

From the "Centralized Abney Archives"

"The Abney Family Researcher"

Newsletter

September, 1997 Volume I, Issue VI

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

"The Grandchildren of Dannett ABNEY & Mary LEE"

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

Dear Cousins,

We've put the summer of '96 behind us. I hope your summer was as nice as mine. I had the pleasure of meeting cousins whom I've wanted to meet for many years (Cousin Joe BAKER, Cousin John HENSELL, & Cousin Abney BREWER) and profited greatly from their experience, knowledge, and desire to correctly record the history of the ABNEY Family and related families. I had a nice family vacation, and even made time to work at the Clayton Library in Houston, Texas. This library is a genealogy-only library which I highly recommend to anyone visiting the Houston area.

With summer gone, we should all be able to find a little more time for genealogy. I look forward to an increase in activity in the coming months. As you will notice, I've decided to title this newsletter with the major article contained within it. This will make each newsletter "more than just a number". In the next newsletter, I plan to discuss the change in the surname ABNEY to ABNER. For this I request some input from you. I'd like to receive information from you regarding which ABNEY Lines became ABNER, when, where, &c. This will surely help those ABNER Researchers in connecting to their ABNEY Roots. Please submit responses prior to October 15, 1997. In the January issue, I plan to discuss the Willesley Muniment Room Papers. This may prove to be an ongoing project, but well worth the time.

The E-Mail experiment was a great success! We've reduced our usage of the U.S. Postal system by 1/3. That figure should rise as many of our new members have E-Mail capabilities. Converting from MS Word seems to be quite easy. Even from IBM to MacIntosh. If anyone's having trouble out there let me know so we can

solve your problem. If anyone is receiving this newsletter via regular mail (or "snail-mail" as the E-Mail users call it), and you have E-Mail capabilities, please let me know so we can get you the newsletter via E-Mail. E-Mail saves me much time and expense...and saves you the wait and chance of loss from Uncle Sam's postal service.

Thank you one and all for the tremendous support you've given me this past year. Welcome to our new "members". Let's keep this newsletter going. It is helping all of us by correcting information once thought factual, and helping many of us discover information which otherwise may not have been learned. Your input is of great importance!

Your cousin,

R.R. Abney Jr.

FORTITER ET HONESTE

Problems presented in previous issues of the *AFR*:

1. 1790 SC Charles ABNEY - RR
2. The Dannett Abney Dilemma - Resolved!
3. Leonard Abney of Tennessee - RR
4. Eliz. "Charity" Malina Abney - RR
5. Parentage of John Andy Abney - NR
6. Parentage of Absalom Abney - Resolved!
7. Parentage of Dora Abney - Resolved!
8. Parentage of Lizzie P. Abney - NR
9. Parentage of James T. Abney - NR
10. Parentage of Mary Agnes Abney - NR
11. Parentage of Soleane Abney - RR
12. Parentage of William Madison Abney - RR
13. The Family of Absalom Troup Abney - RR
14. Dannett ABNEY Sr. & Mary LEE - RR
15. Jⁿ Jeffⁿ ABNEY & Sarah ADKINS - NR
16. Parentage of Joshua ABNEY - NR
17. Parentage of Charles ABNEY - RR
18. Parentage of Dorcas ABNEY - NR
19. Parentage of Pauline ABNER - NR
20. Parentage of Nancy ABNEY - NR

NR = No Response
RR = Responses Received

The Grandchildren of Dannett ABNEY & Mary LEE

Herewith find the author's rendition of the Grandchild-ren of Dannett ABNEY & Mary LEE. It should be noted that there are probably some missing, and possibly some incorrect family groupings. More research is needed in this "grey area" of our family history. However, I believe this is the most accurate list of grandchildren ever published. As always, I welcome your comments, corrections, & additions. If you know something is wrong, please obligate yourself to help us fix it! The following grandchildren are organized by their parents (note: birth order and est. birth dates are my guesses. Suggestions?)

Ursula ABNEY

bapt. 11 Jun 1693; d.?

