

“Monroe Booze Blamed” for Brodhead Man’s Incident in 1909

When I came across an article in the Monroe Evening Times from Tuesday, February 9, 1909, it caught my attention immediately. It mentioned, “a new impetus to the interest in the liquor cases now being tried” in Brodhead. I had not previously noticed anything about those problems, but there were quite a few articles printed later in the month. This article had a headline of “Monroe Booze Blamed.” An unnamed young man residing in Brodhead had returned from Monroe on Sunday in a bad condition from the liquor he had consumed and was taken to the Shorb Hotel by two of his friends who secured a room for him. They put him to bed and locked the door when they left. When the young man awoke, he tried to get out of the room. He climbed out of a window and let himself down on the balcony roof. In an attempt to regain entrance through a different window, he so frightened one of the chambermaids. While she was trying to get away from him, she fell down the stairs and sustained serious injuries. The man was arrested and locked up by Officer McCrady. The townspeople of Brodhead were highly incensed when they found out that liquor had been purchased out of town and furnished to minors. I saw no reference to this incident in subsequent papers.

The paper on Wednesday reported that Elmer Reigle, a defendant in one of the liquor cases at Brodhead, was brought before Justice John Luchsinger on a change of venue from Brodhead. The hearing was set for the following Wednesday. The case against Reigle had previously been dismissed because of a defective warrant - an error in the date. However, another warrant was issued. District Attorney McGrath made a previous offense the basis of the new complaint.

The same article mentioned that the district attorney went to Brodhead that day to appear at the hearing of Charles Laube. The district attorney would return to Brodhead again on Thursday for the hearing of Lou Laube. At that time it was understood that both men were ready to make a settlement.

Sheriff H. L. Ball went to Brodhead the following Tuesday to subpoena witnesses for the Reigle hearing. He had been charged with selling “spiritous” liquor without a license. The case was brought before Justice Luchsinger the following day. Reigle’s (spelled Riggle in this article) lawyer “quibbled for over an hour this afternoon on the technicality that in a change of venue, which was taken from Brodhead, the case should be tried before the nearest justice and that Justice Luchsinger is not the nearest. It was maintained by the defense that Justice Fessenden of Albany was nearer to Brodhead than any local justice but the point was finally waived and the case was begun in earnest.” A recess was then taken while a jury was called.

Elmer L. Reigle, who was the proprietor of a “soft drink” place, was found guilty by the jury in Luchsinger’s court on Thursday afternoon. Luchsinger imposed a fine of \$50 and costs or sixty days in jail. Reigle announced that he intended to appeal the case to the circuit court. He had been charged with selling a keg of beer, which was shipped to Brodhead by a Janesville brewery. There were four other counts against him. The jurors were J. T. Etter, William Harper, Ray Crow, John Discher, Bert Crouch, and William Truman. District Attorney McGrath was assisted in prosecuting the case by George L. Winegar, city attorney at Brodhead.

Reigle was represented by William Smith, Janesville, A. N. Randall, Brodhead, and J. L. Sherron, Monroe, who made their fight upon technicalities. They contended that the justice was without jurisdic-



A young Brodhead man, who got drunk in Monroe in 1909, was taken to the Shorb Hotel by two friends who didn’t want him to get in trouble. He caused quite a disturbance when he tried to escape after he woke up.

tion and called no witnesses. City Clerk R. R. Skinner, Fred Combs, and Grant Combs served as witnesses. Two young detectives, connected with a Chicago agency who spent six weeks in Brodhead and furnished the state with the evidence on which the raid was made, were not called.

It was reported that two more of the Brodhead liquor cases were settled up on Friday when Andrew Sennett and Thomas Hellerud pleaded guilty before Justice O. F. Smith at Brodhead. Sennett was fined \$125 on two counts, one being \$75 and the other \$50, and then the costs of \$25, making a total of \$150. Hellerud was also fined \$100 and costs, making a total of \$125. Both men surrendered their government licenses and closed their shops.

“This cleans up the cases growing out of the recent raid with the exception of the prosecution against Elmer J. Reigle, who was found guilty by a jury in Justice Luchsinger’s court yesterday. There are counts hanging against other parties, but these will be dropped. Reigle has more trouble ahead as the intention is to take him again on another charge.”

The last article that I found stated that Elmer Reigle was again found guilty of selling liquor without a license at a hearing on April 29 before Justice Smith in Brodhead and was fined \$100 plus costs.