

Ancestors and Descendants
Of
Capt. William Layton Yancey
And his wife
Frances Lynn Lewis

1600-1900

Compiled by
REBECCA L. YANCEY

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Dedicated
to
Edward Custer Yancey

Growing up in a world where the terms aunt, uncle, cousin, even grandmother and grandfather, are seldom if ever heard, can be confusing, especially when one senses that there must be some relationship involved. It was Eddie's questions, as a growing boy, that led one to assess the available material, which prompted the decision to trace the family's history.

His continuing interest spurred us on. Unfortunately an accident curtailed his life before the effort was completed. But to him belongs the credit for the undertaking which is hereby dedicated to him.

He walked upright; reflecting high principles, humility, and concern for his fellow man. Only after his death did word of many of his kindnesses and good deeds reach even his immediate family. No temporal legacy could compare with these memories.

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We are all indebted to Charles T. Garth, of Green County, Virginia for "The Diary of Margaret Lewis"; to Maj. Gen. Thomas Ralph Yancey U.S.A. Ret., who, while living in Williamsburg, spent weeks searching the records, of The Library of William and Mary College, in a successful effort to assemble 17th and 18th century information, which had appeared to be lost; and for a collection of old letters which had been preserved by his mother; to Ruth Rodes Culpeper for her graphic observations and stories recalled concerning "Midway" and the family of Clarissa Yancey Rodes; to Elizabeth Mary Harnsberger, for the diligent search of her father's "Harnsberger" memorabilia in which were found pictures and letters with information that had eluded us; to Jessie Conrad Gibbons for Conrad information including clippings and her aunt's scrap-book; to Mary Gibbons Snapp for addresses locating cousins in Colorado; to Lavernia Reid and Naomi Shafer for many letters written to accumulate an account of their husbands' family; to Thomas L. Yancey Jr. for the oration of his great-uncle, Thomas L. Yancey, delivered July 4th 1860; to Irene Sipe Hedrick for George Edgar Sipe's "A Boy's Recollections of the Civil War"; to William D. Yancey and his wife, of Grandview, Missouri who generously sent records from their all-inclusive Yancey file, and searched cemeteries and records; to John and Rosalie Byrd, who assisted with maps and in evaluating involved material. None of the last five named is directly related to the family, nor is Violette Lowenbach, or Harriet Cooley. They with Sallie Acker and Nancy Harmon joined in searching court records and cemeteries, in Albemarle, Augusta, Culpeper, Frederick, Green, Madison, Orange, Shenandoah and Spotsylvania Counties of Virginia.

To these and many more who assisted in various ways, our profound gratitude.

INTRODUCTION

Because my father, Richard H. Yancey, left Virginia when he was quite young his brothers and sister sent him clippings and accounts of what various relatives were doing; also copies of recollections of the family written by members of an older generation. All of which were carefully preserved for reference. Perhaps my mother, Kate Hay Yancey, studied them more than anyone else, because she really knew the family better than did my father.

The following account is based on these and other old letters, clippings, diaries, ledgers and scrap-books. Preserved also were three outlines of the family, obviously written in the late 1800's but not dated or signed. And a forth, more complete, which was generously provided by Thomas Leland Yancey of Malta Bend, Missouri. Information from all sources has been verified whenever possible. However, due to fire and war many old records have been lost. Lacking records, when two of the 19th century recollections were found to agree, the result was so reported. An effort has been made to verify old records if possible, otherwise to report as a clue for further research. To avoid errors is extremely difficult. If any be found they will be deeply regretted.

YANCEY ORIGINALLY NANNEY

Ship records have apparently been lost. But accounts observed all agree that four brothers, Charles, William, Robert and Joel Yancey (Nanney) came to America, in 1642, with Sir William Berkeley, Governor of Virginia. They settled on the James River.

There were few signatures in those days. Parish records, quit rent lists and muster rolls were written by someone who spelled names according to sound, often reflecting the nationality of the scribe. Thus Nanney, in America, can be found as Yanney, Yanci, Yauncey, D'Hancey and in many other forms. By the 19th century Yancey had become the accepted spelling.

In a frequently quoted letter (53) written by Samuel Shephard, in 1805 to his brother Robert, he mentions visiting his wife's cousin, Charles Yancey. While there, he met a Mr. Evans, a descendant of a Welsh Prince, who believes the name Yancey to be incorrect. He said the name should be spelled "Nanney". Charles recalled hearing something of this, from his family. His wife had been given an old Arms which, when described, Mr. Evans thought belonged to the Nanney family of Wales. The Arms, a blue lion rampant, facing left, on a gold shield was authenticated in 1935 by Mr. Lyon G. Tyler, a recognized authority. He agreed with Mr. Evans that it was the Nanney, now Yancey, Coat of Arms. Arms were used for identification of possessions, and of men in battle.