(no issue known at this time)

George ABNEY m. Unity n.n.

b.est. 1695; d.1766

1. *Samuel ABNEY Sr.* m. Martha COLLINS
2. *Rebecca ABNEY* m. Edward DEAN Sr.
3. *Dannett ABNEY* m. Cassandra n.n.
4. *Willam ABNEY Sr.* m1. Mary CLARK & m2. Elizabeth BURNHAM
5. *Michael ABNEY Sr.* m. Ann TURNER

Dannett ABNEY Jr. m. Mary MEREDITH

b.est. 1697; d.ca. 1757

1. *Maacah ABNEY* m. Thomas SPRAGGINS
2. *Sarah ABNEY* m. n.n. SHERWIN
3. *Reuben ABNEY* m. n.n. PETTY
4. *Ruth ABNEY* m. George SHERRER
5. *Millesent ABNEY* m. Thomas PERRY

Paul ABNEY m. n.n.

bapt. 24 Dec 1699; d.aft. 1786

1. *William ABNEY Sr.* m. n.n.
2. (dau) ABNEY m. William WITT (?)

Bathshua ABNEY m. Thomas HILL Sr.

b.est. 1700; d.aft. 1773

1. William HILL m. Dorcas ABNEY
2. *James HILL Sr.* m. Nancy Jane CASON
3. John HILL
4. Dannett HILL
5. Sarah HILL m. Edward WATKINS (?)
6. Joseph HILL
7. Anne HILL
8. Mary HILL
9. Thomas HILL Jr.

Martha ABNEY m. William SPRAGGINS Sr.

b. est. 1701 d. ?

1. Thomas SPRAGGINS m. Maacah ABNEY
2. Susannah SPRAGGINS
3. Nathaniel SPRAGGINS m. Tabitha FINCH
4. Anna SPRAGGINS
5. Glory SPRAGGINS
6. Elizabeth SPRAGGINS
7. *Mary SPRAGGINS* m. James NORRELL JR.
8. Hannah SPRAGGINS
9. Martha SPRAGGINS
10. William SPRAGGINS Jr. m. Martha ABNEY

Dr. Abraham ABNEY m. Cassandra MEREDITH

bapt. 27 Dec 1702; d.aft.1783

1. Dr. Nathaniel ABNEY m. Lucy NORRELL
2. Paul ABNEY/ABNER (?) m. Rhoda NORMAN
3. Rhoda Susan ABNEY (?) m. William RUSSELL

Note: Paul & Rhoda were probably siblings, however, it is doubtful if they were children of Dr. Abraham. They are placed here until their rightful place can be learned.

Abner ABNEY m. Anne n.n.

b.est. 1703; d.ca. 1752

1. *Elisha ABNEY (ABNER) Sr. m. n.n.*
2. *John ABNEY m. Isabella VAN LEAR*
3. Milly ABNEY
4. Judith ABNEY m. Luke BULLEN

Mary ABNEY m. John BERNARD Sr.

b.est. 1704; d.?

1. John BERNARD Jr. m. Elizabeth BARNETT
2. Elizabeth BERNARD
3. *Abner BERNARD Sr. m. Phebe n.n.*
4. Peter BERNARD m. Agnes n.n.
5. William BERNARD

William ABNEY (Sr.?) m. Sarah SPRAGGINS

b.est. 1705; d.aft. 1758

1. *John ABNEY m. Isabella n.n.*
2. *Nathaniel ABNEY m. Isabella MADISON*
3. William ABNEY (?)

The Grandchildren represented by genealogists on the CAA database are italicized. Is your ancestor italicized? If not, let me know so I can be sure to correct the database. Also note that some genealogists who descend from two ABNEY Lines may have only shown up on one of the lines. Nevertheless, if a grandchild is not italicized and should be, please write, fax or E-Mail me so I can ensure the CAA database is correct.

"Great Discoveries"

Discovery #4

"Paul Collins ABNEY"

(special thanks to Cousin Jennie H. ABNEY GANT)

The importance of this discovery should not be lessened by the fact that its impact was made on only a branch of the ABNEY Family, instead of the ABNEY Family as a whole. Paul Collins ABNEY is represented by quite a large number of descendants, as well as numerous genealogists.

Two published genealogies became known to Cousin Jennie ABNEY GANT of Slidell, Louisiana. They gave the father of Robert Releford ABNEY of Tennessee (her ancestor, as well as mine) as Joseph Griffith ABNEY. Since Robert Releford ABNEY had a brother named Joseph Duncan ABNEY it made sense that he was named for his father. However, those genealogies lacked proof. Cousin Jennie set out to find the proof, and know who the father of Robert Releford ABNEY & his siblings was.

