

Newspaper exaggerated 1914 visit by revelers

Looking back, from page A1

it was certainly blown out of proportion. Commented the *Star*, "The story was highly colored and published in an Indianapolis paper under the flaming headlines of 'Dragged From Bed and Whipped by Whitecaps.'"

According to the Indianapolis newspaper account, the perpetrators were employees of the Showers factory in Bloomington. Countered the *Star*, "The Showers workmen are, as a general rule, an industrious class and have no time to go prowling over town at midnight for a spree. Such a charge is a gross injustice to them and to the Showers Company."

The reporting of the event by the Indianapolis paper may have been part of a deliberate campaign to discredit Bloomington in general and further the cause of moving the state university to Indianapolis. That is a notion that turns up every so often like the proverbial bad penny.

Whatever the capital city newspaper's motive, it gave the editor of the *Star* an excellent opportunity to explain Monroe County's point of view. "These exaggerated reports

do a great injustice to the town, and are seized upon by newspapers as evidence that the whitecap spirit still prevails in Monroe County. The fact is, there has not been a case of whitecapping in Monroe County since the Snoddy affair, and

two men are now serving terms in the penitentiary for that offense."

The *Star* concluded, righteously. "There was no excuse whatever for reporting the crowd of young men out the other night as whitecaps. Whitecaps don't take a brass band with them when they go out for a raid."

Actually, the *Star* did not dwell any further upon the misinformation spread about by the members of the Indianapolis journalism fraternity. The local newspaper had other causes to publicize.

For example, the *Star* was busy deploring the fact that the ground floor of the Courthouse constantly smelled of whiskey. "Empty bottles are found daily in the men's apartments, as well as elsewhere about the building. It is also said that occasionally there is a dice game going on there. On the same floor is a rest room for women, but the corridors are unfit for women to pass through to reach the room."