

Descendants of Nancy Ruffin

Generation 1

1. **NANCY¹ RUFFIN¹⁻⁹** was born about 1817 in Richmond, Virginia, USA^{3, 8, 10-13}. She died on 30 Apr 1874 in Chelsea, Suffolk, Massachusetts^{2, 7}. She met **ROBERT EDWARD LEE GENERAL**. He was born on 19 Jan 1807 in Stratford, VA¹⁴⁻¹⁵. He died on 12 Oct 1870 in Lexington, VA¹⁴⁻¹⁵.

Notes for Nancy Ruffin:

Research Notes:

The Lee Letter

This letter is postmarked "Washington Feb 25," and is addressed "C. C. Lee Esqr, Counsellor at Law, Spring Camp, Stony Fork. P. O., Virginia." In pencil and written perpendicularly to the address and on the left side of the envelope is the notation, "R. L. Lee, Feby 24 - 1835."

Sender: Robert E. Lee

Recipient: Charles Carter Lee

Engr: Dept: Wash: 24th Feby 1835

My dear Carter

Your two last letters were duly received, & that of the 13th Inst; arrived yesterday. I would have answered the first long ago, had I been able to accomplish the Comm - ns contained therein, but it has been out of my power. I called on Maj. Lewis at once to get the requisite information of the Life of Napoleon. He informed me that 1000 copies of an Edition printed in France were in the Custom House in Phila - a The duties were about \$300. & great delay & difficulty had occurred, in getting any of the Booksellers to take them (in that way) Subsequently he told me that Mr - - in N. York had agreed to take them. I have seen his advertisement etc, & also a notice of <F>. Taylor, in this place, in anticipation of the then arrival. But as yet they have not been received. I also found upon inquiry at the Office of the Collector of Taxes, that all your lots were Sold on the 17th of May last for Taxes - Four were bought by Mr Dunton, & one by Burch & Ward. The whole amount for which they were Sold, is \$44.55, bearing interest of 10 per centum, & redeemable in 2 years, to which must be added the taxes of 1834 - I was about taking steps to redeem them, but learned that Mr Jesse Brown, put in for a Share of said Lots, & I had no idea of devoting a months pay, to any part of his Service. What is the true State of the case? I will make inquiries about the rye & rabbits, & time would have been saved, had you have told me, what disposition to make of them - I will also go in search of Mrs. Sally Diggs, I think you may make up your mind to do without her, if she is only to go by her own consent unless she is very different from her sex, color & caste. I spent last night at Arlington, & mentioned the Subject of your new settlement. It was received I thought very inauspiciously. Cousin A. & Mr. C - were the only parties concerned. Mrs Nancy Ruffin & her three illegitimate pledges, sent to N. Kent when I broke up at Qrt O: P. are all of the race in my poss: They expressed some surprise at your wishing to bestow your attention on any other spot than that paradise of a Camp - Smith has returned & was married on the 5th Inst. They had a gay wedding & have been on a routine of Frolicking ever since. Clermont, Ravensworth, Geo town were in succession the Scenes of these Parties - They go to Arlington tomorrow to spend the remainder of the week - When I believe they & the World, will be satisfied that they are married - I wish you could have been among us. I have entered into none of the gayiety, except that which occurred at night & home where I could reach the Office by next mor - g We lately heard from Mr Childe & Walker, they are both well & the latter expects to be better in about 2 months - Mr M - - Anne & her children are all well. I am obliged to spend the most of my time in W - - am constantly occupied till near Four, & by the time dinner is over it is night. I then most generally go to A - - Mary has not been well for the last 3 months, Influenza, Colds, etc have confined her at home the whole Winter, I tried to get a house when I first came up, but could fine none coming within the purviews of a 2nd Lt. If I stay here, I hope to find in the Spring - At Present I am boarding & M - - & the Boo are at A - - I am frequently wanting out of office hours, & am therefore obliged to have a homestead on this side of the river - All at A - - desire to be remembered particularly to you, Cousin A - - Says perhaps you do not know all that she has been about, or you would not be surprised at her long silence - She alludes to the death of her Father - which happened about 2 months since - Her health & spirits are very good - Uncle B is at Broadneck & daily expected here - Charles is to establish himself on the Patuxent in the Spring, on some land given to Eugee by her father. Young Bernard is here on a visit, All the Turnes, Randolps, Meades etc have been at A - - in the course

Generation 1 (cont.)

of the Winter, Charles & Bena are still here, Mr & Mrs T - - have returned - Cousin Anna is quite ashamed at some political address to which she saw your name attached - and says you have forgotten your old principles - Miss Emily Key was to have married to Geo - H - - last week - I suppose you see by the papers every thing that is going on in Con: & that at one time we were thought to be bordering on a war with France - The last news is thought to be more pacific - A French Sloop of War has arrived to carry home Mr Lenarier - Mr L - - has been offered his passports by the F - - M - - but has declined them - We have not the France priv - er

Yours

R E Lee

Notes:

Lee Papers University of Virginia Archives

Notes for Robert Edward Lee General:

R.E. Lee's Personal Ownership of Africans - Joe Ryan

I. Nancy and her children

In the summer of 1829, Lee's mother died. Her will identified the fact that, at her death, she held legal title to at least three Africans as slaves: two women and a man. The will bequeathed the two women to her daughter, Ann Kinlock Lee, who was then married to the lawyer Louis Marshall of Baltimore, and the man she bequeathed to her second daughter, Mildred, who was then married to Edward Childe of Boston. The will makes reference to other "property" which Ann owned at her death, and as to this "property" the will specified that it be sold and that the proceeds be spilt pro rata between her three sons: Charles, Sidney, and R.E. It is probable that this "property" included unnamed Africans which Ann had a legal interest in.

