

Susan Glaspell

SHERIFF AFTER MRS. HOSSACK
SENSATIONAL TURN TAKEN AT INDIANOLA.

Coroner's Jury Returns Its Verdict This Morning--Mrs. Hossack
Thought to Be Crazy.

INDIANOLA, Dec. 5.--(Special)--The Hossack murder case took a sensational turn today when the sheriff went to Medora for the avowed purpose of arresting Mrs. Hossack, wife of the murdered man. The departure of the sheriff was kept a profound secret for a time, but eventually some of the county officials were induced to reveal to your correspondent that the object of the trip was the arrest of Mrs. Hossack.

The evidence is by no means conclusive of Mrs. Hossack's guilt, but the testimony before the coroner's jury was such as to raise a suspicion of guilt and her arrest was decided upon as a matter of precaution.

Members of the Hossack family are understood to have testified before the coroner's jury that the blood on the ax found under the corn crib was caused by chopping off the head of a turkey the day before the murder. It is now reported that a child admitted on cross-examination that he himself placed the ax in the corn crib the evening before the murder and that at that time there was no blood on it.

Friends of Mrs. Hossack are beginning to suggest that she is insane and that she has been in this condition for a year and a half under the constant surveillance of members of the family.

The robbery theory has been wholly abandoned, as absolutely nothing was taken and no suspicious characters were seen in the neighborhood prior or subsequent to the murder.

The most suspicious circumstance in connection with the crime is the testimony of Mrs. Hossack that she lay in bed by the side of her husband while his skull was crushed in two places, and was not awakened in time to see anyone leave the house.

The developments since the murder that the members of the Hossack family were not on pleasant relations with each other is a complete surprise, as Hossack was not supposed to have an enemy in the world.

The verdict of the coroner's jury found this morning was as follows:

"We do find said deceased came to his death by two blows upon the head; one with a sharp instrument and one with a blunt instrument. (Signed) C.D. Johnson, Fred Johnston, T.W. Passwater."

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SHE PREPARES TO FIGHT
MRS. HOSSACK WILL RESIST CHARGE OF MURDER.

Was Locked Up In Indianola Jail Last Night--Public Against Her.

INDIANOLA, Dec. 6.--The wife of John Hossack, arrested on the charge of having beaten out his brains with an ax, has employed Henderson and Berry as her attorneys and is preparing to fight the case to the end.

She was locked up in the county jail here last night at 8:30. She manifested no emotion, took her arrest calmly and absolutely declined to make any statement concerning her guilt or innocence.

Members of the Hossack family are standing by her solidly, but public sentiment is overwhelmingly against her.

Though past 50 years of age, she is tall and powerful and looks like she would be dangerous if aroused to a point of hatred. It is claimed by the prosecution that she and her husband quarreled violently over their second son, John Hossack, Jr., because the father was unwilling to overlook his son's shortcomings.

An effort was made at the coroner's inquest to bring out that Mrs. Hossack had threatened her husband's life and had intimated to William Haines that she would like to get her husband out of the way. Haines only partially corroborated this story.

Hossack owned 300 acres of fine land and was considered well-off. It is claimed now, however, that the farm was in his wife's name and that possession of it could have furnished no incentive to the crime. Deceased, however, carried \$2,000 in life insurance, made payable to his wife.

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MRS. HOSSACK MAY YET BE PROVEN INNOCENT

Tide of Sentiment Turns Slightly in Her Favor -- Notified Today That She Will Soon Be Released

First Photograph Bearing on the Tragedy.

INDIANOLA, Dec. 12.--(Special)--Mrs. Hossack was notified this morning in her cell that in all probability she would be released within the week on bail. Sheriff Hodson conveyed the news to the aged prisoner. She looked up into the officer's face, smiled and remarked that she would be glad to get home again with her children, but did not manifest any great degree of joy at the news.

Justice Ross yesterday completed the examination of the transcript taken at the coroner's inquest and announced that in his estimation the offense was a bailable one, but he had not arrived at any conclusions relative to the amount. It is expected that it will not be excessive, however, for the reason that Mrs. Hossack is an aged woman and one who would not try in any manner to escape. It is believed that the magistrate, in the face of these facts, will keep the amount within the limit of \$10,000. This sum the relatives and friends of the Hossack family are ready to put up the moment it is necessary.

As was announced yesterday there will be no special session of the grand jury. County Attorney Clammer does not deem it advisable and unless there is a demand on the part of the defense, which is not at all likely, the matter will be allowed to rest until the January term of court, which convenes on the 8th of next month. Both sides will require time to look up facts before the trial, as it is now conceded the case will be one of the bitterest and most hotly contested of any that has ever been tried in the criminal division of Warren county courts.

Detectives at Work.

