

# An eloquent plea for a road in 1867

As letters to the editor go, the one appearing in the May 5, 1867, edition of the *Bloomington Republican Progress* had an unusual beginning.

"Winter has long-lingered in the lap of spring, and I can't blame it much as it is a very nice place to linger, but then there is a way of running things into the ground and it just made its escape from such a catastrophe when it took its departure, and was followed by a gentle-eyed maiden wearing the habili-ment and name of spring in whose train came beautiful flowers, gentle breezes, laughing sunshine, caroling birds and everything that makes the month of May so gay and joyous."

But extolling spring was not the real motive of the letter-writer, who seemed to have a serious run-on sentence problem. Believe it or not, he was trying to drum up enthusiasm for the development of his rural Monroe County community.

Relating that Stanford "stands



## Looking back

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once more upon the ground — yea real terra firma," the writer, who called himself "Nemo," said the community was "in a fair way to prosper if we could only induce someone to come here and build a mill, one combining a saw and grist mill."

That the residents of the Stanford were inconvenienced by their distance from a mill is obvious from Nemo's choice of the words available in the English language.

"It is really outrageous that we must almost suffer for the 'Staff of Life' in this old and enterprising country. At times the New York bread riot painfully dawns upon

our minds, and we are fearful of the cry of 'Meal or Blood.' . . . Come out here, capitalists, and invest your surplus revenue in a mill, and you never will regret it."

Nemo wanted his readers to know that Stanford had come a long way in recent days. He was particularly appreciative of the new Thrasher and Umbarger "good family grocery store" and the fact that Baker & Bro. ("our gentlemanly merchants") had bought a large stock of goods, latest styles and fast colors.

" . . . and their house seems to be the Headquarters for Dry Goods in this county, outside of Bloomington."

Forgetting his highfalutin letter to the editor tone, Nemo edged closer to what was on his mind, besides a mill.

"The citizens of Stanford 'uv whom I am wick,' are manifesting considerable interest in the pro-

see **Looking back**. Back page