

FREEDOM OF 'BET' BRIDES IS ASSURED

Expect Judge To Sign Annulment Decrees For Two Couples

WASHINGTON, July 17—Justice Oscar R. Lohring will sign decrees annulling the marriages-on-a-bet of Miss Doris Mae Carter, 1316 Riggs street northwest, to John Robert Risher, 227 Florida avenue, northwest, and of Miss Caroline Ellen Harris, 1731 S street northwest, to William Grayer Williams, Jr., 1709 Second street, northwest, it was learned Wednesday.

Justice Lohring decided to grant annulments after he had studied a memorandum reviewing the case; showing that he had authority to do so submitted by Cobb, Howard and Hayes, attorneys for both young women.

The two suits were heard by Justice Lohring 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.

Admit Action Foolish

In the memorandum submitted to Justice Lohring, counsel for the young women admitted that the conduct of the four young people "was foolhardy and thoughtless"; and "all the more inexplicable 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."

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."

Barely Acquainted

Counsel also pointed out that prior to the automobile trip from Miss Harris' home, Miss Carter had not kept company with Mr. Risher and Miss Harris had not kept company with Mr. Williams, but, on the contrary, the two young women had other boy friends and the young men had other girl friends. According to the testimony at the trial, there had been only a childhood friendship and schoolmate relationship existing between them for a long period of time.

Counsel also noted that on the trip to Highland Beach, Md., and from Highland Beach to Annapolis, where they were married, and back from Annapolis to Washington, Miss Carter rode with Mr. Williams and Miss Harris with Mr. Risher, "reflecting the lack of appreciation which the parties had for what they were doing."

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 and fact that the young ladies and one of the young men were in school and the other young man dependent upon his father for support and none of them in any position to assume toward the other the proper marital relation."

No Cohabitation

It was also pointed out that "there was no cohabitation after the marriage ceremony, the testimony being that the young ladies were taken to the home of one of them and the young men went home together, after which they did not see each other for a long period of time and from that time forward were never even alone in each other's presence."

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, last. Miss Harris will be 21 years old on October 11, next. Mr. Risher will not be 21 years old on October 11, next. Mr. Williams was 20 years old on April 22, last.

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

Ten Dollars Involved

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

At Highland Beach they were unable to locate any mutual friends. A conversation started about marriage among young people. 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. On the way they agreed they would go through with the proposal as a joke but that there would be no attempt to consummate the marriages.

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

They returned to Washington. It was 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. They did not see each other until about a month later when reports of their marriage became widespread.

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