

# Bloodhounds lead howling Ellettsville mob on manhunt

At the end of August in 1915, a Civil War veteran living near Ellettsville was badly beaten by a pair of would-be robbers. Perhaps the most interesting part of the case was the use of bloodhounds in attempting to track the criminals.

The battered veteran was Riley Williams. He said his attackers were two young brothers who lived near his home northeast of Ellettsville. The Bloomington *Weekly Star* reported, "No crime in recent years has made the little town of Ellettsville more indignant, and crowds quickly formed Monday to help the



## Looking back

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officers search ... but without result."

A week later, help was on the way in the person of a man called Detective Bob Owens of Bedford. Keeping its readers abreast of the continuing story, the *Star* related,

"The little town of Ellettsville had the most exciting time in many years last week, when everyone locked their doors and went on a man-hunt with Detective Bob Owens and his bloodhounds."

The Bedford man was a "modern" investigator by 1915 standards. He arrived in Bloomington in his Ford and stopped long enough to pick up a *Star* reporter, who apparently shared the back seat with "two yelping bloodhounds."

"Fording to Ellettsville" was a new expression the reporter used,

one that would have delighted the heart of a Ford Motor Company advertising executive, if they had had one in 1915. He described their reception in the little town. "As we came into Ellettsville the road was lined with people most of whom followed the auto yelling. The bloodhounds are coming."

The account continued. "In the main street all the town was out, and they surged around the auto to welcome the great detective and his famous dogs. People in autos, others on foot and horseback, armed with revolvers and clubs quickly

gathered, and in 10 minutes Bob Owens was leading a howling mob that resembled a scene in the French Revolution."

Their first objective was to go to the scene of the crime so the dogs could pick up the scent of the attackers. According to the reporter, although the two miles of road to Williams' farm was rough and steep in places, those of the "posse" on foot were able to keep up with the others.

Foremost among the trackers was Ellettsville's marshal, whom

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