

Court cases brew for and against construction workers on railroad

"Contractor Hunt is advertising for men and teams. He will pay \$4 per day for teams and \$1.75 per day for men," reported the *Bloomington Telephone* in October 1905. Within the context of supply and demand, one may assume that during the building of the Indianapolis Southern Railroad (later the Illinois Central), teams of horses, were harder to come by than construction workers.

Cheap as those wages are by our standards, the investors in the railroad had seriously miscalculated how much it cost to build one, and were undercapitalized. Cases against the company began cropping up in the Monroe Circuit Court and presumably in other counties as well. There were, for example, three reported in the June 6, 1905, edition of the *Bloomington Weekly Courier*. They were Grant Cox against the Indianapolis Southern, damages; Joseph Campbell, receiver of Hunt Bros., breach of contract, and John Bundy, breach of contract, also.



Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

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Nor were the lawsuits against the Indianapolis Southern the only cases related to the railroad construction that had been so much heralded by Bloomington businessmen. There was bad blood among some of the foreign laborers, and some others evidently didn't take the Indiana statutes seriously enough. There was the case of Giuseppe Damiano, who was accused of murdering Rocco Ferrar on the Ellettsville Road in the summer of 1905, or perhaps it was the other way around. On Oct. 17, 1905, the *Courier* reported that in a gallant effort to help one of their own, the Italian work gangs had raised \$500 as a defense fund for Ferrar.

but the Nov. 17 edition said Sheriff Hough escorted Giuseppe Damiano to Jeffersonville Reformatory to serve a 2- to 14-year sentence for the murder of Ferrar.

Even with the money in hand, the Italians were cautious and did a considerable amount of shopping around. "The Italians have been to see every lawyer in town, but as yet they have not decided who they will employ to save one of their fellow countrymen. Ferrar (?) is still in jail and does not seem at all worried over the deed, or his chances for freedom."

One of the Italian laborers evidently chose not to live in the tent city work camp, but had, other troubles besides a board bill. Under the sign-of-the-times headline, "FUGITIVE CAUGHT Marshal Johns Has Dago Stopped at Lafayette," the *Courier* reported that Giuseppe Masciolo, an Italian laborer, was taken from the northbound Monon train at Lafayette, because of some unresolved matters in Bloomington. **see Looking back, Back page**