Ann Hill Will

Will Part 2

The Lee basher, Gettysburg College history professor, Allen Guelzo, offers his audiences the interpretation of the will's meaning as "Ann Lee itemized the slaves she bequeathed to her daughters, but the only designation of property to her sons was a vague division of `the remainder of my estate' among [my three sons]. (see, Robert E. Lee and Slavery, Encyclopedia Virginia 2018) The relevant text of the will actually reads, as Ann wrote it, this way: "All my property of every description that shall remain after the payment of my debts and legacies, I leave to be divided in equal portion between my three sons, Charles, Sidney and Robert." Guelzo's purpose in referencing this part of Ann's will, is to offer his audiences the proposition that part of the "property" to be divided between the three sons must have included "Nancy and her children" Guelzo is probably correct in this, as it is an undisputed fact that, in his will which was filed in the Rockbridge County courthouse, in 1846, R.E. Lee identifies "Nancy and her children" as "property" he owned as of that time. Given the text of a letter R.E. Lee wrote his brother, Charles, in 1835, Nancy's "children" numbered three. How old the children were, at the time of his mother's death, the record does not show.

R.E. Lee's Letter to Charles Lee, February 24, 1835

II. Nat

In the summer of 1829, Lee was twenty-two years old. His first post of duty was at a fort in the vicinity of Savannah, Georgia. From a letter he wrote to family members at that time, we are informed that the male slave named "Nat," an elderly man, who his mother had given in her will to her daughter, Mildred Childe, went with Lee to his post where he became ill and died. Why Nat went with Lee the objective record does not say. We can speculate: maybe Mildred refused to accept the bequest, being married to a man in Boston; maybe Lee asked Mildred for Nat's services; maybe a lot of things.

III. Gardener

In his 1835 letter to his brother, Charles, Lee used this language in describing his legal relationship to African slaves: "Mrs. Nancy Ruffin and her three illegitimate pledges being all of that race in my possession," which suggests that, as of that date, Lee did not own any other Africans. However, there is additional evidence, in the form of letters and receipts in Lee's handwriting, which show the fact that, after his mother's death in 1829, her estate included a legal interest in an African male named Gardener who lived at her family home, Shirley Plantation on James River.

Between 1830 and 1833, Ann Carter's Estate, through its executor, her brother, Hill Carter, received \$30 a year from Shirley "for the hire of Gardener." Between 1834 and 1845, R.E. Lee received the \$30 for the annual hire of Gardener. (Hill Carter inherited Shirley from his father, King Carter.) Using Williamson's Measuring Slavery as a guide, the average male slave's market value at sale in 1833 was \$300, spiking to \$600 in 1837 and dropping back to \$300 in 1845. According to Clement Eaton's Slave Hiring in the Upper South, such a slave would be hired out annually for 12% to 15% of his market value. If these numbers are accurate, in an ordinary business transaction, Gardener would have been hired out at the annual rate of about \$30.

Lee to Hill:

Given these undisputed facts, it appears reasonable to conclude that, by the close of his mother's Estate, R.E. Lee had been given the right to receive the annual hire fee for Gardener's labor. Whether Lee possessed, as a consequence of the Estate's settlement, legal title of ownership to Gardener, in the sense that he had the legal right to sell Gardener, without more evidence, it is impossible to decide. According to the existing Shirley Plantation records, the evidence of Lee's financial connection to Gardener ended in 1845. This fact, in conjunction with Lee's will, filed in court in 1846, gives rise to the reasonable inference that the connection did end as a matter of law, between 1845 and 1846. It might have ended, because Gardener died. Had Gardener been sold or manumitted, most reasonable persons would expect a record of this fact to exist.

Lee's 1846 Will

Will of Lee - schedule of property

Between about 1830 and 1833, Lee and his wife, Mary Custis Lee, had been living in officers' quarters at Old Point Comfort (i.e., Fort Monroe, VA) and it appears that Nancy and her children had been living there with them. In 1835, after several years of duty at Fort Monroe, Lee was ordered to move himself to Fort Calhoun ("Rip Raps), a man-made island that sits in Hampton Roads, to supervise construction. Because the island did not have quarters suitable for a wife, Mary Lee returned to her father-in-law's home at Arlington, and Lee sent Nancy and her children, as the letter to Charles explains, to one of the New Kent County farms Mary's father owned. Given the text of Lee's letter to Charles, the punctuation of which creates ambiguity, Lee seems to have used the phrase, "illegitimate pledges" with a meaning peculiar to the times. The phrase probably means the idea of having put up something as security which the putter upper does not actually have legal title to. How Lee meant the idea of Nancy putting up as security something she did not own, in the form of her children, who can say.

Dr. Guezlo and his pals, chide Lee for not manumitting Nancy and her children, pointing out there is no objective evidence that he did so prior to 1862. Other writers, William C. Davis among them, point to a supposed letter Lee's youngest son, Robert, Jr., wrote, in 1908, in which he retells to the addressee what he said his older brother, Custis, told him about the history of Lee's ownership of Africans. However, the hearsay statement is not consistent with the objective facts the records shows.

"My Dear Dr. Paige:

"[My older brother, Custis,] tells me that General Lee inherited three or four families of slaves and 'let them go.' The reason that no formal paper was executed at that time was that he did not wish any question to arise as to their being compelled to leave Virginia. [Custis's] recollection is that one

Generation 1 (cont.)

of them went to Liberia. This liberation of them happened a long time before the war."
(See, Some Letters of Thomas Nelson Paige, William E. Rachel, Virginia Magazine of History & Biography LXI (April 1953))

Custis Lee's son, Custis, was born in 1832 and died in 1913. He would have had no personal knowledge of Nancy, her children, of Nat and Gardener, or any of the Africans owned by his grandmother's and grandfather's families, and the statement attributed to him by his younger brother, in 1908, does not provide an objectively reasonable explanation for the fact that no record can be found that Lee had manumitted what slaves he owned prior to December 1862, when, as Executor of the Custis Estate, he caused the manumission document to be filed in the Henrico County Courthouse.

