

'Hoop' factory fuels city's growth in 1883

"THE BOOM STILL BOOMS!" boasted a headline of the *Bloomington Progress* in the fall of 1883. The special occasion for the newspaper's enthusiasm was the announcement of the coming of a "hoop" factory, backed financially by unnamed Boston, Mass., investors.

The article in the *Progress* was not the only celebration of Bloomington's "boom" of the 1880s. Year end summaries by the *Progress* and the *Telephone* indicated that unprecedented building was in progress — \$90,000 worth in 1883 alone.

Of particular interest to Monroe County historians are the two newspapers' enumeration of new buildings with some specific locations, size and cost. The leg work for the *Progress*' summary was done by Bloomington building contractor Alex Robison.

Typical of the comments in the *Progress* was its view of one of Bloomington's main streets. "A few years ago East 3rd Street was a rough, ugly, rocky and clayey hill, with gullies, hollows and mudholes, and often impeded by an impassable stream (Spankers Branch)."



Looking back

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The *Telephone* was more restrained in its claims for the new look in Bloomington, but could not resist telling its readers, "... during the year now dead the city has entered upon a new life, shaken off, so to speak, whatever lethargy that may have previously encumbered her advance, and taken a stand with the more enterprising, thrifty, growing cities of the West."

The *Progress* gave its readers some work to do as public relations touters for Bloomington, "... to send the word to the hundreds who have moved away, of the go-aheaditive energy, enterprise and business pluck of our people, and of the rapid, steady, wonderful and solid growth of our town."

Part of the impetus for building, according to the *Telephone*, see **Factory, Back page**