

# July Fourth of old had plenty of spirit — and danger

In the 1930s, Bloomingtonians didn't celebrate the Fourth of July with a parade, but they certainly had a lot of other activities to choose from on that day. They were described in the *Bloomington Telephone* of July 3, 1930.

A huge crowd was expected at the Bloomington Speedway for a special series of motorcycle and "novelty automobile" races. Added the newspaper, "Officials announced today that the entire speedway course had been groomed by workmen and is in tip-top shape for the events ... Sheriff R.H. Stephens and a corps of deputies will be on hand early to direct traffic and keep order at the course."

Picnicking at Cascades Park was popular, the annual one staged by post office employees expected to be the largest group in the park. On the other hand, the Christian churches of Monroe County held their Fourth of July picnic at Rogers Grove, two miles southwest of the city.

The Reverend Harry T. Bridwell, pastor of the Clear Creek Christian Church was general chairman of the event, and the "grounds committee" was made up of Wesley Sims,



## LOOKING BACK

By Rose McIlveen

Mount Gilead, chairman; Joe Frisbee, Clear Creek; and Jess Edson, South Union.

The committee delegated to look after athletic events and contests were Maynard Pollard, chairman; Ed Skirvin, Mount Gilead; and William O. Cosby, Bloomington. Mrs. Wesley Oldham of Smithville was chairman of the program committee. She was assisted by Ray Fife, Maple Grove; and John Butcher, South Union.

There was a food committee composed of Turner Wylie, Clear Creek; David Campbell, Ellettsville; Scott Henderson, Hindustan; and Dolph Cooter and George Acuff of Stinesville.

Another celebration was planned at the Bloomington Country Club for members and guests. The activities included golf and swimming competition, a fireworks display and

dancing to the music of the Klondyke Tucker's Ebony Jazz Kings. There were no special events at the Municipal Golf Course, but some players were expected to qualify for the *Telephone's* City Championship Golf Tournament.

The newspaper noted that the Spencer Band was going to present an outdoor concert at McCormick's Creek State Park, and a large crowd was expected to flock to the newly opened Spring Mill State Park. Fourth of July activities were also planned at Lake Holbrook near Gosport.

Results of the golf competition at the country club were duly reported in the July 5 edition of the *Telephone*. The winners among the men were Alan Buskirk, E. Matthews, Frank Gilliat, B.G. Hoadley, Charles Willard, Roy O. Pike, Ward Johnson, A.M. Snyder and A. O'Harrow. Women golfers who won awards were Ruth Hoadley, Mrs. John Suthphin and Mrs. Fred Barrett.

Unfortunately, not everyone in Bloomington enjoyed the holiday. Explained the newspaper, "As a result of too close inspection of a

firecracker, Wilbur Shake, five-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. G.G. Shake, 809 South Rogers Street, may lose the sight of his right eye or at least have the sight of that eye seriously impaired for the remainder of his life."

Wilbur bent too close to a firecracker that had just been lit by a playmate. Continued the *Telephone*, "The firecracker exploded, sending a shower of sparks and burning powder directly into the eye of the youth. With blood streaming from his eye the boy rushed into his home screaming with pain, and a physician was summoned at once."

As for Wilbur's sight, the unnamed physician was taking a wait-and-see attitude. He suggested that while the boy might still be able to see light with the eye, the vision would probably be considerably blurred.

The newspaper noted that just prior to the accident, Wilbur had been told by his parents that he could not play with firecrackers. Such incidents eventually led to the banning of some fireworks by the Indiana General Assembly.

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