

# 1 Rapid

H., SATURDAY MORNIN

## DENIES HODELL DRANK CUP OF POISON COFFEE

DEFENSE TELLS JURY ONLY TEA  
WAS SERVED AT ALLEGED  
FATAL MEAL

CLAIMS DAUGHTER-IN-LAW  
IS VICTIM OF VILE PLOT

Prosecution Springs "Mystery Wit-  
ness" Who Says Neda Feared Ar-  
rest as Murderer—Defendant to  
Take Stand Next Monday.

By STAFF CORRESPONDENT.

WHITE CLOUD, Oct. 20.—David Ho-  
dell drank no coffee at the noon meal  
preceding his death one day last Feb-  
ruary; in fact, there had been no coffee  
in his son's home for two weeks pre-  
ceding his demise. This was the open-  
ing statement of the defense by At-  
torney Arthur W. Penny late this after-  
noon after the prosecution in the case  
of Mrs. Neda Hodell, on trial here for  
the murder of her aged father-in-law,  
had placed its last witness on the stand.

Mrs. Hodell is accused, by virtue of  
her own confessions, of having put a  
teaspoonful of poison in the elderly  
Newaygo county farmer's coffee on that  
day. The attorney declared he would  
show the jury that Mrs. Hodell,  
through force, intimidation and out-  
lawry on the part of state police and  
Newaygo county officials, was made to  
confess to a crime she never committed.  
He went into the life history of the  
girl-widow on trial, and pictured her  
as the victim of a plot on the part of  
certain authorities who wanted a  
"goat" on which to fasten the crime.

Mrs. Hodell Only 20.

According to Attorney Penny, Mrs.  
Hodell is only a little more than 20;  
was born on a farm in Indiana and  
came to Newaygo county with her par-  
ents when a babe. When the elder Ho-  
dell came to visit her and her husband  
last January she received him with  
open arms, looked upon him as a  
father, and even took the clothing from

came to Newaygo county with her par-  
ents when a babe. When the elder Ho-  
dell came to visit her and her husband  
last January she received him with  
open arms, looked upon him as a  
father, and even took the clothing from  
her own bed to make him comfortable.

"Our little sister here," said the at-  
torney, pointing to the defendant, "is  
the under dog. She has been made  
to seem a vile criminal."

Describing the dinner which the  
prosecution contends ended fatally for  
David Hodell, Mr. Penny said it was  
a simple country meal and consisted of  
bread, potatoes, beans, tea and some  
cookies brought to the Hodell home  
that morning by Mrs. Fred Anderson, a  
neighbor. Hodell slept for a while on  
his bed following the meal the attorney  
said, and awakening, appeared anxious  
to help his daughter-in-law with her  
household work. Mrs. Hodell was  
starting to the pump for water and  
he begged her to let him take the pail,  
which she did and he filled it and  
carried it into the house. He com-  
plained of feeling cold and went to the  
woodpile and split some wood.

Fell Into the Snow.

It was while returning to the house  
that he fell and his daughter-in-law  
rushed to him and asked, "Dad, what's  
the matter?" He replied that he felt  
blind. She then wiped the snow from  
his face with one of his mittens which  
had fallen from his hand. Helping  
him toward the house, he fell again  
and she lifted him to his feet. He  
fell a third time near the door of the  
home, and Mrs. Hodell, becoming  
rightened, ran to Mrs. Anderson's  
home and got her to assist in bringing  
him into the house. A physician was  
summoned but when he arrived he  
pronounced the old man dead.

Mr. Penny asked the jury if it  
thought Hodell would have been able  
to draw water and split wood if he  
had swallowed a large dose of poison  
only a short time before.

Held Jail Conference.

The attorney's voice had resolved it-  
self into a hoarse whisper by the time  
he finished his opening statement. He  
had a severe cold which was aggra-  
vated by a drive to Big Rapids last  
night in company with Attorney Wor-  
cester, his associate, Mrs. Hodell and  
Robert Bennett. The four held a con-  
ference in the Mecosta jail with Mrs.  
Alice Dudgeon and her two sons, Lee  
and Herman, with reference to the  
appearance of all but the attorneys as  
defense witnesses next week.

It was the intention of the defense to  
put Mrs. Hodell on the stand as its  
first witness before court adjourned  
today, but owing to Mr. Penny's phys-  
ical condition this was postponed. It  
was Mr. Penny's illness that caused  
Judge Barton to order a recess in the  
trial until next Monday morning. Un-  
der agreement by prosecution and de-  
fense the jurymen were permitted to  
go to their respective homes over the  
week-end without the surveillance of  
sheriff's officers.

Prosecutor Branstrom's mystery wit-  
ness was among the last he put upon  
the stand today. This was Mrs. Neva  
Crawford, who resides near Grant.

Meda Feared Arrest.

Mrs. Crawford, a striking brunette  
with a pleasing smile, declared that

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