

IU tradition included involuntary haircuts for freshmen

The raucous, sometimes destructive exuberance of Indiana University students was by no means confined to the occasions of athletic victories. There was the annual freshman/sophomore "scrap," which often enriched local doctors and dentists. And then there was the custom of shearing hapless freshmen.

One victim found himself on the front page of the Bloomington *Evening World* on Sept. 20, 1905, which related to its readers that "Indiana University formally opened yesterday morning and last night at 10 o'clock, twenty five valiant sophomores jumped out on Harry Yelch as he was crossing the square on his way home and held an informal hair-cutting party, which is the first



Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

of a series to be given at irregular intervals during the fall and winter terms."

The trouble was, the newly shorn young man wasn't a freshman. "Young Yelch was recognized by the sophs and before explanations could be made, he was thrown down, choked into silence and his locks shorn." Back on his feet again, Yelch finally got the opportunity to tell his scissors-wielding at-

tackers that not only was he not a freshman, he wasn't even a student.

Yelch got an apology. There was the student who was not so fortunate. Three days later, according to the *Evening World*, "While engaged in fighting a gang of freshmen who were bent upon cutting his hair last night, Monroe Greeman, a sophomore of Indiana University, whose home is in Batesville, was painfully injured."

Greeman was walking along about 9 o'clock when he was attacked. In the fight the scissors were somehow pressed against his face, and he received a cut under his eye.

Commented the newspaper, "The accident frightened the under-

classmen, who ceased their efforts to cut Greeman's hair and accompanied him to his room, where the wound was treated. Although the injury is not serious it is thought the accident will stop the hair-cutting here." (Actually, it didn't.)

Bloomingtonians could be more philosophical about the enforced hair cutting than about celebrations over athletic victories. And the explosion of all that energy was by no means confined to the dates on the football schedule. Spring fever took its toll as well.

Chirped the *Evening World* on April 25, 1913, "Indiana spirit, after hibernating for many long months, flared up in a giant demonstration last night. Three minutes after word came on the wire of Indiana's

overwhelming victory over Wisconsin, the student community was roused and a mob of several hundred, headed by a 'band,' were on the rampage. Three hours later — well, they were still at it." (What came over the wire was the score of the baseball game: IU 10, Wisconsin 4.)

The mob visited local theaters and set fires on each corner. A "ringleader" was arrested and taken to the sheriff's office. Students retaliated by breaking the front window. Though the unruliness had died down by 10:30, it flared up again near the Indiana Cafe. Concluded the *Evening World*, "The police force became active again, but in spite of a long pursuit down back alleys none of the gang of twenty or more will appear in court."