

# Memories of Bloomington in the 1830s

(Continued from page 1)

this morning, looking at and admiring your elegant public school building, I said, how many of you know that there was once Dodd's tannery." The *History of Lawrence and Monroe Counties, Indiana* confirms that the old tannery was also once a school building. "The vats had been filled up and the children walked over them and climbed the stairs to the schoolrooms." Passersby would call

the children "tan-rats," which they resented.

Wright remembered that in the fall of 1831 he "broke bark into the mill for three vats, receiving in return, uppers for a pair of shoes of the value of three bits . . . How the rest of the material was secured I do not remember, nor who made them; I only know that I had shoes that winter and among the first I ever wore I always rather blessed father Dodds,

the tan yard, the mill . . . and I am sure I prized those shoes."

ANOTHER of Wright's recollections was of "Granny" Sheets, who was the wife of Jacob, a farmer. The latter sometimes sold fruit from the farm, when it had not already been obtained by the boys "without money and without other trouble than a ride to his farm or other peril than his dogs and old flint lock gun!"

Granny Sheets furnished the boys

with cider, home-brewed beer and ginger bread. The latter, according to Wright, was sometimes called "Hoosier bait."

Another of Wright's memories was of churches without the nicety of choirs, but whose congregations made up for it by singing lustily, "blissfully unconscious of the omission of sharps and flats." The services were followed by plain Sunday dinners, cooked on Saturday.