The explanation that no manumission papers were given, was because of the law of Virginia that required an emancipated slave to leave the State within one year of the date of emancipation, and Nancy did not want to leave the State, is not objectively reasonable under the circumstances. The suggestion is contradicted by the objective fact that the laws of Virginia existing at the time did not allow the owner of a slave to effect a private emancipation; that is, free a slave to wander about Virginia without proof of emancipation; nor would the emancipated slave be prudent to do so. First, as to the owner, he would be subjecting himself to a fine and penalty for doing so. Second, as to the slave, she would be subjecting herself to being apprehended and sold by the state into slavery. Third, though the law did specify that an emancipated slave was required to leave the state within one year of emancipation, it was enforced only on a county level and then only when the white population considered the emancipated slave to be a thief, a malcontent, or a liability on the public resources of the county. In 1835, there were many petitions filed in the courts, some in the Legislature, by white persons asking that a particular emancipated slave be allowed to live in their county as she or he were considered to be useful lawabiding persons who were capable of supporting themselves. (See, John H. Russell, *The Free Negro in Virginia 1619-1865*, John Hopkins Press (1908).) Given the laws of Virginia, and the manner in which they were executed, then, it seems highly unlikely that Lee would have let Nancy, or any slave, wander off without proper emancipation papers, or that the freed slave would willingly wander off without them.

Therefore, given the state of the objective record, it is not possible to reasonably say R.E. Lee manumitted any slaves he had a legal interest in before 1846, much less Nancy and her children between 1846, the year he wrote his will including her as a slave, and 1862, the year he executed deeds of manumission covering all the slaves named in the list of slaves residing at GWP Custis's three farms: White House, Romancocke, and Arlington.

Whether "Nancy and her children," were included in the 1862 bill of manumission that Lee executed, no one can say. (While there is listed in the bill a "Nancy" who was, in 1862, residing at the White House Plantation in New Kent County, this Nancy's age is not known. The 1850 Richmond census shows a "Nancy Ruffin" as a free inhabitant, but this Nancy is listed as 33 years old which put her age, in 1830, at 13; making it difficult to assign to her at that age three children.)

Here it must be said, that Lee's manumitting Nancy, if he did, as part of his action as executor as the Custis estate is curious. According to his will, Lee wished "Nancy and her children" "to be liberated as soon as it can be done to their advantage." But apparently not before his death. Yet, in the midst of war he decided to include Nancy-apparently his property, not Custis's-in the emancipation of the Custis slaves. Perhaps, he just wanted to be done with it.

Since we know nothing of the circumstances of how he became the owner of Nancy, and nothing about Nancy, herself, it is impossible to state with any degree of certainty what their actual situation was. We can say, however, that, given the objective record of Lee's duty stations from 1829, when he graduated from West Point, to 1861 when he resigned his commission in the U.S. Army, Nancy was not acting as his servant, or a servant in his household.

IV Philip Meridey

R.E. Lee's final known connection to the ownership of Africans is the power of attorney he executed at the time he left Washington D.C. to assume the assignment as Superintendent of West

Generation 1 (cont.)

Point, in 1852. Lee gave the power of attorney to a clerk named James Eveleth, who was a long-time employee (clerk) of the Army's Engineer Department, to manage the hiring of "my servant man Philip Meridey." From the text of Lee's letter describing the power given Eveleth no one can intelligently say whether Lee actually held legal title to the person of the servant, in the sense that Lee could transfer the legal title to another. It may have been the case, as with the African named Gardener who lived at Shirley, that Lee's "right" in Meridey was based on bailment; i.e., the right to use the value of Meridey's labor.

Power

Whatever was, in fact, the legal case, the circumstances make it plain that the reason Lee gave Eveleth the power was because Lee could not bring Meridey to West Point. Lee could have sent Meridey to one of the Custis plantations but instead chose to leave Meridey on his own (under Eveleth's watch) to live in familiar circumstances in Washington.

The Custis Slaves

Professor Guelzo, in his bashing of Lee, emphasizes the fact that when, shortly after his mother's death in 1829, he married Mary Anne Randolph Custis, Lee "became part of a large slaveholding household." Indeed Mary Custis was the great, granddaughter of Martha Washington. Martha, a Dandridge from the Shenandoah Valley, had first married Daniel Parke Custis and they had a child who married and from that marriage came Martha's grandson, Mary's father, George Washington Custis. Guelzo points to a letter Lee wrote Mary, in 1841, when he was 34 years old, as evidence of Lee's attitude toward the institution of slavery, which recognizes that the master's authority over the servant must be maintained.

For some reason Mary wanted to purchase a slave named Robert, who was owned by one of her Washington relatives, as the means of saving him from what she perceived was a bad situation. What that situation was, the record does not say.

Lee gave Mary this advice:

"Your plan of purchase will bring you nothing but trouble and vexation and it is very problematical whether Robert's condition will be injured rather than bettered. In judging of results you must endeavor to lay aside your feelings and prejudices and examine the question as thus exposed. In this matter is everything to be yielded to the servant and nothing to the master? What will be the effect of the precedent upon the rest and the instruction of the example intended to be set as well as the comparisons likely to be made to the prejudice of your father and his authority? Others ought to be considered as well as Robert. If you determine to apply your money in this way, I am ready to pay it. So consider well upon the matter and act for yourself."

Much can be discerned from Lee's language. There were several farms owned by Mary's relatives interconnected with her father's at Arlington. The Africans residing on these farms were connected by family structure, some members residing on one farm, others on another. Apparently, Robert's owner was treating him in a manner Mary did not like; perhaps the issue was one of punishment in some form which Mary wished to prevent. The record shows that Mary's attitude toward slavery, as was her mother's, Mary Randolph Custis, was that, to the extent possible under the circumstances of the times, the Africans ought to be freed.

