

## HARRIET

Harriet Jane Camlin Ridge Harlan Rodgers Colvin was born in 1836<sup>1</sup>, presumably in Boyle County, Kentucky. Harriet's mother was Lucinda Camlin and Lucinda was only fourteen years old when she gave birth out of wedlock to Harriet. There is evidence both circumstantial as well as opinions expressed by others of their time that Lucinda was a prostitute who became pregnant as a result of one of her business clients. It would seem that Camlin was Lucinda's maiden name and Lucinda would marry a man named Ridge and both Lucinda and Harriet would adopt his name. It is probable that this Ridge was the client of Lucinda that fathered Harriet. Lucinda would go on to have more children with this Ridge and move to Scotland County, Missouri in 1853. Harriet did not move with her mother and family, but stayed with her Aunts in Boyle County, Kentucky.

The reason Harriet stayed in Boyle County, Kentucky, just outside the town of Danville, seems to be because she, too, by this point in time had become a very well known prostitute in the area and had become pregnant. The story goes (see all Boyle depositions) that Harriet was a sought after prostitute and saw many, many men of the county. She had been seeing two brothers a Tom and John Pittman and a John Harlan at the same time. Harlan and Tom Pittman got into a massive fight over Harriet and Harlan was knifed several times. It is unclear exactly when, but Harriet became pregnant with Harlan's child and according to Harriet, he promised to marry her and did so at his brother's house with a Justice of the Peace named Hollans, a couple of other men, and a slave named Tilda as witnesses. The records of Boyle County have been searched from

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<sup>1</sup> [Scotland County, MO 1860 Census](#)

top to bottom and it has been the conclusion that this was never an actual marriage. It would seem to me that Harlan staged the wedding to keep Harriet away from other men and to himself, as well as give some legitimacy to Harriet's pregnancy. After this "wedding" Harlan found out that Tom Pittman was again seeing Harriet and in a rage killed Pittman. (See all Boyle depositions).

John Harlan was arrested and just as the trial was about to start, Harriet left Boyle County with her Aunts to live in Scotland County, MO with her mother. The child she had with Harlan had apparently been born, but died as the result of a drowning in either a spring or a well (all Boyle depositions). It was the opinion of one of the special examiners (and I concur) that Harriet was sent away by Harlan so that there were no witnesses to the murder that could testify at his trial. Harriet would forever claim to be the wife of Harlan. One definitely gets the feeling from her depositions that she firmly believes that she was married to Harlan even though all those involved were convinced she never was, and she tried to cover up the fact she had a baby out of wedlock, for obvious reasons. In retrospect, she could have saved herself and her children a lot of difficulty if she had never claimed to be married prior to her marriage to James HC Rodgers. This was one of the reasons the government was challenging her and her son John Ray Rodgers' Civil War pension claim. She was claiming she was married before she was married to James HC and under her circumstances, if she was never divorced from John Harlan by the time she married James HC, she could never claim to be James HC's wife or claim any of his pension money or estate. Alas, she was never married to Harlan by law and after an extensive investigation, this was shown. Ultimately though, she would show up at her mother's home in Scotland County along about 1855.

Harriet arrived in Scotland County, Missouri probably in the early spring of 1855. She had just fled Boyle County, Kentucky, a life as a prostitute, and a perceived husband's murder trial. According the Martha Martin deposition, she traveled by train and then by boat up the Ohio River to the Mississippi River most likely landing at Keokuk, Illinois and then traveling down what is now US 136 to Memphis. Her mother was living near Memphis at the time. Ironically, this was just about the time that James HC and Mary Ann Moore Rodgers had started to have difficulties in their lives. James HC is on record in the Circuit Court at about this time of being charged with several counts of illegal gambling<sup>2</sup> and public intoxication.<sup>3</sup> He seemed to be frequenting bars and taverns and "frolicking" in and around Memphis. James HC was even illegally selling alcohol and was arrested for this with quite a list of customers and a record of what was purchased.<sup>4</sup> I am also of the opinion that at this time he had already met Lucinda Ridge and then her daughter Harriet Harlan. Both were prostitutes in their past, and it seems clear that one, or both of them was having an affair with James HC Rodgers. Very shortly, James HC Rodgers life would take a further turn for the worse as his first marriage would end and he would be charged with first degree murder.

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<sup>2</sup> [James HC Rodgers Gambling #1](#)

<sup>3</sup> [James HC Rodgers Intoxication #1](#)

<sup>4</sup> [James HC Rodgers Bootleg](#)