

## Emily (Vecchi) Noble, “La Petite Emilie” (1886-1963)

Emily (Vecchi) Noble was born on Church Street in London, England on February 4, 1886 to Enrico and Emily Vecchi. She had two sisters, Margherita and Roma, as well as one brother, Umberto. Her father operated a hotel that was only a few blocks from the Hippodrome Theatre and a few doors down from the Shaftsboro Avenue Theatre.<sup>1</sup>

At the age of six, Noble began dancing at Nolan’s Dancing School which was attended by Adeline Genée, “England’s greatest ballet dancer.”<sup>2</sup> At this time, Noble also began her training as a singer.<sup>3</sup> Her career progressed rapidly from this point, and at the age of eight she joined Ben Greet’s company, “The Ben Greet Players.” Under the company of this “great English tragedian,” Noble began playing children’s parts in Shakespearean plays and later found herself performing in Sir Cooper’s *Robinson Crusoe*.<sup>4</sup> Noble showcased her singing and dancing talents throughout Great Britain, eventually branching out as a vaudeville and bicycle performer during these years. Noble performed in programs with many notable entertainers including Elsie Janis, Marie Dressler, Charlie Chaplin, and Marilyn Miller.

It has been said that Noble appeared in the opening of the London Hippodrome on January 15, 1900.<sup>5</sup> The opening featured a vaudeville number entitled *Giddy Ostend*, along with a circus variety show beforehand. Noble was not included in the original program for the show, but it is still plausible that she was a member of the cast, if only in a small role. Many cast members were left out of the official program at this time, with their roles being listed at the end as “visitors, market folk, bathing attendants, nursemaids, boatmen, gendarmes, croupiers, children, donkeys, zebras, sea-monsters, etc.”<sup>6</sup> While his name is not present on the program either, it is acknowledged that “a young man called Charles Chaplin,” performing in one of his first ever roles, was among the cast members as well.<sup>7</sup> It is known that Noble knew Chaplin when he was first starting out in London, so it is possible that they performed in this show together. Their close relationship was confirmed in 1915 when Emily and her husband, Clyde Noble, were invited into Chaplin’s studio where he was directing at the time. Emily and Clyde were able to spend the whole day with Chaplin, chatting with him about friends in England. It was uncommon for Chaplin to invite anyone into his studio, as he normally upheld a strict policy that no one was allowed in—not even his manager.<sup>8</sup>

Sometime in 1900, Emily Noble (who was fourteen at the time) embarked on the next stage in her career by joining the Kaufmann Bicycle Troupe. The first definitive proof of Noble being associated with this troupe comes from a page in her autograph book dated June 25, 1901, on which appears a note written by Wallie Bradley, who was also a member of the Kaufmann Troupe.<sup>9</sup> Started by Nick Kaufmann in the late 1890s, this troupe had “been a great success

<sup>1</sup> A. Morton Smith, "Circus Stars of Yesteryears, V. Clyde V. Fisher & Emily Vecchi," *Hobbies*, November 1950, 24-25.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> "Noted Troupe’s Star Visited Many Lands," *The Daily Pantagraph*, June 24, 1928.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> A. Morton Smith, "Circus Stars of Yesteryears, V. Clyde V. Fisher & Emily Vecchi" *Hobbies*, November 1950, 24-25; "London Hippodrome: Grand Opening Night," n.p., January 15, 1900.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> "Our Story," *Events at the Hippodrome*, <http://www.eventsatthehippodromelondon.com/our-story/>.

<sup>8</sup> "If you’ll be Natural I’ll give you a Job’ Will Rodgers Was Told," *The Daily Pantagraph*, January 30, 1926.

