

MONTGOMERY MEMORIES

Bad Boys, Bad Girls, Too!



June 2023

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The Paper of Montgomery County

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Contributing Writers



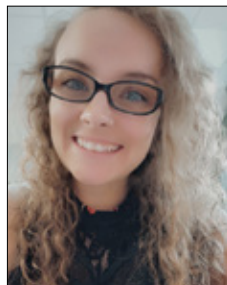
KAREN BAZZANI ZACH has been a contributor of local historical articles for almost 50 years. A native Montgomery Countian, she grew up in Waveland, married Jim Zach, and received her grad degree from IU while working at CDPL as Children's Librarian. Karen authored one of the newer county histories, *Crawfordsville: Athens of Indiana*. After teaching English at Turkey Run HS for 21 years, she retired and is now enjoying visiting with her two children (Jay and Suzie), writing, reading, doing genealogy, and grandkidding!



CHUCK CLORE After a lifelong career in visual communications, Eureka! Chuck discovered that noodling the nuances of the written word can be just as much fun as tweaking a font into an iconic logo. *Montgomery Memories* is the perfect venue to explore his treasured C-ville's east-end recollections. An Athenian boomer from the class of 65, he delights in graphic design, cartooning, and story telling. Chuck's articles reveal how a CHS senior corduroy artist eventually evolved into an award winning designer and aspiring writer.



JOY WILLETT was born in Crawfordsville and spent most of her childhood in southern Montgomery County. She graduated from South Montgomery High School. Her undergrad was from Indiana State University and she earned her MBA at the University of Phoenix. Joy and her husband David have lived in Indiana, Arizona, California, and Illinois. As an amateur genealogist, she enjoys research and has written three family history books. She also writes poetry and fiction.



KELSEY CURRAN is one of the paginators for the Paper of Montgomery County. She edits and helps complete the daily news as well as the *Montgomery Memories* and *Sports Report* every month for viewers to enjoy. She was born in a small town in Illinois and moved to Crawfordsville in 2016. She has three children. She enjoys spending time with her husband and kids, reading and baking.



May Feature: Meet Plumps

Karen Bazzani Zach, Montgomery Memories

Plumps Marley – ever heard of him? Neither had I, but oh, my his shenanigans kept me entertained for a couple of days. Quite an interestin’ fellow – read on!

Plumps was born May 6 in 1868 and lived with his parents, Michael and Angeline (Canada) Marley and his brothers, James and Henry on Spring Street while growing-up here. He was a loved young man but it quickly became well known that if he had a desire to have something – well, let’s just say it became his and he didn’t purchase it!

Near as I can tell, he began this constant desire in his late teens, a couple of years after his father had passed. Interestingly, he was followed by several writers in the newspapers, early on in the back pages but after the first few years of his capers, he almost always made page one! Later, he mixed booze with his mad passion and things really turned news-worry!

Certainly, Plumps wasn’t afraid of work. In 1889, he carried on a good job at the Nutt Hotel but took the summer off to travel around the state to sell lamps. He did a good job, saved some money and went back to his local job at the Nutt.

In July 1890, when Plumps said he was “entirely out of my head under the influence of liquor,” but never denied his wrong of stealing money out of the till where he worked totalling about \$12. He said if he could get out of it, he’d never err again (many times, Plumps’ famous last words) and that he was sorry but the man decided Plumps should pay and be an example to others who had a “strong penchant for tapping tills.” Off to Jeffersonville prison went Charley “Plumps” Marley. Seems 1890 was not a very good year for Plumps as he was accused of “tapping the till” at the Nutt Hotel but said he made no attempt to do that but was just overdrawn a bit (\$3) on his wages.

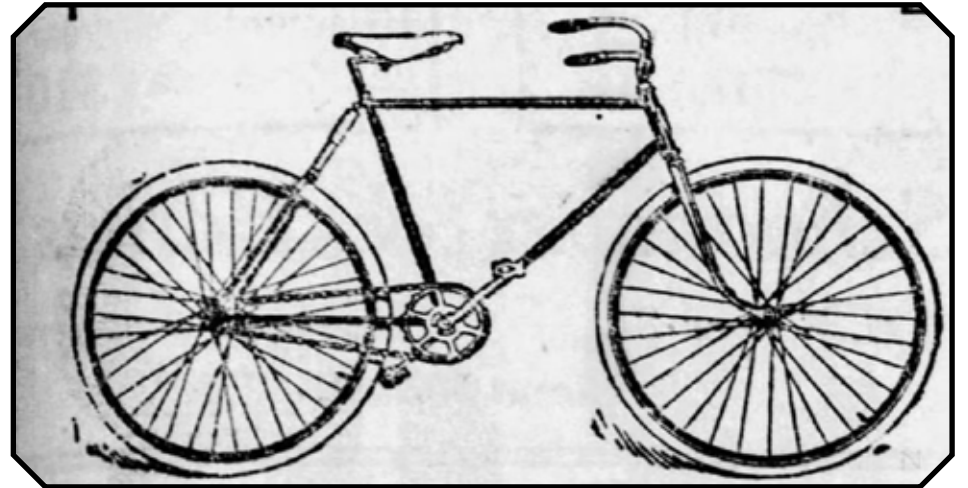
Later (October) in 1890 while working in the LeVante Room in the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Chicago as a private waiter, he and Ike Drake got “in a fight over a crap game” and Plumps whomped him on the head with an iron weight. It was thought that Ike might die but Plumps lucked out again and Ike recovered nicely ... Plumps took off ... to parts unknown.

