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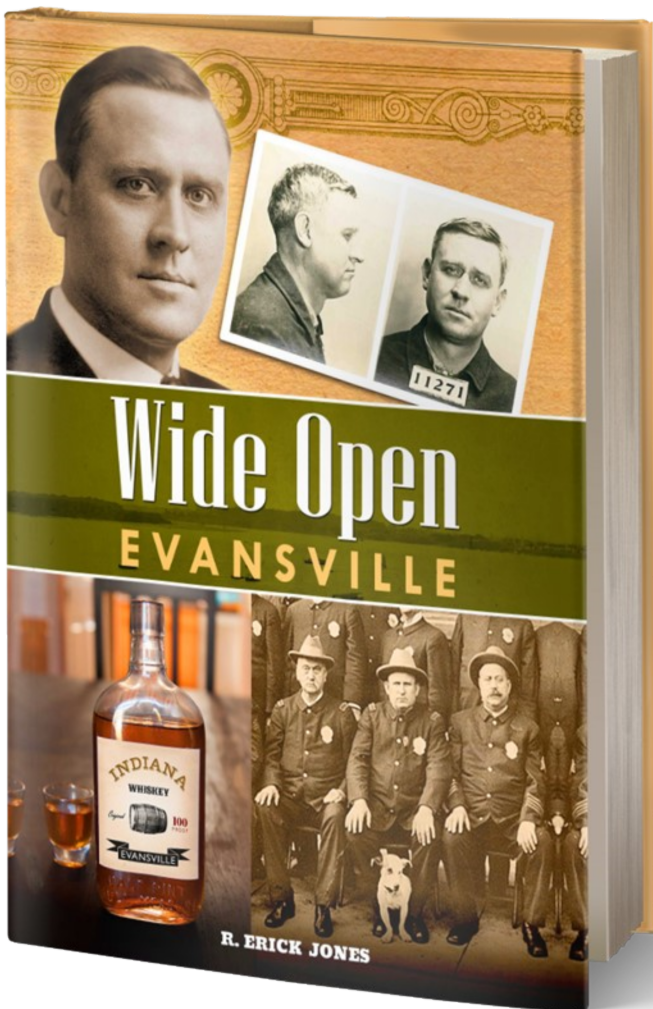
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Author: R. Erick Jones
Category: Local History
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Author Bio

Erick Jones is the great-grandson of Evansville, Indiana Police Captain Andy Friedle, the officer in charge of the infamous police “booze boat” which was used for bootlegging. But, his family’s ties to prohibition don’t end there. He is also the great-grandson of former Vanderburgh County Sheriff Deputy Jesse Jones, who later became a federal prohibition agent.

His debut book, **Wide Open Evansville**, is the culmination of several years of research and tells the true story of the 1920 whiskey ring conspiracy using the prosecutor’s own notes, witness statements, and the trial transcript.

Although he currently lives in Ohio, he has fond memories of spending summers as a child with his grandparents in Evansville.



Book Bio

What began as a genealogy search, grew into an in-depth examination of a fascinating period in Evansville's history when Indiana instituted prohibition while Kentucky, just across the Ohio River, did not. Evansville was a brewery town with a strong German culture at the time, and it struggled to stay away from liquor. It earned a reputation of being wide open when its Chief of Police, Edgar Schmitt, was prosecuted in the 1920 Evansville whiskey ring conspiracy.

The author is the great-grandson of Evansville Police Captain Andy Friedle, the officer in charge of the infamous police "booze boat" which was used for bootlegging. This authentic account covers the forgotten details of the story and reveals things that were never brought to light.

Readers can finally learn the truth about this historic event and get answers to key questions, such as who was involved. The author's remarkable insight into this period provides a unique window into the past, revealing a complex and intriguing narrative that will captivate readers from start to finish.



Book Excerpt

Chapter 2: Prohibition Comes to Indiana

In January of 1917 the Indiana House passed the Wright-Dorrell prohibition bill (House Bill number 78): At first, this wasn't received as big news since it wasn't the first time the house or senate approved a bill on prohibition. Previously, the bills would die before being approved by both legislatures. This time, however, the Indiana Senate also passed the bill. Titled, "An act prohibiting the manufacture, sale, gift, advertisement or transportation of intoxicating liquor except for certain purposes and under certain conditions," Governor James P. Goodrich signed it in February of 1917 and it became effective April 2, 1918. This bill would finally bring prohibition to Indiana. However, this wasn't the national prohibition brought about by the Eighteenth Amendment—that wouldn't come until 1919.

