

Good Citizens League revolts against saloon, club

"Second ward citizens and residents of Walnut Street in particular were given an unexpected surprise today in the news that a saloon is to be opened for their convenience within the next week unless it is defeated by a remonstrance by Friday midnight." Bloomington Telephone, Aug. 31, 1906.

What with private drinking clubs and unpublicized application for liquor licenses, the Good Citizens' League had its hands full in the fall of 1906. The *Telephone* reported, "It seems that the people generally were to be taken by surprise and know nothing of the effort until after it was too late to file a remonstrance."

Actually, there was a law that required prospective bar owners to advertise their pending application. Arthur Parks, the applicant, had complied with the letter of the law by notifying the Indianapolis *Star*. Only a few people in Bloomington subscribed to it.

Leaders of the Good Citizens' League called a hasty meeting at the Baptist Church, and members started fanning out in the Second Ward with petitions. By Sept. 9, the newspaper gave its readers an ink-



Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

ling of how the members were doing in their house-to-house canvassing.

Strategists in the league had more than enough signatures in mind, and they certainly succeeded. On page four, the *Telephone* announced, "By this time the names on the remonstrance against the Walnut Street saloon will number no less than three hundred as against 217 that are necessary."

The Good Citizens' League gathered together to gloat and plan their last-minute strategy. Meanwhile, the folks who thought it was all right to make a living by selling alcoholic beverages were not willing to give up.

A *Telephone* reporter had unearthed

what came next. "The report that is given out that a 'club' house is to be opened in the same room if the license is refused is also causing much indignation and is to receive attention, and in this connection it is said that the case already filed against those fakes are also to be prosecuted to the limit."

The league's reaction to the rumor was to discuss the possibility of paying the fees of several lawyers who would work with the Monroe County prosecutor in processing the case against the "club" owners. Meanwhile, the league leaders felt they had plenty of public support. "An officer of the League said to the Daily this morning that he never knew the time when the sentiment was so strong against law violations, and he believes that a hundred majority against license could be secured by another canvas in the ward."

Pursuing the story, the newspaper reported that the prospective saloon owner's lawyer was ready to call it quits on the application. As for the private clubs, the *Telephone* reporter could not help trying to be funny. "The trial of the 'club' house sales is set for Thursday, and it is understood that

the officers have strongly fortified themselves with evidence..."

The newspaper patted itself on the back for its reporting of the liquor license battle. Crowded the *Telephone*, "President Fulwider of the Monroe County State Bank: 'I want especially to commend the policy of the *Telephone* in the present contest as to whether the rights of the people are to be respected. ... The *Telephone* is exactly right.'"

Well, the anti-saloon and anti-private club people prevailed in those cases, at least. On Sept. 11, the newspaper told its readers that it was all over. As the *Telephone* put it, "The club house proposition has been solved by Prosecutor Fletcher and Mayor Malott, and unless the managers are looking for more trouble, literary exercises will hereafter be suspended."

The agreement was that if the clubs were closed there would be no prosecution of the owners. Apparently the club idea had caught on elsewhere. The newspaper indicated that the Owen County prosecutor had put one out of business there, too.

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