

From the "Centralized Abney Archives"

# "The Abney Family Researcher"

Newsletter

March, 1998 Volume II, Issue III

*Dedicated to discovery, correction, and communication of ABNEY & related family information since November, 1996*

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## *"The Willesley Muniment Room Papers" (Part II)*

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*A Message from R.R. Abney Jr., Editor*

Dear Cousins & Fellow Researchers,

As many of ya'll know, I had been forced to reducing the newsletter to email only. Several of our dear cousins suggested recruiting volunteers to snail-mail the newsletter to our non-email cousins. That being done, we have received enough volunteers that we can resume mailing to some 80 cousins who do not have email capability. I am still awaiting the government's ruling on my doctor's decision to place me on permanent disability. Anyway, the funds are low and all of our volunteers deserve a great, big, THANK YOU! Anyone who has not sent me their lineage, please do so. If we don't get any response from you, we'll have to assume you're no longer interested in the newsletter, and in order to save money and work by our volunteers, we'll remove you from our mailing list.

Although we'd lost the majority of our mailing list for the past two issues, we were still making strides toward additions & corrections of our family history. This is the good news. There are some very interesting discoveries being made in the ABNEY/WITT lines. Interestingly enough, the ABNEY Family, or I should write, a branch thereof, became very close to the WITT Family in the early to mid-1700's. As late as 1884, one Roland WITT married one Martha Ellen TIPTON, both of Kentucky. Martha was a daughter of John J. TIPTON Jr. & Rebecca Jane ABNER/ABNEY. I find it amazing that these two families could have remained close for well over a century.

With this issue, we will conclude our study of the "Willesley Muniment Room Papers" discovered by Cousin Joe H. BAKER of Houston, Texas. This last set of documents should be of more interest to our readers as they contain more ABNEY's in them.

I am also adding a column in this issue called "Abney's Law of Genealogy". It is a column I wrote for two years, as published in *the Historian* magazine, 1991-1992. "Abney's Law" is like "Murphy Law", but humorously geared, of course, toward the problems we've all encountered in our genealogical endeavours. I add this to break up the monotony of our genealogical problems. I hope you enjoy this column.

Next issue we'll discuss William ABNEY "the Frontier Defender". This should be very interesting to most of our readers, but particularly to those descendants of Capt. Nathaniel ABNEY & "Gentleman John" ABNEY.

Those receiving this newsletter may feel free to copy and distribute it amongst our other cousins, as well as to libraries, archives, friends, &c.

Your cousin,

*R.R. Abney Jr.*

FORTITER ET HONESTE

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Unresolved Problems presented in Previous Issues of *the Abney  
Family Researcher*

1. 1790 SC Charles ABNEY - T\*
3. Leonard ABNEY of TN - RR
4. Elizabeth "Charity" M. ABNEY - RR
5. John Andy ABNEY - RR
8. Lizzie P. ABNEY - NR
9. James T. ABNEY - NR
10. Mary Agnes ABNEY - NR
11. Soleane ABNEY - Resolved\*
12. William Madison ABNEY - T\*
13. Absalom Troup ABNEY - RR
14. Dannett ABNEY Sr. & Mary LEE - T\*
15. John Jefferson ABNEY & Sarah ADKINS - NR
16. Joshua ABNEY & Patsy PHELPS - T
17. Charles ABNEY (gs/o Dannett ABNEY) - RR
18. Dorcas ABNEY - T
19. Pauline ABNEY - T
20. Nancy ABNEY - T
21. Duel of Dr. Nathaniel ABNEY - T
22. Another "Patsy" PHELPS - Resolved
23. Mary Ann HOLMES GAUSDEN - NR
24. Nathaniel ABNEY m. Elizabeth BOULWARE - RR
25. Nathaniel ABNEY m. Mary BROOKS - RR
26. Parentage of Rhoda Susan ABNEY - NR

