

# Many residents object to paving Kirkwood

Voters don't always approve of the decisions made by the people they elect to office. Kirkwood Avenue residents used their prerogative to vent their disapproval of the city council.

The issue was the paving of the street, the council got around to doing something about Kirkwood in the spring of 1912. Females sometimes rumbled about muddy skirt hems and teetering on whatever passed for stepping stones during the rainy seasons.

Did the council members suspect that paving Kirkwood was not as popular as they wished? There is a hint in the *Bloomington Evening World* article of April 17, 1912. "East Kirkwood Avenue was ordered paved by the city council last night, and Tuesday night May 7, the next meeting night, was fixed as the time to hear remonstrances."

Perhaps the readers of the *Evening World*



## LOOKING BACK

By Rose McIlveen

did not suspect that the Kirkwood paving was the least bit controversial. After all, commented the newspaper, "The preliminary resolution ordering the improvement was adopted following several weeks of discussion with the property owners."

At the April 16 meeting council members moved on with the agenda. There were other city problems that needed their attention — faulty sidewalks in various locations, extension of water mains on East Second and South Walnut, the appointment of Antoine Lettelier as street commissioner and poor drainage in a

couple of locations. Dr. C.E. Carpenter didn't want an alley constructed behind his barn.

Kirkwood Avenue citizens didn't even wait for the May 7 remonstrance meeting. On April 26 the *Evening World* reported that those residents of the street who had been consulted were not as amenable as the council thought they would be.

Leaders of the opposition were "the Rev." Amzi Atwater and William P. Bollenbacher. They had been out on the street, knocking on doors and rallying opposition.

Their object was to get at least 80 percent of the resident property owners. They claimed that only three declined to sign the remonstrance.

The names of the opposition included some people who were not without influence in the Bloomington community. Atwater had been vice president of Indiana University

from 1888 until 1891. The Bollenbacher family had been in business in town since at least the 1860s.

The *Evening World* printed the names of the other signers to date. There was the board of the Kirkwood Avenue Christian Church, which included two attorneys, newspaperman Walter Bradfute and Judge Enoch G. Hogate, dean of the IU Law School.

Despite the list of prominent opponents, there was a possibility that all was not lost as far as the city council was concerned.

The *Evening World* explained, "They (those who signed the remonstrance) also assert that they do not oppose the paving of the street but are against the present plans adopted by the council."

Obviously, in the end the council won the battle of wills.

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