

Dec. 25, 1883

# A Christmas in Ellettsville

In mid-November one hundred years ago, Monroe County was drenched by heavy rains that caused a lot of havoc. Called a "freshet" by the *Monroe County Citizen* (published in Ellettsville), the flooding washed out a half mile of fences belonging to Tom Owen along Stoute's Creek.

JOHN BLAIR AND REP OWENS also had particular reason to grumble as the holidays approached. Bean Blossom Creek swelled over its banks and thinned out the stock on their hog farm. The estimated loss was some \$800.

In the southern part of the county the "freshet" wiped out the underpinnings of the railroad bridge over Clear Creek near Harrodsburg, and passengers were obliged to change trains on foot until the gap could be repaired.

In Bloomington the fire department was helpless to give assistance at a particular fire, since the crew had drained the water from the pumper to ensure that it wouldn't freeze and damage the tank. (Thereafter they refilled the tank and kept a small fire going under it.)

DESPITE THE CALAMITIES of fire and flood, there were signs in the *Citizen* that Christmas was approaching. Take, for example, the classified advertisement of Dec. 13, 1883, which said, "All little boys between the ages of three and ten in Ellettsville and vicinity will receive a Christmas present from J.R. Harris by calling at the store, December 24th and 25th, 1883." Understandably, in the next

## Looking Back

By Rose H. McIlveen

issue (the following week) the ad had been hastily amended to read, "All little boys and girls," etc.

## Tree thieves are sentenced

H-T Report

Instead of stealing trees, nine Indiana University students charged earlier this month with the theft of 26 Christmas trees from an Ellettsville tree farm will soon be doing some tree planting.

**MONROE SUPERIOR COURT** Judge John Baker sentenced the students last week to 50 hours of public restitution to come in the form of planting trees under the supervision of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

The students, Clifford M. Bishop, 18; George R. Zochowski, 19; Damon G. Hart, 19; John Snyder, 18; George R. Murray, 18; Matthew B. Hamilton, 19; John C. Hammond, 21;

A curious item which seemed out of place in Dec. 6 issue of the *Citizen* proclaimed that the ladies of the M.E. Church (Methodist Episcopal) were going to have a "Martha Washington" festival on Dec. 20th. Another projected social event during the holiday season in Ellettsville was a 16th anniversary celebration of the founding of their lodge by the Odd Fellows.

**THE TOWN'S SCHOOL CHILDREN** were looking forward to a couple of weeks of vacation

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Christopher T. Batwinski, 18; and Thomas J. Russo, 20, all pleaded guilty to a Class A misdemeanor of theft. All but Russo live at the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity House, 1115 N. Jordan. Russo lives in Briscoe Quad.

**IN ADDITION TO THE** public restitution work, the nine students were sentenced to 20 days in jail with all but two days suspended; assessed \$110 in restitution and \$102 in fines and court costs.

The nine were also placed on a year of probation, but Baker stipulated that if any member of the group violated the terms of his probation the suspended sentences would be revoked for all of them.