Mary Lee, and her mother, Mary Randolph Custis, did, in fact, teach the Africans to read and write English, contrary to the law of Virginia, and Mary Randolph manumitted one or more family groups of Africans, financing their immigration to Liberia (It is this that Custis Lee was probably referring to, in replying to his younger's brother's question). So her concern for Robert as a person must be taken to have been real. But, in counter-balance to her "attitude" her husband was pointing out that stepping into the situation and saving Robert from whatever the matter was, would undermine the master's authority over the slave population and infect the Arlington slaves with feelings conducive to insubordination. It is hard to ignore, in criticizing Lee's attitude here, the reality of plantation life in which a small group of white persons were living in close proximity to a large group of Africans held in slavery. The last sentence of Lee's text highlights the fact that, in 1840, a wife as

Generation 1 (cont.)

a legal person was subsumed into one person with her husband and he was that person.

Arlington House

George Washington Custis's parents died when he was an infant and, when Martha, his grandmother, married George Washington, Custis went to live at Mount Vernon and eventually inherited much of the Washingtons' property.

At the time of his death, in 1857, Custis owned three large farms: Arlington, composed of 1,100 acres and a house built on the bluffs of the Potomac overlooking Washington City; Romancoke, located on the Pamunkey River; and the White House close by on the York River 15 miles west from Richmond, the place where Martha and George Washington made their marriage vows.

In addition to the business about Nancy and her children, Guelzo chides Lee for the fact that, in 1850, when he was living with his wife and children in a house in Baltimore, the federal "census-taker itemized three 'mulattoes' as household slaves, all of them drawn from the Arlington slave population." What Guelzo leaves unsaid, is that the three "mulattoes" were, in fact, members of the Burke family of slaves that Lee's wife taught to read and write, that the husband and wife (the wife may have been, like Mary Lee, a daughter of GWP Custis, were married in the Arlington parlor, that Custis manumitted all of them, and that, in 1853, upon the application of R.E. Lee, they were accepted by the American Colonization Society for emigration to Liberia.

Burke Letter Written to Mary Lee From Liberia

Lee's Legal Role as Executor of the Custis Estates, 1857-62

When General Lee returned to Arlington from Texas in the fall of 1857, he was informed that he had been appointed executor of his father-in-law's estate. It appears that a holographic will was probated at the Alexandria County Courthouse in 1858, but neither it nor a certified copy survives. Either a fire at the courthouse destroyed the original will, or it was stolen by unknown persons during the Civil War.

It is not disputed in the historical record that George Washington Custis had bequeathed his three farms to General Lee's three sons: upon the death of their mother, Mary Custis, G.W.C. (Custis) Lee was to inherit Arlington; Fitzhugh (Rooney) Lee, the White House; and Robert E. Lee, Jr., the plantation of Romancoke. The will also provided that legacies of \$10,000 were to be paid from the assets of the estate to each of General Lee's four daughters, Mary, Ann, Eleanor and Mildred. Nor is there any dispute as to the conditions that George Washington Custis made in his will for the emancipation of his slaves.

The Will of George Washington Custis

"In the name of God, amen. I, George Washington Custis, I give to my dearly beloved daughter and only child, Mary Ann Randolph Lee, my Arlington House estate. . . for her natural life. On her death it goes to my eldest grandson, GWC Lee, to him and his heirs forever. . . And upon the legacies to my four granddaughters being paid, then I give freedom to my slaves, the said slaves to be emancipated by my executor in such manner as he deems expedient and proper, the said emancipation to be accomplished in not exceeding five years from the time of my decease."

The Custis estate inventory records of 1858 list as assets, 93 slaves, 28 mules, 28 oxen, 73 sheep and 100 hogs at the White House in New Kent County; 43 slaves, 10 mules, 38 cattle, 44 sheep and 50 hogs at Romancoke in King William County. The inventory records list 62 slaves on the grounds of Arlington, grouped among seven families named: Bingham, Norris, Grey, Check, Burke, Parke and Taylor. Some of these slaves belonged to the Dandridge family and were inherited by Martha Washington and passed down to her great grandson.

My Thanks to Joe Ryan for his research on this matter:

<https://joeryancivilwar.com/Civil-War-Subjects/General-Lee-Slaves/General-Lee-Family-Slaves.htm>
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Generation 1 (cont.)

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Yours

R E Lee

Notes:

Lee PapersUniversity of Virginia Archives

Generation 1 (cont.)

This letter is postmarked "Washington Feb 25," and is addressed "C. C. Lee Esqr, Counsellor at Law, Spring Camp, Stony Fork. P. O., Virginia." In pencil and written perpendicularly to the address and on the left side of the envelope is the notation, "R. L. Lee, Feby 24 - 1835."

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Know all men by these presents, that I, Robert E. Lee, executor of the last will and testament of George W. P. Custis deceased, acting by and under the authority and direction of the provisions of the said will, do hereby manumit, emancipate and forever set free from slavery the following named slaves belonging to the Arlington estate, viz: Eleanor Harris, Ephraim Demicks, George Clarke, Charles Syphax; Selena Grey and Thornton Grey and their six children Emma, Sarah, Harry, Anise, Ada and Thornton; Margaret Taylor, and her four children Dandridge, Jhon, Billy and Quincy; Lawrence Parks and his nine children- Perry, George, Amanda, Martha, Lawrence, James, Magdalena, Leano and William; Julia Ann Check and three children Catharine, Louis and Henry and infant of the said Catharine, Sally Norris and Len Norris and their three children Mary, Sally and Wesley; Old Shaack Check; Austin Bingham and Louisa Bingham and their twelve children Harrison, Parks, Reuben, Henry, Edward, Austin, Lucius, Leantche, Louisa, Caroline, Jem and an infant; Obadiah Grey, Austin Banham, Michael Merriday, Catharine Burk and her child; Marianne Burke and Agnes Burke: Also the following slaves belonging the White House estate, viz: Robert Crider and Desiah his wife, Locky. Zack Young and two children, Fleming Randolph and child; Maria Meredith and Henry her husband, and their three children Nelson, Henry and Austin, Lorenzo Webb, Old Daniel, Calvert Dandridge, Claiborne Johnson, Mary and John Stewart, Harrison, Jeff, Pat and Gadsby, Dick, Joe, Robert, Anthony, Davy, Bill Crump, Peyton, Dandridge, Old Davy and Eloy his wife, Milly and her two children, Leanth and her five children; Jasper, Elijah and Rachel his wife Lavinia and her two children, Major, Phill, Miles, Mike and Scilla his wife and their five children Lavinia, Israel, Isaiah, Lobsey and Delphy; old Fanny and her husband, Patsey, little Daniel, and Cloe, James Henry, Milly, Ailsey and her two children, Susan Pollard Armistead and Molly his wife, Airy, Jane Peter Bob, Polly, Beetsy and her child, Molly, Charity, John, Reuben, George Crump, Minny, Grace, Martha and Matilda: Also the following slaves belonging to Romancoke estate, viz: Louis, Jem, Edmond, Kitty and her children Mary, Dandridge and an infant; Nancy, Dolly, Esther, Seneca, Macon and Louisa his wife, Walker, Peggy, Ebbee, Fanny, Chloe Custis, and her child Julia Anne, Elvey Young, and her child Charles, Amy Johnson, Anne Johnson, William and Sarah Johnson and their children Ailsey Crump, Molly and George, James Henry and Anderson Crump, Major Custis and Lucy Custis, Nelson Meredith and Phoebe his wife, and their children Robert, Elisha, Nat, Rose and Sally, Ebee Macon, Martha Jones & her children Davy & Austin; Patsey Braxton, Susan Smith and Mildred her child, Anne Brown, Jack Johnson, Maxwell Bingham and Henry Baker