In fact, almost each time he denied doing anything wrong but always, when he got into trouble, he would sneak-off and go elsewhere, usually working in a hotel, waiting or bussing tables (Jan

1892 he went to the Doxel House in Anderson). Almost always he’d wind back up in C’ville.

At the last of August, 1894, “the long-missing and much-wanted burglar” showed-up on the streets and such in Terre Haute. He had been there working and living for about five weeks. In the meantime, he had found his one true love who had visited the police station many times. “Elsie Lee was a gay and gaudy gazelle,” and she brought Plumps with her to see Justice Kenneth, blushing-ly telling the ancient judge that she and Charley wanted to “unite their fortunes and sorrows and jog along life’s rugged pathway in the sunlight of each others’ smiles” thus they paid the good judge the required \$2 to “tie the matrimonial noose.” Ironically, when he should have been holding his beloved gazelle, he was receiving news that they were looking for him and he took off. Elsie didn’t seem as mad at being dumped as a new bride as she was that her best purse was taken with \$15 in it. Not sure exactly where he went or for how long and what happened to their marriage but he later (17 September 1901) married Fannie Lash in Marion County. They had two daughters but so sad – Anna Marie born 11 July 1902 passed away (17 August 1903) before her sister Catherine was born (28 Nov 1906). Plumps passed away the 6th of September 1912 at the Flower Mission Hospital of tuberculosis at just 44 years 4 months old, little Catherine passed away in February 1914 with heart problems. In 1910, Plumps was in Indianapolis working in a hotel while Fannie was here (they were divorced) doing the same thing.

Plumps even made the papers when he was being good, as when he was shining shoes in C’ville and a man from Indianapolis gave him a nickle tip and a lottery ticket. Plumps didn’t know what to do with it so he sold it to Dr. C. Brown for 50 cents and the doc won \$1500. Another time he was coaching the C’ville Outcasts and their games were almost “easy picking” although they gave a



couple of the players more credit than Plumps.

Sometimes Plumps’ whims were for rather odd items, the bicycle getting him in major trouble. It was a “Queen City Wheel Number 4359” belonging to Melville Edwards who had purchased it from Zach Mahorney and left it in the feed yard near Brown & Watkins Mill when he went inside to do business. Well, you can guess who ended-up with that nice bike. At that time, one item everyone in the county wanted was a bike, thus an all-points bulletin brought Plumps in and “it looked like another term in the pen for Plumps!” (old similar bicycle photo from the Elmira NY Star-Gazette 25 June 1917 newspaper p 13)

Yes, Plumps stole what he wanted (an overcoat, a watermelon, a gold watch ...) but truly it seemed he always felt bad for his transgressions. He paid for each, I believe tallying two trips to Jeffersonville and one to Michigan City, having been reported as a “model prisoner” in all aspects. His favorite job there was making shoes in the factory but his least was carrying hod for new buildings. Everyone liked Plumps and it seems fairly obvious that he was a kleptomaniac and I would guess today it is controlled with a medication or therapy. At any rate, he was an entertaining fellow and had a lot of good in him, as well. Rest In Peace, Charles “Plumps” Marley. Oh, and don’t know where the nickname is from but when he carried hod for a few weeks a lengthy article in the 11 April 1902 Journal (yep page 1) noted that Plumps was so in shape that he “resembled a half-starved greyhound” so guessing it is a play on him being thin but who knows?

Odds & Ends – Collected & Commented on by Karen Bazzani Zach

Not often but occasionally, a “crime” was a bit humorous. In the Saturday Mercury 11 December 1876, there was an overview of a “poor dilapidated wretch” who was put to work on the street, with one ball and chain attached to his leg. This was fairly common at that time in many of the towns. Well, it seems the poor fella decided he was outta’ there, and dragging his ball and chain he ran. Of course, he didn’t get far before he was captured and another ball was chained to the other leg. Smart ‘nuf fella’ to realize he wasn’t getting’ anywhere like that but he did decide he wasn’t taking it and he “took revenge upon the municipal government by throwing mud all over the city building until ... they just took him back into the jail and locked him up.

