

Metropolitan police force established for city in January 1914

The question of whether Bloomington should take a step forward by having a "metropolitan police force" was evidently not one of those matters settled in a "smoke-filled" back room somewhere in City Hall. Much to the amusement of local newspapers, the argument between the council and Mayor John Harris on the issue was right out front in open council meeting.

The establishment of a metropolitan police force was an idea that Harris thought was overdue. The hitch was that the state statute stipulated only Indiana communities with a population of 10,000 inhabitants or more were legally entitled to the force.

Whether the objection of the council was money or who controlled the force, it was the Bloomington *Star* that displayed some tongue-in-cheek amusement about the squabbling. On May 16, 1912, in a column called "Town Talk," the editor of the newspaper told its readers, "In the meantime the general public is disgusted with this continual strife and contention between the guardians of our peace and welfare. But we are going to



Looking back

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12-12-1987

boost the town, all the same."

To put a roadblock in the plans of Harris, the council filed an injunction, which was granted on May 22. At issue was the actual population of Bloomington and whether the Indiana University students could be counted. Commented the *Star*, "It is claimed that no students are counted in the late census, but according to a decision of a court, in the north part of the state, they should be counted, as the census is taken on account of police protection, and students are entitled to such protection."

It was the *Star* that pointed out to Bloomingtonians that the cost of the law suit would cost them, no matter which way it went. It was merely a matter of which

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