

# East flamboyant Monroe attorney

(Continued from page 1)

suicide instead of a murder, East recalled for the jury the county suicide record in the the previous decade. Winding up with a *Bible* quotation, his summation lasted three hours.

The defendant's relatives were crying, East was crying, and the defendant's mother had to be carried from the courtroom in a faint. With so much emotional energy generated in the courtroom, the defendant was acquitted.

BY JUNE OF 1906 BRIGHT'S disease had done considerable damage to East's body, if not his mind. Still practicing law and swapping stories with his cronies at the Courthouse, he was photographed with such contemporaries as Jess Fields, Edwin Corr, Ira Batman, Roy Pike, Judge James B. Wilson, and J. E. Darby.

Barely two months later it was said around the square that he had died. Editor Blaine Bradfute dutifully reported the death by wire to an Indianapolis morning newspaper, which published East's obituary on its front page. Bradfute was later quoted as having said it was his biggest blunder as a newspaperman.

IN OCTOBER OF 1906 a rural Monroe County man was walking past East's house at 417 W. Sixth St. and saw him sitting on the front porch. The man exclaimed: "Then you're not really dead. But I'm sure I read it in the paper."

Consulting with his family about it, East was shown the Indianapolis paper obituary, carefully saved, but hidden from him, lest it affect his morale.

His actual death followed in April of 1907. His son, C. Earl East, who ran a yarn shop where the Monroe County Public Library now stands, recorded the monumental goof in his own book, *Relive It*, published in 1963.