

Nancy F. Allen Coffey

1840-1915

In the January 1999 issue of Backroads, Shirley E. Houk of Ohio sent in a genealogical article and photographs about her great-great grandmother, Nancy F. Allen Coffey and her family. For those who may have missed it on the first go-round, I am pleased to reprint it again for NCHS.



Nancy was born January 6, 1840 in the Montebello area of Nelson County, Virginia. Her parents were Joshua B. Allen and Mary “Polly” Campbell Allen. Joshua was said to have been born on September 23, 1809 in Nelson County and died in 1889. Mary was born around 1815 and died before 1865. It is believed that both Joshua and Mary are buried in the Haines Chapel (South Mountain) Cemetery.

Nancy’s siblings were *Robert Hall Allen*, born February 2, 1833 and married Mary Margaret Fauber on December 18, 1836, and died December 27, 1908. *William B. Allen*, born 1837 and died August 1861, unmarried. *George Givens Allen*, born January 26, 1838, married Jane Sholts Woods on December 24, 1857, and died on April 5, 1906. George and Jane are also buried at Haines Chapel. *Mack Allen*, born around 1843. No further information is known about him. *Margaret Sarah Allen*, born around 1845, married Martin H. Lotts on February 6, 1862. Her death date is unknown. *Malinda Allen*, born June 27, 1853. No further information is known about her either.

Nancy F. Allen Coffey, date unknown Nancy married Jesse C. Coffey on December 22, 1853 in Nelson County. Jesse was born on January 12, 1833 and raised in the White Rock area of Nelson County. His parents were Garland and Nancy Coffey. Nancy and Jesse had the following 12 children:

MARY JANE COFFEY – Born January 8, 1855; married John A. Harris on February 26, 1874. Died January 13, 1901 and possibly buried at Pines Chapel Presbyterian Church in Augusta Co.

JOSHUA ELMO COFFEY – Born May 13, 1847; married Emma Breitenbach on March 18, 1881, in Pike County, Ohio. Joshua was known as “Jerry” and was Shirley Houk’s great grandfather. Joshual died on October 23, 1934 in Allen County, Ohio.



*Joshua Elmo “Jerry” Coffey, wife Emma Breitenbach Coffey and their six children
l/r Elmer, Grover, Edythe, Asa, Hazel, and Patrick, 1920s*



Asa holding an unknown child and sister Edythe. Four others listed below



Elmer



Grover



Hazel



Patrick



Four generations: sitting is Nancy F. Allen Coffey, her son, Joshua, Joshua's daughter Edythe and Edythe's son Cecil Ross Hartman. Photo taken between 1908-1909.

BEATRICE ANN COFFEY – Born April 24, 1860; married Thomas Given Mays on September 25, 1877 in Nelson County. She then married David A. Robinson on September 11, 1889. After David's death she remarried William Neely on December 4, 1930. Beatrice died on May 12, 1940 in Allen County, Ohio, and is buried next to her nephew Asa and near her brother Joshua Coffey.



Beatrice as a young woman and with and husband David Robinson



Beatrice Ann, her husband David A. Robinson shown with five of David's ten children from his first marriage to Nancy Blake. Notice David is missing his right leg which was amputated after he was hit by a mini ball in the Civil War, 1865.

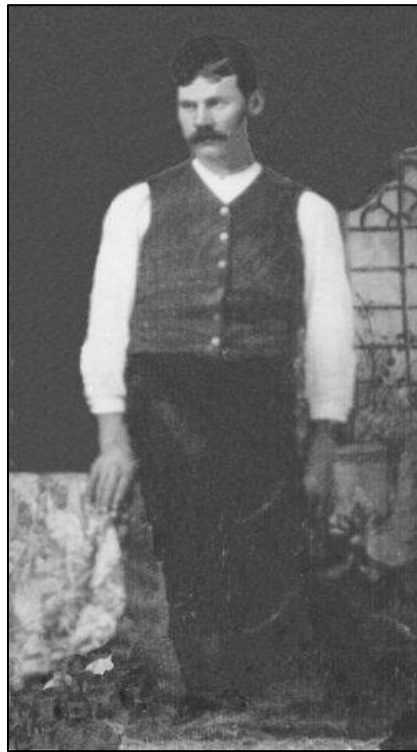
WILLIAM GARLAND COFFEY – Born June 3, 1862. No further information is known of William. The last record of him was on the 1880 Nelson County census.