27. Parentage of Pvt. William ABNEY - RR
28. Parentage of Pvt. Paul ABNER - RR
29. Did Ursula ABNEY m. William WITT - NR
30. Parentage of James R. "Neighbor" ABNEY - T\*\*
31. Parentage of Drucilla Lane ABNEY - T\*\*

**NR = No Response**  
**RR = Responses Received**  
**T = Theory Formulated**  
**T\*\* = Theory Formulated...**

**(as presented in the previous issue of AFR)**

*\* See A Compendium of the Inaugural Year*

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## The Willesley Muniment Room Papers - Part II

*"If a lawyer had access to the Muniment Room Papers, Willesley would not have passed out of the ABNEY Family" - Samuel MAYS, 1929*

In our last newsletter, we discussed those documents which the author has taken the liberty of calling "The Antiquity of Willesley" from the late 13<sup>th</sup> or early 14<sup>th</sup> century to the early 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The most confusing information received from those documents was contained in Doc. I:8 wherein one William d'INGWARDBY passes Willesley Manor to his brother Richard d'INGWARDBY and Isabelle, his wife, circa 1333. We've received no response on the query as to whom these brothers may be.

In Doc. I:12 (ca. 1491), we see John ABNEY & Margaret, his wife, receiving land in Willesley. [John was a son of William, styled Lord ex-parte of Willesley. His father, John d'ABNEY became the first ABNEY Lord ex-parte of Willesley ca. 1419.]

In Doc. I:13 (ca. 1536), George ABNEY [son of John ABNEY & Margaret, above] and his father-in-law, John WOLSELEY are two of six plaintiffs involved in a land dispute in Willesley.

Those were, what this author considers, the highlights of the ABNEY Family interest in these early documents. Now on to the second set of documents which the author has styled, "Pre-Hastings Willesley". All documents are unavailable. We can only proceed on the translator's notes:

Doc. II:1 (1670) An Indenture-old English, small writing, contains names, James ABNEY & Francis, his wife, plus Ed. ABNEY.

[Lord James ABNEY was a son of Lord George ABNEY by his first wife, Margery LOWE. Lord George ABNEY was a son of Lord James ABNEY & Mary MILWARD. The latter Lord James ABNEY was a son of Lord George ABNEY & Ellen WOLSELEY of Doc. I:13. This "Francis" mentioned as Lord James ABNEY's wife was Frances TODD, his second wife. Lord James' first wife was Jane MAINWARING. Edward ABNEY was the heir apparent, son of Lord James by his first wife, Jane.]

Doc. II:2 (1670) An Indenture, same condition as II:1. Ed. ABNEY, heir apparent of James ABNEY, Co. Stafford. John MAINWARING of Stokes - Ed. MAINWARING, Samuel STAPLES (?) of Nottingham - Ed. ABNEY & Thomas ABNEY

[Lord James ABNEY is the same as in Doc. II:1, as is Sir Edward ABNEY, heir apparent. Edward MAINWARING is the father-in-law of Lord James ABNEY. Sir Thomas ABNEY is Sir Edward ABNEY's full brother (both sons of Jane MAINWARING, Lord James ABNEY's first wife)]

Doc. II:3 (est. 1541-1635) Much older English - Jacob (James) ABNEY, Michael LOWE, George ABNEY. Translator's note: This document could be in Latin.

[Jacob ABNEY is Lord James ABNEY whose son, George ABNEY, heir apparent, married Michael LOWE's daughter, Margery LOWE.]

Doc. II:4 (undated [Lord James ABNEY lived 1599-1693]) Indenture James ABNEY & Francis, his wife. Ed. ABNEY. same condition as Doc. II:1. [same persons as in Doc. II:1.]

Doc. II:5 (1670) James ABNEY - similar to II:4

Doc. II:6 (date-see II:4) long & narrow section-very small writing. James ABNEY, John MAINWARING, Ralph ADDOWLEY (?), Samuel STAPLES (?) - similar to II:4.

