

# The rains of 1907 made for Noah jokes in January

**M**onroe Countians expect to see snow falling in January. Rain during the month is not unusual, either, except when it doesn't stop. Local residents were beginning to wonder when it would end after 7 7/100 inches had fallen between New Year's and the middle of January.

Lamented the *Bloomington Telephone* on Jan. 18, 1907, "The entire month has been one of the most gloomy in the history of the weather bureau. Only one partly clear day has been recorded, and that was Saturday, the 9th, when the sun shone for some four hours unobstructed by clouds."

Jan. 3 was the worst day. A man by the name of Maple who held the title of "local forecast officer," reported that the rainfall amounted to 3 1/100 inches.

There is also the suggestion by the newspaper that the weather was warmer than usual during the first two weeks of January. Continued the *Telephone*, "Great damage has



## LOOKING BACK

By Rose McIlveen

resulted from the high waters, and the warm weather has had a tendency to force fruit buds to the front that will eventually fall before the onslaught of the Frost King."

The newspaper indulged itself in a reference to Noah's ark from the Bible. ("It would not be amiss for the citizens of Indiana and Bloomington, especially, to stop up the leaks in their arks and prepare to float.")

The *Telephone* was so impressed with the news value of the weather that it carried two articles about it in the Jan. 18 issue. Normally, Monroe Countians would not be enthusiastic about a cold wave, but in January of 1907 they

would have welcomed one. Commented the newspaper, "A cold wave that was reported to be sweeping down from somewhere in the Dakotas, evidently got side tracked, as up to the noon hour its whereabouts had not been discovered."

The rain was bad news for our neighbors to the south, too. The *Telephone* reported that "There is not much land visible from the Monon track in Lawrence County between Mitchell and Bedford ..." The editor of the newspaper couldn't resist taking a little jab at the neighboring county by adding "... and for once the wicked country down there will be given a thorough cleansing by shushing and flushing."

In the area that overlapped southeastern Monroe and northern Lawrence counties, Salt Creek was, as the *Telephone* put it, a raging river, sweeping away logs, timber and fodder.

It is unlikely that the heavy rain caused the

death of Samuel H. Pinkerton of Bloomington, but it certainly contributed to it. On Jan. 22 the *Telephone* reported the odd story.

Pinkerton, who lived with his brother on North College Avenue, usually took a short stroll before bedtime. Fifteen minutes later someone in the family remarked that Samuel had not said goodnight as he usually did when he returned to the house.

The *Telephone* picked up the story. "He (the brother) went out into the yard and found his brother lying face downward on the ground between the walk and fence. The body was still warm and drenched with rain."

Unfortunately, Samuel Pinkerton was not breathing because his mouth and nose were filled with mud. It was impossible to revive him. The newspaper noted that Pinkerton had suffered from ill health for many years, and so it is conceivable that he had a stroke or heart attack. Still, the possibility of someone drowning in mud seems hard to imagine.

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