

Bloomington house lived up to its 'haunted' label

Once upon a time there was a two-story house that stood on the northeast corner of Seventh and Morton streets in Bloomington.

There is no mention in the newspapers that the house was considered haunted, but it certainly had a tragic history.

Mack Hurst lost his will to live after indulging himself over a period of time in bootleg whiskey.

In 1913 his wife, Rena, rented some rooms for the family in the Seventh and Morton streets house to try to make a new life for herself and the children. A reconciliation with Mack had failed.

In his alcohol-fogged mind, it apparently seemed to Hurst that the best thing he could do was kill himself and take all of his family with him.

He crept into the house with a stick of dynamite attached to his leg. Because he blundered into the wrong room, his wife and other children were spared, but his daughter, Maude, was killed along with him.



LOOKING BACK

By Rose McIlveen

Three years passed, and the residents of the house changed. In 1916 a man by the name of Feltner moved in with his wife. They apparently moved to Bloomington in 1914, coming from Morgan County.

According to the *Bloomington Telephone* of Dec. 8, 1916, a daughter of Feltner had committed suicide when she was 15 years old. He, himself, had swallowed acid, but not enough to kill him.

There is an ironic headline on the story about Feltner. "ANGRY AT HIS WIFE SHOOTS SELF." Usually a person who is angry with another, shoots that other person. Not Feltner.

Before he shot himself, he sat down and wrote a long and rambling emotional letter

that was printed in its entirety in the *Telephone*.

It began, "Dear wife: I wish to live no longer for you say you are afraid of my living person. Now when you read this I want you to be standing over my dead body in one hour."

Feltner had given some thought to what would happen after he shot himself. One of the plans involved his son.

"My poor boy, I want George Shively to raise him if he will, if not, let Ozias Hacker of Crawfordsville know of his having no home, and he will take him."

Feltner had some unenumerated grievances against his wife, but acknowledged that he had not always behaved as he should. "I will forgive you all the wrongs you ever done me. I will die happy if you will forgive me. If I have wronged, I may falsely accuse you; if so God will forgive for I am asking it now."

Another plan mentioned in the letter was that the wound inflicted upon himself would not be immediately fatal.

He expected to live at least an hour. "After shooting myself I want to talk to you one hour and then die."

Then there was the matter of his funeral. Feltner explained in the letter that he had "\$70 in Empire" that should take care of his burial expenses. He wanted to lie in state in the Seventh and Morton streets house until he was buried.

What became of his plans? Well, Feltner did shoot himself and was carted off to the hospital in a police car.

In a postscript to the article, the reporter added, "This afternoon Dr. Wiltshire cut the bullet from the back, and the chances are still against his recovery."

There is no record of Feltner's burial in Rose Hill Cemetery. Perhaps his body was taken back to Morgan County.

Anyway, if ever there was a spot in Bloomington or Monroe County that deserved to be designated as a haunted place, it surely must be the northeast corner of Seventh and Morton streets.

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