

# Was city marshal paid to overlook gambling?

Oscar Strother, who kept a saloon "on the corner below Faris Bros.," was the first of the local citizens to testify in the hearing set up by the Law and Order League in January 1895.

The businessman's testimony may have left the league members and professional court watchers scratching their heads.

According to the *Bloomington Telephone*, Strother related that before Christmas, City Marshal George Owens demanded \$25. Strother continued, "... told him I did not have it; this made him mad and he came in my saloon stating that he was going to break me. Monday he had a man arrested; I went his bond. Owens always got his part of the 'take-off.' If we took in \$15, Owens got one-third of the amount. All the money from the 'take-off' was divided into three



## Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

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parts, the marshal getting one part, me one part and someone else the other part. Owens often got more than his part. Owens got about \$50 a month from us."

But Strother also said he never paid Owens money for the privilege of violating any liquor law. Strother added, "(I) paid him money two weeks ago; gave him \$5 in my saloon. I paid one half on a suit of clothes at Axtell Bros. I did not owe him anything. Have paid him money for about two years."

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