Doc. II:7 (06 Dec 1665) Reign of Charles II - Indenture between James ABNEY of Derby of Willesley & John MAINWARING, Ed. MAINWARING, Stafford-Samuel STAPLES, Nottingham. Ed. ABNEY, James & Thomas ABNEY. [same persons as Doc. II:2]

Doc. II:8 (16 Dec 1665) Reign of Charles II - James ABNEY, same as Doc. II:7

Doc. II:9 Indenture: generally as Doc. II:8

Doc. II:10 (1662) Same seal as on copy but much later - James ABNEY

Doc. II:11 (undated) Indenture: very small writing, Robert STRETTON, Robert SEABROOKS.

Doc. II:12 (undated) Seems identical to above - John ABNEY & Robert SEABROOKS. [due to the fact that there is no date available on this document, we cannot ascertain who this John ABNEY is. We know that there was a Lord John d'ABNEY liv. in 1419. His grandson, Lord John ABNEY d. 01 Dec 1505. The latter's grandson, John ABNEY (son of Lord George ABNEY & Ellen WOLSELEY) was liv. 07 Apr 1609. This John was not heir to Willesley. His brother James was. Lord James ABNEY had a grandson, John ABNEY liv. 18 Mar 1662. This John was also not heir to Willesley. Considering the wide range of John ABNEY's, it is impossible to know which John and which era. However, if this document were written around the time of Doc. II:14 (see below), then the John ABNEY must be the son of Lord George ABNEY by his second wife, Anne STAPLES.

Doc. II:13 (20 Jun 1666) Ed. ABNEY of Willesley selling part of woods. Benjamin WHITETROFF (ss).

[Sir Edward ABNEY, heir apparent of Willesley, son of Lord George ABNEY & Jane MAINWARING. Sir Edward ABNEY, LL.D., Knight, & Member of Parliament was b. 06 Feb 1631 and d. 03 Jan 1728. He was knighted by King Charles II on 02 Apr 1673.]

Doc. II:14 (1662) John ABNEY, Ed. GODDARD, Thos. GODDARD, Ed. STAFFORD [see Doc. II:12 for explanation of who this John ABNEY might be]

Doc. II:15 Indenture, Sir Ed. ABNEY to Thomas ABNEY. Between Sir Ed. ABNEY and his brother Thomas, in the Reign of Charles II.

[Since Sir Edward ABNEY was already knighted by the time this indenture was written, we know that it was written on or after 02 Apr 1673. This [Sir] Thomas ABNEY became Lord Mayor of London in 1690. Dying on 06 Feb 1721, Sir Thomas ABNEY outlived all of his eleven children.]

Doc. II:16 Indenture as above between Ed. ABNEY and Thomas ABNEY.

Docs. II:17 - II:31 are unavailable. They are written in Latin and/or very old English. The translator has some notes, such as "can't read any of this". Some documents are marked Ed II, Ed III, & H IV. If these are the periods of reigns of the Kings of England, then we're looking at King Edward II (1307-1327), King Edward III (1327-1377), and Henry IV (1399-1413). However, Doc. II:31 has hand-written "late 1500's to 1670's". Nevertheless, none of these documents are helpful as none are legible.

In Conclusion:

From what we've seen here, there is no evidence to support Cousin Samuel MAYS' claim that Willesley would not have passed from the ABNEY Family.

However, we must realize a definite lack of evidence,

here. The last male ABNEY Lord of Willesley was Thomas ABNEY who married Parnell VILLARS. Lord Thomas ABNEY wrote his will in 1789, and dying on 15 Aug 1791, left Willesley to his daughter, Lady Parnell ABNEY. Lady Parnell married Gen. Sir Charles HASTINGS who committed suicide in 1830. They had a son, Sir Charles HASTINGS who was b. 01 Oct 1792.

According to all I've read, Lady Parnell ABNEY HASTINGS was supposed, at her death, to pass Willesley back to the ABNEY Family. However, she passed it to her son who promptly changed his surname to ABNEY-HASTINGS. Thus, he became the first ABNEY-HASTINGS Lord of Willesley, and Willesley passed out of the ABNEY Family forever.

