

Macadamizing in 1880s improved city streets

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Street — in fact, the entire length of Sixth Street.”

In case Bloomingtonians weren't grateful for the bit of progress begrudged them by the city fathers, the *Progress* gave its readers a reminder of what it used to be like before macadamizing. “A few years ago East Third Street was a rough, ugly, rocky and clay hill, with gullies, hollows and mudholes, and often impeded by an impassable stream.” (That stream would have been Spanker's Branch, which meandered across town on its way to meet Clear Creek.)

But the macadamizing of Third Street had truly transformed it. Boasted the *Progress*, “Now there is hardly a prettier street in this town, or any other, an arched, rock culvert, that will be there when the everlasting hills give way, takes care of the water in the road; new houses line the street, and property holders, at whose expense, mainly, this has been done, can command good prices for their property.”

The property owners along

Sixth Street benefited as well, “opened at the west in a way that an old resident would not recognize it, thus bringing into the market new building lots, and giving the town a new direction in which to grow.” Macadamizing of other streets — Walnut, Fifth and Fourth — had been hastened somewhat by the move of the university from the Seminary Square area property to Dunn's Woods. The *Progress* also revealed the cost of Bloomington's street improvements: “In these improvements — guttering, grading and all, at \$480 per square, it is safe to say that not less than \$37,800 has been expended.”

The *Progress* gave little space to another much-needed improvement — one that would have been much appreciated by the female population. Under a separate heading called “SIDE-WALKS,” “True, we are still afflicted in many places, with a rough, undressed flagging, unfit for a walk; but we are consoled to think that probably these walks are designed of Providence to test and develop in our people a Christian patience . . .”