And I do hereby release the aforesaid slaves from all and every claim which I may have upon their services as executor as aforesaid.

Witness my hand and seal, this 29th day of December in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred & sixty two

R E Lee (Seal)
Exr of G. W. P. Custis

State of Virginia; County of Spottsylvania to wit

I, Benjn S. Cason, Justice of the Peace in and for said County, do hereby certify that Robert E. Lee, executor of the last will and testament of George W. P. Custis, a party to the foregoing deed of emancipation, this day personally appeared before me, and acknowledge the same to be his act and deed. Given under my hand this 29 day of Decr 1862
Benjn L. Cason (JP)

City of Richmond, to wit,
In the Office of the Court of Hustings for the said City, the 2d day of January 1863.
This deed was presented and with Certificate annexed, admitted to record at twelve o'clock N.

Generation 1 (cont.)

Teste Ro Howard, Clk. (Endorsed)

Relationship Notes for Robert Edward Lee General and Nancy Ruffin:
Partner - not legally married.
Slave of RELee.

DNA Confirmed children of Nancy Ruffin and Robert E Lee are Mack Lee and Peter Lee.

Hi Jacqueli,

I am curious, as I am on Ancestry.com and found information that was somewhat surprising. You seem to have done your homework for sure, so help me out a bit if you can....

I see that my Great-(2x) Grandfather was Peter Lee who was one of Nancy Ruffins children by REL. My DNA came back with Irish and Great-Britain lineage. Unfortunately that is as far as They go on Ancestry. I was wondering if you had pictures or other information?

I spoke with a woman who told the story that it was actually a "Love Affair" REL and Nancy had and that Nancy pretty much ruled the house LOL and told REL to send the children away because they were starting to look like him. As the story goes, Peter was sent to Texas and served in the Colored army and had like 16 children by two wives!

Like I said it's just a story, but I was wondering if you heard anything about this? I would love any information you may have. I came across the attached letter that mentions Nancy and Sally Diggs. This is odd as Nancy Ruffin is my Great (3x) grandmother on my mom's father's side and Sally Diggs is my Great (3x) Grandmother on my mom's mother's side! How wild is that?

So any help would be greatly appreciated. I'd be happy to invite you to my tree if you like.

Always in Gratitude,

Darick Hendrix, LCSW

- Original Message -----

Subject: I am the 4th great grandson of General Robert E. Lee through my enslaved grandmother Nancy Ruffin and their son Mack Lee.

Date: Wed, December 11, 2019 8:12 am

To: info@leesofvirginia.org

James Harpe

Robert Edward Lee General and Nancy Ruffin had the following children:

- +2. i. PETER² LEE^{4, 16-18} was born about 1835 in Virginia, USA¹⁹⁻²⁰. He died about 1915. He married (1) ROSETTA BROWN on 05 Nov 1911 in Okfuskee, Oklahoma, USA²¹⁻²². She was born about 1840¹⁸. She died about 1867. He married (2) CHARITY BURMINGHAM about 1868. She was born about 1835 in Alabama²³. She died on 21 Mar 1911 in Okfuskee County, Oklahoma, USA²³.

Generation 1 (cont.)

- +3. ii. MACK WESLEY LEE^{4, 24-26} was born about 1845 in Texas, USA²⁷⁻²⁸. He died on 05 Jan 1920 in Barbour County, Alabama, USA. He married (2) EMMA BOTRILE ROBINSON LEE, daughter of Lewis Robison and Maria Lumpkin, on 05 Dec 1868 in Barbour, Alabama, USA²⁸⁻³². She was born on 05 Dec 1852 in Georgia, USA²⁹⁻³⁰. She died on 26 May 1922 in Clayton, Barbour, Alabama.

Generation 2

- 2. **PETER² LEE** (Nancy¹ Ruffin)^{4, 16-18} was born about 1835 in Virginia, USA¹⁹⁻²⁰. He died about 1915. He married (1) **ROSETTA BROWN** on 05 Nov 1911 in Okfuskee, Oklahoma, USA²¹⁻²². She was born about 1840¹⁸. She died about 1867. He married (2) **CHARITY BURMINGHAM** about 1868. She was born about 1835 in Alabama²³. She died on 21 Mar 1911 in Okfuskee County, Oklahoma, USA²³.

