

# Hanging of Tom Hayden

By Jerry Long  
c.2024



**“Ohio County”, by the Homemakers Clubs of Ohio County, KY,  
Back Home In Kentucky, Vol. 5, No. 5,  
September / October 1982, Bowling Green, KY, p.21:**

The first hanging in Ohio County was in 1826, when Francis Irvin was found guilty of shooting William Maxwell and hiding his body in a creek bed...

The second hanging was in 1896. A black man named Hayden shot his girlfriend, Dena Logan of McHenry, during a lover's quarrel. My father witnessed this hanging. He said that people came from all directions, some coming the night before to be there early. He recalled that Hayden appeared so remorseful over what he had done and he said a prayer while on the platform. Many of the people wanted to shake his hand.



**Hartford Republican, Hartford, KY, Friday, 15 June 1894, p.3:**

Tom Hayden, colored, of Echols, came up Saturday to play in a game of base ball between the Hayti base ball club and the Taylor Mines colored nine and during the game Sheriff Stevens pounced upon him with a bench warrant and lodged him in jail. He s accused of cutting Lewis Clevere.



**Hartford Republican, Hartford, KY, Friday, 22 October 1897, p.2:**

Meager reports of a killing, which occurred at McHenry Wednesday, have come to us, the real facts of which are not obtainable. It seems from report that Tom Hayden and a woman, both colored, had a dispute over a child, when Hayden drew a revolver and fired, killing her instantly, Up to going to press Hayden had not been arrested.



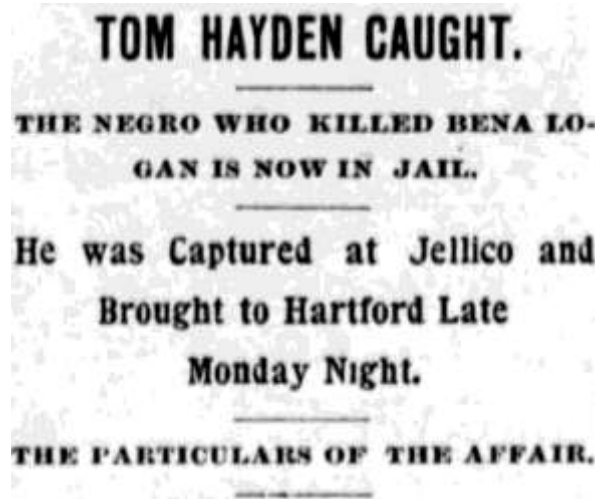
**Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, Wednesday, 27 October 1897, p.3:**

McHenry

Oct. 25. – There was a sad and serious shooting took place in the suburbs of the town near John Glovers residence Wednesday evening. Tom Haden shot and killed Bena Logan. All concerned in the affair wero colored citizens. Bloodhounds were brought here to try and locate the murderer, but they failing to trace him, he is still at large.



**Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, Wednesday, 15 December 1897, p.3:**



Tom Hayden, the negro who brutally murdered Bena Logan, a colored girl, at McHenry, the first week in October, and who escaped at the time, was caught Monday and brought to Hartford about midnight the same day. He is now in the Ohio county jail.

The story of the murder and the capture is a thrilling one. Hayden was seen by a HERALD man yesterday morning in his cell and asked if he had anything to say. He made no attempt to deny the killing, but said it was done in a drunken passion and he was awful sorry about it. He said he in company with several other darkies was at the Logan girl's house, drinking wine, and that in the course of the conversation the girl became offended at something he said. She called him a vile name and intimated that his mother was a woman without honor. Quick as a flash he drew a pistol and fired at her, the bullet piercing her heart, and she died instantly. Hayden says he didn't fire but ono shot and that there were four loads left in the pistol. It was reported that Bena was Hayden's sweetheart, but he denies this and says she was only an acquaintance.

Immediately after the shooting, Hayden fled. The whole community of colored people was aroused and if he had been caught, his life would have been but a matter of a few minutes. There has been some talk of lynching him by men of his own race, and a few weeks ago a crowd of darkies from the mines was in Hartford and made dire threats in this direction. Governor Bradley offered a reward of \$100 for his capture, and this was supplemented by a puree of \$50, made up by colored men.