Another fun one was in the summer of 1914 when Jack and Elsie Rankin (“who lived in Crawfordsville’s famous district, Monon Hill”) were jailed on Saturday evening for disturbing the peace, “entertaining their many neighbors” with some loud choice English words with some Dago thrown in.” Thinking Elsie must have been the loudest and most raucous of the couple as Jack was fined but \$1 (which he quickly paid and was ready to go) and Elsie five times that (she stayed for another couple of days in the “county hotel!” as neither of the Rankins had that much ready money). Hope they behaved themselves after that!

The Weekly Journal 18 April 1891 cracked me up with the headlines: “Our County’s Convict range from Polished Gentlemen to Illiterate Thugs and from Murderers to Umbrella thieves.” Tom Corbett, gate keeper at the Michigan City penitentiary noted that MoCo was his pet as it sent more criminals than any of the other counties, but that the MoCo boys were “all model prisoners and the punishment record shows they are – none of them have ever been confined in the dungeon!”

Hmmm, guess that was a compliment. In 1874, John Campbell was sent there for murder; 11 years later, William Shular went for manslaughter for 17 years. ’87 John Connelley burglary 5 years; John Berry the next year for the same but 7 years. Others for burglary were: Charles Burton and Adam Shafer.

June Bias received 5 years for grand larceny and others for the same were Fletcher Hampton; Marion McGuffin; William Kernodle (most were around 5 years, he got 18 months); and for Petit Larceny, most for one or two years and quite a few for that: Louis Jones; Bert Wilson; Levi Teeters; Charles Howe; Charlie Rogers; George Rogers and John A. Long... Assault & battery were charges of John Vaughn; Harry Arnold; Fletcher Hampton; Marion McGuffin; and John Campbell wasn’t the only murderer – the list also had: (Rev) William F. Pettit; and Charley Coombs (manslaughter, 21 years). Found it interesting that there was only one female in the women’s facility – Nancy Lightcap who was serving a year for arson.

Skipping a few years, the end of 1946 was pretty exciting in the area when six-year-old Virginia Yelton was kidnapped from Mills School. Virginia was described as having “dark hair; dark complexion; brown eyes and wearing a red jumper and white blouse at the time she was taken by a 5’11” man weight 200# with dark hair. It was quickly put together that the man, her father, Rev. Charles Yelton had gotten her and was heading to Key West, Florida with her. Virginia seemed quite happy, having been living with her Aunt Betty Deere Beeson, sister to her mother, Julia Deere Yelton. They were daughters of George Washington Deere and Ida May Litsey, and had another sister, Waneta and brother Paul Ulysses. Carroll and Betty Beeson had two daughters (Julia



and Dorothy) and a son George most older than Virginia and seemed to die young so Virginia may have been like an only child for them. Julia and the Rev. were not divorced but separated and after the FBI found him there really wasn’t anything they could do, as the little girl was happy being with her father and loved Florida!

And, many of our gals here were not exactly innocent little angels. For one, Alice Follick who was a very pretty 20-year-old, the daughter of Isaac Follick, who had never been in trouble but in May of 1890, she took to nabbing chickens. One place she enjoyed getting them was at a prosperous Ripley Township farmer’s. He worked hard to find the culprit and ironically he was at Howard Fruits’ store and found a couple of his properties in Fruit’s chicken coup. Seems Miss Alice had sold them to Mrs. Fruits. Despite her beauty, charm, good name, Alice was taken into custody and given a trial. However, she was found not guilty and a great cheer rang out in the courtroom much to Judge Snyder’s chagrin. Alice said on the stand that she had never met Old Speck; Black Long Neck or Muckle Dunn or any of Beams’ chickens. Alice had many gifts, food and the like taken to the jail for her and at the trial, the whole Follick family surrounded her and the attorney, bringing on tears and loud lamenting. It was suggested if she was found guilty that she could perhaps be confined in the county jail versus the penitentiary. Wailing followed. While the jury was out, Alice broke down sobbing and couldn’t quit. Her mother fainted. Off to the judge’s private room doctors finally quieted them but there was a short wait, anyway, as the jury out about 15 minutes came back with “THE JURY FINDS THE DEFENDANT NOT GUILTY.” The yell that followed was heard blocks away.

Thus, you have just read some of the enlightening (hmmm not), entertaining (hmmm somewhat), emotional (for sure) tales from the courts of our fair MoCo!!

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Nifty at Ninety - And Beyond

Joy Willett, Montgomery Memories

For June's Nifty at Ninety... we are introduced to three characters – Fred Birchfield, Reed Riley, and Davy Myers. I first learned about them in an article dated May 20, 1897 (The Monticello Herald). They were referred to as “14 year old boys” who had been “engaged in a career of burglary for some time.” The crimes took place in Crawfordsville, where the youngsters lived. According to the article, the boys were armed with guns and knives.

