

Missing pike piques Brown Countians of 1903

In the 1856 *Atlas of Monroe County* there are maps for each township at that time. On the northern boundary of Perry Township and along the southern one for Bloomington Township is printed "Columbus Road."

The atlas would give the impression that enough people were traveling between Bloomington and Columbus to warrant a respectable road. There is reason to believe that some 47 years later, part of the "Columbus Road," at least, amounted to little more than a meandering cow path.

According to a front page article in the May 15, 1903, edition of the *Bloomington Telephone*, there were those in Brown County who wanted to shop in Bloomington but weren't



Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

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pleased about what they had to do to get here. The headline said, **BROWN COUNTY INDIGNANT - Citizens Threaten to Boycott Bloomington.**

The *Telephone's* informant was "A well-known citizen of Bloomington who has been spending several days in Brown County." The temperature of the natives to the east of us was, apparently, at the "incensed" level.

At the heart of their wrath was

the refusal of the (Monroe) County commissioners to grant a petition for the building of 2 1/2 miles of pike road at the east end of the Stephens Pike to connect with the Columbus Pike at the Brown County line.

How could the Chamber of Commerce (or its forerunner, the Boosters' Club) have let the oversight happen? Needing moral support for the cause, some 66 citizens of the county had signed a petition for the road improvements. They had also put in an appearance at the county commissioners' meeting.

Related the *Telephone*, "There was some opposition in Salt Creek Township to the movement and a counter petition was filed removing a number of names from the original petition. This left the county commissioners with nothing to do

but reject the original petition."

Although the commissioners' action could be interpreted as "Who needs Brown County shoppers?" that probably wasn't the case. Two of the commissioners were James W. Davis and J.W. Miller, and there is no reason to believe that they didn't entertain the idea of Brown Countians coming for the day and leaving some money behind.

Meanwhile, that well-known citizen of Bloomington reported "It is said that there are at least 100 farmers and citizens of Brown County who would like to come here to do their trading, but do not do so on account of the previous bad conditions of the road."

Their complaint was that although they had to go some five or

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