She discovered that neither of the two genealogies had the correct information. Robert Releford ABNEY was a son of Paul Collins ABNEY, eldest son of Dr. Nathaniel ABNEY. The difficulty of finding Paul Collins ABNEY was due in part to his nomadic-like movements. He was born in South Carolina and migrated to Tennessee circa 1809. He lived in several counties there (including Maury County where Robert Releford ABNEY was born on 28 Aug 1810). In 1819 he migrated to Warren County, Mississippi where he was Justice of the Peace. He moved to Hinds County, Mississippi circa 1831 where he lived with his son, Robert. He died there and was buried on a piece of land owned by Robert, (which had previously been owned by another son, Joseph Duncan ABNEY).

Another circumstance that made Paul difficult to track was his "ability" to evade the census takers. He can only be found on the 1830 Census of Warren County, Mississippi, taken about one year prior to his death.

The descendants of Paul Collins ABNEY and genealogists of that branch of the ABNEY Family owe a debt of gratitude to Cousin Jennie Helen ABNEY GANT for her great discovery; And I am amongst those grateful descendants & genealogists.

I. The American ABNEY Family

Problem #21

The Alleged Duel of Dr. Nathaniel ABNEY

It has been stated, written, and is now a popular belief that Dr. Nathaniel ABNEY was killed in a duel with another physician. Nobody has ever been able to present any proof for this belief, citing only "family tradition" as the source. After researching the alleged duel for many years, I've not been able to find so much as a single piece of evidence.

Dr. Nathaniel's will doesn't prove anything, but it can be used to support the duel theory. The will was seemingly hastily written in what I like to call an "abbreviated fashion". Although Dr. Nathaniel was a very wealthy man with children, he failed to mention any of his children in his will, leaving everything to his wife, Lucy. This was odd for an ABNEY Family member. Although his grandfather, Dannett ABNEY Sr.'s will failed to list all of his children, it did mention some of them. Similarly, Dannett Sr. left his wife, Mary everything. It has been most unfortunate that a will has not yet been discovered on Dr. Abraham ABNEY, Dannett ABNEY Sr.'s son and Dr. Nathaniel's father. It might give us some insight on how wills were written in this branch of the ABNEY Family.

Nevertheless, if we are to believe the duel actually occurred, we can look at the will and notice several factors which help to support that conclusion:

1. The will was short, possibly hastily written.
2. The witnesses did not seem to be close friends or family members.
3. None of his children are named or mentioned.
4. His wealth was not itemized, and was left only to his wife.

If we are to believe family tradition (which is quite often proved wrong) then we must also believe that the duel occurred the same day his will was written, 01 Jul 1787. The will was probated almost one year later on 28 Jun 1788, a normal occurrence. Nevertheless, this is very weak evidence and would never stand the test for genealogical proof.

The descendants of Dr. Nathaniel would be very grateful to resolve this mystery which has troubled our branch of the family for many years. If anyone has any additional information, please send it in.

A Tribute to Cousin John HENSELL

Let us, the ABNEY Researchers extend a special note of thanks to Cousin John Robert HENSELL for the work he has done on the ABNEY Family. Born 27 Jul 1910 in Granbury, Texas, son of Robert HENSELL and Claudie HINER, he current-ly resides in Houston, Texas. His grandmother was Martha Margaret ABNEY, a descendant of Dr. Abraham ABNEY through Dr. Nathaniel ABNEY. Cousin John has been a genealogist for some 60 years and has worked with the likes of Agatha ABNEY WOODSON & Ted BERNARD. Cousin John has published 3 manuscripts on the ABNEY Family, which were huge undertakings. In addition to the enormous amounts of effort and money required to publish such works, one must go "out on a limb" to do so. One must be prepared to answer the multitude of questions that will inevitably arise; Be humble enough to change that which is proven incorrect; Be austere enough to maintain that which is correct; And be discerning enough to know the difference. Cousin John has exhibited these admirable traits in his work. As the Acadian Genealogist Bona Arsenault wrote, "a genealogy has never been published that doesn't contain errors and omissions, including my own". Cousin John's 2nd manuscript was a major revision of the 1st; and the 3rd a Supplement to the 2nd. The 2nd & 3rd volumes continue to be foundations for many of our family histories, but are supplemented by updates of new and corrected information. He is preparing his "Final Summary" of the ABNEY Manuscripts, which by his declaration will be his final work on the subject; but as long as he has breath, I think Cousin John will have a word to say about the ABNEY Family. Cousin John's work reminds us of that genealogical rule: "Don't take anything at 'face value'". Just when you think you have it all figured out, another piece of evidence emerges causing major changes. Published genealogies should be used as "clues" to discover primary evidence. For this reason, Cousin John's works have been blessings to us all. Therefore, it is no small debt of gratitude that we owe to the earlier researchers, including Cousin John HENSELL. Cousin John, thank you for your many years of service to the ABNEY Family. We hope you continue to enjoy the new information we discover on the ABNEY Family; And I personally hope you continue to enjoy *the Abney Family Researcher* for many years to come. Thank you for your support of this project.

