

# Bloomington known for its hobos in 1914

"There is a big cross mark on the gates of Bloomington, and it is in the hobo hieroglyph that means 'Enter and get a soft bed.'" *Bloomington Sunday Star*, March 15, 1914.

Bloomington was the center of the population of the United States in 1914, and after reading an article on the front page of the *Sunday Star* in 1914, one would think that the city was the hobo capital as well.

The newspaper suggested that the word "soft touch" had made the rounds on the transient grapevine. "The city is becoming known far and wide among tramps and they are passing the word along to their brothers of the open road that a night's lodging and breakfast may be had in Bloomington for the asking."



## Looking back

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A *Star* reporter may have done some research about Bloomington's temporary visitors, because the article has some statistical substance to it. Commented the newspaper, "During the last few weeks nearly half of the states of the Union have been represented in the county jail, and still they come. Snaggy-haired bums, wandering peddlers and hobos of every description stalk into police headquarters nearly every night and ask to be put in jail until

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