Mr. Jack Chandler, the barber at Beaver Dam, heard of the rewards and took an interest in the matter. Hayden escaped to the mountains of Tennessee and engaged himself as a miner in the Proctor coal mines, near Jellico, Tenn. Chandler received information that Hayden was in hiding

near Jellico and seeing Deputy United States Marshal G. C. Thompson, he asked the latter to assist in the arrest, as he was going to Jellico on business. Deputy. Marshal Thompson had secured a description of the murderer before he left Beaver Dam. Shortly after his arrival in Jellico he paid admission and entered a hall in which a troupe of comedians were performing, much to the amusement of a crowded house of negro miners. Thompson, mingling in the crowd, caught a glimpse of Hayden, who was sitting at the farthest end of the hall. He walked to Hayden's seat and hastily told the murderer that he was under arrest and ordered him to surrender. Hayden was unarmed, but nevertheless resisted arrest. With the aid of several men, the fugitive was finally handcuffed and taken to the rear end of the hall.

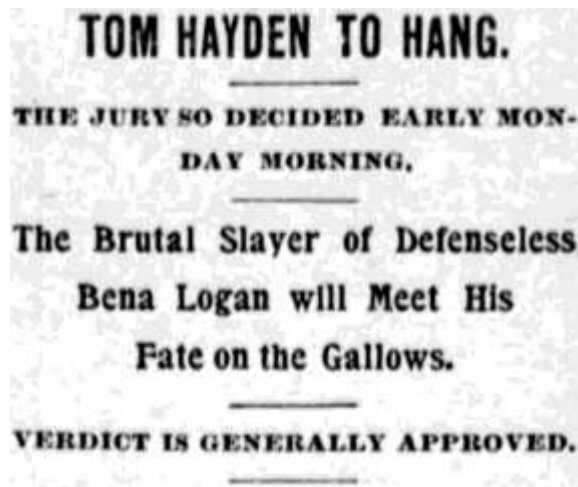
The performance soon came to a close and it became noised about that Tom Hayden, the murderer of Bena Logan, had been captured. A mob of negroes soon organized and started towards the Deputy and his prisoner. By adroit movements the Marshal managed to escape the mob and deputizing half a dozen men to help him he guarded the prisoner through the night. He boarded the first train to Louisville and wired barber Chandler of the capture. Mr. Chandler left immediately for Louisville and brought his prisoner, securely band-cuffed, to Beaver Dam and thence to Hartford.

Hayden is an intelligent looking negro, with blue eyes and light complexion. Ho says he has several times been taken for a "dago," and prides himself upon the fact that he has "gone to school." Ho seems very much "broken up" over the murder and the capture, and his voice trembles as he talks about it. He realizes his situation and seems ready for whatever fate has in store for him.

The talk of lynching has about died down and it is to be hoped that it will not be revived. There is no necessity for any rash action and the law should take its course. Hayden is safely in jail and his escape is improbable. In due time he will be given a fair trial and he will receive the full measure of justice.



Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, Wednesday, 23 March 1898, p.3:



And Hartford is to have a hanging.  
This has been decided by twelve good men and true, and the subject named.

When the case of the Commonwealth vs. Tom Hayden, was called in the Ohio Circuit Court, few people doubted but that the trial would result in a verdict of the death penalty.

Tom Hayden, a mulatto, killed Bona Logan, a colored girl, at McHenry, the first week in last October. The crime was a most brutal and inexcusable one. For some time Hayden had been paying bis attentions to the Logan girl, but she disliked him and plainly showed her distaste for his company. This only served to arouse his jealous anger and he took occasion to push himself upon her society at every opportunity. Upon the day of the killing he was at her house, in company with several other darkies. A trip was suggested by one of the party, but Bena said if Tom was going she would stay at home. This angered him and he upbraided her with very abusive and insulting language. He finally gave her a brutal blow on the side of the head and called her a vile name. She put her apron to her face to quiet the stinging pain, and replied that her parents were as respectable as his. He dearly saw that his case was np with her and that she bad no use for him at all. Her tears and her words seemed to madden him and he reached in his left hip-pocket (being left-handed), pulled out a pistol and shot her through the heart. She screamed and fell and lived about five minutes after being shot.

Hayden escaped and was captured in the eastern part of Kentucky about the middle of last December and brought to Hartford and lodged in jail. There was absolutely no sympathy for the negro and no lawyers would offer to defend him. The law, however, vouchsafes to every man a fair trial and the court appointed Messrs. E. T. Miller and E. P. Neal to defend Hayden. Evidence was commenced Friday morning and the jury took the case Saturday afternoon. They could not arrive at a quick decision. Six of the twelve men were for imprisonment for life and six for banging. The imprisonment contingent, however, were not very strong in their convictions, feeling that the negro deserved hanging, but disliking to affix their names to the death verdict. This feeling was finally overcome and the death penalty was agreed upon.

