

Coverage of trial reflected 1898 life

Trial, from page A1

tained quinine); she gave contradicting accounts of what happened and it was a matter of record that the couple did not get along well, since Mrs. Evans had previously filed an unsuccessful divorce suit.

The *Bloomington Telephone* left no one who had any information about the Evans family to go unreported in its efforts to keep readers informed. For example, little Lulu Foster, an 8-year-old, said she was at the Evans home after Charley Evans died, and saw Mrs. Evans being kissed by one Harry White. On the other hand, 7-year-old Pearl Chandler saw Sarah Evans kiss her husband after he died and take some money out of his pocket to put away for safe-keeping.

Other equally interesting glimpses of the life of the Evans family were to emerge during testimony at the trial, but first the attorneys involved had to agree on a jury to decide Sarah Evans' fate. She was to face an all-male jury, since deciding the guilt or innocence of a prisoner — particularly in a murder case — was considered men's work. All prospective panel members were asked, "Have you any scruples against capital punishment?"

Those who would determine the fate of Sarah Evans were: Marshal Guthrie, John Campbell, George Mercer, Thomas Ward, Clifford Thompson, Walter Robertson, James Bright and P.P. Stultz of Bloomington Township; David Hays of Salt Creek

Township; William Burch of Indian Creek Township and A. Homer Johnston of Clear Creek Township. The defendant was represented by Col. John R. East, a flamboyant attorney whose oratory had been known to move courtroom hangers-on to tears.

The prosecutor told a packed courtroom that the Evanses had had a "stormy domestic life." He said that only her husband separated Sarah Evans from the arms of a clandestine lover.

East, on the other hand, claimed that he could show Evans had attempted suicide by hanging, was "melancholy" and had told someone that he would take his life with strychnine. Reported the *Telephone*, "Col. East said that many circumstances would be given to show that he took poison of his own free will — and died in the arms of his wife."

Seven prosecution witnesses — John Browning, Albet Suggs, David Dyne, Robert Davis, T.J. Penrod and O.L. Barton — testified that they had seen Charles Evans "up town" on the evening of his death and that he was in good spirits. It was at Penrod's store where the deceased had purchased quinine and (presumably) empty capsules.

Mrs. Martha Chandler informed the jurors that she saw Evans return home about 10:15 on the evening that he died. She was also later summoned by Sarah Evans after her husband became sick, but before he died. She told the court that Evans said to her, "Martha, what's the matter with me?"

Next week: The trial continues.