

'The good old days' had a serious side

Anyone — young or old — who is prone to feel all warm and fuzzy about "the good old days" can recover a sense of reality by scanning the newspapers shortly after the turn of the century

TAKE, FOR EXAMPLE, public safety at that time. Within the same week in January of 1902, the Bloomington Telephone reported two fires on the square, one costly. The newspaper on the 10th said that there was a fire in Breeden's Banner-Star store on the south side of the square. It had apparently been caused by a gas jet fire which illuminated the display windows across the front of the store and was the precise location of Breeden's most expensive wares —

Looking back

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By Rose McIlveen

furs, fine carpets and jewelry

Only four days later the Telephone informed its readers of a near-fatal flash fire in the private quarters of H.B. Gentry in his new hotel on the southwest corner of the square and nearly adjacent to Breeden's establishment. The flame from a chafing lamp had ignited

some lace curtains, and fortunately Gentry, who was in the next room, had the ingenuity to tear them down and stuff them into a grate

A COUPLE OF weeks later when the old Beta Theta Pi house on Third Street burned, it was nearly a total loss. One of the Showers brothers, who owned it, had providentially covered his property with an abundance of insurance. The Telephone noted that on that occasion the fire hoses froze straight and stiff and had to be carried by the men back to the firehouse, presumably for thawing.

On the health front in Monroe Coun-

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