

# Rain ravage Bloomington in 1913

## Rain, from page A1

morning of March 21 and brought intermittent rain that caused every rill and gully to overflow. Perhaps the most serious consequence for the city as a whole was that it was temporarily isolated because railroad bridges were washed out.

Commented the *Star*, "Railroads were destroyed, bridges carried away and telephone and telegraph lines wiped out. . . . There was talk at the university of trying a wireless apparatus, but after a conference between Registrar Cravens and chief electrician Foley the matter was abandoned."

Elsewhere in Bloomington, as the water was rising, a community entrepreneur gallantly went to the rescue of several women who were spending the evening in the new Arbutus Flats on East Kirkwood Avenue. Explained the *Star*, "J.W. Gentry waded the current to the flats, and after

Mrs. Gentry and Mrs. C.V. Firmin had donned hip boots he led them to safety."

Hardest hit areas of the county were along Bean Blossom, Salt and Clear creeks. The drama of the rampaging water included such stories as that of Ernest Lytton, who returned to his home near Paynetown to find only the roof above the water.

George Floyd and Robert Wooten, who lived at Sanders, were trapped on the Monon bridge at Clear Creek. Although Henry Woolery tried to rescue them, they were obliged to spend the night clinging to the iron railing.

The most dramatic rescue of all was along Bean Blossom Creek north of Dolan. With water surrounding his house, Martin Hoke decided it was time to get out. As the water was rising, he hitched up a team of mules, but they stubbornly refused to budge.

Continued the *Star*, "Finally rescuers telephoned to John Hunter in this city, and he sent

out two row boats by wagon. Willard Farr manned one of the boats and rescued the couple as the water covered the mules' backs . . . Nearly all of Mr. Hoke's livestock was lost."

Not everyone was distressed by the inconvenience of the heavy rains. The newspaper informed its readers that over 100 "traveling men" were marooned in Bloomington. They "amused themselves by taking in the university and other places of interest, in a body."

For one sector of the community, at least, the storm was a godsend. A casualty of the high winds was a billboard at the corner of Fourth and Walnut

streets. It had displayed a "bevy of pretty girls," advertising a coming-theatrical attraction. Said the *Star*, "The Salvation Army loudly denounced the posters as indecent, and now some call the destruction of the offending billboard 'the wrath of God.'"