

# Students flexed political muscles against lawyer

Readers of the Bloomington Telephone on May 8, 1896, opened their newspaper to discover what long memories some of the town's temporary citizens had. Indiana University students who had a grudge against a local attorney had decided to flex their political muscles and get even for an event that took place in January of 1895.

The object of all the attention was Captain Theodore Loudon, twice an IU graduate and a local attorney. He had received one degree in history in 1889 and another in law in 1891.

The students' tactic was the cir-



## Looking back

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culating of a petition that said the lawyer was not qualified for the office of Indiana Supreme Court reporter, a position to which he aspired. Or, rather, he aspired to the nomination as a candidate for the post.

What turned the students against

the promising Bloomington attorney? It was a confrontation that happened on Founders Day, Jan. 25, 1895.

IU historian James A. Woodburn describes the incident as one of confrontation between students who wanted the university moved to Indianapolis and Company H of the 1st Regiment of the Indiana National Guard. The soldiers were on hand to escort then Gov. Claude Matthews at Founders Day festivities, as well as the dedication of Kirkwood Hall.

According to Woodburn, "There

was an unpleasant occurrence in connection with these dedicatory exercises. *The Student* attributed this to the disgraceful action of Company H. This company was supposed to act in the capacity of a governor's guard and as a guard of honor. There was, however, no real reason for their presence. . . . A number of students were wearing Indianapolis badges, favoring the removal of the university. Members of the company, by order of their captain and at the instigation of some citizens, tore the badges from the clothes of the students, of both men and women. Some men who

resisted were struck in the face; others were knocked down and even bayonets were drawn on them."

Louden was not entirely passive during the scuffling, which happened, oddly enough, in front of the chapel on the old campus. The *Telephone* of May 8, 1896, said that after the incident, "The offended students first went to Gov. Matthews, but he laughed them out of court. . . ."

When Loudon sought the nomination for reporter of the Supreme Court, the students saw their op-

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