

New year in '14 described

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In the Jan. 9, 1914, issue of the *Star*, Feltus described Bloomington's New Year's Eve:

"THE TOWN CLOCK AND university chimes sounded midnight together. At the Monon yards an engineer tied down the whistle of his engine, smiled, lit his pipe, and let 'er blow; four boys stole into the belfry of the Christian Church, pulled the bell rope a few times, got scared and fled; a man in South Park stepped out on his front porch, fired both barrels of a shotgun and yelled 'Whoopee!' — and the year 1914 was welcomed in Bloomington.

"In years gone by the new years was greeted by the ringing of nearly every church bell in town, but the erection of many modern churches in the city has marked the passing of church bells, and only about three now remain.

"And all the factory whistles used to blow, and an anvil would be fired in the court house yard. There was probably as little enthusiasm in Bloomington over New Years as in any town in the state."

STILL, OBSERVED FELTUS, Bloomington was going to take a long step toward a "bigger and better city." His annual verse — entitled "New Years Reflections" — was published the following Dec. 27.

His hopes for the revamped police force apparently weren't realized, since he wrote, wistfully, "We have double of trouble and keep in a bubble, with a constant case of the blues; our police get a hunch, pull 'tigers' (speakeasies) in a bunch for dealing out deadly old booze."

No progress was made on solving Bloomington's water problems, either. "Our poor waterworks goes by fits and jerks, and people are continually fussing, while each 'city dad' is always sad as he comes in for a general cussing."

BUT UPPERMOST IN Feltus's mind as he sat down to write his New Year's jingle at the end of 1914 was another apparent attempt or threat to move Indiana University to Indianapolis. "There's the professors wise, the same old guys who run the factory of knowledge; up the old cry bobs that they will take away their jobs by straightway killing of the college. To move it you know the process would be slow, and who would want it most? If Indianapolis would take it and guarantee to stake it, we might send it along parcel post."

After pledging loyalty to IU — "To old IU we are loyal and true, in our duty we will at no time flinch; it was here she was born, and away cannot be moved" — Feltus's annual doggerel dragged to a merciful close . . . for another year.