

Hopes for oil boom didn't materialize

Second of two parts

Having oil in the water of wells in Monroe County in the 1890s was not considered a nuisance. Quite the contrary.

Some of Indiana's industrial cities suddenly blossomed because of the discovery of natural gas. The state was just beginning to flex its business muscles — economic efforts that would in time dispel the notion that Indiana was merely an agricultural state.

It was no wonder then, that the discovery of oil in a couple of wells near the Courthouse Square generated a lot of excitement, especially in the business sector. Some of the leaders were well aware of the windfalls that



Looking back

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natural gas had brought to Muncie, Fort Wayne and Anderson.

In 1895, the Bloomington *Telephone* was still speculating about the oil found in local wells. Under a headline, "WHERE FROM? Still Investigating the Coal Oil Mystery," the newspaper related, "There is still coal oil talk. One theory was that the oil that

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