Many states instituted their own prohibition, causing neighboring states that remained wet to become a lure for citizens of those states. As a dissuasive measure, the U.S. Congress passed the Reed "Bone Dry" Amendment on March 3, 1917 adding a fine of \$1,000 for violating the national Webb-Kenyon Act which prohibited the interstate transportation of liquor to states that had instituted prohibition. This became effective simultaneously with Indiana's prohibition.

In anticipation of the looming prohibition, Cook's Brewery created Cook's Dry Goldblum and the Evansville Brewing Association started selling Sterling Beverage, a new temperance drink that tasted like beer but had no "kick." It worked to perfect this drink for several years and expected it to seamlessly replace alcoholic drinks in the saloons. Temperance folks also had lofty expectations when they predicted that prohibition would reduce divorces. Even before it's effective date it was harming families in a different way. Evansville's first victim of prohibition was Ben Young, who had been employed at the Evansville Brewing Company. His boss told him to look for a new job because he wouldn't be needed with the coming prohibition. After struggling to find a job and falling behind on his bills, he was charged with failure to provide for his children.

Nationwide, there were twenty-three states that had gone dry. Even though Indiana was dry, Kentucky was not and the Ohio River was kind of a gray area where passenger steamboats were allowed to hold liquor licenses and serve liquor while on the river, but could not sell liquor when they were in port on the Indiana side. Breweries either turned into soft drink factories and creameries, or shut down. Evansville's 1,200 local brewery workers faced the prospect of having to move away to find employment. There were 210 local union bartenders and 287 saloon owners and liquor dealers, many of whom turned to dispensing soft drinks. Evansville was hit harder than other Indiana cities since it had some of the largest breweries in the Midwest. It was estimated that the half million dollars per year spent in saloons would now be used to buy groceries and clothes.

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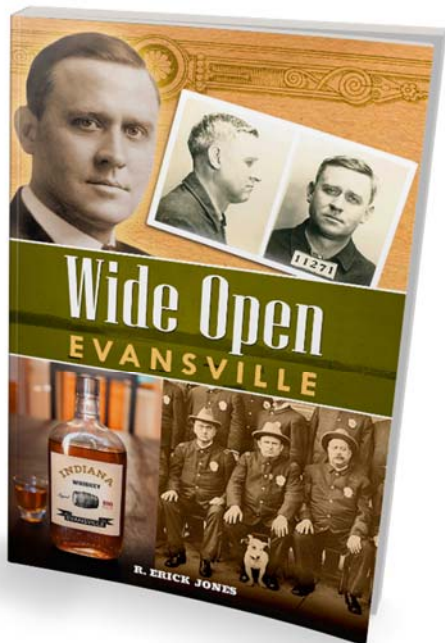
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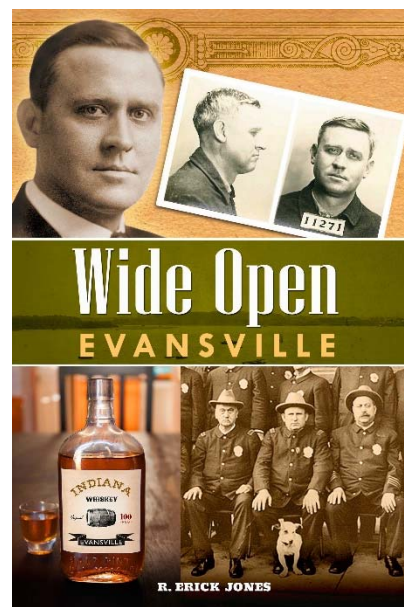
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Interview Questions

- 1 How difficult was it to research this event?
 - 2 What is your family connection to this case?
 - 3 Was Chief of Police Edgar Schmitt merely the fall guy?
 - 4 Why wasn't Mayor Bosse ever implicated?
 - 5 Why was Sheriff Males indicted?
 - 6 Who were the 78 people indicted?
 - 7 Why did the Courier Newspaper turn on Bosse?
 - 8 What are some of the misconceptions of this case?
 - 9 How can I see if I have a family connection?
 - 10 What did Chief Schmitt do while in prison?
 - 11 What ever happened to the police boat?
 - 12 Did Chief Schmitt have a falling out with Mayor Bosse?
 - 13 Are you related to prohibition agent Jesse Jones?
 - 14 What resources did you use in your research?
 - 15 What made you write your book?
 - 16 How did WWI and the Spanish Flu factor into the story?
 - 17 Was there any connection of Benjamin Bosse to the KKK?
 - 18 Why was Van Pickerill the government's star witness?
 - 19 What happened to the policemen that were guilty?
 - 20 How did Fred Ossenberg secure a pardoned?
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