Fredrick “Fred” Moore Birchfield, born March 17, 1881 in Crawfordsville, was the son of John and Lydia (Giley) Birchfield (Indiana, U.S. Death Certificates, 1899-2017). I didn't discover any other information about John or Lydia. On the other hand, Fred was often in the news. A year prior to the 1897 incident cited above, he was arrested and jailed for having a “25-pound keg of powder” (Crawfordsville Weekly Journal, 25 December 1896). Fred's continuing escapades were reported in the Logansport-Pharos Times article titled GANG OF THUGS UNEARTHED. The article goes on to say, “For over two years the people [of Crawfordsville] have been cursed with systematic sneak-thievery” and Fred was the mastermind behind it all! He was caught when a ring he gave to a sweetheart was identified as stolen jewelry. His more egregious crime was robbing Hunt's Hardware Store. (July 24, 1899) The punishment was a stint in the Plainfield Reform School (CWJ, 4 August, 1899).

Fred married Martha Earl on November 26, 1903. The couple lived in Crawfordsville. Their daughter Golda was born in 1904. In early September of 1905, Fred was arrested for forgery (The Reporter-Times 04, Sep 1905). He was arrested again in mid-September for breaking out of the Crawfordsville jail (Hamilton County Register Sep 15 1905), and was found hiding in his father-in-laws attic (Plymouth Tribune 21 September 1905).

In the 1910 Census, Fred's occupation was listed as a “galvanizer” in a wire mill, while Martha was a homemaker. In May of 1912, Fred was jailed for stabbing a Monon railroad agent (Bristol Banner, 31 May 1912). In September of 1912, he attempted to escape from jail (New Richmond Record, 5 September 1912). On June 6, 1913 Fred was released (Herald-Democrat, 6 June 1913). Fred's 1917 draft registration card lists his occupation as a foreman at the Union Steel & Wire Company. At that time, Martha and he lived in Indianapolis. In 1919, he was arrested for bootlegging whiskey (Muncie Evening Press, 17 Dec). The 1920 Census lists that the couple was again in Crawfordsville. Fred worked as an auto mechanic, while Martha was a homemaker and Golda attended Crawfordsville High School. Golda married Jesse Hodshire in 1925. They made their home in Indianapolis.

In 1930, Fred worked as a trucker while Martha was a seamstress in a glove factory. They were again living in Indianapolis by 1932. We know this because that year Fred was arrested for forgery. He was jailed in Crawfordsville but The Indianapolis News referred to him as an “Indianapolis man.” The January 29th article also reported that Fred



and his cellmate escaped by sawing “the bars of the window of their Montgomery County Jail cell.”

In the 1940s, Fred worked as a painter and Martha was a power machine operator. They owned their home at 1707 Milburn Street in Indianapolis. It seems that after 35 years of troubles, in his 60s Fred finally lived a quiet life. He died on June 23, 1959 and

was interred in the Mount Zion Methodist Church Cemetery in Crawfordsville.

Reed Maccormack Riley was born on June 25, 1884 in Alamo, Indiana. He was the son of John and Alice “Emma” (Bayless) Riley. Fred and he were in more than one scrape together. Reed was part of the powder keg robbery in 1896. The Riley family moved to Indianapolis by 1900 and Reed worked as a laborer.

The Indianapolis News reported that Reed was arrested for being a member of a “safeblowing” gang. On January 2 1904, The Indianapolis Star reported that Reed, who was in jail, was “reticent” to provide detectives any information about the gang's activities.

Reed married Mary Murphy on November 1, 1906. By ca. 1925 he was a widower and living in Oakland, California where he worked as shipyard engineer. He was listed in his father's obituary dated January 19, 1929 (Indianapolis Star). His residence in Oakland is confirmed by California Voter Registration Roles throughout the 1930s. In 1937, he submitted a Social Security application. I could find no additional information about Reed.

David “Davy” Myers was born in December of 1883. I found Davy living with his father Edward, a widower, at 700 John Street in 1900. The census tells us that Davy was attending school. This is all I learned. My hope is that Davy lived a long and crime-free life.

May Fred, Reed, and Davy, who took paths different than most, rest in peace.



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have been making special remembrances
for families in this area for over 100 years



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BAD THE BOYLO IMAGE

Hollywood set the bad-boy standard in the early 50s with James Dean. A young Hoosier from Fairmont, Indiana, Dean played an angst-ridden youth. Teens identified with and idolized his portrayals in “Rebel Without a Cause” and “East of Eden.” Two weeks after his third and final movie, “Giant” wrapped in 1955, Jimmy perished on a California highway. His silver-streak of Porsche could not avoid a car crossing the road. Dean’s early demise at twenty-four immortalized him as the bad-boy icon forever.

A decade later, the Class of 1965 Crawfordsville High School boys still attempted to emulate James Dean. One of my classmates came dadgum close. We will call him James Dean Jr.

He came rumbling up to the school parking lot, riding a motorcycle. I am not talking about a ring-da-ding-ding Moped. This was a full-blow bad-boy’s bike, a Triumph, I think. As James Jr. kills the throttle, we notice his tough-looking jacket has a club name stitched across the back in big gold letters. He knew he could not use the name Hell’s Angels for fear of death and dismemberment. So he settled on the name Road Angels. James Dean Jr.’s bad-boy grandiose entrance was discredited when a classmate pointed out he had misspelled Angels. Doh! He was a boastful member of the Road Angles.

