

# Lost boy and 'lost' girl make work for the police

"When constabulary duty's to be done,  
A policeman's lot is not a happy one."

— W.S. Gilbert

Perhaps the main advantage of being a police officer is the variety of the work-day — that is, no two days are exactly alike; and Feb. 28, 1914, and April 15, 1915, were certainly not humdrum days in the lives of Bloomington law officials.

The 1914 event was triggered by a (mercifully nameless) Indiana University student. He booked a room at a local hotel for his "sister," who was supposed to arrive in Bloomington from out of town.

The student supplied the information that she would get to town too late for supper. No problem with that, according to the man on the desk.

The student's story broke down when the "sister" arrived at the hotel. Perhaps she giggled nervously.

The *Bloomington Telephone* of March 3, 1914, gave another explanation of what went wrong with the booking. "The youth hadn't



## LOOKING BACK

By Rose McIlveen

been playing the man-about-town long enough to get away with it, and the girl looked more like chicken than sister."

The clerk apparently gave the young people a key to their room and then called the police. The result was inevitable. "An 18-year-old Indiana student and a Bloomington girl were taken from a local hotel Saturday night about 9 o'clock and marched through the square to police headquarters, the girl crying and protesting and the boy endeavoring to get the police to turn them loose."

The officers may have been snickering behind the prisoners' backs, but they had to do their "constabulary duty," as the Gilbert and Sullivan opera librettist wrote.

Imagine the humiliation of being dragged across the square! Nevertheless, the young

people were held at the jail for a period of time and then let go. The *Telephone* noted that the boy later sent the police officer a box of candy.

Then there was the case of a local "all points bulletin" out for Jack Barrow on April 15, 1915. The 3-year-old was missing.

According to the *Bloomington Weekly Courier* of April 16, 1915, Jack's father, H.R. Barrow, an undertaker, had left his office to drop into a harness store. Little Jack saw his opportunity to widen his horizons, so to speak, by leaving the undertaking office to explore Bloomington.

It must be said that the child was not entirely thoughtless. When Barrow realized that Jack was missing, he learned from the barber shop that the boy had stopped there "to leave word for 'Daddy' that he was off."

Off to where was the problem. Jack's parents started the search on their own, but after three hours had passed, they called the police and fire departments. There wouldn't have been all that many officers on duty in those days, but whoever they were, they no doubt fanned out to look for the little boy.

Finally, at 6:30 p.m., a woman who lived on Morton and 11th streets provided the essential information for Jack's recovery to his family. She called the Barrow residence to report that the boy was playing with some other youngsters in the Showers (factory) lumber yard.

By this time it was dark, but Jack did not seem to be the slightest bit uncomfortable when his father arrived to retrieve him.

He cheerfully told his father. "A boy asked me if I wanted some supper, and I said, No. I have been wading in the dusty road and have had a dood (sic) time."

Little Jack probably already had a "rap sheet" at the police station. The newspaper drolly concluded its account of the boy's latest exploit.

"Last summer, Jack made several excursions to different parts of the city without divulging his plans to his parents in advance, all of which caused them no small amount of uneasiness, although Jack was returned safely each time."

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