R.R. Abney Jr.

On behalf of the ABNEY Researchers

Another Dannett ABNEY in Virginia?

A Virginia Tax Record of 1787 includes 4 ABNEY's, one of whom is Dannett ABNEY listed with David WITT. At first glance, this seemed to be a "new" Dannett ABNEY; Especially since Dannett ABNEY Sr. & Jr. were both deceased by 1787, and George's son, Dannett ABNEY had migrated to South Carolina decades before.

To add to my suspicions, one William WITT is said to have married a sister of William ABNEY who lived in Amherst County. Since William & Dannett were the only two "ABNEY's" mentioned on the tax list living in Amherst County, it seemed that this Dannett ABNEY could be a brother or son of William (son of Paul ABNEY [bpt. 24 Dec 1699]).

I put out messages to several ABNEY researchers in the CAA with WITT connections. I learned that David WITT named son "Dannett Abney WITT" in his will (filed at Nelson Co., Va., Bk. B, pg. 32).

Wayne Witt BATES, editor of the *Bates Booster Newsletter*, wrote me that according to WITT Family tradition, the above-mentioned David WITT married Sally ABNEY, daughter of Dannett ABNEY (son of George ABNEY & Unity).

David WITT (son of John WITT) was a grandson of the William WITT who is credited as having married a granddaughter of Paul ABNEY (bapt. 24 Dec 1699).

Evidently, the compiler of those tax records had mistaken Dannett Abney WITT's middle name, "Abney" for a surname, hence the reference to Dannett ABNEY, the beginning of the confusion.

Many thanks to Cousins Yolanda OLSEN, Capt. James JOHNSTON, Jennie H. ABNEY GANT, and Abney BREWER, and of course Wayne Witt BATES for helping me avoid what could have been another "Dannett ABNEY Dilemma".

A Call to Assist

At this time I would ask that all our members, fresh & relaxed from your vacations, please re-read the previous newsletters and re-check your work to learn if you might have the answers to any of the problems previously presented. Please keep these problems in mind (and take copies of the newsletters) on your next genealogical excursion. You may be one who has a Great Discovery!

The AFR Reach-Out Program

In an effort to obtain a broader audience, I am requesting the members to make copies of *the Abney Family Researcher* newsletter and place it in the archives & libraries which you use for your research. We must continue growing so that we can find new avenues of information which will help not only our "new" cousins, but the veteran researchers as well. Many of our cousins don't know this assistance is available to them. Therefore please feel free to copy our newsletters and place them in whatever location you feel might benefit researchers of the ABNEY Family & related families. Please drop me a note and let me know what institutions you've placed the newsletter in so that I can keep a record for my files. Let's "Reach Out" for our "new" cousins! Thank you in advance for your kind assistance.

VI. Related Families

Norrell Family History Society International

I have been requested by Mr. David NORRELL of Larne, Antrim, Ireland, U.K. to be the U.S. Representative for the newly founded *Norrell Family History Society International*. The NFHSI is seeking volunteers to help organize the NORRELL's worldwide. It is my possible connection with the NORRELL Family (through Lucy NORRELL, alleged wife of Dr. Nathaniel ABNEY) that has put me in position to receive this most surprising nomination.

Although honored by such an offer, I have not yet decided whether or not I will accept this appointment due to time constraints. My decision notwithstanding, the efforts of Mr. NORRELL are admirable and I wish him much success. If I do not accept the position, I will become a member of that organization and assist in their efforts to research the NORRELL Family & descendants thereof. Anyone desiring to become a member of that organization or volunteering assistance may contact me for more information. Nonetheless I remain honored and grateful to Mr. David NORRELL.