<sup>9</sup> "Autograph book of Emily Vecchi Noble," Illinois State University, Milner Library Special Collections, Circus and Allied Arts Collection-Local.

abroad and wherever it [had] been presented in this country it [had] been pronounced the acme of skill and daring in exhibition bicycle riding.”<sup>10</sup> Nick Kaufmann was deemed “the most celebrated trick wheelman in the world”<sup>11</sup> and “the father of bicycle riders in groups.”<sup>12</sup>

Joining the Kaufmann Troupe put Noble on her way to becoming “the world’s most accomplished lady bicyclist.”<sup>13</sup> Due to her young age, the Kaufmann Troupe had to sign papers to ensure that she would receive the best care and return home safely.<sup>14</sup> Noble made appearances with the Kaufmann Troupe in circuses all over the world. She emerged as “Miss Emily, star of the Kaufmann Troupe,” in Holland, Russia, Denmark, Bohemia, Scotland, Germany, Belgium, and Ireland, along with many others.<sup>15</sup> Outside of Europe, she performed in Canada, the United States, Mexico, and Cuba. The Kaufmann Troupe performed as a specialty act during the second season of the famed New York Hippodrome in 1905. The Hippodrome served as “the largest and most successful theater in New York” for two decades, allowing a great deal of exposure for the Kaufmann troupe in the United States.<sup>16</sup> Another appearance by the troupe at the Western Canada Industrial Exhibition in July 1906 received rave reviews. The troupe was “recognized as the stellar act of the attraction programme.”<sup>17</sup> Performing at the Lyric Theatre in Altoona, Pennsylvania in December 1906, it was reported that the troupe “[proved] another hit of very large proportions and [had] become the talk of the town.”<sup>18</sup> Amidst all of her other performances, Noble even appeared before royalty.<sup>19</sup> Although this lifestyle meant that she was never in one place for long, Noble managed to make lifelong friends with some of the people she was performing and traveling with.<sup>20</sup>

After the Kaufmann troupe joined the Ringling Brothers Circus in 1904, Emily met her future husband Clyde Noble, a fellow circus performer and member of “The Flying Fishers.” The Flying Fishers were also traveling with the Ringling Brothers at the time.<sup>21</sup> Due to the restrictions that were placed on young women who worked for the Ringling Brothers Circus, Emily and Clyde were unable to easily get to know one another outside of performances. The Ringling Brothers Circus was unofficially known as the “Sunday School Show” due to the clean, family-oriented atmosphere.<sup>22</sup> Emily was placed under even closer supervision by the Kaufmann Troupe given her age and the fact that she was a solo rider in the act. A governess, usually being someone to teach and train a child in a private household, accompanied her wherever she went.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Sandra Markham, “Nick Kaufmann On a Wheel Against Time,” *Proceedings, 7<sup>th</sup> International Cycle History Conference*, 68; “The Drama,” *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, March 30, 1902.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> “The Kaufmann Lady Cycle Troupe,” *Variety*, May 1909, 15.

<sup>13</sup> “Clyde V. Noble, Retired Circus Aerialist, Dies,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, May 4, 1955.

<sup>14</sup> “Local Couple’s Experience Reads Like Story Book,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, November 14, 1937.

<sup>15</sup> “Noted Troupe’s Star Visited Many Lands.”

<sup>16</sup> “Hippodrome Theatre,” *The New York City Chapter of the American Guild of Organists*, <http://www.nycago.org/Organs/NYC/html/HippodromeTheatre.html>.

<sup>17</sup> “Big Crowd in the Evening,” *Manitoba Morning Free Press*, July 26, 1906.

<sup>18</sup> “At the Lyric Theatre,” *Altoona Tribune*, December 27, 1906.

<sup>19</sup> The royalty she performed before included the Kaiser of Germany, the King of England, and the Czar of Russia. Betty Holzhauer, *Circus Lore*, 1965.

<sup>20</sup> “Noted Troupe’s Star Visited Many Lands.”

<sup>21</sup> Maureen Brunsdale and Mark Schmitt, *The Bloomington Normal Circus Legacy: The Golden Age of Aerialists*, (Charleston: The History Press, 2013), 33.

<sup>22</sup> Conversation with Maureen Brunsdale (Head of Special Collections and Rare Books at Milner Library, Illinois State University) on April 6, 2016.