It was rumored today on absolute authority that detectives are to be set to work on the case at the instigation of the defense. Mrs. Hossack has stoutly affirmed her innocence from the first and repeatedly asserts that if the matter is looked into there will be a different story to tell. Since, however, Henderson and Berry have taken hold of her case she has maintained a discreet silence, refusing absolutely to talk of the matter to her most intimate friends, who have access to her cell. Whether or not the prisoner, if she is innocent of the crime of murdering her husband, believes some other member of the family is responsible, is not known. At any rate it is understood the members of the family and all others likely to be concerned will be kept under the closest surveillance from now until the date of the trial.

Son Is Interested.

John Hossack, Jr., over whom many of the quarrels in the Hossack family were said to have originated, is one of the most interested. To a number of friends in Indianola while here a few

days ago he announced that it was his intention to do all that is within his power to have the matter cleared up. He does not believe his mother is guilty and says it will be proven so before the grand jury. It is understood he is inclined to the belief the object being to rob.

This son, it developed at the coroner's inquest, was the cause of the first breach in the family between the father and mother. Their quarrels after that were numerous, all of which are said to be directly traceable to him. It is, therefore, his desire that the matter be cleared up as quickly as possible, so there can be no finger of suspicion pointed in his direction.

Is Chain Broken?

While the analysis of the blood on the axe is yet a secret and will remain so until the date of the trial, it is rumored that the attorneys for the defense know the result of the analysis and it is favorable in their behalf. If that is true one of the strongest links in the chain of circumstantial evidence is broken. It will be remembered this axe was found on the Monday following the ghastly murder of John Hossack with the helve buried to the pole under the granary. The blade was covered with blood and a substance resembling brains. It was at first supposed the instrument was that used by the murderess or murderer, who after inflicting the fatal blows, carried [it] there and stuck the blade into the ground for the purpose of removing the clots of blood. The state's theory is that Mrs. Hossack secured the axe, crept softly into the room when the old man was sleeping, struck the blows, and then sped to the granary and secreted it as above. It is then supposed she returned to the house and placed herself beside the wounded man, giving the alarm that woke the household.

If this version is conclusively substantiated by other evidence borne by the facts now in possession of the state then the chances for Mrs. Hossack's acquittal are in jeopardy. If, however, as has been rumored, the analysis of the blood resulted in the discovery that it was that of fowls the evidence against the prisoner will be severely shaken.

The axe is one that was used for the purpose of butchering fowls and was kept in the back yard. The fact that it was found hidden under the granary with the blade buried in the ground excited the suspicion at once that it was the instrument with which the murderer or murderess delivered the blows. The further fact that the wounds were made by just such an instrument lent strength to the belief that the old axe was used. However, if the analysis proves conclusively that the blood is not human then the theory will be advanced that some one else and not Mrs. Hossack did the deed, though the fact that she claims to have known nothing of the tragedy until all was over will be strongly against her.

Rumors of Confession.

Rumor comes from New Virginia, the home of the Hossacks, that on the Sunday following the night of the murder, Mrs. Hossack lost that strange self-control which she has borne all through the trying ordeals and muttered in incoherent tones, between moans and sighs, something that sounded as though she was trying to confess something of the affair. When questioned, however, by some of the members present, she immediately regained her usual demeanor and positively refused to be further questioned along those lines. The state is said to have been informed of this

rumor and will make a diligent search between now and the date of the trial to secure the parties who are said to have noticed the actions and bring them here as witnesses during the trial. Many are inclined to the belief, however, that it is mere rumor and that little credence can be given it.

Plea of Insanity.

There is a well defined rumor current to the effect that Messrs. Berry and Henderson will enter a plea of insanity if their efforts in behalf of their client before the grand jury are of no avail. It is understood some of the best citizens of the neighborhood where the Hossacks reside will testify that Mrs. Hossack has acted queerly on several occasions, threatening to take the life of her husband. The testimony of the man Haines before the coroner was to the effect that he had been approached by Mrs. Hossack with the request that he help her get rid of the old man. The fact that Mrs. Hossack had developed this strange feeling toward Hossack during the past few months is taken as an indication that her mind is not as mentally bright as normal conditions should justify.

Blood on Her Clothes.

Relative to the alleged spots of blood on Mrs. Hossack's clothes discovered after the murder, but which she explained as blood from a fowl, it is claimed by the state that it will be able to prove definitely that the blood is human and an investigation is being made as in the case of the axe. The garment is in possession of the state and will be introduced as evidence at the January trial.

The sentiment of the best people of Indianola, those who know the family well, is that Mrs. Hossack was either crazy or that she did not commit the crime. She is intelligent and to visitors who had occasion to go to the home even only a few months prior to the murder she was attentive to her husband, seeming to anticipate his wants, and saw that he wished for nothing. She is said to be a woman who is quick tempered, high strung, like all Scotch women, but of a deeply religious turn of mind.

