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Whiskey and the Indians.
as told by
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About 1890 Solomon Copple and Tom Frank ran a saloon in Southwest City, Missouri, just over the state line. These men, of course, had Federal, state, and county licenses to sell whisky, in Missouri, but didn't have license to sell to Indians, as that wasn't legal and not supposed to be done.

They, however, did sell to Indians. These Indians never came over in the daytime; they would come over to the state line during the day, and await the coming of night, then they would come into town. The question asked them would be, "You are not an Indian, are you?" and of course they would say they were not Indians, so they could and would buy whisky and proceed to paint things up.

I was a young man then, and knew Copple & Frank. They ran a credit business and as time went by their accounts grew and they soon came to need cash. So they hired me to keep bar while they went out and tried to collect on their accounts. There were rum runners, who bootlegged whisky over in the Territory, and who got their supply from Copple & Frank. When they didn't

have cash they were allowed to trade ponies for whisky. I was told to sell them whisky on these conditions, giving them from two to three gallons for a pony. The whisky we traded them, and they sold to the Indians of the Territory was our cheapest, being only \$1.50 per gallon. This made the ponies worth from \$3.00 to \$4.50 per head.

Finally, the wholesale houses, in St. Louis, closed in on the firm, which got deeper in debt, and closed them up, but not before they had removed most of the whisky from the barrels and kegs and hid it away, so about all the wholesale dealers got was that on the shelves at the bar.

Copple continued to sell whisky, but mostly in the Territory, where he peddled it out from the stock he had saved. Copple said he "carried whisky for the Indians and a rifle for the white man."

He was finally killed by Sam Sixkiller, an Indian.

Copple and Frank were white men. Copple's son now lives in Fort Smith, Ark.