The Bad-boy image was a lost cause for this skinny little runt with big ears and a chest like a xylophone. I could never pull it off. It would be like Barney Fife pretending to be Sheriff Andy.

Oh, I tried to look cool. I even sent off for the Charles Atlas mail-order bodybuilding course. What a joke. You had to be built like an orangutan to attempt the simplest of beginner exercises. Goodbye, Mr. Atlas! Why worry about some bully kicking sand in my face? Central Indiana has no sandy beaches.

Don Carter and I got our driver’s licenses at about the same time. Neither of us could afford a car, so we rode on a copper-colored Moped. That little motorbike had a centrifugal clutch that took four city blocks to reach the speed limit in town. Riding double on a Moped screamed, “GEEK!” especially when we swung wide, turning the corner at the entrance of Eastern Acres. The front wheel dropped off the edge of the fresh asphalt spilling us and our books into the ditch just as a convertible full of girls drove past. Yeah. There is no way to look like a bad boy while riding a Moped.

As soon as I could scrape up enough cash, I bought a used Honda Dream 305cc touring bike. A one-owner black beauty with a square headlight, it was all chrome and high-gloss wax shinier

Story & Graphics by Chuck Clore



than a new silver dollar. He had even waxed the seat so the young lady riding on the back would have to hold on tight as she slid forward.

By today’s standards, the engine sounds small. But in 1965, most of my friends were riding 90cc and 160ccs. I think Dad was prouder of my purchase than I was. Mom, on the other hand, thought we both lost our senses. Convinced that I would perish on the highway like James Dean, Mom had no sense of adventure. She finally drew the line when I brought the bike into the house to work on it.

“Out! Out! Outside!”

To ease her concerns for my safety, I bought a helmet for my cranium and a bright red and white striped jacket so other drivers could see me coming. I looked like a deranged bumblebee.

Just as I was beginning to get

that proud bad-boy vibe, I glanced across Delaware Street. There was Sherry on a bright red Honda Scrambler 305 cycle. Scramblers



were built for speed on or off the road. My street bike Honda Dream looked wimpy, wimpy, wimpy in comparison.

Alas, even Sherry, the cute young lady across Delaware Street, looked tougher than this bad-boy want-to-be.

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Subject: Montgomery Memories

Poetry and Puzzles

Montgomery Memories

The Jail

By Joy Willett

A patent was issued
in the year 1881
for a jail to be built
at Spring and Washington.

First of a kind
its cells spun 'round,
keeping those who "visited"
safe and sound.

Misters Hanna
and Harshbarger,
along with my 2nd
great grandfather,
commissioned for the goal
to take a stand.
Then Sheriff Wilhite
took command.

Over the years,
both renowned and bland,

1

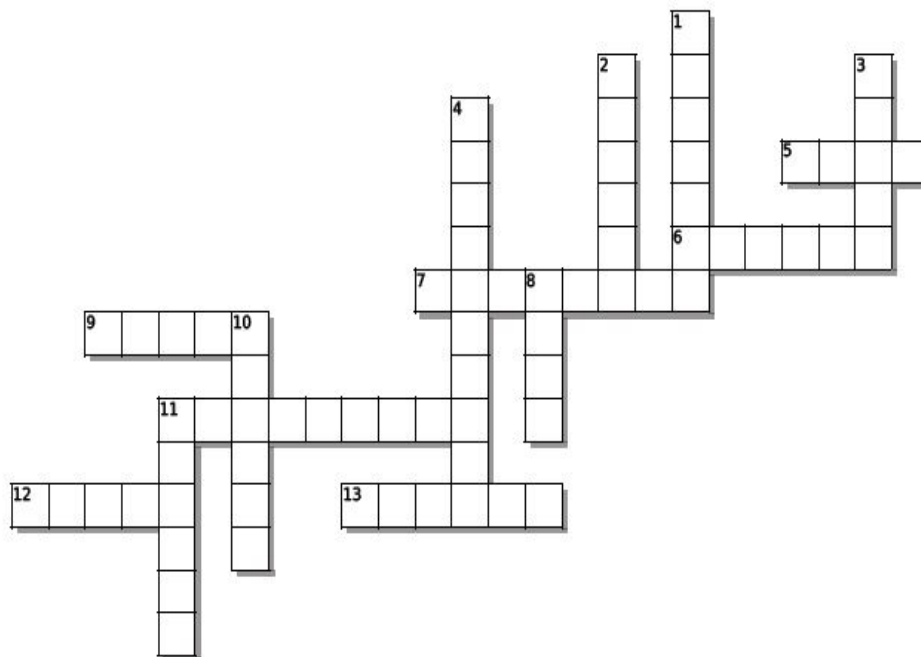
spent time behind
its iron jamb.
Some had stolen,
while others scammed.
A few were drunkards
from local taverns.

