

When wild animals roamed in county

One morning when the county was in its infancy, James Parks awoke to find a big bear fast asleep and snoring on the front porch of the Parks cabin near Ellettsville. In his memoirs, the early settler wrote that there was a Potawatomi trading house not far away.

According to a couple of Indiana University history professors, Donald Carmony and the late John Barnhart, Indiana abounded with a variety of animals. They quote from an 1850s account by Charles Lassell of Logansport. "The bear, elk, deer, panther, otter, wolf, wildcat, fox and raccoon were also to be found in considerable numbers in various portions of the state ... and although the amount of furs produced was afterwards diminished by the destruction of the game, yet it still continued large for a long time ..."

A few of the wild animals were still around when the Bloomington *Evening World* of Dec. 24, 1923, published an article about a



Looking back

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12-3198

man from Indianapolis. A self-styled professional hunter, H.L. Amsden, claimed to have caught four bobcats and one large wildcat within only a few miles of Bloomington.

The hunter related that the wildcat had killed one of Amsden's hunting dogs in "an unequal fight." The hunter surely must have been a stubborn one, for he said he had tracked the prey from Little Indian Creek near Martinsville to Griffey Creek valley.

Quoting the hunter, the *Evening World* reported, "The hounds were running ahead of their master and 'treed' their

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