

Paper's 'bear story' surprises readers

Bear, from page P1

their search, which was then taken up by male volunteers.

Gabe continued, "Hour followed hour, but the search proved fruitless, and it was not till quivering lines of gray light in the eastern horizon, signalled the advent of a new-born day, that a distant shout proclaimed the finding of a trace."

The searcher, according to Gabe, had come across a grizzly bear with "glaring eyes and bared murderous-looking teeth, his fore-paws and snout clotted with the blood of his innocent victim, while at his side lay the clean-stripped bones of a ghastly skeleton."

It is just barely conceivable that Gabe's readers may have been believers in his news until they got to the final sentences of the article, at which time credibility should have broken down completely. "Nothing remained to identify the young creature who had met so horrible a fate, except the chignon she wore upon that fatal afternoon. This

article was crossed and re-crossed with cherry-colored ribbons, and was tied so high, that the bear was unable to reach it. The animal was quickly dispatched, by a well-directed blow under the ear from the fist of a base ballist, and a triumphal procession carried the 'game' to town. The new weight of Bruin's carcass was some 1,900 lbs."

Any reader who still believed it was a bona fide news story would have searched in vain through that issue of the newspaper for the young woman's obituary. What would motivate a reputable editor to pass off a "bear story" on his readers? The answer to that question can be found on the same page in an adjoining column. There Gabe informed his readers that wild animals had been sighted in various parts of the state and excitedly reported by local newspapers. It was apparently a case of any local animal scare you can report, we can report better. Gabe concluded by commenting, "Harding of the Indianapolis *Herald* will envy us. . . ."