Louise Muxfeld (1853 – 1909)

Louise Muxfeld, who everyone called "Lizzie," was born Johanna Louise Catherine Tobecksen on June 7, 1853, in Schoenburg, Germany. She was the daughter of Ferdinand Johann Tobecksen from Schoenberg and Elizabeth Gedke Tobecksen from Austria. When she was a child, Louise came to America with her father, who worked in a circus. As a young girl, she was part of a "casting act," where performers were thrown into the air. Louise also walked on a tightrope. The circus toured the southern U.S. before returning to Germany. Louise dreamed of going back to America, and after her father died in 1865, her family moved to the U.S. in 1872, settling in Bloomington, IL.

In Bloomington, Louise stayed with a German family, the Meyers, who owned the Meyer Brewing Company. There, she met August Muxfeld, also from Germany. They married on January 10, 1873, and had five children, though their youngest daughter, Martha, died at the age of five. August worked in a clothing store before opening his own store in Minonk, IL, in 1892.

Louise became known for her work as a midwife, a job that was common in the U.S. at the time, though hospitals were starting to take over births. She trained at Madame Carpenter's School for Midwives in St. Louis and earned her certificate in 1886. Louise delivered around 1,500 babies during her career and was well respected in Bloomington. She even attended births for wealthy families and Christian Scientists, and some people traveled to Bloomington to have her help with their births.

Louise and August were active members of the German Evangelical Lutheran United Peace Church in Bloomington, where August was the president and Louise helped with the church's baptismal font. She was also a member of the Rebekah Degree, an organization that helps people in need.

Louise owned a horse named Monk, known for being stubborn and hard to catch. However, when Louise needed him for an emergency call, he would come right to her.

On March 22, 1909, Louise suddenly passed away from heart failure while doing laundry in her basement. She seemed to be in perfect health, but when her family checked on her, they found she had already passed away. Louise was remembered as one of the most respected and experienced midwives in Bloomington, and she was buried in Evergreen Memorial Cemetery.