

In 1910, Ellettsville was invaded by out-of-town rowdies

Through the years Ellettsville has had the reputation of being a rather staid and quiet little community. A notable exception was Oct. 20, 1910.

According to the *Bloomington Daily Telephone*, there was a week-long carnival going on in Ellettsville. It was good, clean fun and a treat for the inhabitants.

The problem was that not all of the carnival-goers were inhabitants. It seems the town was "invaded" by some rowdies from Stinesville and Bloomington.

Most of them were lucky — their names were omitted from the *Telephone* article of Oct. 21. The one exception was a young man by the name of John Gatlin.

"The spectacular event of the eve-



Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

ning centered around a young man from this city, John Gatlin, who, according to the Ellettsville authorities, started out to clean up the town. Gatlin, loaded with bad booze, it is alleged, started proceeding by striking Hubert Stimson, son of Town Marshal (Thomas) Stimson," explained the newspaper.

When several men ran to help the young Stimson, Gatlin pulled a gun, "waving it in a threatening man-

ner." That cost him his freedom, and he had an opportunity to think about his behavior in the Ellettsville jail — particularly the cut he had put on the marshal's face.

Meanwhile, two other boys, who had rented a buggy and horse from a Bloomington livery stable, challenged others to a race.

The *Telephone* described the outcome: "Four miles this side of Ellettsville, the horse stumbled, rolled over on its side from exhaustion, damaging the buggy considerably. The horse laid by the road side all night and died this morning, in spite of the work of a veterinary, who was called. The horse was valued at \$150."

The *Telephone* playfully com-

pared Ellettsville to Reno, Nev., saying the imitation was red-blooded and lifelike. Fortunately, the boisterous visitors did no real harm to the town, but it was touch-and-go for awhile.

Even after Gatlin was put to bed for the night in jail, things did not calm down in Ellettsville. "From the noise and the shooting that went on around the outskirts of the little town, an outsider would have been led to believe that a fair sized battle was being fought on all sides of the town. Every country boy present seemed to have a revolver, and as he left the fair, he put his horse into a gallop, gave his lungs full play and shattered the peace of the night by shooting at a tree, fence post, the moon or anything that

happened to draw his attention," continued the *Telephone*. "It was the small hours of the morning before the noise died down and the pop of guns finally ceased."

The next day, it is likely that there were plenty of heated discussions about the out-of-town rowdies who spoiled the street carnival and disturbed the peace.

The *Telephone* added a postscript to the story.

"Gatlin and three other boys, who were arrested, were brought here (Bloomington) by an Ellettsville constable on the 10:10 (train). They persuaded the constable to take them to the Gatlin home so they could . . . clean up and there escaped from him. They are still at large."