<sup>23</sup> “Local Couple’s Experience Reads Like Story Book.”

Young women in the circus were unable to interact with young men outside of professional performance, making it difficult for Emily and Clyde to develop their relationship. Women were given a warning the first time they violated this rule, a \$25 fine the second time, and barred from the show altogether if they were caught disobeying a third time.<sup>24</sup>

Despite the barriers that were put between them, Emily and Clyde found a way to keep their budding relationship going. Later in her life, Emily told of instances when Clyde would sneak a box of candy to her as they passed each other on horseback during the show's preparations. Knowing the consequences for both of them should they get caught, she would always hide the presents under her robe right away.<sup>25</sup> Much of the two years their acts worked together for the Ringling Brothers, from 1904 to 1905, were spent like this. However, there were a few rare occasions when the two were allowed to spend time together. These outings were always spent with another couple, and in the company of additional supervision. By the time the Kaufmann Troupe left the Ringling Brothers Circus in early 1906, Emily and Clyde had only interacted privately a few times.<sup>26</sup>

Following their time with the Ringling Brothers, the Kaufmann Troupe spent the next several years travelling and performing all over the world. This left Emily and Clyde to keep up a long distance relationship through letters. While Emily was performing in Germany in 1908, she received an engagement ring in the mail from Clyde.<sup>27</sup> After Emily returned to the United States on November 7, 1908, the two were married in New York City on November 10, 1908.<sup>28</sup> This marked one of the few times during their five-year courtship that the couple was allowed to formally meet.<sup>29</sup> This union between Emily and Clyde created another circus legacy with its roots in Bloomington, Illinois. Bloomington-Normal was well known for producing some of the greatest circus performers in the world, Clyde Noble being one of them.

The story of Clyde's initiation into the business is tied to the origin of Bloomington-Normal's circus industry. It has been argued that two brothers, Fred and Howard Green, started it all. According to local lore, they began their career by training on a trapeze they built in their father's barn in the mid-1870s. This has since been dispelled.<sup>30</sup> Researchers with the Milner Library Special Collections, Circus and Allied Arts Collection discovered that Fred and Howard (and younger brother Harry) were members of the first dedicated gymnasium in Bloomington (established by I.P. Fell in 1875 above the offices of the *Bloomington Leader*). This gymnasium touted having a trapeze as an available apparatus. According to an 1876 article in *The Pantagraph* about a performance at the gymnasium, the three brothers performed "feats now in vogue among the professionals," which included horizontal bars and tumbling. Having an easily accessible practice space, their skills developed exceedingly well.<sup>31</sup> Fred and Howard went on to

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> "Official Program for Ringling Brothers': World's Greatest Shows," (Chicago, 1906, First Edition), *Illinois State University, Milner Library Special Collections, Circus and Allied Arts Collection*

<sup>27</sup> "Local Couple's Experience Reads Like Story Book."

<sup>28</sup> New York Passenger Lists, 1820-1957 for Emily Vecchi, Ancestry.com, Date Accessed March 24, 2016; "Clyde V. Noble, Retired Circus Aerialist, Dies."

<sup>29</sup> "Local Couple's Experience Reads Like Story Book."

<sup>30</sup> Steve Gossard, "The Flying La Vans of Bloomington, Illinois," *Bandwagon* 54, no. 4 (July-August 2012), 2-3; Email correspondence between Candace Summers and Mark Schmitt, June 5, 2018.

<sup>31</sup> Email correspondence between Candace Summers and Mark Schmitt, June 5, 2018; "Muscle," *The Pantagraph*, February 25, 1876.

become the “La Van Brothers,” with Fred being about nineteen at the time and Howard twelve.<sup>32</sup> When Howard later retired due to an injury, the act came to include their younger brother Harry.