However, the controversy does not end here. It is doubtful the illegible documents would shed any light on the legal dispute, considering the probability that they were written centuries prior to the passage of Willesley out of the ABNEY Family. However, there are, almost without doubt, many documents missing from the Willesley Muniment Room Papers. Could these missing documents prove that Willesley should still be an ABNEY holding? Were these documents lost? Were they intentionally destroyed?

Considering the fact that over two centuries have passed since Willesley became an ABNEY-HASTINGS manor, and countless descendants of the ABNEY family are alive today, it would be futile for any ABNEY to make any attempt to re-gain the lost manor.

However, as a matter of historical and genealogical interest, it would certainly be interesting if the lost documents were recovered, and once and for all time, Willesley is proved to be an ABNEY possession.

Still, the ABNEY Family must take pride in our roots, in our heritage, and in our accomplishments. There are many families descended from the ABNEY's, such as Cousin Joe BAKER, Cousin John HENSELL, Cousin Samuel MAYS, and the like, who, although not surnamed ABNEY, enjoy the fact that they are of the ABNEY Blood through a distaff line. How much more should we enjoy our own male blood and heritage?

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## Problem #32

### Parentage of Clem ABNEY who m. Rebecca Jane ABNEY as her 4<sup>th</sup> husband

On 01 Oct 1895, one Clem ABNEY married Rebecca Jane ABNEY of Kentucky as her fourth husband. Rebecca Jane ABNEY was born 14 Jan 1859, daughter of William Madison ABNEY & Narcissus E. COOPER, both of Kentucky. William Madison ABNEY was a son of Joshua ABNEY & Sarah "Sallie" GRIGGS. Rebecca Jane ABNEY m1. Adam HARRISON on 13 Feb 1879. She m2. William D. CARMILE on 22 Dec 1881. She m3. John Henry CARMILE on 01 Jan 1885. Clem ABNEY, as previously stated, was her 4th husband, married on 01 Oct 1895. Issue of these marriages is unknown to this author. Anyone having additional information [please email us](#).

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## CAA Volunteers

The following cousins deserve a note of recognition. They have volunteered their time and expense to post our newsletters to our non-email cousins. Anyone receiving this newsletter via regular post, and would like to volunteer to mail some newsletters out, please contact me as soon as possible. We still need more volunteers. As new volunteers come forward, we can relieve some of the work and expense of these dear cousins. My special thanks to the following cousins (arranged alphabetically):

***Cousin Richard ABNEY, Cousin Barbara BAILEY, Cousin John BROWN, Cousin Glee BURGHER, Cousin Marjorie DIAMOND, Cousin Ruth DUNHAM, Cousin Ira FRANKLIN, Cousin Barbara INGRAM, Cousin James JOHNSTON, Cousin Laura LAMB, Cousin Myrna LAZENBY, Cousin Bettye LOWRY, Cousin Carol SHRADER, & Cousin Mary SOUTH.***

**Without these dear Volunteers, many of  
you would not be reading this newsletter!**

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## CAA Membership Report

We currently have 75 active members without email capabilities, 5 active members who have email, but are on a system in which they cannot receive the newsletter attachments, and 56 active members receiving our electronic newsletter. This makes a total of 136 active members. Of these 136 members, I only have 60 in the CAA database. A few of these 76 members are cousins whose lineage we've not yet been able to prove. However, most lineage's we know. Therefore, if you've not sent me your lineage heretofore, or at least as much as you know, please do so at your earliest convenience. This will help make our records as complete as possible, and could assist some of our "new" cousins in proving their ancestry. Thank you very much for your kind cooperation.

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## Abney's Law of Genealogy

### "The Missing Book Theory"

*"In a 30-volume set of vital statistics record books in any given library, the book that contains the records of your family has been lost."*

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### "The WITT Newsletter"

The WITT Researchers have been working with me for some months now on the ABNEY/WITT connections, of which there are many. I have found these researchers both knowledgeable, courteous, and very willing to share their information.

