

NOVEMBER 19, 1893

WILLARD TESTIFIES.

Denies That He Patronized the
"Joints" of Argentine.

POSES AS A VICTIM OF PLOTTERS.

Witnesses Testify That the Charges
Against Him Are False.

An Officer Mistakes the Moon for a Burn-
ing Dwelling and Calls Out the
Fire Department—Other Con-
solidated City News.

It is going to cost the taxpayers of Wyandotte county several hundred dollars to have a legal settlement of the question as to whether or not Frank A. Willard, mayor of the city of Argentine, did play cards and drink sherry and egg in a certain "joint" alleged to have been run by Captain Richardson in Argentine. The vital point in the whole affair is not whether he drank or not. The time the playing and drinking was done is the point at issue. If Mr. Willard played cards and drank sherry and egg prior to his election as mayor, then the people do not care, but if it was done after he was exalted to the office of the chief executive of Argentine some of its people and officials want him ousted from the office and otherwise punished.

For three days there has been a steady effort on the part of the attorneys and the judge of the court of common pleas to get down to the bottom facts in the case in which Mayor Willard is defendant, and the task is not yet completed. To-morrow morning it will be resumed and the day will be taken up with the completion of the trial.

There has not been much of interest brought out in the trial except what the attorneys have said about each other. It has been settled that there were several "joints" in the city of Argentine, and that they were headquarters for the politicians last spring in the campaign.

There have been several of the witnesses who testified that the chief officer of the city had played pinochle with the boys in the "joint" and then joined in the treat that followed, while others have been quite as positive that he did not. The mayor says he did not do as he is charged with doing and that the whole affair is the outgrowth of the bitter political fight that has been going on there for some years. He says that he was trying to enforce the laws there and that his actions have made him many enemies. His enemies charge that he tried to close part of the places and leave others open. At any rate the affair has gotten into the courts and the jury will have the task of deciding the

While all this is going on the taxpayers are quietly looking on and figuring on the bill of costs that the county will have to pay when the ball is over and the majesty of the law is vindicated.

Yesterday there were several witnesses examined and much spirited legal sparring indulged in. Nothing of interest was brought out until the afternoon session of the court.

Mayor Frank A. Willard, who is the defendant in the case, was placed on the stand just after court convened for the afternoon session and for a couple of hours was kept busy answering questions. He stated that he was the mayor of Argentine; had been since April 15, 1893, and since taking the oath of office he had never been in a "joint" except twice, when he went to Captain Richardson's place to see about a contract and a horse trade. In each case he saw no liquor sold, nor did he drink or see others drink either of the times. He had complained to County Attorney Cobb of the alleged "joints" and the violations of the prohibitory law and had furnished some information against "joints" of which he had knowledge.

He admitted he had been in Richardson's place during the campaign, but that subsequent to his elevation to the office of mayor he had never visited that or any other "joint" in the city. He made the statement that he was not in the "joints" playing cards as had been sworn to by Mr. Petree and others.

On the cross-examination that was conducted by Mr. Carskadon, the witness was subjected to a very crucial test and was taken over all the matters that have occurred in the city since he became mayor. He was questioned upon some matters alleged to have taken place at a certain stormy meeting of the council. He admitted that there had been a constant fight between him and some of the departments of the city government and gave as a reason that "the gang" fighting him was in favor of keeping the "joints" open and was fighting him because he was trying to stop the business of the "joint-ists."

The famous order issued by Mayor Willard closing the "joints" was not introduced in evidence although the defense tried to get it in.

Geddes Simmons was a witness for the defense and told of a conversation he had Friday with Mr. J. R. Bowers, whose name is on the complaint as the prosecuting witness, in which Bowers was alleged to have said that so far as he was concerned the affair was a persecution and not a prosecution. The conversation, he said, took place at Simmons' barn.

Mr. George Simmons was called and said he overheard part of the conversation, and stated that the part he overheard was Bowers' admission that so far as he was concerned the saloons could run and that he took a glass of beer at times and liked it. That the complaint had been made and it looked as though it was the only way they could get at Willard.

During the progress of the trial Judge Anderson administered a stinging rebuke to the attorneys for not observing the well-established rules of practice in courts. He told them plainly that if the rules were not observed he would fine them and sentence them to jail. He said he did not want to be arbitrary, but he would insist that the court be treated with due courtesy.

The case was adjourned until Monday morning to await the arrival of a witness from Winfield.