

Season's greetings with season's doings from 1916

At the end of November in 1916, the editor of the *Bloomington Evening World* took it upon himself to remind his readers to do their Christmas shopping early. In the Nov. 28 article he gave a couple of good reasons for the suggestion.

The first was the feeling of freedom from anxiety that early shoppers enjoy. And the second one was to avoid the rising prices that would result from scarcities of goods as Christmas approached.

The newspapers carried the inevitable reminder by the U.S. Postal Service to mail early to avoid waiting in long lines and run the risk of sending packages that did not arrive by Dec. 25.

Whatever the readers of the *Evening World* chose to do about holiday chores, they could look forward to a special holiday event. On Dec. 19 the newspaper announced, "The cement base for the Community Christmas Tree has been made and sunk in the Courthouse ground. It is large enough to hold the great tree which was hauled into town this morning ready for erection."

The arrival of the tree was certainly a com-



LOOKING BACK

By Rose McIlveen

munity affair, since business men around the square were asked to help steady the tree in the cement base. Other volunteers put up strings of lights and strands of tinsel.

The children were an important part of the community celebration. Explained the *Evening World*, "Local children will form a parade at the post office, the boys carrying small evergreen trees to place in special stands made by the manual training department of the schools." The manual training staff had also repaired enough toys to fill an automobile.

Thirty-two cars were needed to drive the children to different parts of the city for caroling. Then they would all meet on the square. Volunteer drivers were to call the Chamber of Commerce at 1971.

Another feature of the celebration was

described in the *Evening World* of Dec. 22. "Squads of boys this afternoon received baskets of candles from the Christmas Tree Committee and distributed them in their assigned wards in different parts of the city. Everyone who received a candle or who can secure one for the purpose is asked to set it in a prominent window of his home. Hours for burning candle will be announced on the program and will appear in the paper tomorrow."

The program was to last only a half hour. An area of the square was roped off to keep the space in front of the tree clear enough for everyone to see it. The *Evening World* gave downtown merchants a pat on the back. "It is a remarkable fact that almost every business man interviewed has declared his willingness to have the program Saturday night even though it means a temporary lull in business."

Transporting carolers out into the town was an ambitious project. The sections they were assigned to were North College and East Tenth Street; North Fairview and West Eighth streets; South Maple and Third streets; South Durin and East Second streets; South Fess and East Third streets; North Indiana and East

Seventh streets; and North Grant and East Tenth streets.

Many in the community volunteered to spread the joy of the season as far as possible. On Dec. 26 the *Evening World* reported that "...the Christmas spirit manifested itself along other lines as well. All the toys that were brought by the school children were invoiced and distributed by the Committee on Charities and their helpers. One Hundred and eighty baskets containing Christmas dinners, also several hundred articles of clothing, were given to the needy."

Unfortunately, death did not take a holiday during the Christmas season, but there were some things to celebrate besides the birth of Christ. On Dec. 20 the city council voted to add \$350 to a maintenance fund, thus assuring that the projected Carnegie Library would be built. The Athletic Board at Indiana University appointed a committee to plan for a new football stadium. And lastly, the management of the Field Glove & Mitten factory put a piano in the girls lounge at the factory and gave each employee a box of candy and a 10 percent raise.

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