

Showers workers were celebrated at Christmas

As the Christmas of 1916 approached, the office staff of the Showers furniture factory planned a Christmas dance that was to include some 35 couples.

If any of the readers of the *Bloomington Telephone* of Dec. 19 thought the dance was the company's only Christmas activity, they were mistaken.

Showers president, William N. Showers, was ahead of his time as an employer. An early Christmas present for the employees was described in the Dec. 14 *Telephone*.

"Miss Ruth Ikerd, who has been the visiting nurse for the city, today took up her duties in the same capacity for the Showers Bros., and she will be at the service of the families of the employees of that company whenever she



LOOKING BACK

By Rose McIlveen

can be of benefit — and free of charge as she will be paid by the company."

On Dec. 18 *Telephone* readers learned of another Showers gift. At the office of the factory, W.N. Showers gave each under-12 child of employees a one-pound box of candy. Candy for children too young to call at the factory office was entrusted to a parent.

The newspaper noted that the order was for more than a ton of candy.

The gift giving at Showers was by no means one-way. The day after Christmas a *Telephone* front page article revealed that a committee composed of the plant general superintendent, Charles Sears, Amos Seminole, William Sutphin and William Sears made a special delivery to the company president's home.

They brought him a "fine Howard 21-jewel gold watch," each jewel being a diamond. It was suspended from a gold chain having a knife set with another diamond. The gift was from "more than 1,000 people employed in or about the great enterprise."

In previous years, employees had come up with other tangible tokens of their affection for Showers. The 1904 gift was an ebony cane with a gold handle. Showers was lured into

one of the factory buildings on the pretext of looking at some equipment. He found there instead a platform and all of his workers assembled.

The *Telephone* reported that "Almost overcome, it was some time before Mr. Showers recovered sufficiently to respond. He heartily thanked the men for their esteem and said that in his declining years, as he aided his tottering steps with this magnificent cane, he would always remember his 250 friends."

• He was not the only person remembered that Christmas. One of the Searses received an Odd Fellows Lodge ring, and Mrs. David Wampler was given \$30 in silver because her husband, a longtime employee, had died earlier in the year.

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