, Rev. Smith and C.H. Marsson.

The *Telephone* kept the story on the front page. The March 7 edition said that immediately after the shooting Hardin had commandeered a wagon for his getaway. The newspaper described what happened next. "Hal Prince, son of William Prince south of town, was the boy who drove Thomas Hardin in his dramatic flight Tuesday after he had shot down his wife and mother-in-law. The wife-slayer commanded Prince's wagon and team of mules at the point of a gun and made the young man lash the animals into a gallop

in his wild flight."

Meanwhile, at the hospital, Jessie Hardin's mother, Jennie Richardson, had been fighting for her life. Explained the *Telephone* of March 9, "Until last night there was some hope of saving Mrs. Richardson. She had shown remarkable vitality, recovered nicely from the first shock of her wounds and was cheerfully making a good fight for life." The fact that she lived after the shooting made let police to get two almost identical statements from her about what happened. Pneumonia was the cause of her death.

Jennie Richardson's funeral was held in the same house as her daughter's on South Lincoln Street. Mother and daughter were buried side by side in Rose Hill Cemetery.

At the Monroe County Jail, Thomas Hardin had nothing to say about his mother-in-law's death. (Just prior to the shooting, according to Mrs. Richardson, Hardin had called her "omery.") Actually, his attorneys had advised him to keep his mouth shut.

After Richardson's death, Monroe County Prosecutor Joseph K. Barclay filed a second count of murder against Thomas Hardin.

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