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## Thinking about getting E-Mail?

If you are interesting in getting "on-line", as it is referred to in the computer industry, you are making a smart move. Much information can be obtained through the Worldwide Web (www). Of interest to many of our readers, of course, is the genealogy web sites, forums, and databases. Besides electronically "mailing" this newsletter, we often have group discussions about the ABNEY/ABNER Family and related families that most of our CAA Members miss, because they don't have email. Besides that, there are literally thousands (probably millions) of genealogy-related web sites that email users can visit, and gain multitudes of information. While it may seem "scary" at first, your e-mail provider will do all they can to help you get accustomed to the web. I am personally unbiased as to which provider one uses. However, for our purposes here, the reader should beware that the "Juno" system does not support MIME (in other words, you cannot receive "attachments" on your email, such as this newsletter). If you'd like to receive the newsletter via email attachment, please ensure the system you get on has that capability. Also, let me know as soon as possible so that we can take you off the "snail-mail" list and put you on the email list. This will save us time & money, and help reduce the workload of our CAA Volunteers. Don't fear the web! Get on-line and watch your genealogy grow faster than it has ever grown before! If I can do it, anyone can!

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## A Possible Succession of the Lords of Willesley Manor

Following is the author's rendition of the succession of Willesley Manor. The author will be the first to admit that it's accuracy is questionable. There are some periods wherein the succession of Willesley is quite confusing, seeming to belong to someone, but belonging to someone else. The author has seen several accounts of the Lords of Willesley, however, has agreed with none of them. At one point, the author believed his conclusions the most accurate of them all. Now with the discovery and translation of the Willesley Muniment Room Papers, more questions arise. Aside from that, nobody can actually prove how Willesley came to be an ABNEY possession. Did John d'ABNEY marry a daughter and co-heiress of William d'INGWARDBY? Was John de SHEYLE actually John d'ABNEY. The author hopes to get this information known to the ABNEY researchers who are working on the ancestry in England, so that they can, perhaps, offer their views and discoveries. Only by this sharing may we learn (hopefully), the proper succession of Willesley. Nevertheless, herewith is the best the author can provide. We will begin with the first Lord of Willesley that the author is aware of, to wit (continued on page 6):

1. William d'AUBIGNEY, 3<sup>th</sup> Earl of Arundel, died 1221, passed Willesley to his eldest son:
2. William d'AUBIGNEY, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Arundel, passed Willesley to his brother:
3. Hugh d'AUBIGNEY, 5<sup>h</sup> Earl of Arundel, d.s.p. 1243, passed Willesley to his sister, Mabel who married:
4. Robert de TATESHAL, Lord of Willesley in right of his wife, passed Willesley to his son:
5. Michael de TATESHAL, passed Willesley to his daughter, Albreda who married:
6. William d'INGWARDBY. Is this the William who passed Willesley to his brother, Richard? If so:
7. Richard d'INGWARDBY, received Willesley from his brother, William. Somehow, the manor then went to:
8. Nicholas d'INGWARDBY, s/o William d'INGWARDBY. Was he Richard's nephew? Nicholas passed it to:
9. Nicholas d'INGWARDBY, s/o Nicholas. Dying, he left his estate to his daughter, Alice who married:
10. William de BARTON, who would have been Lord of Willesley in right of his wife. However, he evidently d.s.p. and his wife, Alice gave Willesley to her 1<sup>st</sup> cousin, Alice (d/o John d'INGWARDBY). This Alice m:
11. William de SHEYLE of Octorpe. This William would have become Lord of Willesley in right of his wife, Alice d'INGWARDBY, daughter of John d'INGWARDBY, but did he? Here is another very confusing era of Willesley. Was this William actually William d'ALBINI, Lord of Seile & Octorpe? If so, there is a great amount of confusion in the descent of the American ABNEY's. William SHEYLE allegedly descends from the d'ALBINI Lords of Gresley. The American ABNEY's allegedly descend from the d'ABNEY Lords of Hungerton & Wiwell. These are two distinct lines. Anyway, William de SHEYLE, had he been Lord of Willesley, would have passed Willesley to his son:
12. John SHEYLE of Octorpe. Now YEATMAN alleges this John may be the John d'ABNEY who held Willesley. However, if this were the case, why would this John drop his surname SHEYLE and take the d'ABNEY surname? There is also another problem with this theory. In 1398, John gave all he held in Octorpe to one William d'INGWARDBY. Did this