INDEX

n.n. (wife of Elisha ABNEY Sr.)	2
n.n. (wife of Paul ABNEY)	2, 8
n.n. (wife of W ^m ABNEY Sr.)	2
n.n., Agnes (w/o P. BERNARD)	2
n.n., Ann	2, 8
n.n., Cassandra	2, 8
n.n., Isabella (w/o J ⁿ ABNEY)	2
n.n., Phebe (w/o A. BERNARD)	2
n.n., Unity	2, 4, 8
ABNER, Joshua	7, 8
ABNER, Monroe	7, 8
ABNER, Pauline	1
<i>ABNER Researchers</i>	1
ABNEY, n.n. (d/o Paul)	2, 4, 8

ABNEY, Abner	2, 8
ABNEY, Abraham (Dr.)	2, 3, 4, 8
ABNEY, Absalom	1
ABNEY, Absalom Troup	1
ABNEY, Bathshua	2
ABNEY, "Bobby"	8
ABNEY, "Bobbye-Girl"	8
ABNEY, Charles	1
ABNEY, "Clo"	8
ABNEY, Dannett	1, 2, 4, 8
ABNEY, Dannett Jr.	2, 4
ABNEY, Dannett Sr.	1, 2, 3, 4, 8
ABNEY, Dénielle-Rae Clothilde	8
ABNEY, Dora	1, 8
ABNEY, Dorcas	1, 2
ABNEY (ABNER), Elisha Sr.	2, 7, 8

ABNEY, Eliz. Charity Malina	1
ABNEY, Gaynel Ann	8
ABNEY, George	2, 4, 8
ABNEY, James T.	1
ABNEY, 1 st Lt. Jesse Mercier	8
ABNEY, John (s/o Abner)	2
ABNEY, John (s/o William)	2
ABNEY, John Andy	1
ABNEY, John Jefferson	1
ABNEY, Joseph Duncan	3
ABNEY, Joseph Griffith	3
ABNEY, Joshua	1
ABNEY, Judith	2
ABNEY, Leonard	1
ABNEY, Lizzie P.	1
ABNEY, Maacah	2

ABNEY, Martha	2
ABNEY, Martha Margaret	4
ABNEY, Mary	2
ABNEY, Mary Agnes	1
ABNEY, Michael	2
ABNEY, Michael Sr.	2
ABNEY, Millesent	2
ABNEY, Milly	2
ABNEY, Nancy	1
ABNEY, Nathaniel (Dr.)	2, 3, 4, 5, 8
ABNEY, Nathaniel (Capt.)	2
ABNEY, "Nipper"	8
ABNEY, Paul	2, 4, 8
ABNEY (ABNER), Paul	2
ABNEY, Paul Collins	3, 8
ABNEY, Raechel Yvette	8

ABNEY, "Ralph"	8
ABNEY, Raymond Robert III	8
ABNEY, Raymond Robert Jr.	8
ABNEY, Raymond Robert Sr.	8
ABNEY, Rebecca	2
ABNEY, Reuben	2
ABNEY, Rhoda Susan	2
ABNEY, Robert Crosby "Bob"	8
ABNEY, Robert "Ralph"	8
ABNEY, Robert "Ralph" II	8
ABNEY, Robert Releford	3, 8
ABNEY, Robert-Thos. Rosario	8
ABNEY, R. Robert Jr.	8
ABNEY, R.R. Jr., Editor	1, 4, 7
ABNEY, "Ross"	8
ABNEY, Ruth	2

ABNEY, Samuel Sr.	2
ABNEY, Soleane	1
ABNEY, Sarah	2
ABNEY, Sarah "Sally"	4, 8
ABNEY, Tami-Rae Bobbye	8
ABNEY, Ursula	2
ABNEY, William (s/o William)	2
ABNEY, William Sr. (s/o Abra.)	2
ABNEY, William Sr. (s/o Dan ^t)	2
ABNEY, William Sr. (s/o Geo.)	2
ABNEY, William Sr. (s/o Paul)	2, 4, 8
ABNEY, William Madison	1
ABNEY, "Yvette"	8
<i>Abney Family Researcher</i>	4, 5
ADKINS, Sarah	1
ARSENAULT, Bona	4