NANCY ELIZABETH COFFEY – Born May 21, 1864; married James F. West on July 20, 1902 in Basic City, Augusta County, Virginia. James, born in 1948, was a widower at the time of their marriage. It is unknown at this time when Nancy died.



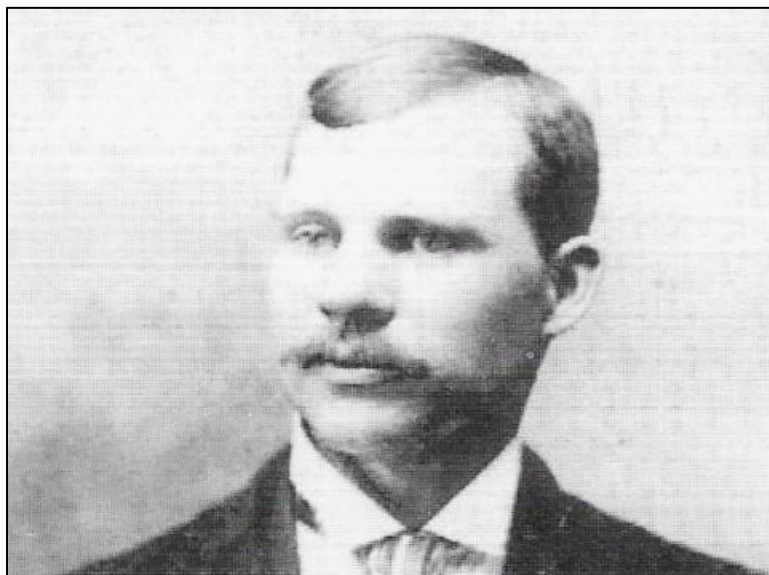
Nancy Elizabeth Coffey, Pike County, Ohio, late 1890's

ALLEN F. SHERMAN COFFEY – Born May 27, 1866; married Susan V. Hamilton on June 24, 1891 in Rockbridge County. Allen died on April 12, 1913 in Allen Co., Ohio



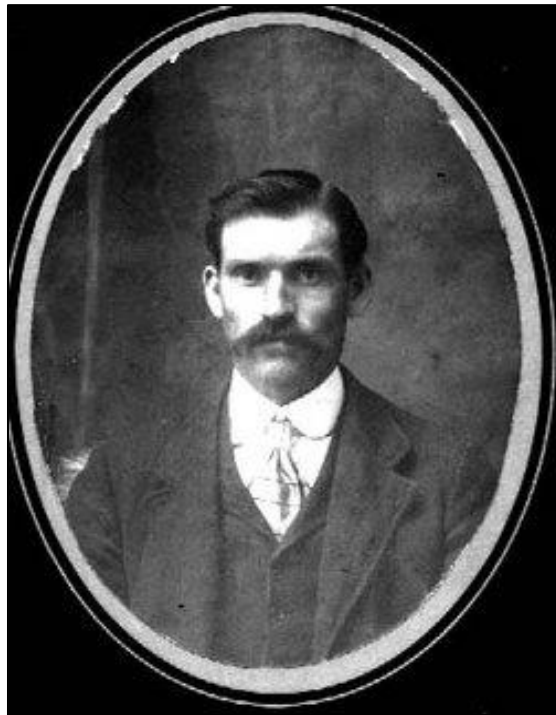
Allen F. Sherman Coffey

GEORGE ROBERT COFFEY – Born March 16, 1869; married Sarah Emma Lotts on February 10, 1891 in Nelson County. George and Sarah had one child, Estelle, born May 1891 in Augusta County. It is unknown when George died and no further trace of the family has been found.



