

# *First professor at IU took note of Christmas*

"We had this year a very merry Christmas," Baynard Hall, Indiana University's first professor, wrote in the early 1820s.

"FOR FIRST and foremost we devoted the holidays to hog-killing and all of its accompaniments, lard rendering, spare-rib cooking, sausage-making and the like," he related in his book, *The New Purchase*. Hall, a professor/minister, had left the "civilized" East and settled with relatives by the name of Young in the Gosport area.

Hall's account of the holidays includes a domestic mishap, when the carefully preserved hog guts had been carefully cleaned and soaked in brine in preparation for

being stuffed with sausage. Unfortunately, a servant girl accidentally disposed of the skins, much to

the consternation of Hall's Aunt Kitty.

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## Looking Back

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*By Rose McIlveen*

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Though the Young family had to forego sausage for their Christmas dinner, venison took its place. Hall wrote that they spotted a deer about a mile from their cabin, wounded it, and tracked it to the place where it lay dying.

**CORN WAS** a staple crop for homesteading families, and their Christmas dinner often included corn bread, which traveled under different names and forms — ash cake, hoe cake, crackling bread, Johnny cake and corn dodger. Ash cake was literally baked under ashes in the hottest part of the fire. Cabbage leaves kept the ashes out of the moist batter.

Family and guests for Christmas dinner at the home of IU's first president, Andrew Wylie, probably sat down to an entree of turkey. He kept the birds in a coop behind his house at the corner of Second and Lincoln streets in Bloomington.

Turkey was also the fare for other Monroe County families, since many flocks of wild turkeys could be

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