Peter Lee and Rosetta Brown had the following children:

- 4. i. LUCY³ LEE⁴ was born in 1863 in Upshur County, Texas, USA. She died date Unknown.
- 5. ii. JERRY LEE³³⁻³⁴ was born about 1864 in Texas³³⁻³⁴.
- 6. iii. JULIA LEE⁴ was born about 1865 in Upshur County, Texas, USA. She died date Unknown.
- 7. iv. FRANCIS LEE⁴ was born in 1866 in Upshur County, Texas, USA. She died date Unknown.
- 8. v. MARY LEE⁴ was born in 1868 in Upshur County, Texas, USA. She died date Unknown.
- 9. vi. WILLIAM LEE⁴ was born in 1873 in Upshur County, Texas, USA. He died date Unknown.
- 10. vii. LAURA LEE⁴ was born in Oct 1874 in Upshur County, Texas, USA. She died date Unknown.

Notes for Charity Burmingham:

Maiden Name Unknown - Burmingham from Previous marriage

Peter Lee and Charity Burmingham had the following children:

- 11. i. PETER³ LEE JR⁴ was born in Jan 1870 in Texas.
- +12. ii. DANIAL J LEE^{4, 35} was born in Oct 1876 in Texas³⁵. He died on 24 Jun 1956 in Los Angeles³⁵. He married KATIE L LEE. She was born in 1884 in Big Sandy, Upshur County, Texas, United States of America³⁶. She died on 26 Mar 1939 in Los Angeles, California, USA³⁶⁻³⁷.
- 13. iii. AMANDA B LEE⁴ was born in Jun 1879 in Texas.
- +14. iv. KATIE L LEE^{4, 36} was born in 1884 in Big Sandy, Upshur County, Texas, United States of America³⁶. She died on 26 Mar 1939 in Los Angeles, California, USA³⁶⁻³⁷. She married DANIAL J LEE. He was born in Oct 1876 in Texas³⁵. He died on 24 Jun 1956 in Los Angeles³⁵.
- 3. **MACK WESLEY² LEE** (Nancy¹ Ruffin)^{4, 24-26} was born about 1845 in Texas, USA²⁷⁻²⁸. He died on 05 Jan 1920 in Barbour County, Alabama, USA. He married (2) **EMMA BOTRILE ROBINSON LEE**, daughter of Lewis Robison and Maria Lumpkin, on 05 Dec 1868 in Barbour, Alabama, USA²⁸⁻³². She was born on 05 Dec 1852 in Georgia, USA²⁹⁻³⁰. She died on 26 May 1922 in Clayton, Barbour, Alabama.

Mack Wesley Lee and Emma Botrile Robinson Lee had the following children:

- 15. i. EDDIE³ LEE⁴ was born on 06 Nov 1869 in Eufaula, Barbour, Alabama. He died on 02 Sep 1940 in Eufaula, Barbour, Alabama.
- +16. ii. MINNIE IRENE LEE⁴ was born about 1871 in Alabama. She died about 1964 in Alabama, United States. She married Joe Richard, son of Harper Richards and Paulina Richards, on 19 Oct 1886 in , Barbour, Alabama. He was born about 1861 in Alabama. He died on 12 May 1945 in Jefferson County, Alabama, USA.
- 17. iii. JUNIE LEE⁴ was born in Feb 1874 in Abbeville, Alabama, USA. He died on 01 Nov 1944 in Henry, Alabama.

Generation 2 (cont.)

18. iv. FRANK LEE⁴ was born on 15 Nov 1875 in Henry, Alabama, United States. He died about 1972 in Barbour County, Alabama, USA.
19. v. MARY LEE⁴ was born about 1877 in Henry County, Alabama, USA. She died on 17 Feb 1945 in Stillwater, Payne, Oklahoma, USA.
20. vi. ANDREW LEE^{4, 29-30} was born on 20 Feb 1880 in Alabama, USA²⁹⁻³⁰. He died on 05 Apr 1962 in Cuyahoga County, Ohio, United States of America.
21. vii. ALTO "OTTO" LEE^{4, 29-30} was born on 24 Oct 1882 in Alabama, USA²⁹⁻³⁰. He died on 18 Apr 1956 in Pratt City, Jefferson, Alabama.
22. viii. TINA LEE^{4, 29-30} was born on 26 Feb 1884 in Alabama, USA²⁹⁻³⁰. She died on 17 Nov 1974.
23. ix. TERESA LEE^{4, 29-30} was born on 03 Jul 1885 in Alabama, USA²⁹⁻³⁰. She died on 21 Aug 1957 in Newville, Henry, Alabama.
24. x. LILLIE LEE^{4, 29-30} was born in Feb 1893 in Alabama, USA²⁹⁻³⁰.
25. xi. HATTIE LEE⁴ was born about 1898 in Alabama.

Generation 3

12. **DANIAL J³ LEE** (Peter², Nancy¹ Ruffin)^{4, 35} was born in Oct 1876 in Texas³⁵. He died on 24 Jun 1956 in Los Angeles³⁵. He married **KATIE L LEE**. She was born in 1884 in Big Sandy, Upshur County, Texas, United States of America³⁶. She died on 26 Mar 1939 in Los Angeles, California, USA³⁶⁻³⁷.

Danial J Lee and Katie L Lee had the following children:

- +26. i. WENDELL EWART⁴ LEE SR^{4, 38-39} was born on 11 Aug 1905 in Big Sandy, Texas, USA³⁸⁻⁴¹. He died on 19 Apr 1966 in Los Angeles, California, USA³⁸. He married (2) VIVIAN LOTTIE CLARK about 1928^{39, 42}. She was born about 1910 in New Orleans, Jefferson, Louisiana, USA⁴². She died about 1969 in Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California, USA. He married (3) FLORENCE ORA SMITH. She was born on 11 Feb 1906 in New Orleans, Jefferson, Louisiana, United States⁴³. She died on 19 May 1996 in Rancho Cucamonga, San Bernardino, California, USA⁴³.
 27. ii. ARBEZINE MANALESY^{4, 44} was born on 13 Feb 1902 in Texas, USA⁴⁴. She died on 10 Aug 1946 in Los Angeles, California⁴⁴.
 28. iii. OLGA LEE⁴ was born about 1903 in Texas.
14. **KATIE L³ LEE** (Peter², Nancy¹ Ruffin)^{4, 36} was born in 1884 in Big Sandy, Upshur County, Texas, United States of America³⁶. She died on 26 Mar 1939 in Los Angeles, California, USA³⁶⁻³⁷. She married **DANIAL J LEE**. He was born in Oct 1876 in Texas³⁵. He died on 24 Jun 1956 in Los Angeles³⁵.

