

Chiming in with reasons for ringing

Bloomingtonians who are near the Indiana University campus at 5 o'clock in the afternoon are used to hearing a concert of the bells atop the Student Building. But one Thursday morning in January 1908, the bells abruptly began pealing out songs that caused the phone at the *Evening World* office to "ring off the hook."

Apart from the fact that the reporters didn't have the faintest idea why Bloomington was being treated to an impromptu concert, the occasion did provide the editor to have a little fun at the expense of an interesting collection of local people.

It was, to say the least, literary entertainment, passing as a bona fide news story, complete with an innocent-enough headline. The preposterous basis of the item was the telephoners' guesses about the reason for the concert.

According to the *World*, Police Chief Ed Johns thought the chimes proclaimed the capture of "the



Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

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holdup man." On the contrary, hypothesized IU Professor U.M. Smith, the bells signaled that "the governor had ordered a regiment of the state militia here to help out in the parade on Founders Day."

One of the deans had another idea. He was sure it mean the Law School was going to get to move into Maxwell Hall. John E. Edmondson, who clerked in the IU registrar's office, was sure the chimes were ringing "in honor of the fact that the university will have 2,000 students this year."

Nor was the speculation reported in the *World* limited to the "gown" sector of the community. According to the newspaper, S.E. Carmichael,

the telephone-owners' champion in the recent fight with the Home Telephone Company, had quite decided that the chimes ringing marked the City Council's granting of a franchise for an interurban transportation company to link Bloomington with Indianapolis.

It is likely that having reached that point in the article, the readers would have realized that they were being had. By the time they reached the "bachelor" item, they are probably smiling. It purported that the ringing announced that "the following good-looking bachelors were going to get married: Charles S. Small, John Enhi, Walter Collins, Charles Rawles, William A. Rice, Bruce Moore, Carl Breeden, Thomas Karsell and Morris Demaree."

There was also the suggestion that the chimes' ringing meant that "at last one honest Republican had been found." Or, the thought that

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