George Robert Coffey – taken in southern Ohio

JACOB W. COFFEY – Born June 4, 1871; married Willie Winsor on August 19, 1908 in Rockbridge County. Died on September 28, 1936 in Rockbridge County.



Jacob W. Coffey

JOHN FRANKLIN COFFEY – Born April 20, 1874; married Sallie Fitzgerald Hite on April 24, 1891 in Rockingham County. Died on December 31, 1933 in Allen County, Ohio.



John Franklin Coffey

EMILY SUSAN COFFEY – Born July 9, 1876 and died December 9, 1876 in Virginia.

ROSA BELLE COFFEY – Born July 21, 1878; married Robert Oceola Nuckols on October 4, 1899 in Augusta County. Died July 14, 1920 in Augusta County.



*Rosa Bell Coffey Nuckols & four of her nine children:
l/r: Elmer Juett, Annie, Evelyn (on lap), William Hyder*

JAMES RUCKER COFFEY – Born February 22, 1881; married Martha Rebecca Anderson on June 13, 1900 in Augusta County. Died on August 10, 1934 in Allen County, Ohio



James Rucker Coffey as a young man and later in life

The family of Nancy and Jesse appeared to have moved frequently, probably due to Jesse looking for work. At the time the 1860 census was taken, they were in the Glenwood District of Rockbridge County. On the 1870 census they were in Fishersville in Routh River Twp. of Augusta County, and on the 1880 census they were in the Massies Mill District of Nelson County.

Their son, Joshua, moved to Ohio by 1880 and most of the family followed him sometime after 1880. They were living in Pike County, Ohio in a small cabin when in August of 1887 Jesse was murdered. Nancy and most of the children then returned to Virginia. Nancy was living in Rivers Head Twp. of Augusta County on the 1900 census with her daughter, Nancy Elizabeth, and her son, James Rucker.

Shortly thereafter, Nancy returned to Ohio to live with her daughter and son-in-law, Beatrice and David Robinson, in Miami County where she died on April 30, 1915. Nancy is buried in the Mapel Hill Cemetery, Tipp City, Miami County, Ohio.

It is obvious to this writer (Shirley Houk), her great-great-grandmother, Nancy F. Allen Coffey, was indeed a fine example of the fortitude of our early mountain women. It is with this in mind that I hope readers will recognize this small tribute to such a fine woman.

Joshua B. Allen's Last Will & Testament (Nancy's Father)

I Joshua B Allen being of sound mind and disposing memory do make this my last will and testament here by revoking all other wills heretofore made by me first I desire to be decently buried and my burial expenses paid and all my debts and and liabilities settled. Second I give and bequeath to Reuben W Coffey Alfred Coffey and Betsy Coffey thirty two dollar and seventy five cents it being the proceeds of the property which I obtained by my last wife. Thirdly I give and bequeath to George F Allen Margaret Lotts Nancy F Coffey zero A Campbell and the heirs of Elizabeth Patterson all my personal property remaining ~~and~~ after the above mentioned and also the proceeds of my real estate which I have formally sold to Thomas F Harvey the same to be equally divided between them. fourth I give and bequeath to Robert A Allen one dollar in cash and it is my will and desire and I hereby appoint George F Allen as my lawful administrator. This the 7th day of March 1889

Joshua B Allen

Test. Milton H Fitzgerald
Samuel Bryant
A Hooper

“I Joshua B. Allen being of sound mind and disposing memory do make this my last will and testament hereby by revoking all other wills hereto fore ward by me. First, I desire to be decently buried and my burial expenses paid and all my debts and anet liabilities settled. Second, I give and bequeath to Rueben W. Coffey, Alfred Coffey and Betsy Coffey thirty-two dollars and seventy-five cents, it being the proceeds of the property which I obtained by my last wife. Thirdly, I give and bequeath to George G. Allen, Margaret Lotts, Nancy F. Coffey, Zeno A. Campbell and the heirs of Elizabeth Patterson all my personal property remaining after the above mentioned. And also, the proceeds of my real estate which I have formally sold to Thomas H. Harvey, the same to be equally divided between them. Fourth, I give and bequeath to Robert A. Allen one dollar in cash and it is my will and desire and I herby appoint George G. Allen as my lawful administrator this 7th day of March, 1989. Signed: Joshua B. Allen, Test. Milton H. Fitzgerald, Samuel (X) Bryant, A. Hatter.

