

Liquor early 1900s controversy

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had lost about \$4,500 in annual revenue from the sale of liquor licenses and "a whole menagerie of blind tigers" (speakeasies or individual bootleggers) were operating all over town.

THE EDITOR of the *Star* went so far as to quote a blind tiger operator, who said, "If Bloomington will vote dry for two years more, I will have enough to retire from business and promise to quit the town."

Referring to another dry rationale that Bloomington would be safer and the police department budget reduced, the *Star* reported smugly that, on the contrary, it had been necessary to hire an extra policeman to help chase the drunks and bootleggers. Where, wailed the editor, were the good old days when the city had a dozen saloons and all of the drunks could be found there, instead of all over town?

The *Star* printed a tongue-in-cheek arti-

cle about the case of a blind tiger arrested on a series of charges and some of his stock confiscated as evidence. In such cases it had been customary for the prosecutor to allow the jury sips from the bottles to verify the alcoholic contents. But in the present case, especially since the alcohol would be needed for the subsequent charges against the defendant, the prosecutor risked not passing the bottles around. After getting a conviction on the first charge, the prosecutor — three days later — resumed his case against the defendant. Unfortunately, the evidence had disappeared from the mayor's office, where it had been put for safekeeping.

On June 6, 1911, the *Star* triumphantly reported that in the referendum the county had gone wet by 22 votes (out of 2,318 cast) and added, "There is only one dry town in the state of Indiana today that exceeds Bloomington in population — Crawfordsville."