BAKER, Joe	1
BARNETT, Elizabeth	2
<i>Bates Booster Newsletter</i>	4
BATES, Wayne Witt	4
BERNARD, Abner Sr.	2
BERNARD, Elizabeth	2
BERNARD, John Jr.	2
BERNARD, John Sr.	2
BERNARD, Peter	2
BERNARD, Ted	4
BERNARD, William	2
BOLLING, Agnes	7, 8
BOLLING, Benjamin	7, 8
BOLLING, William	7, 8
BOND, John W.	8
BREWER, Abney	1, 4

BULLEN, Luke	2
BURNHAM, Elizabeth	2
CASON, Nancy Jane	2
CLARK, Mary	2
COLLINS, Martha	2
CROSBY, Sarah	8
DEAN, Edward Sr.	2
FINCH, Tabitha	2
FUGATE, Sarah "Sally"	7, 8
GANT, Jennie Helen ABNEY	3, 4, 7
GRAVES, Amelia	2
GRAVES, Judith	2
HENSELL, John Robert	1, 4
HENSELL, Robert	4
HILL, Anne	1
HILL, Dannett	2

HILL, James Sr.	2
HILL, John	2
HILL, Joseph	2
HILL, Mary	2
HILL, Sarah	2
HILL, Thomas Jr.	2
HILL, Thomas Sr.	2
HILL, William	2
HINER, Claudie	4
HINGLE, Clothilde Anysia	8
JOHNSTON, Capt. James	4
LEE, Mary	1, 2, 3, 8
MEREDITH, Cassandra	2, 8
MEREDITH, Mary	2
NORMAN, Rhoda	2
<i>Norrell Family History Soc. Int'l</i>	5

NORRELL, David	5
NORRELL, James Jr.	2
NORRELL, Lucy	2, 3, 5, 8
OLSEN, Yolanda	4
PERRY, Thomas	2
PETTY, n.n.	2
PHELPS, Martha "Patsy"	7, 8
PHELPS, "Patsy"	7, 8
RAGAN, Lillian "Gertrude"	8
ROBERTS, Mary Ann	8
ROGERS, Emily Ann	8
ROGERS, Tiffany Ann	8
ROGERS, Wade Elza	8
RUMORE, Tammy Marie	8
RUSSELL, William	2
RUTHERFORD, Dorothy	8

SHERRER, George	2
SHERWIN, n.n.	2
SPRAGGINS, Anna	2
SPRAGGINS, Elizabeth	2
SPRAGGINS, Glory	2
SPRAGGINS, Hannah	2
SPRAGGINS, Martha	2
SPRAGGINS, Mary	2
SPRAGGINS, Nathaniel	2
SPRAGGINS, Sarah	2
SPRAGGINS, Susannah	2
SPRAGGINS, Thomas	2
SPRAGGINS, William Jr.	2
SPRAGGINS, William Sr.	2
STRAIN, Ella Henrietta	8
TURNER, Ann	2

VAN LEAR, Isabella	2
VASALLO, Monica Yvette	8
WATKINS, Edward	2
<i>Willesley Muniment Rm. Papers</i>	1
WITT, Dannett Abney	4, 8
WITT, David	4, 8
WITT, John	4, 8
WITT, William	2, 4, 8
WOODSON, Agatha ABNEY	4

Oh no! Not those Census Records!

I have set an unobtainable goal: **To connect every ABNEY in American history into the family.** (You wonder why Cousin Jenny ABNEY GANT calls me a genealogical maniac?) This is quite impossible to do alone. Due to the loss and destruction of so many records, it is probably impossible to do at all. However, work-ing together, we can come a lot closer to achieving this goal. Please share my dream with me. Each of you may have a record or records important to the family. We may be able to correct many mistakes before I publish them. Time for my census speech: There are many ABNEY's, ABNER's, &c. in the census records whose ancestry has not been traced back to Dannett ABNEY Sr. I am currently collecting census records on every ABNEY (all spellings) from every census, 1790 to 1920. I have added hundreds of ABNEY's and related families because of this census work. As you know, copying census records is a tedious and time-consuming chore. If you have census records on the ABNEY's & "ABNEY daughters", please write & tell me what you can copy for me. If I need them, I'll be happy to pay for postage & copies. It will take me years if I have to copy them all myself. Perhaps if we each take a state or two, we can finish this year! Let me know if you can help!

I began with 1790 Virginia & South Carolina. I have all the "ABNEY's" for those two states up to 1850 (inclusive). I also have to 1850 for Alabama & Georgia. I had transcripts for Illinois, however, I would prefer actual copies of the census records.