The jury brought in their verdict about 8:30 o'clock Monday morning. Hayden listened to the reading of the few words that doomed him to death with stoical indifference, but broke down upon being taken back to jail and cried bitterly. He asked for somebody to come and pray with him, which request was granted. Later he calmed down and seemed to take matters coolly.

Judge Owen will fix the day of his execution within a few days, but it is likely that it will be several months yet before Hayden will be hung. The scaffold will likely be erected in the park adjoining the jail and the hanging will be visible to many people.

The verdict seems to be received with general satisfaction and we have heard no adverse comments. Hayden is a negro of desperately bad character, and his crime was without any extenuating circumstances whatever. It is the general opinion that he received full justice. The jury that convicted him was composed of the following gentlemen:

Messrs. J. H. B. Carson, C. T. Whittinghill, J. L. Miller, C. W. Butler, Jasper Patton, Flem Stevens, H. C. Felix, A. L. Westerfield, Stephen Duke, Ham Barnes, R. A. Stewart, James A. Baird.

Hartford never had but one legal hanging before in its history and that was about seventy years ago, when a man named Irving was hung for killing a man named Maxwell. Press Davis, a negro, was sentenced to be hung here about fifteen years ago for killing a negro raftsman, but escaped from jail before the day of execution.



**Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, Wednesday, 13 July 1898, p.3:**



## **TOM HAYDEN EXECUTED.**

**THE MURDERER OF BENA LOGAN PAYS  
THE PENALTY ON THE SCAFFOLD.**

**A Warning to Others---Something  
of the Bloody Deed and  
its Perpetrator.**

**THE TRAP DOOR SPRUNG AT 10:01 A. M.**

The crime for which Tom Hayden surrendered his life on the scaffold here Monday was brutal and the speedy action taken by the law should be commended by all. On the 20th day of October, 1897, he murdered a poor, helpless negro girl by the name of Bena Logan, who was visiting the family of John Glover, of McHenry, On the afternoon of the day of the killing a crowd of darkies had assembled at John Glover's and among the others was Tom Hayden and Bena Logan. Bena Logan, it seems, was considered the belle of the colored society and Tom wanted to talk to her and on her refusal of his proffered attention, Hayden became enraged and undertook to force his attention. She, still protesting started in company with others to a neighbor's to relieve her of his company. But Tom being a very determined character, followed her as far as the yard gate and insisted that he be permitted to go with her, and on her refusal he slapped her in the face and while she stood thus, crying with her apron over her face Hayden deliberately pulled his pistol and shot, sending the ball through Bena's heart. Seeing what he had done and realizing his deed he at once left for parts unknown.

Many of the white people joined the darkies in their persistent search for Tom on that evening and the next day and had he been found, there would have been no banging at Hartford last Monday. He made good his escape, but was captured at the Jellico mines in Eastern Kentucky by Mr. W. F. Chandler, of Beaver Dam, a detective. He was brought to Hartford by Mr. Chandler

and lodged in jail. There was strong talk of the friends of the dead gill coming here and taking him from jail and lynching him, but be it said to their credit, this was not done.

The case was tried at the last March term of the Ohio Circuit Court and twelve of Ohio county's best citizens found him guilty and fixed his punishment at death. The case was taken to the Court of Appeals by his attorneys, E. P. Neal and E. T. Miller, who had been appointed by the court to defend him. Notwithstanding the efforts of his able counsel, the judgment of the lower court was affirmed and after thirty days had elapsed the Governor fixed July 11th, 1898, as the day for the execution. As the day approached it was plain to be seen that the Sheriff was going to have everything in perfect readiness. The scaffold and enclosure was completed on Wednesday before and a strong guard of the sturdy men were selected to keep the large crowd back from the enclosure that surrounded the gallows. But, be it said to the credit of the good people of Ohio county, these guards had nothing to do but sit around at their different posts, chatting and talking with a passing friend, for there was never a more orderly set of people in Hartford for any occasion.

Out of this vast crowd, with full access to four saloons, there were only four arrests made by the town marshal or his deputies and this was in the afternoon after the hanging, Every one seemed to recognize the gravity of the occasion and so conducted himself.

This is the first hanging Ohio county has had since 1826. Pres Davis, who killed a man on Green river, near Smallhouse, was sentenced to be hung here in 1882, but made good his escape and afterward died.

Early in the morning Tom's coffin had been placed under the rear of the scaffold and the guards were placed at their stations around the jail and enclosure and remained there until after the execution, This hour was awaited with abated breath by the enormous crowd that surged and crowded one another about in order to get a glimpse of the condemned man,

A great clamor was made for Hayden to make his statement on the jail doorsteps, but this was not acceded to by the Sheriff for fear that Hayden might say something that would call forth a controversy between him and some of the witnesses who Tom claimed had misrepresented the facts on the witness stand.