Danial J Lee and Katie L Lee had the following children:

- +26. i. WENDELL EWART⁴ LEE SR^{4, 38-39} was born on 11 Aug 1905 in Big Sandy, Texas, USA³⁸⁻⁴¹. He died on 19 Apr 1966 in Los Angeles, California, USA³⁸. He married (2) VIVIAN LOTTIE CLARK about 1928^{39, 42}. She was born about 1910 in New Orleans, Jefferson, Louisiana, USA⁴². She died about 1969 in Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California, USA. He married (3) FLORENCE ORA SMITH. She was born on 11 Feb 1906 in New Orleans, Jefferson, Louisiana, United States⁴³. She died on 19 May 1996 in Rancho Cucamonga, San Bernardino, California, USA⁴³.
 27. ii. ARBEZINE MANALESY^{4, 44} was born on 13 Feb 1902 in Texas, USA⁴⁴. She died on 10 Aug 1946 in Los Angeles, California⁴⁴.
 28. iii. OLGA LEE⁴ was born about 1903 in Texas.
16. **MINNIE IRENE³ LEE** (Mack Wesley², Nancy¹ Ruffin)⁴ was born about 1871 in Alabama. She died about 1964 in Alabama, United States. She married Joe Richard, son of Harper Richards and Paulina Richards, on 19 Oct 1886 in , Barbour, Alabama. He was born about 1861 in Alabama. He died on 12 May 1945 in Jefferson County, Alabama, USA.

Joe Richard and Minnie Irene Lee had the following children:

29. i. NANCY⁴ RICHARD was born on 12 May 1904 in Abbeville, Alabama. She died on 19

Generation 3 (cont.)

- Jun 1994 in Detroit, Wayne, Michigan, USA.
- 30. ii. MACK RICHARDS was born about 1916 in Alabama.
 - 31. iii. WESLEY RICHARDS was born about 1912 in Alabama.
 - 32. iv. FRANK RICHARDS was born about 1914 in Abbeville He, Alabama. He died on 01 Mar 1991.
 - 33. v. EMMIT RICHARDS was born about 1900 in Alabama.
 - 34. vi. JOE RICHARDS was born on 20 Dec 1908 in Abbeville, Alabama, USA.
 - 35. vii. EMMA RICHARDS was born about 1897 in Alabama.
 - 36. viii. MITTIE RICHARDS was born about 1895 in Alabama.
 - 37. ix. ARA LEE RICHARDS was born about 1894 in Alabama.
 - 38. x. HENRY RICHARDS was born in Apr 1893 in Alabama.
 - +39. xi. TERESA RICHARDS was born about 1908 in Alabama. She married ALLEN SHAW. He was born on 30 Oct 1895 in Henry County, Alabama, USA. He died on 02 Jan 1936 in Fort Gaines, Clay, Georgia, USA.
 - 40. xii. HATTIE ROSE RICHARDS was born about 1903 in Alabama. She died on 08 Apr 1996 in Tallahassee, Leon, Florida (Abbeville, Henry, Alabama - last residence).
 - 41. xiii. MARY LEE RICHARDS was born about 1891 in Alabama.

Generation 4

26. **WENDELL EWART⁴ LEE SR** (Danial J³, Peter², Nancy¹ Ruffin)^{4, 38-39} was born on 11 Aug 1905 in Big Sandy, Texas, USA³⁸⁻⁴¹. He died on 19 Apr 1966 in Los Angeles, California, USA³⁸. He married (2) **VIVIAN LOTTIE CLARK** about 1928^{39, 42}. She was born about 1910 in New Orleans, Jefferson, Louisiana, USA⁴². She died about 1969 in Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California, USA. He married (3) **FLORENCE ORA SMITH**. She was born on 11 Feb 1906 in New Orleans, Jefferson, Louisiana, United States⁴³. She died on 19 May 1996 in Rancho Cucamonga, San Bernardino, California, USA⁴³.

Wendell Ewart Lee Sr and Vivian Lottie Clark had the following child:

- 42. i. WENDELL EWART⁵ LEE JR was born on 11 Sep 1929 in California. He died on 16 May 1989 in Los Angeles, California.

Wendell Ewart Lee Sr and Florence Ora Smith had the following child:

- +43. i. KATIE⁵ LEE was born about 1959. She married HENDRIX. He was born about 1959.
39. **TERESA⁴ RICHARDS** (Minnie Irene³ Lee, Mack Wesley² Lee, Nancy¹ Ruffin) was born about 1908 in Alabama. She married **ALLEN SHAW**. He was born on 30 Oct 1895 in Henry County, Alabama, USA. He died on 02 Jan 1936 in Fort Gaines, Clay, Georgia, USA.

Allen Shaw and Teresa Richards had the following children:

- 44. i. SAVANAH MINNIE⁵ SHAW⁴⁵ was born about 1923 in Georgia⁴⁵. She died on 17 Mar 1931 in Eufaula, Barbour, Alabama⁴⁵.
- +45. ii. MARY ALLEN SHAW was born on 12 Aug 1924 in Fort Gaines, Clay, Georgia, USA. She died in Sep 1992 in Albany, Dougherty, Georgia, USA. She married (1) ALEX SHAW on 20 Dec 1893 in , Henry, Alabama. She married (2) LESLIE HARPE. He was born about 1920 in ARLINGTON, GA. He died in Aug 1975 in Arlington, Calhoun, Georgia, USA. She married (3) JAMES AUTRY HARPE. He was born on 12 Apr 1922 in Georgia⁴⁶⁻⁴⁷. He died on 22 May 1998 in Springfield⁴⁶.

