

SOCIETY COUPLES CUT KNOT

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Bet Marriages of Co-eds to Be Annulled

WASHINGTON—

Marriages involving four well-known members of Washington's younger set will be annulled by decrees which Justice Oscar R. Lurhing on Wednesday made known his intention of signing.

The couples, married on a bet at Annapolis, Md., last September 1, are: Miss Doris Mae Carter, 1316 Riggs Street Northwest, and John Robert Risher, 227 Florida Avenue, Northwest; and Miss Caroline Ellen Harris, 1731 S Street, Northwest, and William Grayer Williams, Jr., 1709 Second Street, Northwest.

Justice Lurhing decided to grant annulments after he had studied a memorandum submitted by Cobb, Howard and Hayes, attorneys for both young women.

Authority in Doubt

The two suits were heard by Justice Lurhing on March 27. At that time, he indicated that he doubted he had the authority to annul the marriages because no fraud had been alleged or proved.

In the memorandum submitted to Justice Lurhing, counsel admitted that the conduct of the four young people "was foolhardy and thoughtless" and "all the more inexplorable when the educational qualifications of the persons concerned are considered."

The court was asked to consider "the exuberance and quirks of youth" where public policy and public morals are involved, and "not allow the perpetuation of what would amount to a palpable injustice to all parties concerned."

No Serious Intent

It was pointed out that Miss Carter, Miss Harris, Mr. Risher and Mr. Williams in their every act "except the actual going through with the marriage ceremony, evidenced that between the parties this matter was approached in joke and jest and in the carrying out of a dare."

Counsel also pointed out that prior to the automobile trip from Miss Harris's home, the girl's had not kept company with the young men they married.

Attention was also invited to the testimony that there was the specific understanding that there was to be no actual relationship of husband and wife.

Families Well Known

The four young people involved come from well known families. Miss Carter is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Beverly Carter. Her parents are separated. Miss Harris is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer M. Harris.

Mr. Risher is the son of Mr. and Mrs. John T. Risher, and Mr. Williams is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Grayer Williams.

Miss Carter was 20 years old on April 10. Miss Harris will be 21 on December 24. Mr. Risher will be 21 on October 11 and Mr. Williams, was 20 last April 22.

Miss Carter, Miss Harris and Mr. Williams were students at Howard University. When their marriages became known they were suspended for a year.

According to the testimony, Miss Carter was visiting at the home of Miss Harris's on Sunday, September 1, when Risher and Williams came to call. An automobile trip to Highland Beach in Williams's car was agreed to, during which, Miss Carter rode in the front seat with Williams and Miss Harris in the back seat with Risher.

Wager Accepted

At Highland Beach they were unable to locate any mutual friends. A conversation began about marriage among young people, and Risher said to Williams:

"I'll bet you \$10 you won't marry Caroline!"

"I don't want to take your money," Williams replied, "but if you'll marry Doris, I'll marry Caroline."

The bet was accepted. The four young people started to Annapolis, and on the way they agreed they would go through with the proposal as a joke.

Stayed Apart

A marriage license clerk, finally located, issued them licenses dated Saturday, August 31, 1935, and a Rev. Mr. Drummond performed the ceremonies.

They returned to Washington shortly after 9 p.m. The two girls got out of the automobile at the home of Miss Harris. The two boys drove off together and did not see each other until about a month later when reports of their marriages became widespread.

The two young women filed suit for annulment of the marriages on November 6, 1935. The suits were uncontested, but Justice Lurhing expressed an unwillingness to grant annulments simply because the two couples had entered into the marriages in a spirit of jest.