

Column to Feature Interesting Bits of History

Many people who frequently see me reading the rolls of microfilm at the Monroe Public Library during the last few years have asked me what I am looking for or what I am finding that day. With this column, I am happy that I now have an outlet to be able to share some of the interesting things that I have found in the hundreds of hours that I have sat there and will continue to sit there. Some might make you chuckle, some might pull on your heartstrings, and to be honest, some may be boring to you. From one column to the next, you'll never know what might be next. One day we might focus on the 1850s; the next column might be the 1920s or the 1950s. One column might be about rural schools, the next might be about a business or building in town. I hope that each column will be a pleasant surprise.

For those of you who do not know me, I was born and raised on a farm southwest of Monroe, attended one of the one-room schools of the county, graduated from Monroe High School in 1966, taught for thirty years in the Chicago land suburbs of Indiana. In between I was getting a college education that was interrupted by poor grades and a draft notice that sent me to Vietnam for eleven and a half months. I was extremely excited to move back to Monroe in 2004 and have absorbed myself in the local history ever since.

I have never considered myself a writer, but I hope you'll be open to what I am sharing and not critical of my writing. If I don't share this information, it might be lost forever. As those of you regular readers of the Monroe Times know, one of my passions is the one-room, rural schools of the county. I'll share some stories about those schools and the people who attended them, unique stories about times gone by, and anything that I may find interesting – and hope that you do, too! On occasion, the article may also include a photograph.

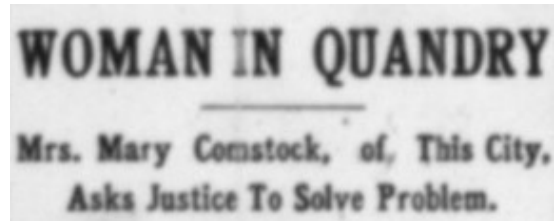
As I was recently reading the 1908

Monroe Evening Times, I came across an article titled, "Woman In Quandry" in the February 28 issue. It reported that a Mrs. Mary Comstock of Monroe, Wisconsin was married a year ago at Rockford. It continued that she had "written to Justice Norton, who performed the ceremony, that her first husband, whom she supposed was dead when she remarried again, has turned up. She asks the justice which husband she should live with." I have heard of situations like this where a husband deserts the family and the rumor makes it back to the deserted wife that the husband has passed away. I made note of the interesting article and continued to read the papers.

I was surprised to find a letter to the editor in the March 4 issue from Mrs. Mary Comstock of Monroe, Wisconsin. She had seen the previous article and stated that she "had never written to Justice Norton and if any one else has written, it was unknown to me." She went on to say, "I was married to Clarence Comstock about a year ago, but I have not been married twice. Will you please correct the mistake in your paper and oblige?"

This letter makes one wonder where the newspaper got its information. It was obviously before the days where litigation became too common. Corrections were included in the old papers on occasion, but never frequently. One must also wonder how much of what was published in those days was not correct and never caught by the person/family or they just did not choose to correct it. Times have definitely changed, some of it for the good and some of it not so good.

I thank you if you made it through this short column. It would be even better if you enjoyed it.



Headline from the February 28, 1908 issue of the Monroe Evening Times.