Attracting aspiring acts to train in Bloomington and inspiring other locals to test out their skills on the trapeze, the La Van Brothers set the foundation for many other aerial acts rooted in Bloomington’s circus legacy. Charles Noble, Clyde’s brother, was one of these aspiring locals. Charles joined The Flying Fishers in the early 1890s.<sup>33</sup> Charles Noble worked with Harry Green, one of his former schoolmates, before Harry took over for Howard in the La Van act. A legend grew up around the origin of the name of The Flying Fishers because of the need to set up some kind of protection under the flyers while they were performing. Fred Miltimore and Charles Noble traveled to Pekin, Illinois to talk to a fisherman about potential ways to create a net.<sup>34</sup> One was eventually made out of hemp rope that was tied together in knots.<sup>35</sup> After the net was set up, an onlooker joked that the performers “looked more like fishermen than they did actors,” thus inspiring the name of the “Fisher Brothers.”<sup>36</sup> It was eventually changed to the “Flying Fishers” after they became a flying act. It has been found, however, that “the historical record does not support this legend, but it is important to note that the community fostered such a myth as part of the local culture.”<sup>37</sup>

Clyde Noble eventually joined the Flying Fishers in 1904. As a teenager in Bloomington, he started out as a jeweler’s apprentice, having learned the trade in Chicago. After two years, he returned to Bloomington around 1899 and began working for Frank T. Parritt, who owned and operated a watchmaking and jewelry business at 533 North Main Street in downtown Bloomington.<sup>38</sup> However, Clyde found another calling, that of aerial acrobatics.<sup>39</sup> When he joined his brother’s act, they expanded to five members (Ed Foreman, Clyde Noble, Charles Noble, Charles Waller, and Fred Johnson) and became known as the “Five Flying Famous Fishers.”<sup>40</sup> It was during this time that the act was featured by the Ringling Brothers, and Clyde met Emily.<sup>41</sup> Just months after the Five Flying Famous Fishers finished up a season with the Forepaugh and Sells Brothers Circus, Charles Noble passed away of heart disease in January of 1908 at the age of 39.<sup>42</sup> Clyde then took control of The Flying Fishers following the death of his brother.

Sometime after their marriage in late 1908, Clyde gave up “flying” and he and Emily performed together in a new bicycle act called the “La Petite Emilie Troupe.” The act was managed by Clyde and consisted of Clyde, Emily, and Emily’s two sisters, Margherita and Roma, who had also been members of the Kaufmann Troupe.<sup>43</sup> The troupe was advertised as “the daintiest, most novel and pleasing trick bicycle act obtainable; wardrobe, ability and

---

<sup>32</sup> Steve Gossard, “The Flying La Vans of Bloomington, Illinois,” 2-3.

<sup>33</sup> Brunsdale and Schmitt, 31.

<sup>34</sup> Clyde V. Noble, “Bloomington, Illinois: the Home of ‘The Man on the Flying Trapeze’,” 3-4.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Steve Gossard, “The Greatest Little Show on Earth; the YMCA Circus of Bloomington, Illinois,” 1997 (unpaged), McLean County Historical Society Circus Collection, Folder 4.

<sup>38</sup> *Bloomington-Normal City Directory, 1897*, p. 665-666.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.; Brunsdale and Schmitt, 31.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> It is unclear exactly when Clyde and Emily met, although it must have been sometime during 1904-1905.

<sup>42</sup> Brunsdale and Schmitt, 31.

<sup>43</sup> A. Morton Smith, “Circus Stars of Yesteryears, V. Clyde V. Fisher & Emily Vecchi,” *Hobbies*, November 1950, 24-25.

appearance unsurpassed; a real feature in every sense of the word and absolutely new for America.”<sup>44</sup> It has been said that “Emily was the principal solo rider with this troupe and was considered one of, if not the greatest lady trick cyclist in the world.”<sup>45</sup>