Special thanks to Kristin Gembara of Wintergreen who translated Joshua’s will and found several newspaper clippings concerning Jesse and sent them to be included in this article. Also, a big thanks to genealogist Carol Harlow of Rockbridge Baths for sending a list of Nancy and Jesse’s children and grandchildren plus the last will and testament of Nancy’s father, Joshua B. Allen.

More on Jesse C. Coffey

Jesse was the son of Garland and Nancy Coffey of Nelson County, Virginia who were double first cousins. Jesse, when he married Nancy F. Allen on December 22, 1853, in Nelson County, was the father of their 12 children. Jesse was found murdered in the woods of Jackson Twp., Pike Co., Ohio. The township trustees buried him in the original Waverly City Cemetery which is under the Police/Ire station. It is reported the bodies were moved to Evergreen Cemetery in 1882 along with the monuments that were removable. Jesse has no headstone. Proof of his death and burial is in Pike County’s death register and various newspaper articles, reporting the murder.

The Cincinnati Enquirer, 1885

Jesse C. Coffey, of Pike County, Ohio, was brought to this city yesterday in the custody of Constable W. A. McKonkey, and handed over to the tender mercies of the Work-house authorities, for, as the Constable said, “smashing a couple of chairs and pokin’ a gun ‘round with him.” The commitment was made out by Justice of the Peace, Bishop of Waverly. Two years later this sad newspaper article appeared in Pike County, Ohio.

Found Dead.

The dead body of Jesse Coffey, 54, was found in a small woodland tract on the Crooked Creek pike about two miles northwest of town, last Wednesday, August 5, 1887. The neighbors not seeing anything of him since last Friday became alarmed and Messrs. Harlan Sprouse and William Lancaster instituted a search, found his body greatly decomposed. Death, it is thought, having taken place four or five days previously. The body of the old man lay in a hollow on his back with the arms crossed and his hat being used as a pillow.

Coffey had separated from his family some time since and lived in a cabin or cottage on the pike and had been working in the vicinity of which he was found, that being some distance away and off the line of his path to and from home. There were some marks on the head as though he had been struck by a blunt instrument and his back was lacerated as though he had ben dragged on the ground. Also, at some little distance away and near his work were the marks of a struggle and from there to where he was found was traced such a furrow or mark s would likely be made by the dragging of a body.

It might be added, too, that his jug and dinner-bucket was beside him as though placed there by another hand. We are informed by those who are conversant with the facts that the family acted in a very peculiar manner during the examination instituted by coroner Sailor, that were circumstantial evidence of guilty knowledge on the part of some of the members and we might say there is a pretty general opinion that Jesse Coffey was murdered and that his own family are familiar with the manner of his death.

It is reported here that young George Coffey was ill at ease during the coronial investigation and since has left home, that his brother Al, who shot his father, some time since was at home last Friday and was seen out by the pike by neighbors and that the girls' exhibited a peculiar indifference when the body was found and that Mrs. Coffey was found under the bed when notified of the event.

These rumors may be untrue but we haven't time to run them down and demonstrate their truth or falsity. They may be unfounded. The township trustees buried the body Wednesday evening in our cemetery. The coroner's verdict has not been announced.

