

# Shot in the dark marks senior serenade of 1874

Spring fever — like the recent outbreak of measles on the Indiana University campus — was going around in the spring of 1874 in Bloomington.

At IU in those days it was the custom for seniors to be excused from the last month of classes before graduation. Commencement exercises consisted of student orations — some in Latin — and the seniors needed time to polish their speeches.

~~HAD SENIOR J.W. Jefferson~~ confined himself to that task. Bloomington's spring of 1874 would have been more uneventful. It seems that another custom for that last month was for the seniors to hire a wagon and make the rounds of the professors' homes to serenade them.

According to IU historian James A. Woodburn, the juniors liked to do some detective work and find out the unannounced date of the serenade. Having picked up

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Looking  
back

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that important piece of information in 1874, junior Nat U. Hill Sr. of Bloomington rented a wagon from James Blair, so the juniors could follow the seniors and heckle them.

As the senior wagon — laden with an organ, violinist and guitarist — chugged up the Second Street hill between Washington and Lincoln streets, Jefferson,

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