

# Marshal not convicted after hearings

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had passed between them.

Meanwhile, the *Telephone* informed its readers that, "... a leading attorney of the bar, who is in no way connected with the grand jury, stated in open court, that the proceedings of the grand jury were notoriously public. He even went so far as to say that he had heard who had written certain indictments and that one was in the typewriter."

The *Telephone* editor denied that there was any conflict of interest between his official position as jury commissioner — in effect an officer of the court — and his publication of the secrets of grand jury proceedings.

And what of the case against Owens? On April 2 the habitués of Courthouse proceedings were all eagerly assembled to hear the open-

ing of the case. Related the *Telephone*, "... aside from a spicy discussion by the attorneys when the matter came up at motion hour, all (habitués) were doomed to disappointment."

Owens' case regarding being drunk on duty was postponed until May 18. On May 10 his attorneys filed a plea in abatement, which would have, in effect, dismissed the charges. The reasons given for the plea were that the grand jury had one too many members, that the extra member was a law partner of the defense attorney, that undue influence was exerted on the jury and that its proceedings were common knowledge.

The charge of Owens' carrying a concealed weapon and threatening to shoot Theodore Treadway were scheduled for trial, but several of the "squires" who might have heard the case were suddenly un-

available. The weapons case eventually dissolved in a hung jury situation.

Judge Miers sent Owens' public intoxication case to Martinsville. The *Telephone* theorized, "The attorneys gave no reason for asking the change, but it is intimated on the outside that they thought that an effort was to be made in Bedford to 'pack' the jury."

Owens was acquitted of the bribery charges in December 1895. The marshal's attorney had produced testimony to prove that the payments were because of a debt owed Owens.

Whatever Owens' shortcomings as a public official may have been, the chain of court reaction set off by the Law and Order League had generated more heat than light in regard to vice in Bloomington. The only beneficiaries were court habitués, who may have been entertained for a time by the testimony.