

'Boys will be boys' and a frustration to IU president

How old is the expression "Boys will be boys?" No matter where it came from, it pretty well fits the behavior of some Bloomington youths in January of 1897. In fact, the *Bloomington World* said so in an article that appeared on Jan. 24.

Earlier there had been snow, but it was melting, much to the disappointment of about a dozen young men, called "College Hill youths" by the newspaper. They had been tobogganing down the incline on East Third Street. Unfortunately, "... old Sol's rays began to chase the small coating of snow off the earth. ..."

Something had to be done to prolong their sport, and one of the boys had what he thought was an ingenious idea. The newspaper described what happened next. "Each boy secured a bucket, and they formed a regular fire line from Spanker's branch in whose depths one venturesome kid stood and did the dipping, while one on the stone wall passed it along."

The idea was to create a new slick path for



LOOKING BACK

By Rose McIlveen

their sleds. According to the *World*, the boys hid themselves near the site and awaited results. That would indicate that merely making a slippery slide for themselves was not all they had in mind.

Continued the newspaper, "A highly respected citizen of the aristocratic hill, who is known to be a religiously inclined person, and not given to saying swear words, was on his way to the city, and when he arrived at Third Street he began to look about him to see if the rain was confined to that locality, as he was not aware that there had been an atmospheric disturbance."

Well! There was nothing unpredictable about what happened to him. When he hit the icy section, his feet slid out from under him,

and his bottom hit the pavement, which was definitely not forgiving. Furthermore, "His gold rimmed eye glasses went spinning through the air, and in his endeavor to pick them up, while attempting to steady himself, his suspenders parted company from his trousers."

Needless to say, after securing his glasses, his trip to town was aborted. He headed home "to have his good wife put a porous plaster on his back."

The next pedestrian was a young lady, who "came tripping along all the while casting sheep's eyes at a young man on the opposite side of the street." She, too, fell and shortly afterward said some unkind things about the young man across the street. He had laughed at her mishap.

Less than a week later, the university sophomore boys swooped down on some hapless freshmen who were having a banquet. The *World* on Jan. 29 described the event. "The savage Sophomores raided a Freshman's banquet, bound, gagged and tied

the latter up in hard knots and devoured all the eatables in sight."

No doubt the freshmen were embarrassed, since they had been accompanied by young ladies to the banquet in Kirkwood Hall. After the freshmen had been rendered helpless, they were compelled to watch the sophomores eat all the food.

There was more to come. Explained the *World*, "In celebration of their triumph, the Sophomores brought several of their prisoners up town and serenaded a number of the professors, students and citizens. The *World* office was visited, and the university and class yells were given with a vim and vigor that carried great enthusiasm."

No doubt Indiana University President Joseph Swain heaved a sigh of relief that that incident in the traditional rivalry between freshmen and sophomores had passed without injury to either side. Other incidents had been more violent.

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