

In 1910, Judge declares Jackson County dry

BY SAM BOYCE, JR. INDEPENDENT STAFF WRITER 9/22/00

Editor's Note: *The following is the tenth in a series of articles which celebrate the upcoming 100th anniversary of the Newport Daily Independent.*

Usually when researching old microfilmed stories contained in the archives of the Newport Daily Independent's located at the W.A. Billingsley Memorial Library, I find myself allowing quite a bit of time in reading through the newsprint which I intend to use in my upcoming article.

My endeavors in this regard are generally concluded when I come across an article which I feel will be of local interest to the general public and also pay homage to Jackson County's historical past.

Yesterday however, my explorations came to an end almost before I began when my attention was struck by the first article I had begun to survey. It was a story published by the Independent on Saturday, Jan. 1, 1910 which announced the closure of all saloons in Jackson County. After viewing such a headline, there was no need to search any further for I had my story.

This announcement did not come as any surprise to me however since, in reading through the 1909 archives last week, I came across several stories which forecast County Judge H.S. Simmons' desire to make Jackson County dry.

The national temperance movement, headed by firebrands such as Carey Nation, had been hard at work in securing passage of the prohibition act by constitutional means ever since the turn of the century. Stories regarding their efforts appeared in the Independent, as well as many other papers, on a regular basis.

However, in this particular case, it was not the vote of the people which caused Jackson County to go dry but, according to Newport Daily Independent editor Percy Van Dyke, "the arbitrary power of the county court in refusing to grant liquor licenses." *See "Dry" page two ...*

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The following is a reprint of the article published in 1910 which declared:

SALOONS CLOSED IN JACKSON

Refusal Of Judge Simmons To Grant License Closes Doors Of Nine Saloons

With the ringing out of the old year and the ushering in of the New Year, the saloons of Jackson County closed their doors, not for the night but for the year, begun at the determination of Judge H.S. Simmons in refusing to grant liquor licenses is maintained and the applicants for licenses find no further recourse before the court.

While Jackson County is wet under the vote of the last election, the best legal authorities say there is little doubt but that the county court has the arbitrary power to refuse to grant liquor licenses and any other subsequent county judge or acting county judge could grant the license that is refused by the present court.

Friday was a big day in the wet goods line. Crowds from all over the county laid in their supplies for the announced drought and the sales of liquor in the city probably broke all high records.

The saloons had been preparing to close since the announcement of Judge Simmons that licenses to sell liquor would not be granted again during his term of office, yet most of the firms in this business are left with large stocks on hand.

There were eight saloons in this city, namely Kyle & Koger, Bailey Brothers, L.L. Bowen & Co., A.W. Anderson & Co., J.E. Doherty, J.W. Eamheart & Co., W.R. O'Neal & Co., H.C. Sanders & Co. Grubbs is also affected by the court's order, being the only outside town in the county, where liquor was sold. The saloon of that place was owned by Denton & Pennington.

The city saloon license has been \$2,000 per year, the county \$500 and the state \$300. While the loss of revenue to the county is not material compared with its other sources of revenue and the fact that court costs will doubtless be reduced under prohibition, the city government will be financially crippled when \$16,000 of her revenue is cut off and with heavy water and light expenses that virtually take up her other income. The problem ahead of the next council in retrenching expenses and yet keeping the city's credit and paper from a very low depreciation will certainly be a trying one.

Yet these troubles have nothing to do with the enforcement of the law. The officers will be expected to see that blind tigers or open tigers have no place in Newport. Behind them, these servants of the people will have the moral support of a law-abiding people who, regardless of difference of opinions as to the wisdom of prohibition, believe in the strict enforcement of the law.