

THE AMERICAN ISSUE

ILLINOIS EDITION

CONTINUING

THE ILLINOIS ISSUE

VOLUME VII

MARCH 15, 1912

NUMBER 11

Jacksonville—No Saloons, Gains Nearly Million in Deposits in Four “Dry” Years

Jacksonville, Morgan county, Illinois, saw the last of her saloons in the fall of 1907, and the men that control the real prosperity of the city, the merchants and bankers in the city itself and the farmers in the county without, say that they will never again return. The saloons are no longer even an issue in this beautiful and prosperous town. They have been beaten three times and, they will be beaten the fourth and the fifth and every time that they come up for vote, say the merchants, so certain are they that they do not want them again. One man said to me:

“We are just as good runners as the saloon crowd and if they think that they can tire us out, let them go ahead. We are getting stronger all the time and they are getting weaker. If they can't beat us now what chance do you think they will have in another two years?”

This statement sums up the sentiment of the merchants that have been in the fight from the start and it is coming to be the sentiment of many that were once on the fence. They have seen that the loss of saloons has not been a detriment to their business, even if they are not willing to admit that it has been a help. But the man you talk to for more than a minute at a time is pretty sure to let drop some remark that will tell the real state of his feelings even if he is too politic (?) to commit himself out of hand.

Bank Deposits Grow.

It is a pretty well established fact that no town that is not prospering will make much of a showing in the matter of bank deposits and savings. But when the reader hears that since the loss of saloons four years ago last fall that the seven banks of Jacksonville have gained in deposits \$942,000, he will wonder just what kind of argument the saloon crowd can offer to combat this showing. And when he further hears that the bank clearings of the Decatur banks showed one week last October that they were only 14 per cent bigger than the bank clearings of the Jacksonville financial institutions, and with the former city 100 per cent larger and with much better transportation facilities, he will have an additional item to ponder over.

And this statement of the prosperity of the banks is but a reflection of the prosperity of the merchants. They are almost a unit in saying that the presence of saloons is a detriment to their city. And from the moral consideration they are unanimous. One man on the square who is doing a finer business than ever said:

“It is a good thing that you people do not call on us very often or we would have no time to wait on trade. I tell you when I get started on this “wet” and “dry” talk I never know when to quit.”

Improvements On Every Hand.

And as I walked out of his store and looked across the business square and saw all the new things that the city has gained since the saloons closed, I could not help joining in his enthusiasm. For instance there is the New Ayers National Bank building that is under way. It will cost close to \$250,000.00 and is far and away the finest structure the city will possess. The vice-president of the bank, Mr. Robert M. Hockenhull, said enthusiastically, that it is going to have the finest vaults and general bank system of any bank outside of Chicago. The two banks whose merger is responsible for this fine new structure gained between them \$390,000.00 of the above mentioned \$942,000.00. Then there are three new churches erected since the saloons went out of business. These—the Christian, Grace M. E. and the Northminster Presbyterian cost \$200,000.00.

Besides these evidences of prosperity there are many other smaller buildings, residences, etc., which have gone up since the loss of saloons, or are now going up. Another matter was brought to my attention is vital proof of the immediate effect of the no-license policy. Almost the same day that the saloons closed several merchants began to put in new fronts or to build additions to their stores. One man said that when he got up from a sick bed he hardly knew the square and he had lived in the city for twenty years. Do all of these things then show that Jacksonville is worse off without its thirty-two saloons and their license money of \$800.00 each?

Volume of Crime Decreases.

The decrease in crime is also notable since the no-license policy was introduced. The report of the