

Law student's liquor stash confiscated in 1919

In late June of 1919, members of the Women's Christian Temperance Union assembled at the residence of the LaRue family at 610 N. Lincoln St., in Bloomington to celebrate the imminent national ban on liquor.

Living nearby on 10th Street was an Indiana University law student who went around with a smug grin on his face and an ambitious business enterprise under way.

What did they have in common besides the neighborhood? It was liquor — the WCTU lobbying against the production, sales and consumption of the beverage and the student promoting the drinking of it. Their working at cross purposes came to light on or about June 26, when a telephone conversation was accidentally overheard in a Bloomington store.

According to the *Weekly Star*, a customer dialed an unlisted num-



Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

ber — 1486 — and told the party at the other end of the line, "Everything's all right now. Bring over a quart."

It is not entirely clear who tipped off the local police, but they certainly had the authority to ask the phone company who was paying for that particular telephone.

Dropping by the location, they discovered the student subscriber, Fay Whitfield Cullins, had an unusual hobby. He collected quarts of whisky — more than 500, in fact.

Not to be outdone by the *Star*, a reporter on the staff of the *Bloomington Telephone* did a little investigating of his own. (Both newspapers misspelled Cullins' name as "Cullen," and the *Star* gave him an address — 110 E. 10th St., — that didn't exist.) Nevertheless, he turned out to be a temporary resident who came from Greentown in Howard County and was enrolled in the IU Law School.

The *Indiana University Bulletin* for 1919 reveals that Cullins had received a bachelor's degree from the Indiana State Normal School at Terre Haute in 1908. On June 30, the *Telephone* contributed some additional information, "It is reported that Cullen's people are wealthy, and he has over \$20,000 in Liberty bonds."

Since the recent IU commencement, local authorities had been on the lookout for the person or per-

sons who had obligingly supplied students with liquor that had such catchy names as "Old Prentice," "Old Tom" and "Haymer's." Coincidentally, some of the bottles of whisky confiscated from the would-be lawyer dealer bore the same labels.

In a column titled "Town Talk," the *Star* gave its readers more details of Cullins' past. "The story of how Cullen got into the illicit liquor business is interesting. He attended the State Normal College at Terre Haute, and, as a young man who was fond of drink, he found in that dry town a place where he could readily buy booze."

But, upon moving to Bloomington, the law student discovered that what liquor was available here was "not fit to drink." Continued the *Star*, "... he concluded to satisfy

his appetite from his own source of supply in Terre Haute. He first got it in small quantities for his personal use, but finally some persistent and thirsty friends persuaded him to procure a few bottles for them."

A single whisky run from Terre Haute (in his Ford car) was said to have been 16 cases. The mystery of where he was able to keep more than 500 bottles of whisky was partially explained by the *Star*.

"There (at his rooming place) he kept his stock under lock and key. Some say he told them that he kept books in this locked room. Quite a library! The police found a 'gentlemanly gallon' in his living room when they made the raid, and Cullen made a complete surrender by delivering the key to the 'library.'"

Next week: The dilemma of disposal.