

Plea from Muncie helps IU funding

"... the relationship between higher education and the total development and welfare of the state is a subtle and difficult one to comprehend. Many government leaders and informed citizens throughout the country have this understanding, but I doubt that the majority of the population has any comprehension of the relationship; yet year after year a substantial proportion of the tax dollar is spent for education at all levels including higher education."

Indiana University
Chancellor Herman B Wells

Indiana University had been founded by the legislature, which based its action on lofty words and a belief shared by leaders of all of the various states. That belief was (and still is) that the best government is one elected by people taught to ask questions — sometimes awkward questions.

In the wake of the visit of the members of the state legislature education committees, IU and Bloomington got support from another part of the state — Muncie. The editor of that city's newspaper, the *Times*, was George Washington Cromer, a recent graduate of IU (class of 1882). He made a point of coming to Bloomington on the occasion of the committees' visit and had some comments to make about Bloomington in general and the university in particular.

Wrote Cromer, "A State University is a necessary part of our Public School System, which, without the University would be imperfect. It is just as important



Looking back

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to have a University for those who desire a College education as it is to have High Schools for those who desire an education higher than the district school."

Cromer, whose article in the *Muncie Times* was re-printed in the *Bloomington Telephone*, went on to say that the university had always been strapped for money, that the lack of money was stifling its growth, at "the peculiar whims of the legislature."

Cromer suggested that ignorance on the part of the average citizen was due in part to the fact that the trustees of the university were appointed, rather than elected by the people. He commented, "... if the regents were elected by the people every time an election would come round the University would be brought prominently before the people ... They have never heard of it and Bloomington, the greatest seat of learning in the State." Furthermore, wrote the *Times* editor, the university didn't advertise enough.

There is a glimpse of Bloomington in Cromer's article. He called the city a great center of Grecian culture and classic learning and continued, "The
see Funding. Back page