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## Married by J. P. During Good Behavior

Dicta Editorial Board

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## MARRIED BY J. P. "DURING GOOD BEHAVIOR"

From the musty archives of Mecosta County, Michigan, via Milton E. Bachmann's column "From the Editor's Desk" in the *Michigan State Bar Journal*, comes this little nugget as proof, says Mr. Bachmann, "that at the J. P. level the administration of justice has made less than turtle progress, and as a suggestion that the unauthorized practice of the law is no worse today than it was years ago."

"The story," says Probate Judge Benjamin W. Franklin, "was culled by one of my daughters from research material on county history."

Here is the tale:

In the early history of Mecosta County, a new justice of the peace developed quite a law practice, drafting deeds, wills, mortgages and other papers. Then came the day that he was called upon to perform his first marriage. As the young couple approached, the justice arose, took off his hat and announced:

"Hats off in the presence of the Court."

This being done, he had the couple stand before him.

"Now raise your right hands," he ordered.

"You, John, do you solemnly swear, to the best of your knowledge and belief, that you take this woman to have and to hold for yourself, your executors, administrators and assigns for your and their use and behoof forever?"

"I do," answered the groom.

"You, Alice, do you take this man for your husband, to have and to hold forever, and do you further swear that you are lawfully seized in fee simple, are free from all encumbrances, and have good right to sell, bargain and convey to said grantee yourself, your heirs and assigns forever?"

"I do," said the bride, somewhat doubtfully.

"The consideration will be \$1.50, John," said the Court.

"Are we married?" asked the bride.

"Not until the consideration is paid," the justice replied.

After some digging, the \$1.50 was produced and duly deposited with the Court. When the money had been carefully tucked in the judicial pockets, the judge announced:

"Know all men by these presents, that I, being in good health and of sound and disposing mind, in consideration of the sum of \$1.50 to me paid, do by these presents declare you man and wife, during good behavior and until otherwise ordered by the Court, so help you God."

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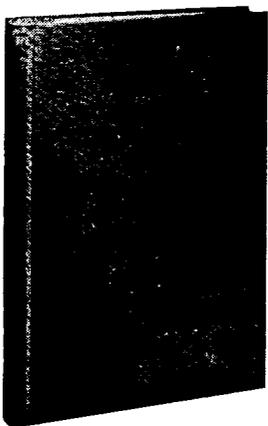
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