

What was that shrouded lump in a midnight grave?

Monroe countians who lived in the Hunter Quarry area were all agog over a rumor that definitely bore investigation in mid-August of 1904. The story was reported in the *Bloomington Telephone*.

Readers were no doubt startled to learn that "There was excitement enriched with mystery, a crowd of excited men, under the gloomy shadow of lanterns, unearthing a corpse in the Hunter Quarry district last night." That tantalizing lead led subscribers to the *Telephone* to read on.

According to the paper, around 2 in the morning, someone had been spotted digging a large hole in the ground by a dim light. He was also seen lowering something shrouded in white into the hole.

Continued the *Telephone*, "It was covered



LOOKING BACK

By Rose McIlveen

with dirt, and the man quietly stole away. At daylight a general alarm was given, and by noon the stranger and his mysterious actions was the talk of the quarry district." It was decided that the authorities should be informed about the middle-of-the-night event.

And so the grave was reopened. Needless to say, the unearthing attracted a lot of attention. "By 9 o'clock most of the men and some of the women of the district had collected, and

quietly wended their way down the valley to the newly made grave.

A hush fell as the men began digging. It was not long before they struck a white garment "seemingly a shroud."

What did they find? The *Telephone* led the readers on until the very last paragraph. "It was the pretty white pony of Miss Ethel DeMoss that had been given an honorable burial because of its years of family service."

August of 1904 may have been the month of unusual stories in the *Telephone*. On the 26th the readers were informed that a 65-year-old Benton Township resident had decided after 40 years of marriage that it didn't suit him. Fielden Richardson had filed for a divorce from his wife, Susan. His complaint was full of trouble.

According to Richardson, Susan had abandoned him without cause and refused to live with him again. He also charged that she had told him he could not go to church or anywhere, for that matter. Worse yet, she had "unjustly caused him to be declared or unsound mind and placed in the insane asylum at Indianapolis."

When the case (cause 6662) came up Judge James B. Wilson's court on Oct. 14, 1905, Sarah did not appear, although called three times.

Judge Wilson ruled for Fielden Richardson by default, saying "that the allegation in his complaint alleging abandonment has been sustained."

Richardson, by the way, was obliged to pay the costs.

H-T 3/30/98