An inmate infamous,
and member of a gang,
young John Coffee
was sentenced to hang.
Several came to witness
the death of this man.

It is said his ghost
still haunts and clangs.

In the year '39
there was a citation
that the building wasn't fit
for human habitation.
It remained a prison
'til 1973
then was turned into
the museum rotary.

2



ACROSS

- 5 ___ and Chain
- 6 Historic jail in C'ville
- 7 Alice Follick nabbed ---
- 9 KBZ's Red Cabbage is ---
- 11 AKA hoosegow
- 12 AKA robber
- 13 Killing or crows

DOWN

- 1 Celebrated on 6/18/23
- 2 Notorious ___ VanCamp
- 3 Safe blower from Alamo
- 4 Member Gang of Thugs
- 8 Prisoner's "room"
- 10 Wax beans are ---
- 11 Hanged for murder

Check out page 10 for the solution

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Karen's Kitchen

Karen Bazzani Zach, Montgomery Memories

Although I taught at the Rockville prison, I don't have any recipes from there (never ate) and I don't think I have any bad guys in the family but I found a recipe they might make at a prison and it is very similar to one I used to make years ago (mine only used kidney beans and added mayo) that we loved! This was in the Waveland Tattler Feb. 2001

Bean Salad Recipe

Dressing: 1 C. Sugar

½ C. Salad Oil

1 C. Vinegar – Mix ingredients together; let stand while preparing the vegetables.

Salad:

1 can green beans

1 can yellow wax beans

1 can red beans

1 C. Chopped celery

1 C. chopped onions

1 C. chopped green peppers



Drain the beans and add the chopped vegetables. Pour the dressing over all and let marinate in the refrigerator over night.
AND if you're not a bean fan try this one – it's very good

Yummy Red Cabbage

(this was from a cookbook that was all ripped apart of my mom's – it says Mary Kinder sent it in to whatever the cookbook was) – I added the Yummy to it because it is :) And if you're making it for New Years' throw-in some sausage !

1, 3# head of red cabbage

2 green apples, peeled and chopped

1 onion, finely chopped

½ C. Sugar

½ C. Vinegar

2 T. bacon fat (I use some of the dried bacon – Krogers)

1 t. Salt

Ground black pepper.

Shred the cabbage (I just chop it) put in a large pan with the other ingredients plus ½ C. boiling water.
Bring all to a boil, reduce the heat – cover and simmer for 1 hour but stir fairly often.



This is our county!

Why not help preserve its history by contributing to Montgomery Memories?

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County Connections: The Scarlet Woman

Karen Bazzani Zach, Montgomery Memories

Don't believe this "scarlet woman" as she was tagged ever lived here per se but she dwelled here for 27 days in our county jail thus she is perfect for our County Connection. Basically, she just seemed like a silly young thing. What got Miss Bessie VanCamp into trouble at the onset was that she rented a livery buggy in C'v, drove it down to Ladoga and raced through the streets scattering "pigs, chickens and little children in all directions." Next, she tried to drive into one of the saloons to let the bartender know he should repent. Wrong saloon as the town marshal happened to be there "decorating a keg," so he jumped up, grabbed our Miss Bessie and carried her to the calaboose. She "squeezed him tight all the way to the jail but the marshal ignored her" and did his duty. She was later released and drove back to Crawfordsville where she was again locked up in jail as this time she decided she wanted to leave the horse in the fire station. All Bessie had to do was promise to return to her home in Lafayette so she told them she "could not conscientiously do that!" Hmmm, that was because she lived in Indianapolis at the time! (CDJ 21 July 1892).

Probably what made this situation worse was that Bessie tried to present herself to the WCTU (Women's Christian Temperance Union) at Ladoga as Ed VanCamp's sister. Wrong! She thought it a great joke but Ed was irate, Ed being one of the executives in the VanCamp canning factory, living here running a packing plant for the much larger company. Top that off with Bessie flirting with the first to do his duty on the chain gang that our mayor, the beloved Fred Bandel, had begun, thinking it would deter many in their thrust into crime. Bill Hays (no, not THE Bill Hays), "the stone pile's first victim deserved his dose richly," the paper noted. He had a wife loved by the community who happened to walk by the jail and Bessie stuck her head out of a little window and let Mrs. Bill have it big-time. (Old Jail picture from the wonderful Crawfordsville District Public Library's Image Collection). Bill had been "entirely too friendly with the notorious Bessie VanCamp. His action with the Vancamp animal has fairly broken up his marriage and the poor wife (is in) great agony." He took Bessie a large basket of fruit but the next night he was refused entry in to see her. So all or at least the author of the article felt the stone pile was fitting for Hays but thought that Bessie should be out there with him. Bill went on to other offenses, chasing a married woman whose father brought her home to keep her away from both men and Bill beat up the older fellow while he was asleep. Sure there were more transgressions!