Generation 5

43. **KATIE⁵ LEE** (Wendell Ewart⁴ Sr, Danial J³, Peter², Nancy¹ Ruffin) was born about 1959. She married **HENDRIX**. He was born about 1959.

Hendrix and Katie Lee had the following child:

- 46. i. DARICK⁶ HENDRIX was born about 1970.
45. **MARY ALLEN⁵ SHAW** (Teresa⁴ Richards, Minnie Irene³ Lee, Mack Wesley² Lee, Nancy¹ Ruffin) was

Generation 5 (cont.)

born on 12 Aug 1924 in Fort Gaines, Clay, Georgia, USA. She died in Sep 1992 in Albany, Dougherty, Georgia, USA. She married (1) **ALEX SHAW** on 20 Dec 1893 in , Henry, Alabama. She married (2) **LESLIE HARPE**. He was born about 1920 in ARLINGTON, GA. He died in Aug 1975 in Arlington, Calhoun, Georgia, USA. She married (3) **JAMES AUTRY HARPE**. He was born on 12 Apr 1922 in Georgia⁴⁶⁻⁴⁷. He died on 22 May 1998 in Springfield⁴⁶.

James Autry Harpe and Mary Allen Shaw had the following child:

47. i. JAMES⁶ HARPE was born about 1957.

Sources

- 1 Virginia, U.S., Select Marriages, 1785-1940.
- 2 Massachusetts, U.S., Town and Vital Records, 1620-1988.
- 3 Massachusetts, U.S., State Census, 1865.
- 4 .
- 5 Marriage Bonds of Henrico County, Virginia, 1782-1853 Pollack, Michael E. Marriage Bonds of Henrico County, Virginia, 1782-1853. Baltimore, MD, USA: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1984.Original data: Pollack, Michael E. Marri;;).
- 6 Virginia, U.S., Select Marriages, 1785-1940.
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- 8 Massachusetts, U.S., State Census, 1865.
- 9 Ancestry.com, Virginia, U.S., Select Marriages, 1785-1940 (Provo, UT, USA, Ancestry.com Operations, Inc, 2014), Ancestry.com.
- 10 Ancestry.com, Massachusetts, U.S., Death Records, 1841-1915 (Name: Name: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc.;;), Ancestry.com, New England Historic Genealogical Society; Boston, Massachusetts; Massachusetts Vital Records, 1840???1911.
- 11 1850 United States Federal CensusYear: 1850; Census Place: Richmond, Richmond (Independent City), Virginia; Roll: 951; Page: 247b.
- 12 Ancestry.com, Massachusetts, U.S., Death Records, 1841-1915 (Name: Name: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc.; Location: Provo, UT, USA; Date: 2013;;), Ancestry.com, New England Historic Genealogical Society; Boston, Massachusetts; Massachusetts Vital Records, 1840???1911.
- 13 1850 United States Federal Census Year: 1850; Census Place: Richmond, Richmond (Independent City), Virginia; Roll: 951; Page: 247b.
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- 16 Texas, U.S., Select County Marriage Index, 1837-1965.
- 17 Texas, U.S., County Marriage Records, 1817-1965.
- 18 Oklahoma, U.S., County Marriage Records, 1890-1995.
- 19 Ancestry.com, 1900 United States Federal Census (Name: Name: Ancestry.com Operations Inc;), Ancestry.com, Year: 1900; Census Place: Justice Precinct 7, Upshur, Texas; Roll: 1675; Page: 2; Enumeration District: 0122; FHL microfilm: 1241675.
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- 21 Oklahoma, U.S., County Marriage Records, 1890-1995.
- 22 Ancestry.com, Oklahoma, U.S., County Marriage Records, 1890-1995 (Lehi, UT, USA, Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2016), Ancestry.com.
- 23 Ancestry.com, U.S., Find a Grave Index, 1600s-Current (Lehi, UT, USA, Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012), Ancestry.com.
- 24 Alabama, U.S., County Marriage Records, 1805-1967.
- 25 Alabama, U.S., Select Marriage Indexes, 1816-1942.

Sources (cont.)

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- 27 Ancestry.com, 1900 United States Federal Census (Name: Name: Ancestry.com Operations Inc;), Ancestry.com, Year: 1900; Census Place: Lawrenceville, Henry, Alabama; Roll: 19; Page: 3; Enumeration District: 0096; FHL microfilm: 1240019.
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- 29 1900 United States Federal Census
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- 39 U.S., Newspapers.com Marriage Index, 1800s-current The Los Angeles Times; Publication Date: 6/ Nov/ 1928; Publication Place: Los Angeles, California, USA; URL: <https://www.newspapers.com/image/385598000/?article=f1e71ef4-3b5c-4547-a84e-00aaf4ae9349/9666d66c-f940-4f20-bd96-543ef03725e2&focus=0.13938025,0.43>.
- 40 California, U.S., Death Index, 1940-1997 Place: Los Angeles; Date: 19 Apr 1966.
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- 42 Ancestry.com, U.S., Newspapers.com Marriage Index, 1800s-current (Lehi, UT, USA, Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2020), Ancestry.com, The Los Angeles Times; Publication Date: 6/ Nov/ 1928; Publication Place: Los Angeles, California, USA; URL: <https://www.newspapers.com/image/385598000/?article=f1e71ef4-3b5c-4547-a84e-00aaf4ae9349/9666d66c-f940-4f20-bd96-543ef03725e2&focus=0.13938025,0.43>.
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- 45 Alabama, U.S., Deaths and Burials Index, 1881-1974.
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- 47 U.S., World War II Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947 (The National Archives at Fort Worth, Texas; Fort Worth, Texas; WWII Draft Registration Cards for Georgia, 10/16/1940-03/31/1947; Record Group: Records of the Selective Service System, 147.