

LUCINDA CAMLIN RIDGE NEEDHAM

On August 17th, 1896, Lucinda Needham was interviewed by Special Examiner W.H. Nehus at the home of her son John Ridge in Memphis, Missouri. She states she is seventy-four years old and the mother of Harriet J. Colvin. (Just as a side note, if Lucinda and Harriet are accurate in giving their ages, it means Lucinda was thirteen or fourteen years old when she gave birth to Harriet.) Lucinda states that about 1853 she moved to Missouri and that Harriet was about twenty years old and did not accompany her to Missouri, but lived with the sisters of her second husband John Ridge whose names were Annie McKenzie, Polly Taylor, and Eliza and Mary Ridge near Danville, Kentucky. Lucinda goes on to say she hasn't heard from these women since the Civil War and doesn't know if they are alive or not.

Mr. Nehus asks Lucinda if Harriet was married prior to her marriage to James HC Rodgers and Lucinda states that as far as she knew Harriet was never married to anyone but did admit that Harriet stayed in Kentucky because she was seeing John Harlan and he had promised to marry her. Lucinda says that Harriet never talked about him after she came to Missouri about 1855. Lucinda confirms again that Harriet was pregnant by John Harlan before Lucinda left for Missouri and that the child drown in a "spring that he fell into by accident." Lucinda says she is sure Harriet was not married to Harlan because first off, Harriet would have told her, and second off, Harriet never would have left because the Harlan family was quite wealthy and Harriet would have been entitled to a lot of property and money as his wife, ex-wife, or widow.¹

Mr. Nehus reports to his superiors he is under the impression there never was a marriage and questions Harriet truthfulness and puts forth the opinion that Harriet is simply trying to conceal the fact that she was "in the family way" outside of marriage in

¹ [Lucinda Needham 8/17/1896](#)

an attempt to save face and to save character. He recommends further investigation into the situation with the sisters of John Ridge, if they can be found, and of John Harlan's family.² In the short term it doesn't seem like this was going to happen and a long time passed before the next deposition, which is without a doubt my favorite, the deposition of Robert W. Rodgers, my great-great grandfather's brother.

² [Special Examiner W.H. Nehus 8/22/1896](#)