Hossack was above the average in intellect. Two years ago he was prominently mentioned for treasurer of Warren County and had the votes pledged that would have named him for the place. A division was about to be made in the party, however, and he came forward and withdrew his name. Since that time he has been mentioned for some of the highest offices in Warren county, but has refused. No one ever regarded the quarrels between the couple as serious.

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MRS. HOSSACK A MURDERESS
JURY SAYS SHE IS THE SLAYER OF HER AGED HUSBAND.

Sentenced to Penitentiary for Life--Prisoner Receives the Sad News in Half Fainting Condition.

INDIANOLA, April 11.-- (Special.) -- Mrs. Margaret Hossack must pay the penalty for the murder of her husband. The jury has just now returned a verdict of guilty as charged in the indictment. Judge Gamble has sentenced her to the penitentiary for life. The court room was packed when it was reported the jury had reached a conclusion and was ready to make known the fate of Margaret Hossack. The latter sat calmly in her seat, the rigid expression which she had carried all through the trial, changing to that of earnest expectation of either good or evil news. Slowly the twelve men filed to their seats in the jury box. The foreman delivered the verdict to the bailiff, who handed it to the clerk. The latter stood erect. A death-like silence pervaded the room.

"We, the jury, find the defendant, Mrs. Margaret Hossack, guilty as charged in the indictment," he read.

The silence continued several seconds giving way to a low murmur plainly audible around the court room.

The aged prisoner sat looking helpless and in a sort of dazed condition at the clerk. Then, suddenly seeming to realize the meaning of the verdict, she sank back in her chair and for the first time during the long and trying ordeal, gave completely away to her feelings.

She was surrounded by her friends whose sobbing could be heard through the hall and into the open court yard, continuing until Sheriff Hodson led the prisoner back to the jail awaiting final judgment. Senator Berry announced that he would move for a new trial.

The case went to the jury unexpectedly last night at 6 o'clock. Attorney McNeil had intended to continue his address until 10 o'clock today but suddenly, shortly before 5 o'clock last evening, he collapsed from the continued exertion and rested the case. The effect of his appeal for a conviction was great.

Judge Gamble's instructions were read at 5:30 and the jury retired to deliberate at 6 o'clock. The instructions were generally regarded as favorable to a conviction. Judge Gamble's instructions to the jury follow:

Judge Gamble's Instructions.

In no case is it necessary, in order to establish a criminal charge against defendant, that there should be direct proof of her guilt by witnesses who were present and saw her commit the crime. In criminal, as well as in civil cases, the evidence may be, and frequently is, not direct, but circumstantial. In fact in criminal cases the guilt of the defendant if shown at all, is most generally shown by the latter kind of evidence; that is to say, but the proof of such facts and circumstances as establish her guilt, and when evidence in a case consists of a chain of well authenticated circumstances, it is often more convincing and satisfactory and gives a stronger ground of assurance of the defendant's guilt than the direct testimony of witness unconfirmed by circumstances.

To justify the inference of guilt on circumstantial evidence show the facts proven from which it is asked that the guilt of the defendant be inferred, must be consistent with each other, and such circumstances must not only clearly point to her guilt, but they must be incompatible with her innocence; that is to say they must be incapable of explanation on any other reasonable supposition than that of her guilt. But as against consistent and well authenticated circumstances plainly indicating the guilt of a defendant, the supposition which would entitle her to an acquittal must be reasonable, and arise out of and be founded on the evidence in the case, and it must not arise out of or be founded on any fact or state of facts which by probability might have existed, but of which there is no proof.

When conviction by a jury is sought on circumstantial evidence alone, before a verdict of guilty can be reached, the jury must be satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt that the crime charged has been committed by some one in the manner and form as charged in the indictment. It is further incumbent upon the prosecution to establish that the facts and circumstances relied upon are true and that such facts and circumstances are not only consistent with the defendant's guilt, but also that they are inconsistent with any other reasonable hypothesis or supposition than guilt. It is not sufficient that such circumstances are consistent with and point to her guilt, but to warrant a conviction upon such evidence alone. The facts and circumstances proven must not only be in harmony with the guilt of the accused, but they must be of such a character that they cannot reasonably be true in the ordinary nature of things and the person accused be innocent.

You should bring into consideration the evidence your every day common sense and judgment as reasonable men, and make those just and reasonable inferences from circumstances proven, which the guarded judgment of a reasonable man would ordinarily make under like circumstances; and those just and reasonable inferences and deductions which you, as reasonable men, would ordinarily draw from facts and circumstances proven in the case you should draw and act on as jurors; and if, on a consideration of the whole evidence before you, you then have no reasonable doubt, as in these instructions defined, as to the guilt of the defendant, you should convict her; but if you then entertain such a doubt, you should acquit her.