At 8:30 o'clock Sheriff Stevens and his deputies left the court house with the rope and black cap and went over to the jail.

Fully three thousand people were crowding around, The road, court house yard, the trees close around the jail were full of people, but the crowd was very orderly and well behaved. The parting between Hayden and his brother-in-law was very effective, he completely broke down and cried like a child, telling him to meet him in Heaven. Revs. G. W. Drane and L. W. Miles, colored, were constantly with him. Rev. Miles read the 95th Psalm in the jail. Sheriff Stevens arrived and Hayden asked how long he had to live and he was informed that the time had arrived. Jailer Black unlocked the huge iron door and Hayden stepped out to begin his march to death. Jailer Black applied the hand cuffs on him and Sheriff Stevens read the death warrant which was listened to by Hayden very attentively. On reaching the scaffold Hayden made the following talk:

Gentlemen. – I do not know, but I will say this much, as a matter of course it is best for me to die this way; I came into this world just like other men, but I go out of this world without holding anything against anybody. I know that God has pardoned me of my every sin, and I hope that you people will prepare to meet me in Heaven, and I hope this will be a lesson to all of you boys, and that you will quit carousing around and quit going to places where they drink; I know I used to love to drink too well, and by mistake all has now changed, but I hope and trust that you people will prepare to meet me in Heaven. Now if you people have anything to ask me I will answer your questions, if not I am ready.

At 9:40 Rev. G. W. Drane read a passage of scripture. Rev. Miles read a song and then joined in singing with Rev. Drane, Hayden standing by with downcast eyes, seemed to be in reverent prayer and tears were seen trickling down his cheeks as he would think of his end being near, at the close of the song Hayden knelt upon the trap door and offered up an intelligent and fervent prayer to God asking that his soul be taken to Heaven, ending his prayer at 9:55 he asked to tell the crowd good-bye and almost all the crowd in the enclosure went up and shook hands with him, his parting words to all were to meet him in Heaven, after telling the crowd he was informed that it was time for him to die.

At 9:58 he stepped upon the trap door and he was bound and the black cup pulled over his face after which he said good-bye again and at 10:01 the trap door was sprung and he dropped into eternity. Drs. Ford, Pendleton, McDowell, Bean, Patterson, Tichenor, Nall and all other physicians pronounced him dead at 10:13. There was a division of opinion amongst the Doctors as to whether the drop broke Tom's neck. Some said it did while others said there was only a stretching of the spinal cord which would have the same result. Be that as it may the death was not caused from strangulation for there was not a struggle or a motion of the body after the drop, save a slight twitching of the toes, which rested lightly on the ground and a very slight schrug of the shoulders at the end of five minutes. Everything worked perfectly except there had been a slight miscalculation as to the length of the rope. It was intended that his feet should be eighteen inches off the ground, but in coiling the rope it being so large the kinks were evidently not cut and when drop of 4 1/2 feet was made Tom's weight caused the body to drop lower than was aimed for. A shovel was secured and some dirt taken but allowing his toes to hang dear.

Sheriff Stevens, his deputies and Mr. Geo. Bungler, who pulled the lever that sent Tom's soul to its final resting place, all deserve praise for the neatness and dispatch with which everything was done. There was not the slightest hitch anywhere.

The anxious crowd on the outside now requested to be permitted to view the remains, but were denied the privilege because the relatives of the deceased objected. The remains were then taken in charge by his relatives and taken in the hearse to the tunnel hill burying grounds near Echols, this county, where interment took place.

#### NOTES.

There were six colored and forty-four white people witnessed the execution [note: inside the enclosure].

Mr. H. O. Schroeter, the photographer, was on hand and took snap shots of the prisoner while on the scaffold.

Tom Hayden, the condemned, was about the coolest person of the whole fifty within the enclosure during the preparation for the final drop.

Mr. Arthur Buskill, the peer of any stenographer in this section, will accept our thanks for his assistance in getting a report of what transpired while the condemned was on the scaffold.

We are indebted to our efficient jeweler, Mr. Camm Sutphin, for a most perfect drawing of the scaffold, & c., which is found in this article. This was carved on a piece of wood and only represents his second attempt at anything of the kind.



**See also**

- “Hayden Hangs July 11: The Death Warrant Received By Sheriff Stevens”, Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, Wednesday, 15 June 1898, p.3.
- “The Law Will Be Upheld” and “Private Execution”, Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, Wednesday, 6 July 1898, p.2.
- “The Gallows and Enclosure About Completed”, Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, Wednesday, 6 July 1898, p.3.



