

Man's strange death raised many questions

"STRANGE DEATH! HEART TROUBLE OR POISON!" screamed a headline in the Sept. 9, 1898, edition of the Bloomington *Telephone*. Charles Evans, 31, who lived on the outskirts of town, had exhibited some very curious symptoms prior to his sudden death at his home about 11 one evening.

According to his wife, Sarah, her husband had heart trouble, and she put forth the theory that he died of an attack. The police were skeptical — so skeptical, in fact, that they called the coroner for an opinion.



Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

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He, too, found it unlikely that Evans had suffered a fatal heart attack and decided an autopsy was definitely called for.

It was then that the contents of Evans' stomach found their way

into a test tube in the laboratory of Indiana University chemistry Professor Reddick and the victim's heart was examined for disease by Dr. Rogers. When the results of the investigation turned out to be a sound heart and a stomach with enough strychnine to kill several persons, Sarah Evans was arrested and faced with a hearing in the mayor's office.

The case was a melodrama worthy of the *Telephone* reporter's colorful collection of adjectives, and he rose to the occasion. "The

woman charged with the horrible crime was dressed in deep black and wore a heavy veil which, however, was thrown back over her head. The marks on her face were the certain evidence of the mental anguish through which she had been passing." When one of the accused woman's little daughters was brought forward out of the crowd, the *Telephone* reported that the mother "wept bitterly, exclaiming, 'Oh! God! care for us! Oh! God! care for us!'"

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