

# Bloomington woman 'cruelly assaulted' in 1902

## First of two parts.

Middle and upperclass women in 19th century Europe were sheltered by a code which said, simply: a lady does not go out of her house, particularly in the evening, unescorted. The dictate of society was largely based upon protection of the young woman's reputation.

Years passed and customs changed, especially in America, where women were less sheltered. But that earlier antiquated custom might have saved two area women who were victims in unsolved crimes at the turn of the century.

Progress brought the invention of the telephone to Bloomington and with it the necessity of female switchboard operators who worked around the clock. On Oct. 26, 1902,



## Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

Ida Weimer, age 33, finished her shift at 8:30 p.m., at the telephone office just off the square and headed for home.

Her route was south on Walnut Street to Third Street, west to College Avenue and south again towards her home on Morton Street near First Street. At the intersection of College and Second Street, she took a brick path through the

old Indiana University campus, where she was beaten over the head with a wooden club.

The assault was sensationalized by the Bloomington *Telephone* and the *Courier*. It was the latter newspaper that reported she was struck "in the full glare of the First Street electric light." She later related to police that she never saw her assailant, but was aware of someone walking behind her. After walking faster and then running, she remembered hearing correspondingly faster footsteps behind her and calling for help.

In reporting her story, the *Telephone* included some of the details. "Later she remembers of being on the ground in some part of the campus and wiping the blood from her

face and head with grass. She got up and staggered, again falling."

In her dazed state, apparently Weimer went in a southeasterly direction across the campus and found her way to the door of Mrs. Armilla Harris on south Walnut Street. According to the *Telephone*, "Miss Weimer was met at the door and, she asked if someone would not assist her. Her hat was gone, and her shoes were full of water. She was shaking with cold, and her face and neck were covered with blood."

According to the *Courier*, Weimer went to the home of Charles Lawson, also on South Walnut Street. Whichever it was, the two newspapers agree that it was Dr. J.P.

Tourner who was summoned to treat her. He discovered a two-inch gash over her left ear, two teeth damaged and scratches and bruises.

When Marshal Johns and an officer by the name of Morgan began their investigation, they were handicapped by Weimer's understandable confusion. Related the *Telephone*, "During the after part of the night, Miss Weimer rested quietly, but was not fully conscious . . . Her conversations were very disconnected, and she could tell very little excepting her name."

The investigators found Weimer's felt hat next to the brick walk. Nearby was a hickory club. It was believed that the hat had saved her

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