

ODDS & ENDS, #47

In November 1924 Miss Willie Trammell appeared on the streets of Rock Hill wearing knickers. Many a column of newsprint resulted.

Trammell, who was a storekeeper in the nearby community of Ogden, was told by the Rock Hill police to get off the streets or be arrested (for wearing "britches"). She angrily protested that she was insulted and a crowd gathered. Trammell then made another move. She brought suit against the officer, Chief Youngblood.

The Rock Hill City Council refused to discharge the chief. The brouhaha escalated. Trammell announced that she would sue Rock Hill for \$70,000 (we weren't able to find any evidence that she actually did sue.) She said she had been to Charlotte, N.C. in her "blue knicker suit," and the Charlotte "cops" said "nary a word to her."

The Charlotte Observer picked up the story and wrote, "It is no offense to public taste for a working girl to go, about her occupation in working clothes. If it had been a flapper boldly parading herself before the people, the case would have been different." The paper's conclusion was that Miss Trammell was taking the matter too seriously and the police even more so. They also wondered if Trammell had already picked out a new automobile.

The Greenville News was so intrigued that they sent a photographer for a picture of Willie Trammell in her "knicker suit" and leather cuffs that stretched from the wrist to the elbows. Rumors had gotten out that Greenville had an ordinance forbidding women to wear knickers. The chief of police there insisted that it was not so and if Miss Trammell came to Greenville she would have plenty of company. "From 75 to 100 women pass through Greenville every day wearing them and the fact causes little or no comment."

The Anderson Daily News offered stronger language, saying that the Rock Hill chief of police should be "fired for bone-headedness." They went on to say that, "Women dress to suit themselves, and on the whole they show much more common sense than men. They do not afflict themselves with heavy woolen clothes during the summer as men do. . . . when men attempt to regulate women's dress they are butting into something they know little about, and furthermore they do not get anywhere." The paper stated that the Rock Hill police chief should be fired.

The whole matter calmed down after the Rock Hill City Council sent Willie Trammell a letter informing her that the chief meant no disrespect. The Yorkville Enquirer thought that the Council did the right thing, because after all, "Women will do as they please."

York County's Largest Family

A few months after the Trammell/Rock Hill tiff, the Yorkville Enquirer reported that the honor of having the largest family in York County went to Plato D. Hopper of Clover. Hopper, 55, was married three times and was the father of 20 children, some of whom had children. The oldest child was 35 and the youngest about a year old. There were 9 grandchildren.

In November 1924 Miss Willie Trammell appeared on the streets of Rock Hill wearing knickerbockers, a high collar and a vest. Trammell, who was a storekeeper in the nearby community of Oden, was told by the Rock Hill police to get off the streets or be arrested (for wearing "knickerbockers"). She indignantly protested that she was in a crowd gathered. Trammell then made another move. She brought suit against the officer, Oden, for damages.

The Rock Hill City Council refused to discharge the chief. The plaintiffs associated Trammell announced that she would sue Rock Hill for \$20,000 (we weren't able to find any evidence that she actually did sue). She said she had been to Charlotte, N.C. in her "blue knicker suit" and the Charlotte "cops" said "they'd sue her."

The Charlotte Observer picked up the story and wrote, "It is no offense to public taste for a working girl to go, about her occupation in working clothes. If it had been a fatter body parading herself before the people, the case would have been different." The paper's conclusion was that Miss Trammell was taking the matter too seriously and the police overreacted. They also wondered if Trammell had already picked out a new automobile.

The Greenville News was so intrigued that they sent a photographer for a picture of Willie Trammell in her "knicker suit" and leather outfit that stretched from the waist to the elbows. Rumors had gotten out that Greenville had an ordinance forbidding women to wear knickerbockers. The chief of police there insisted that it was not so and Miss Trammell came to Greenville she would have plenty of company. "From 75 to 100 women pass through Greenville every day wearing knickerbockers and the fact causes little or no comment."

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York County's Largest Family

A few months after the Trammell/Rock Hill suit, the Yorkville Enterprise reported that the honor of having the largest family in York County went to Pisto E. Hopper of Clover. Hopper, 55, was married three times and was the father of 23 children, some of whom had children. The oldest child was 82 and the youngest about a year old. There were 9 grandchildren.

The reporter had a bit of trouble getting Hopper to talk, though he said that Hopper was immensely proud of his children and had taught them to work.

Of his three wives, the first, Miss Sarah Montgomery, he married when he was 20 in 1889. She died in 1891 after having one child, Dora Magnolia. He married again in 1894 and reported eight more with three of them having died. That wife, Miss Hattie Lutz, died January 2, 1907. He married a third time, July 6, 1907 to Miss Rena Pope and there were 11 more children over a span of 18 years.

Hopper told the reporter that he might yet be a dad of more than 20. The reporter thought it a shame that Hopper didn't live in Prussia. Frederick the Great would no doubt have showered him with medals.

Louise Pettus is a retired Winthrop University history professor. Her column appears Sundays.