

THE DIVORCE

By end of 1855, James HC Rodgers and Mary Ann Moore Rodgers had three children: Nancy Jane Rodgers was five, Robert W. was three, and William Henry was almost one. Mary Ann was also very pregnant with her fourth child who would be born January 16th, 1856; her name would be Sally Ann Rodgers named after James HC's sister.

1856 seems to be the year everything would change. During this year, James HC and Mary Ann would separate at some point in time and by spring of 1857, James HC had filed for divorce claiming that since late 1856, Mary Ann had threatened to poison him and his children and cause serious harm to him. The truly bizarre part of this whole thing, was the fact that Mary Ann is accusing him of having “criminal intercourse” with a Mrs. Lucinda Ridge (Harriet's mother), and “with various other woman.”¹

Never-the-less, this is where Lucinda and Harriet enter the picture. Mary Ann has accused James HC of having an affair with Harriet's mother and shortly James HC would marry Harriet. Speculation on my part, but is it not possible that James HC was having an affair with Harriet at her mother's “place?” It is too much of a coincidence, in my opinion, that James HC is accused of having an affair with his second wife's mother, and very lurid, indeed. It seems far more likely to me that Mary Ann was simply mistaken in her charge against James HC and named Harriet's mother who was undoubtedly running a brothel in and around Memphis just as she had in Boyle. Indeed, if James HC was having an affair with Lucinda, and then married her daughter Harriet, there was a very lewd and lascivious relationship going on!

¹ [James HC and Mary Ann Rodgers Divorce Decree](#)

By February, 1857 James HC and Mary Ann had separated and were officially divorced in May of 1857. Robert W. Rodgers, James HC's oldest son claimed that he lived with his Uncle Dave Pruitt, (Dave married Polly Wilkerson, James HC mother's sister²) from the time of his parents separation and their divorce and that after the divorce he, Nancy Jane, and William Henry lived with their father James HC and that Sally Ann went to live with their mother Mary Ann because "she was a baby." Robert went on to talk about the day that his father brought home his new wife, Harriet Jane Harlan.³ James HC was still being arrested for gambling and drinking and was gearing up for the big New Years celebration coming up.

² [Joseph Wilkerson Group Sheet](#)

³ [Robert W. Rodgers Deposition pg. 1](#)