

Paper's 'bear story' surprises readers

"A HORRIBLE DEATH IN THE WOODS — A YOUNG LADY EATEN BY A BEAR," exclaimed the headline on a long column in the Nov. 7, 1868, edition of the Bloomington *Progress*. Beneath the attention-getting headline, the newspaper's editor, William Gabe, proceeded to relate what looked like a bona fide news story.

According to Gabe, Indian summer had set in, and "west of Bloomington" the woods were full of "rich stores of hickory and walnuts" ready for the gathering. Parties of young ladies and gentlemen were formed to harvest the nuts and spend a pleasant afternoon, "wandering over the rattling carpet under which nature had so enviously hidden her rich stores . . ."

One such party, related Gabe, was composed of young ladies, who ventured forth on the Saturday preceding the Nov. 7 publication of his newspaper. After they had spent several hours in the



Looking back

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woods, it was discovered that one of the party was missing.

"The girls began to call the name of their companion, but without response, save from the wind, as it sighed among the treetops, or the mocking clatter of a solitary crow, who rocked himself upon a decaying poplar." (At this point it would be interesting to know if Gabe's readers realized that he was indulging in a little bit of creative writing.)

Anyway, the article continued, the girls' calling and searching failed to help them find the missing companion. As darkness approached, they abandoned
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