

Harrodsburg women raid gambling game

"Gambling in Harrodsburg has received a black eye and that kind of business will be dull henceforth, thanks to the efforts of the good ladies of the town." *Bloomington Telephone*, Jan. 17, 1899.

The unusual late-night activity at the Thomas Hays grocery in Harrodsburg may have been what caught the attention of the good ladies of the Christian Church at Harrodsburg in the late winter of 1899. Or perhaps it was that family paychecks didn't seem to stretch as far as they used to.

Whatever gave rise to the rumor that Hays was providing more than groceries at his store, the women organized themselves to confirm or disprove their suspicions. The plan of action took the form of an 11 o'clock raid.

Their pounding on the door of Hays' store brought him down the stairs to face a committee of outraged womanhood, which included his very own wife. It is apparent that the *Telephone* reporter who wrote the front-page article about the incident enjoyed himself enormously. "While they (the women) were parleying with Hays, a number of forms that resembled men, dropped from a second story window to avoid the raid that was threatened and disappeared in the gloom."

Cornered, Hays apparently let the women through the doorway. Upstairs they found "a round table with a slot in the top,



Looking back

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while on its surface were strewn cards and poker chips."

The *Telephone* reported that Hays was duly indicted by the grand jury for keeping a gaming house. A ringleader of the raid, Carrie Holmes, 42, gave some interesting testimony in a hastily constructed case. ("The state was not ready for trial, but Judge Martin decided to take the evidence on the installment plan, and hear two ladies who were present as witnesses to testify.")

Mrs. Holmes must have given the prosecutor a bit of a jolt when, after recounting the events of the evening in question, she added that, "... Hays had to run a game as business was dull and he had to make a living. During her testimony, Mrs. Holmes created some merriment for the court and spectators by the positive manner and the way she detailed conversations held on that occasion."

It should be noted that Hays entered a general denial of the charges. The *Telephone* did not inform its readers of the name of his attorney, but on the day of the actual trial, Hays had had second thoughts about pleading

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