

# A 'Womanless Wedding'

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**OVERLOOKED ORLEANS:** Old-time fundraisers stressed wacky humor

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ALBION — More than 100 years ago, "Womanless Weddings" were commonplace throughout the United States.

Dating back into the 19th century, faux nuptials were held in the South as a means for raising money for charities, churches, and community organizations. As interest in their inherent humor began to rise, the events spread like a wildfire across the entire country.

The Womanless Wedding was an opportunity for men to dress up as women, don some makeup, and over exaggerate femininity. An image shows Eugene W. "Bud" Wilcox, Jr. dressed as Theda Bara for a Womanless Wedding hosted by the Albion Rotary Club, for the benefit of the Crippled Children Fund. Bara was an early silent film actress who became well known as one of the earliest sex symbols in U.S. cinema.

Wilcox was born on February 20, 1891 to Eugene and Alice Wilcox, growing up on West Park Street in Albion.

Following graduation from the Albion High School, Wilcox enrolled at Lehigh University and enlisted with the



SUBMITTED PHOTO

**Albion native Eugene W. "Bud" Wilcox dresses as silent film star Theda Bara for a "womanless wedding" event.**

U.S. Navy during the First World War. Upon his return to Albion he worked as a clerk in his father's hardware store located at 98 Main St., eventually taking ownership of the

business. Wilcox was a charter member of Albion's Rotary Club, an active member of the Presbyterian Church, and a member of the Elks and Renovation Lodges of Albion.