Bessie was quite a duper as with the Ladoga WCTU, when she was in the Ladoga jail, the ladies called on her and she instantly gave a sad story of being a young married woman of C'ville and that she had left a three-year-old at home that would starve unless she could quickly return (in actuality, this was farthest from the truth and the ladies would have been appalled had they known Bessie's real age about the age of a child). "Touched by the appeal the good ladies paid the fine and Bessie went to Crawfordsville." When in the C'ville jail, she sent an invitation to the ladies to come visit her. Hmmm, think they did? Does make you wonder if she was the wild untamed woman the press made her out to be, or was she just a stinker young lady in her teens, just looking for some fun? Probably never know!



Ironically, Bessie was born on the 4th of July in Indianapolis to Civil War soldier John VanCamp who fought with Company D, 2nd Ohio Heavy Artillery beginning his pension on 11-17-1887, his wife, Harriet Isabel Thompson beginning the pension at his death which she received through March 1952 when she passed at age 95. John was in and out of the Veterans National Homes several times but would leave again. He was described with light complexion, blue eyes, gray hair and 5'6". John toward his latter life had defective vision and hearing, chronic catarrh; cardiac problems and lumbar paralysis, passing away 8 November 1919 and is buried in the San Francisco National Cemetery (along with wife Belle). They were parents of two daughters our little stinker, Bessie and her older sister Anna (1877-1953) married three times (Gillum; Holmberg; Cantwell).

Bessie was married at least twice, first to Jacob Huffman 3 December 1899. They had one son, Bernhardt. Jacob was a "collector" in the 1900 census. Her sister Anna had one son, as well (John Carrol Gillum who was in San Quentin in 1932 for one to 14 years for "assault to murder"). I found a Jacob Huffman who was in the Montana Prison in 1908 for grand larceny. Perhaps he collected the wrong things? Definitely this one was the right age and born in Indiana and know Bessie went on west to California, where she married a Meade not long after. Bessie passed away carrying the name, Huffman, dying 7 September 1962 in San Bernardino, her son, husband, mother, father and sister passed, leaving her all alone. Found no stone for her, but sure want to say, Rest In Peace, Miss Bessie and thanks for entertaining us for a quick read!

In Mo Co, it was a very good year in 1900 . . .

Mayor Charles W. Elmore was 70 years old but pretty spry as he laid the first brick on the first paved street in Crawfordsville.

James Vance, 51, took a bike-ride, came home, laid down and died. A photographer, he had just moved to C'ville to set up a business.

27 Orphans were living at the fairly new Orphan's Home (Schenck Road area), listed as "inmates" in the census.

After six years of excellent management of the County Poor Farm, Director George Myers retired. His replacement lasted just a few months.

Fruits Corner (Sec 11, Ripley Twp) had the Fruits Post Office (SW corner of Intersection SR 25 & SR 32) which was known as Needmore Corner during the 1800s but in 1900 became Myers Corner. Gracious!

Wylie Kenyon who took many of the more famous Montgomery Countians (Wabash Pres Hovey; Elstons; Blairs) was a photographer here for many years and passed away in 1900 at almost 78.

Consumption, pneumonia, asthma, rheumatism, old age, accidents were big killers in the area!

37 men, 14 women, one child lived at the Poor House this year.

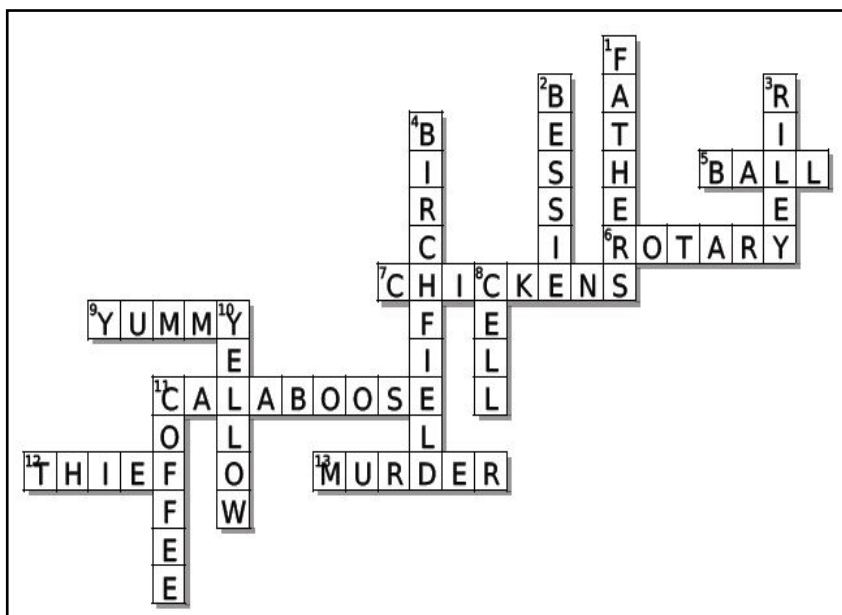
Civil War colonel James R. Ross, who grew-up in C'ville (born in Ohio) and joined General Lew Wallace in Co I, 11th Indiana Volunteers died this year at his home in Indianapolis where he was a prominent wholesaler and in many organizations.