After the 1911 season, during which they played the Keith and Orpheum vaudeville circuit throughout the United States, Emily’s sisters returned to England, which forced Clyde to reorganize the act. Clyde and Emily, along with Fred Johnson and Frank Cadiff, reorganized the troupe as a flying return act, resurrecting The Flying Fishers.<sup>46</sup> In April 1912, the troupe was performing in Minneapolis, Minnesota, when it was reported that they would return to Europe with six months of bookings.<sup>47</sup> Their first booking in Europe was in August of that year at the Empire Theater in London. The booking lasted eight weeks. Reports, however, indicate that though a member of the troupe, Emily was not doing professional work that year.<sup>48</sup> While in Europe, Clyde had contracted five years of bookings for the act, but this was cut short with the outbreak of World War I in 1914.<sup>49</sup> This forced Clyde, Emily, and the rest of the act to return to America on the last ocean liner to leave Europe after the war began.<sup>50</sup> Clyde and Emily continued to perform their acts throughout America for vaudeville and outdoor engagements until 1918, during which time they left behind their nomadic lives as circus performers and retired to Bloomington.<sup>51</sup>

For Clyde and Emily, life after the circus was just as satisfying as the countless days spent leaping through the air and performing grand bicycle tricks. Although it was reported that the couple saw their new home in Bloomington as “superior to the nomadic type of home they had known as stage people,” the two certainly remained connected to their lives in the circus and continued to perform in many local theater and vaudeville shows.<sup>52</sup> They originally lived at 305 South McLean Street, but moved several times over the years. In 1920 they lived at 402 East Market Street. In 1923 they moved once again to live at 214 ½ East Washington Street. By 1928 they were living at 507 South Moore Street, where Emily was still living in 1962.

When they settled down in Bloomington in 1918, Clyde utilized the skills he learned as a jeweler’s apprentice and worked at Will Homuth’s store on the south side of the Courthouse Square at 108 West Washington Street (which had been the location of Clyde’s former employer, Frank Parritt). He worked for Hormuth until 1919, at which time he accepted a position with Mayer Livingston & Co. Clyde was the head of the jewelry department at the new Mayer Livingston & Co.’s Newmarket Department Store, which opened on December 15, 1919.<sup>53</sup> Emily helped Clyde as a sales worker in the store, which he managed for almost eighteen years. The Newmarket was eventually sold to Montgomery Ward & Co., causing Clyde to open up his own store at 111 North Center Street in 1938. Clyde advertised his diamonds as being “unconditionally guaranteed perfect, of fine color and full brilliancy.”<sup>54</sup> Sometime around 1941,

<sup>44</sup> “La Petite Emilie Troupe of Cyclists,” *The Billboard*, March 19, 1910.

<sup>45</sup> Clyde V. Noble, “Bloomington, Illinois: the Home of ‘The Man on the Flying Trapeze,’” 7.

<sup>46</sup> A. Morton Smith, “Circus Stars of Yesteryears, V. Clyde V. Fisher & Emily Vecchi” *Hobbies—The Magazine for Collectors*, November, 1950, 25; “Flying Fishers to London,” *The Pantagraph*, August 8, 1912.

<sup>47</sup> “Mr. and Mrs. Noble Here,” *The Pantagraph*, April 12, 1912.

<sup>48</sup> “Flying Fishers to London.”

<sup>49</sup> Smith, “Circus Stars of Yesteryears, V. Clyde V. Fisher & Emily Vecchi,” 25.

<sup>50</sup> “Clyde V. Noble, Retired Circus Aerialist, Dies”

<sup>51</sup> Smith, “Circus Stars of Yesteryears, V. Clyde V. Fisher & Emily Vecchi,” 25.

<sup>52</sup> “Noted Troupe’s Star Visited Many Lands.”

<sup>53</sup> “Mayer Livingston & Co. Open New Store Monday,” *The Pantagraph*, December 11, 1919, 3.

<sup>54</sup> “Bluebird Registered Perfect Diamonds—Clyde V. Noble,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, June 10, 1943.

