

The verdict

Jury finds 'Mother' guilty after raid on boarding house

Early in March of 1909, crusading Monroe County Deputy Prosecutor William Loudon engineered a raid on a Morton Street boarding house.

CURIOSLY, there is nothing in the *Telephone's* newspaper account of the raid to indicate that Loudon had a search warrant. On the contrary, the article, which appeared in the March 2 edition, stated in part, "Captain Loudon planned the raid after several investigations had failed to bring forth any tangible evidence of violations of the liquor law, which are common talk on the street."

Due to a local option law and subsequent referendum in the county, selling whiskey by the drink was illegal here. The loophole was that individuals could buy a quart of whiskey at any drug store, after signing a statement that it was needed for medicinal purposes. Another method of bypassing the law was by ordering

Looking back

6-1-1980
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alcoholic beverages in quantity shipped by rail or wagon from a source in a "wet" county.

ON THE NIGHT of the raid on "Mother's" boarding house, Loudon et al confiscated as evidence beer and whiskey. On the way to the jail one bottle of the latter was dropped and broken.

It may be recalled that "Mother" promptly produced an impressive roll of bills and posted bail for herself and five friends to the tune of \$450, which the middle-aged landlady just happened to have on her at the time.

By the following morning (Sunday), of the 15 boarders and "guests" arrested, all but two — "one man and one girl" — were out on bond.

"Mother" coolly left town for a much-needed vacation, but had returned by her trial date, April 2. She stated "... she had no intention of evading her bond."

In the courtroom she faced an array of spectators which included local ministers and the members of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. After many challenges by her defense attorneys, the jury selected was composed of: Robert Marshall, John Whisenand, Joseph Woodward, Madison Williams, Milton Robinson, Thompson Fowler, Mort Whitaker, Ed Fletcher, Henry Springer, Henry Sparks, and Crude Spencer.

"MOTHER'S" attorneys presented no testimony for the defense, depending upon "... evidently a forlorn hope ... that after proper expostula-

tion some chivalrous man on the jury might hang the jury, but the jurors looked at the cold facts in the case and speedily reached a verdict of guilty."

Was "Mother" upset by justice meted out by Judge James B. Wilson — a \$250 fine and 60 days in jail? Not at all. According to the *Telephone*, as she "walked down the street to the 'Hotel de Raliff,' she waved her pocketbook and laughed as she passed some friends."

Admittedly the accommodations in the Monroe County jail did not equal those of the Orchard House or the National Hotel, but the *Telephone* philosophized that "Mother's" enterprising spirit was undaunted. "Evidently she took an optimistic view of her sixty days vacation, thinking probably that with some \$1,300 salted down in the bank and several hundred more scattered around as bond money, she could afford a rest."