

Family lucky to survive killer with dynamite sticks

When Mack Hurst stole into the house occupied by his family in the early hours of Sept. 19, 1913, he thought he was going to take all of them with him in one big explosion of dynamite. Newspaper accounts of the tragedy differ in the number of sticks he had with him, but the stories agree that a knowledge of explosives was not one of his skills.

The Bloomington *Telephone* speculated about where Hurst got the

Looking back

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dynamite sticks in the first place. It was learned by a reporter for the newspaper that Hurst had used

explosives when working on a cistern for S.J. Jordan and may have had some "left over."

Seventeen of the 18 people in the house that morning owed their lives to three important facts — Hurst's artlessness regarding dynamite; his alcohol-clouded judgment; and a circumstance he could not have known in advance. Since he had moved out, the household sleeping arrangements had been

changed.

Thinking he was entering his wife's room, Hurst approached the bed occupied by three of his daughters, Fanny, Elizabeth and Maude. Apparently, Maude sat up, and just before the explosion, from another room, Hurst's wife heard her husband say, "Lay down. Rena, we'll die together."

In his suicidal desperation, Hurst see **Looking back, Back page**