Clyde sold the store to Sigmund Sorg., Inc. By 1944, Clyde had ended his career in the jewelry business and no longer was affiliated with the store.<sup>55</sup>

Beyond the jewelry business, Emily and Clyde were active members of the Bloomington community. They maintained their lives as performers by taking part in many area theatrical shows, both on stage and behind the scenes. A 1922 issue of *The Daily Pantagraph* reported that Emily's performance in *The Jollies of 1922* was "a novelty and rigorously applauded."<sup>56</sup> *The Jollies of 1922* was put on by the Young Men's Club.<sup>57</sup> Clyde was a member of this club and served as president in 1932.<sup>58</sup> In 1926 they both did the makeup for *The Sword of the Samurai*, a production put on by Second Presbyterian Church.<sup>59</sup> Clyde and Emily's involvement in local theater broadened when they helped found and organize the Bloomington Community Players.<sup>60</sup> The two remained active members for many years.

The Community Players was formed in 1923 by the Bloomington Women's Club. The women involved wanted a place where they could showcase their talents in amateur theatrical performances. Like most groups first starting out, the Community Players was without a permanent building for their performances. They had to rely on various theaters throughout the community (Turner Hall, Illini Theatre, Bloomington High School, Normal High School, Illinois State Normal University, The Majestic Theater, and the Scottish Rite Temple) before they found their current home at 201 Robinhood Lane in 1962.<sup>61</sup> The Community Players have produced a wide range of plays, musicals, and children's productions, including shows that were put on not long after their run on Broadway. Emily and Clyde took part in many of the productions, not only performing, but by doing the makeup of the cast.

Emily made her debut as a Community Players company member in 1924 at Turner Hall when she played "Minnie" in the one-act play *Columbine*. Clyde did not make his first Community Players appearance until 1929 when he emerged as "Morgan, the tramp," in *The Haunted House*. The program described Clyde as having "more recently identified with the Community Players as a director and expert make-up man."<sup>62</sup> The program's description of Clyde went on to suggest that the other members of the Community Players had been trying to persuade him to act in one of the plays for a long time and had finally succeeded.<sup>63</sup> Clyde went on to serve as president of the Community Players in 1933.<sup>64</sup> Along with acting as makeup artist

---

<sup>55</sup> "Clyde V. Noble, Retired Circus Aerialist, Dies."

<sup>56</sup> "Jollies Feature Local Comedians: Annual Production of Young Men's Club Plays to Packed House," *The Daily Pantagraph*, February 1, 1922.

<sup>57</sup> The Young Men's Club was originally known as the "Young Business Men's Club of Bloomington, Illinois," a service club active in many local charitable events. Hannah E. Johnson, "Lloyd Eyer Biography," *McLean County Museum of History*, <http://mchistory.org/research/resources/lloyd-eyer.php>.

<sup>58</sup> "Past Presidents," *Young Men's Club*, <http://ymcbloomington.org/awards.html>.

<sup>59</sup> "Gave Japanese Play on Sunday," *The Daily Pantagraph*, December 6, 1926.

<sup>60</sup> "Rites Thursday for Mrs. Noble, Circus Star," *The Daily Pantagraph*, March 6, 1963.

<sup>61</sup> Bruce Parrish, "At Community Players Theatre: People Artistically Change the World," *About Community Players Theatre*, <http://www.communityplayers.org/about-cpt/>.

<sup>62</sup> "Bits About The Cast," *The Haunted House* program, April 10-11, 1929.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> "Miss Ethel Gunn to Direct Drama Given Two Nights," *The Daily Pantagraph*, December 3, 1933.

for Community Players, Clyde also served as one of the makeup men for the *American Passion Play*.<sup>65</sup>

Emily and Clyde continued to participate in the productions put on by the Community Players and other local organizations, with Emily acting in a number of comedic roles over the years. Some of these roles included “Aunt Min” in *Her Master’s Voice*; “Cuddles” in *A Pair of Sixes*; “Lily” in *Oh, Oh, Cindy*; “Mamie” in *That’s That*; and “Lizzie O’Brien” in *Spanish Mom*.<sup>66</sup> Emily also performed in the first amateur production of the Rachel Crothers<sup>67</sup> play *When Ladies Meet* as “the vivacious Bridget Drake.”<sup>68</sup>

