

# Mysterious night visit to Maple Grove farm was never explained

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officials frowned on the practice, since whitecappers were known to get carried away at times.

The *Progress* — not noted for its coverage of county news — chose to ignore the story, one that would have sent any modern reporter scurrying out to unearth every last detail. It would be interesting to know, for example, if Houston's neighbors could have furnished any clues.

Finally, on Oct. 10, 1883 — almost a month after the night visit to Houston's farm — the *Progress* printed what could have been either a classified ad or a news item. It said: "Near Maple Grove lies a well-improved farm of 200 acres belonging to Clint Houston. It is a very desirable farm — well grassed, and has all the buildings necessary for a stock or grain farm. Houston desires to sell, and will sell it at a reasonable price."

Did the man who called that

night of Sept. 19, "Hello, is that you, Houston — come out, I want to see you!" intend to threaten the seemingly innocent, God-fearing Maple Grove Christian Church member? Houston's wife was out of town, visiting one of her grown children. Had the night visitors known that and chosen that particular time to call?

The fact that the visitors were carrying guns does not speak well for the nature of their business. The local law against carrying concealed weapons was enforced within the city of Bloomington, at least, for the *Progress* had already reported a case of a farmer arrested in town, because he was armed.

The other possibility in regard to the original story is the it was a hoax on the part of Clinton to call attention to his later offer of sale. Only perhaps some of Houston's descendants still living in the county have the answer to the mystery.