include Willesley? If not, did he also give William the manor at another date? In this scenario, William d'INGWARDBY would have been John SHEYLE's "uncle-in-law". Nevertheless, we find the next Lord of Willesley:

13. William d'INGWARDBY, son of Nicholas d'INGWARDBY, brother of another Nicholas d'INGWARDBY, and uncle to the two Alice's who inherited Willesley, one from her father, Nicholas; the other from her cousin, Alice, daughter of John d'INGWARDBY (brother of this William d'INGWARDBY). It has been alleged that this William died without male issue, and left Willesley to his daughters whose names are not known. One daughter, it is reported, married John d'ABNEY. The other married Thomas de STOKE. If this is true, then Willesley was part-owned by:
14. John d'ABNEY & Thomas de STOKE, Lords ex-parte of Willesley. From here, John d'ABNEY passed his portion of Willesley to his son:
15. William ABNEY, who was evidently Lord ex-parte of Willesley with Thomas de STOKE, allegedly his uncle. Apparently, this William, or his son, John, gained STOKE's portion of the manor as we now find:
16. John ABNEY, sole Lord of Willesley who married Margaret (or Mary). It is not actually known how John came to be sole Lord of Willesley, but he was in fact sole Lord. From here, the succession of Willesley is well-documented. John died 01 Dec 1505 and is buried in the Willesley Chapel. He passed Willesley to:
17. George ABNEY, John's eldest son. George married Ellen WOLSELEY and dying, passed Willesley to his eldest son:
18. James ABNEY, brother of Edmund ABNEY (progenitor of the American ABNEY's). James married Mary MILWARD. His will was probated on 07 Apr 1620. He passed Willesley to his eldest son:
19. George ABNEY who married firstly, Margery LOWE. George passed Willesley to his eldest son by Margery:
20. James ABNEY, a Lawyer, Member of Parliament, and High Sheriff. He married firstly Jane MAINWARING by whom he had his heir, and passed Willesley to his son:
21. Sir Edward ABNEY, LL.D., a Knight and Member of Parliament. He married firstly Damaris ANDREWS by whom he had James ABNEY (who was called a "ne'er-do-well"). This James was the heir apparent to Willesley. He allegedly migrated to the British Colony of Virginia and settled there. However, there is no proof of this tale, and modern-day

genealogists do not take this story seriously as not even one document can be found in the Virginia records of this James ABNEY. Nevertheless, his father married secondly, Judith BARRE by whom Sir Edward sired his heir. James ABNEY, eldest son by his first wife was passed over for:

22. Sir Thomas ABNEY, C.B., Knight, Judge, &c. He married Frances BURTON and had his heir:
23. Thomas ABNEY, the last male ABNEY heir of Willesley. Thomas ABNEY married Parnell VILLARS & had, Parnell ABNEY who became the heiress of Willesley. She married:
24. General Sir Charles HASTINGS, Lord of Willesley in right of his wife. He committed suicide in 1830. Lady Parnell ABNEY HASTINGS passed Willesley to her son, Sir Charles HASTINGS who took the name:
25. Sir Charles ABNEY-HASTINGS. He died in 1858, unmarried, and passed Willesley to his cousin, Edith MAUD (not a descendant of the ABNEY Family) who changed her name to Edith ABNEY-HASTINGS. The ABNEY-HASTINGS family still owns Willesley to this day.