

Coverage of trial reflected 1898 life

Symptoms of strychnine poisoning: "stiffness at the back of the neck; twitching of the muscles; a feeling of impending suffocation and violent tetanic convulsions."
Encyclopedia Britannica.

Accounts of the trial for murder of Sarah Evans in the fall of 1898, say every bit as much about the times as they do about the woman and the circumstances. It was Britain's Lord Hardwicke who wrote, "Certainty is the mother of repose; therefore the law aims at certainty." After Mrs. Evans' case had been sent to the Monroe Circuit Court, that agency began to work toward as much certainty as lawyers and juries were capable of.

The possibility that a woman had committed a murder was a violation of the concepts that Americans had of females at the turn of the century. They were



Looking back

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equated with motherhood, country and apple pie, and Hoosiers in particular didn't relish the idea of a woman being suspected of such a crime, let alone being tried for it.

Nevertheless, Bloomington police and the prosecutor had what they thought were compelling reasons for setting the mechanics of a jury trial for a capital offense in motion. All of the ingredients were there: she admitted having given her husband a capsule (which she said con-

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