In addition to her extensive involvement with the Community Players, Emily was a member of the Order of the Eastern Star, Order of the White Shrine of Jerusalem (Mount Olive White Shrine), and the Order of the Amaranth. These were auxiliaries to the Masonic fraternal organizations that Clyde was a part of, in which members are dedicated to charity and promoting good will among each other and their communities. Emily was also a member of the First Church of Christ, Scientist, along with Clyde, and the Women’s Auxiliary of the McLean County Country Club. Not only was Emily a member of these groups, she was quite active among them as well. She served as the president of the Women’s Auxiliary of the McLean County Club in 1924.<sup>69</sup> In 1950, she was the chairman of Mount Olive Shrine 25.<sup>70</sup> Later she was a worthy herald of Mount Olive Shrine 25 and standard bearer (carrier of the emblem or flag) of the Order of Amaranth.<sup>71</sup> In 1956, she was installed as worthy guardian for Mount Olive Shrine 25.<sup>72</sup>

Emily and Clyde celebrated many anniversaries together throughout their lives. On June 10, 1936, they commemorated twenty-eight years together along with another couple, Mr. and Mrs. Earl DePew.<sup>73</sup> They celebrated thirty years with the DePews and Mr. and Mrs. W. L. Martin on August 21, 1938.<sup>74</sup> These couples would often celebrate their anniversaries together by putting on dinners and social events.<sup>75</sup>

On May 3, 1955, Clyde Noble passed away at the age of 73. It was reported that he died of a heart attack after being admitted to Mennonite Hospital the previous night.<sup>76</sup> Funeral services were held at Beck Memorial Home, and he was buried in Evergreen Memorial Cemetery. Clyde and Emily never had any children.

Almost eight years later, on March 5, 1963, Emily Noble passed away after suffering

<sup>65</sup> The Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts is the home of the *American Passion Play* which has been presenting the teachings of Jesus for ninety-three years. “Where Christian History Comes to Life,” *The Original American Passion Play*, <http://www.americanpassionplay.org/about.html>.

<sup>66</sup> Researcher’s notes on Emily Noble.

<sup>67</sup> Daughter of Drs. Marie Louise Crothers, Rachel Crothers grew up in Bloomington and “followed her artistic aspirations to New York where she established herself as a fairly esteemed female playwright during the course of the 1920s.” Hannah Johnson, “Dr. Marie Louise Crothers Biography,” *McLean County Museum of History*, <http://www.mchistory.org/research/resources/dr-marie-louise-crothers.php>.

<sup>68</sup> “Community Players Make Most of Crothers Hit, Critic Finds,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, December 8, 1933.

<sup>69</sup> “First Meeting of the McLean Club Auxiliary,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, June 13, 1924.

<sup>70</sup> “Bloomington-Normal Club Calendar,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, July 31, 1950.

<sup>71</sup> “Mt. Olive 25 Will Install New Officers Monday Night,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, March 26, 1950; “Order of Amaranth to Install Saturday,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, December 8, 1950.

<sup>72</sup> “Mount Olive Shrine Plans Installation,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, March 25, 1956.

<sup>73</sup> “Couples Observe 28<sup>th</sup> Anniversary,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, June 12, 1936.

<sup>74</sup> “Honoring Triple Anniversaries,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, August 28, 1938.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> “Clyde V. Noble, Retired Circus Aerialist, Dies.”

from an illness for three weeks. Not long before her death, she moved from the home she had shared with Clyde on South Moore Street to 416 East Grove Street. Her funeral was held at Beck Memorial Home on March 7 and was officiated by Stanley E. Mahanna of the First Church of Christ, Scientist.<sup>77</sup> She is buried next to Clyde at Evergreen Memorial Cemetery.

By: Lisa Elleson, 2016

---

<sup>77</sup> "Rites Thursday for Mrs. Noble, Circus Star."