**Fogle’s Papers: A History of Ohio County, Kentucky,  
 McDowell A. Fogle, Ohio County Historical Society, Inc.,  
 Hartford, KY, 1981, pp.165-167:**

The Second Hanging – The other man legally executed in Ohio county, the mulatto, Tom Hayden, paid the penalty for a crime dictated by jealousy as contrasted with the revenge which was the animus of the crime for which Irvin paid the penalty.

Hayden had been paying court to the Logan negress, who lived at McHenry, but had met with little favor. During the first week in October 1897 he became enraged when she again spurned his attentions and shot her to death. He fled the scene of the crime before he could be taken into custody and was not apprehended until in December he was found by W. F. Chandler, a Beaver Dam detective, working in a mine at Jellico, Tenn., arrested, brought back to Hartford and imprisoned in the county jail.

Hayden's trial was held at the March 1898 term of the Ohio circuit court. Judge W. T. Owen presided and the state was represented by Commonwealth's Attorney, J. Edwin Rowe, and County Attorney M. L. Heavrin. Hayden's attorneys, appointed by the court were E. P. Neal and E. T. Miller. The jurors were J. H. B. Carson, C. T. Whittinghill, J. L. Miller, C. W. Butler, Jasper Patton, Flem Stevens, H. C. Felix, A. L. Westerfield, Stephen Duke, Ham Barnes, R. A. Stewart and James A. Baird. The trial began Friday morning, the case went to the jury Saturday afternoon and a verdict of guilty, with the death penalty, was returned the following Monday at 8:30 o'clock. It was reported that the jurors' delay in reporting was due to the fact that six of them were insisting on a life sentence. After the judgment of the local court was affirmed by the court of appeals, the Governor fixed July 11 as the execution date.

The scaffold and enclosure for the hanging were completed the preceding Wednesday on the jail common just about where the public library building is now located.

The Hartford Herald described the hanging as follows:

"Early in the morning Tom's coffin had been placed under the rear of the scaffold and the guards placed at their stations around the jail and enclosure where they remained until after the execution. This hour was awaited with bated breath by the enormous crowd that surged and crowded one another about in order to get a glimpse of the condemned man.

"A great clamor was made for Hayden to make a statement on the jail doorsteps, but this was not acceded to by Sheriff S. T. Stevens for fear that the condemned man might say something that would call forth a controversy between him and some of the witnesses who Tom claimed had misrepresented the facts on the witness stand.

"At 8:30 o'clock Sheriff Stevens and his deputies left the court house with the rope and black cap and went over to the jail. Fully three thousand people were crowding around. The street,



court house yard and the trees close around the jail were full of people, but the crowd was very orderly and well behaved. Out of this vast crowd, with full access to four saloons there were only four arrests made by Town Marshal Samuel L. Casebier or his deputies and this was in the afternoon after the hanging.

"During his last hours, Revs. G. W. Drane and L. W. Miles, colored, were constantly with Hayden, reading Scripture and praying with the condemned man. When the sheriff and his aides arrived at the jail, Jailer T. H. Black unlocked the huge iron door and Hayden, handcuffed, stepped out to begin the march of death. On reaching the scaffold, the sheriff read the death warrant to Hayden who then made his final statement, expressing resignation, repentance and conversion, disclaiming any malice toward anyone, advising other young fellows to eschew drink and bad company and expressing hope of meeting the spectators in Heaven.

"The ministers again read a passage of Scripture and joined in • song, the condemned man standing with downcast eyes, apparently in reverent prayer as the tears trickled down his cheeks. He then knelt on the trap-door and offered a fervent prayer that his soul be taken to Heaven. He asked to be allowed to bid farewell to the spectators in the enclosure, who had been admitted by the sheriff on special permits and consisted of six colored and forty-four white people and nearly all of them shook his hand.

"At 9:58 Hayden stepped upon the trap door, was bound and the black cap pulled over his face after which he said good-bye again and at 10:01 the trap door was sprung by George Bunger, special deputy. At 10:13 he was pronounced dead by Drs. Ford, Pendleton, McDowell, Beau, Patterson, Tichenor, Nall and others." Death apparently was caused by the fall rather than by strangulation in spite of the fact that, by a miscalculation as to the length of the rope, the dead man's toes, following the 4-1/2 foot drop, barely touched the ground, but some dirt was taken out with a shovel and his feet hung clear.

A request by members of the crowd outside the enclosure to view the body was refused by Hayden's relatives, though photographer, H. O. Schroeter, was permitted to take snap shots of the condemned man on the scaffold. According to the Herald, Hayden was the coolest person present.

