

Bloomington suffered phobia about hydrophobia

"Suffering from a bad bite on his left leg from a cat that had been suffering from hydrophobia, James Faucett, the brickmason, who works with Contractor John Murphy, left this morning for Indianapolis to take the Pasteur treatment." Bloomington *Evening World*, April 7, 1908.

It was Henry R. Alburger, a professor of pathology at Indiana University, who examined the brain of the cat and determined that it had what our ancestors called hydrophobia or rabies. Alarmed at the possibility of an epidemic of the fatal disease, the Bloomington City Council passed what the *Evening World* of April 8 called a "mad dog law."

The ordinance said: "It shall be unlawful for the owner, keeper, or person harboring any animal of the dog kind to allow or permit the same to run at large without being muzzled during the prevalence of hydrophobia in the city, after the Mayor shall have issued a proclamation requiring all unmuzzled dogs to be so confined by the owner or keeper."



Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

The punishment for noncompliance was to be a fine of \$25 and prosecution costs. Its introduction in the council agenda resulted in a rather heated discussion over an amendment proposed by three council members.

What they wanted was a provision that all dogs found without muzzles were to be captured and impounded for the duration of the scare. What they got instead was a request by the mayor that the captured dogs be sent to the IU "dog house." Professors B.D. Myers and William J. Moenkhaus told the council that the "dog house" capacity at the university was 40. Dogs unclaimed by their owners would be "sacrificed to sci-

ence," according to the professors.

The unusually large crowd of Bloomington citizens attending the council meeting got a short course in rabies from Professor Myers. He explained, "Previously all dogs were ordered muzzled, but the muzzles were removed too soon, the result being that dogs bitten before are now going mad. It is said that a dog may be bitten now and not have hydrophobia for six months afterwards."

Continued the *Evening World*, "It is not right to put any person to the expense of from \$150 to \$200 in taking the Pasteur treatment on account of some worthless dog or cat, to say nothing about the danger and worry from fear of hydrophobia."

Only two days later there was another scare. The newspaper explained that a mad dog that had been captured by the police and tied up at the fire station on North Walnut, got away. Before it could be killed, it bit four other dogs, including a St. Bernard belonging to H.A. Lee and a French Poodle

owned by Joseph Allen.

Meanwhile, Moses Kahn, who owned a store in Bloomington, got a letter from Dr. Victor Keene of Indianapolis. The doctor warned that to be on the safe side, the dogs in Bloomington should have to wear muzzles for two years.

Asked the doctor in the letter to Kahn "What is Bloomington doing to rid itself of rabies? It is very easy to cleanse a community of rabies, if a campaign is vigorously pushed. Unless the measures you undertake are thorough, you had better not attempt any."

In case any of the readers of the *Evening World* were wondering about the Bloomingtonians who had been bitten and were undergoing treatment in Indianapolis, the newspaper printed Dr. Keene's comments about them. "You will probably be interested to know that all the Bloomington cases under treatment at this time are doing nicely and will be sent home very soon."

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