

The roof fell in on pranksters' visit to newlyweds

"SHIVAREE: a noisy mock serenade to a newly married couple." Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 1977.

The incident started innocently enough. It was supposed to have been a shivaree, the traditional teasing of a bridegroom and wife by some of his friends.

What it turned out to be was a prank that got out of hand. The year was 1911, and the place was Bedford. An article about what happened there during the third week



Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

in August was reported by that city's newspaper, the *Mail*, and picked up by the *Bloomington Weekly Courier* of Aug. 25.

Perhaps the fact that the young

couple had kept their marriage a secret for a whole month gave the bridegroom's "friends" a special determination not to let the event pass without a celebration. In any case, the *Courier* explained that the "groom's friends gathered in great force at the home of a relative of the bride, where the young couple were domiciled, to receive them with all the festivities and honors that they (the friends) felt the occasion called for."

The people who surrounded the

house did not get any response when they called for the bridegroom to come to the door. The *Courier* and *Bedford Mail* related, "As the groom refused to come forth in response to the demonstrations of his old pals, but maintained a dignified seclusion, some of the more resourceful procured a ladder and mounted to the roof, where they cut the telephone wire to prevent interference by the police . . ."

At that point, what the "old pals" did could be called trespassing and

vandalism. Interpreters of the law tend to look differently at perpetrators of mischief who really mean no serious harm.

Unfortunately and incredibly, the "old pals'" enthusiasm outweighed their good judgment. The newspaper accounts continued, "... (the men) then tore off enough shingles to give access to the attic, whence they intended to descend to the interior of the house by means of the

see **Looking back**, page C3