In 1832, Jacob Booher and 40 others came from Tennessee to the Darlington area. In September of 1900, the Booher's (713 descendants) met at the Lutheran Church with 11 of the original Tennessee group present. Such a nice crowd and great fun so the reunions were voted to continue!

This year, fatal accidents took two lives by using coal oil to kindle fires.

17 graduated from the Coal Creek Township schools this year!

Sources used: Montgomery County INGenWeb; obits; Wylie Kenyon's photographs at CDPL; census; Daily News Review 29 Oct 1900.



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Grandcestors

Karen Bazzani Zach, Montgomery Memories



Oh my, I'm thankful to say that we really have some pretty good folks in our families so it was (as I've done before with doctors and other topics) "Adopt a Family" time. Luckily, it doesn't seem real common around here anyway that bad guys were in families – sure there may have been one or two bad apples, but also many good ones. This family is kind of that way but quite a few bad ones involved. More I think it was the circumstances as when one man has 33 children (7 marriages and 1/3 of the children passing at birth or very young), it's pretty hard to feed, clothe and educate them all without having things go bad. So, anyway meet the Gerbrick family, head honcho being Mike who for a long time was a-okay, even a friend of Isaac C. Elston (who funded a large amount of C'ville's first rr) and a well-known Pennsylvania, Baltimore and then Indiana train engineer, even driving the very first engine that came into Crawfordsville, but with all the kids, bad health and drinking, Mike got into some trouble (had a small saloon with a liquor license but he sold his liquor that he said was as sweet as the flowers of May to about anyone and was fined many times. Later, he tried a bit of a huckster wagon style of making money but it basically failed, as well. Sadly, part of his children ended-up in the orphanage and two wild ones Rosie and Lucy were "sentenced to reform school to remain until their 18th birthday because they had gone to the bow-wows." When Lucy was released, she did marry and went to California where she lived a happy life and mothered three children. Her tombstone inscription reads: "Dear Mom, Asleep in Christ!" Rosie also married and went to California. Sadly, Mike, once an admired railroad man, a member of the debating team and quite a plus to the community ended-up passing at the county poor farm while his last wife, Rachel (35 years younger than him had tried to divorce him twice) was finishing-up trying to raise the last of the family.

So, let me tell you about a few of Mike's children who made it all right in spite of all that happened to them #1 being Mike Jr., who was a produce dealer in Lafayette for many years. Someone came and paid to have Mike buried

first-class (so he'd not be in the poor farm cemetery but he has no stone in Oak Hill) but didn't give a name – always thought it was him but could be wrong. Oh and at the same time Mike passed his son, Samuel who was listed as a life-time idiot died, too. Samuel was buried at the Poor farm, though whereas Mike lies at Oak Hill. A grandson was a bank president in Indianapolis, as well. Thanks to Carolyn (New Hope Cemetery, York County, PA for the nice pic of the Gerbrick name, at least – from FindAGrave).

Then there was Ed Gerbrick who lived in a bad section of Michigan City (one of Mike's marriages and many of the children lived there, his wife passing in the 1870s) called Snarltown were involved in a neighborhood fight, Ed having his arm broken and his wife, Emma being badly beaten by Fred Samko. Another grandson, Donovan was a painter was making it in good shape but the Gerbrick curse so to speak followed him as he was illegally passing a pregnant woman on Michigan City Road and State Line Avenue – he was arrested and sent to trial but not sure what happened with that. Donovan was a WWII vet and no one was hurt, so imagine he may have come out okay. Tom Gerbrick confessed to his part in the wrecking of a train in Colorado where a person died. After the trial, he was sent to prison for life. He wanted to go so he could kick his drug habit but after doing that he told officials he was in Michigan working at the time the train was wrecked and by writing to his old employer, he was released. Andrew, another son living in Michigan City was a contractor, married with three children – just 3 not 33! Most of this family were Catholics.

One of the youngest of the Gerbrick 33 was Cora – she married Charles Largent and they lived in the Linden area. She mothered six children but three died quite young or birth and one died at age 17 with kidney failure, something he had had trouble with for three years (Robert Largent).

So many of the little ones died – LaPorte ones: Loretta age 3; Marilette 9 months; Bernard 1 year; Cville: Ida 17 well the list went on as noted above at least 11 of his 33 died young.

Mike Gerbrick led an interesting life for sure – fairly well educated, he grew-up in Pennsylvania and Maryland, had some of his children born in Ohio others in Indiana. Some stayed here many moved out west. Life began with great success looking Mike in the face, but because of many circumstances it ended in a sad affair. In a December Review article in 1891 they noted this and believe me, I'd have to agree: "One of the most noted characters about Crawfordsville is Mike Gerbrick, and few have seen more of the vicissitudes of life than he!"

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