Also, I failed to check for possible "other spellings". For example:

ABBNEY, ABNER, ABENEY, ABENER, ADNEY, EBNEY, OBBNEY, OBNER, OBENEY, OBENER, ODNEY, OBNEY and so on. A multitude of variations can be created just by transcribers' errors. For example the name *Abney* (Abney) written in script can look a lot like *Obney* (Obney)! In fact, there is an OBNEY Family descended from the ABNEY's just as there are ABNER Families descended from the ABNEY's!

I think the best idea I had is that each person take a state or a couple of states. That spreads the work out between a number of us.

Anyway, I am poised to organize this census collection project. I only need a few volunteers to help me. Call, write, E-Mail, Fax or whatever. But please do get involved!

Another "Patsy" PHELPS

Problem number 16 dealt with the Patsy PHELPS who married Joshua ABNEY. His parentage has not been confirmed, although it is suspected that he may be a son of Elisha ABNEY Sr.

Further to that problem is this: There was a Martha "Patsy" PHELPS (Patsy is a nickname for Martha) who married Benjamin BOLLING. Their son, William married Sarah "Sally" FUGATE. Their daughter, Agnes BOLLING married Monroe ABNER, son of Elisha ABNEY/ABNER Sr. (and possible father of the Joshua who married Patsy PHELPS.

Due to the number of generations (3) between the Patsy PHELPS who married Benjamin BOLLING and her "grandson-in-law" , Monroe ABNER...if Monroe was a brother of the Joshua ABNER who married Patsy PHELPS, this is definitely two different Patsy PHELPS'. However, it is interesting that Monroe ABNER was associated, by marriage, with the PHELPS Family. Does this bring us a little closer to finding evidence that Monroe's brother, Joshua was the Joshua ABNER also associated with the PHELPS Family? At least it may be a new avenue of exploration.

In Closing...

There are still a few ABNEY Researchers who are not represented on the CAA Database. If you are getting this newsletter and have not sent me information on your branch of the family, please do so at your earliest convenience so I can include you in the ABNEY Family History & have you on record.

Thank you for your continued support...

Your cousin,

R. R. Abney Jr.

FORTITER ET HONESTE

Who is R. Robert ABNEY Jr.?

(For those of you who have requested my connection to Dannett ABNEY Sr.,
herewith please find the generations of Raymond Robert Abney Jr.)

1. Dannett ABNEY Sr. of Leicestershire, England = Mary LEE of Leicestershire, England
2. Dr. Abraham ABNEY of Virginia = Cassandra MEREDITH of Virginia
3. Dr. Nathaniel ABNEY of Virginia = Lucy NORRELL of Virginia
4. Paul Collins ABNEY of South Carolina = Dorothy "Dolly" RUTHERFORD of North Carolina
5. Robert Releford ABNEY of Tennessee = Mary Ann ROBERTS of Mississippi
6. 1st Lt. Jesse Mercier ABNEY, CSA of Mississippi = Sarah CROSBY of Mississippi
7. Robert Crosby "Bob" ABNEY of Mississippi = Ella Henrietta STRAIN of Louisiana
8. Robert "Ralph" ABNEY of Louisiana = Lillian "Gertrude" RAGAN of Louisiana
9. Raymond Robert ABNEY Sr. of Louisiana = Clothilde Anysia HINGLE of Louisiana
10. Raymond Robert "Bobby" ABNEY Jr. of Louisiana

My wife (and mother of my last three children) is: Tammy Marie RUMORE of Louisiana

My children are:

1. Raymond Robert ABNEY III (called "Nipper")
2. Dénielle-Rae Clothilde ABNEY (called "Clo")
3. Tami-Rae Bobbye ABNEY (called "Bobbye-Girl")
4. Robert Ralph ABNEY II (called "Ralph")
5. Robert-Thomas Rosario ABNEY (called "Ross")

My granddaughter (daughter of Raymond Robert ABNEY III & Monica Yvette VASALLO) is:

1. Raechel Yvette ABNEY (called "Yvette")

I have one sister, Gaynel Ann ABNEY who married Wade Elza ROGERS and had:

1. Tiffany Ann ROGERS (Tiffany assures me that Emily is named after me, Tiffany's uncle. How? Her daughter, Emily's initials in reverse order are

Tiffany has one daughter: "R.A.E." Okay, Tiffany, I'll buy that!)

1. Emily Ann ROGERS

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