Descendant List of Jesse C. Coffey

(See Below)

Descendant List of Jesse C. COFFEY

- 1-Jesse C. COFFEY (1833-5 August 1887)
- +Nancy ALLEN (6 June 1840-30 April 1915)
 - 2-Mary Jane COFFEY (8 January 1855-13 January 1901)
 - +John A. HARRIS (-)
 - 3-George H. HARRIS (18 June 1891-November 1968)
 - 3-Peachey Priscilla HARRIS (7 September 1880-February 1964)
 - 3-Edgar HARRIS (-)
 - 3-Eric H. HARRIS (1878-)
 - 3-Auzy HARRIS (8 July 1886-6 December 1930)
- 2-Joshua Elmo "Jerry" COFFEY (13 May 1857-23 October 1934)
- +Emma BREITENBACH (-)
 - 3-Elmer COFFEY (28 March 1883-December 1929)
 - 3-Edith COFFEY (27 July 1885-10 December 1960)
 - 3-Asa COFFEY (-)
 - 3-Patrick COFFEY (-)
 - 3-Grover COFFEY (-)
 - 3-Hazel COFFEY (-)
- 2-Beatriss COFFEY (1859-12 May 1940)
- +Thomas J. MAYS (1851-)
- +David A. ROBINSON (-)
- +William NEELY (-)
- 2-William Garland COFFEY (3 June 1862-)
- 2-Nancy Elizabeth COFFEY (21 May 1864-)
- +James F. WEST (1848-)
- 2-Allen Sherman COFFEY (27 May 1866-13 April 1913)
- +Susan Virginia HAMILTON (-1912)
 - 3-John Henry COFFEY (29 August 1892-17 July 1962)
 - 3-Jacob William COFFEY (9 May 1894-20 February 1971)
 - 3-Susan Emily COFFEY (30 November 1896-20 July 1964)
 - 3-Minnie Bell COFFEY (5 June 1898-7 September 1960)
 - 3-Anna May COFFEY (24 November 1903-16 December 1993)
 - 3-Forest Allen COFFEY (15 September 1906-17 May 1959)
 - 3-Naomi Pearl COFFEY (22 November 1908-)
 - 3-Walter Lee COFFEY (-)
 - 3-Harry MacDonald COFFEY (-)
 - 3-George Robert COFFEY (24 February 1911-5 October 1967)
- 2-John Franklin COFFEY (20 April 1874-31 December 1933)
- +Willie WINSOR (-)
 - 3-Mabel Virginia COFFEY (11 September 1909-)
 - 3-Ruth Anna COFFEY (10 January 1911-9 January 1993)
 - 3-Thelma COFFEY (1914-)
 - 3-Nancy Mildred COFFEY (1918-)
- 2-Jacob W. COFFEY (14 February 1875-28 September 1936)
- +Sallie Jane FITZGERALD (1858-29 August 1928)
- +Stella HITE (1879-15 April 1938)
- 2-Emily Susan COFFEY (9 July 1876-9 December 1876)
- 2-Rosa Belle COFFEY (21 July 1878-14 July 1920)
- +Robert Oceola NUCKOLS (-)
 - 3-Emily NUCKOLS (1900-)
 - 3-Elmer Juett NUCKOLS (22 May 1904-27 July 1932)
 - 3-William Hyder NUCKOLS (8 February 1906-24 November 1967)
 - 3-Annie Marie NUCKOLS (29 January 1908-23 October 1987)
 - 3-Evelyn Isabel NUCKOLS (2 April 1910-5 June 1978)
 - 3-Henrietta Elizabeth NUCKOLS (10 March 1912-22 November 1985)
 - 3-Fannie Catherine NUCKOLS (21 August 1913-July 1989)

Continued from above

Descendant List of Jesse C. COFFEY

- 3-Mary Magdaline NUCKOLS (8 March 1916-4 March 1978)
- 3-Margarette Hazel NUCKOLS (25 June 1918-5 July 1977)
- 2-George Robert (W.) COFFEY (16 March 1869-)
- +Sarah Emma LOTTIS (1867-)
- 3-Estelle COFFEY (1891-)
- 2-James Rucker COFFEY (22 February 1881-10 August 1934)
- +Martha Rebecca ANDERSON (-)