John and Richard Yancey came to America later in 1600. It is their descendants who claim to be French. Their Coat of Arms also has the blue lion, on a gold shield. But added to theirs is the motto, "Ne Touchez pas le Chat Sans Avoir le Gant". "Touch not the Cat without a glove" is also said to be a motto of a Scottish Clan. In an unpublished letter is reference to "Mathew Mullins a French Huguenot", also referred to as "The Welshman". This may explain the confusion of nationalities in the Yancey family. All sources consulted concerning the Arms have said, "English", or "French from England".

Richard Yancey settled in Mecklenberg County, Virginia while John went farther south to Carolina.

Sometime prior to 1928, Mrs. Temple Hill Carraway consulted Mr. O. E. Ruck, a Welsh genealogist, who traced the Nanney family back to Bleddyn ap Cyfyn, Prince of Powers, from the Third Royal Tribe of Wales, to Cadwagan his son, Lord of Nannau. In 1588 Dwnn (Dynn) was head of the family, and signed the pedigree. In 1638, Hugh Nanney Esq. a grandson, Sheriff of Caenry, had the honor. Edmon, last of the line, married Catherine, daughter of William Vaughn of Corsygedol. His third daughter, Catherine, married Robert Vaughn Esq. well known antiquary of Hengwrt. Her oldest son who inherited the Nanney estate died unmarried. He was succeeded by his brother Robert H. Vaughn, who served in Parliament for forty-four years.

Lynn Dwnn, who paid ten shillings to have the pedigree made out, Lynn Hughes Esq. Sheriff of Merionethshire, and Sir William Berkeley, of nearby Carigan-shire, all trace their ancestry back to Cardoc Fraichfres, a knight of the Mystical Round Table.

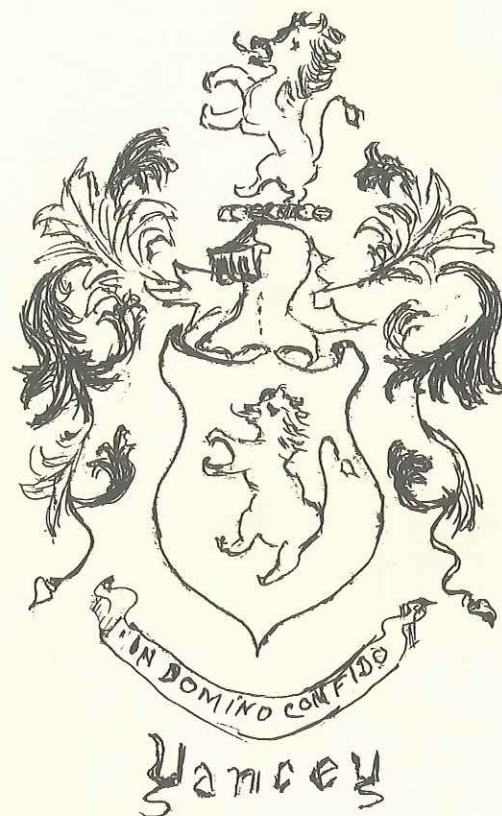
Mr. Ruck included in his report a map, showing in the valley of the River Dee, Vron Goch, home of many Nanney Clans.

Various Yancey descendants, traveling abroad have tried to locate the ancestral home. Most of them failed. Some reached Vron Goch but found no remaining traces. Others, more fortunate, located Nannau, near Dellgallen. There, on top of a hill, a Georgian house of stone, three stories high was still occupied by a Vaughn, Brigadier Charles Hilary Vaughn and his wife, Hon. Mary Patricia Monck Vaughn. On the walls were the Nanney portraits, identified by the same blue lion rampant, on a gold shield, as on the Yancey Arms.

The Vaughns knew of the four brothers who emigrated to America but not what had become of them, nor of the changed spelling. They had heard of a family in France but did not know them.

Concerning the four brothers who came to America with Sir William Berkeley, an old letter is quoted as saying that only Charles remained in Virginia. Joel and William were killed by Indians, and Robert moved to Carolina. This may well be true. There are many Yanceys in the Carolinas, or were in later days, and

most of the families in Virginia, seem to trace back to Charles, with the exception of descendants of Richard Yancey who settled in Mecklinberg County.



LEWIS DAVIS YANCEY

Documentation of the line of Capt. Layton Yancey, and others starts with Lewis Davis Yancey in the early part of the 18th century.

About 1915, while visiting in the Shenandoah Valley, we drove to Culpeper to meet William Terrell Yancey, a member of the Virginia Legislature. Being interested in family history he had searched all available documents at the Capitol and the Library for a clue to the parents of Lewis Davis Yancey, and found nothing. Some descendants recalled being told, that Benjamin was the father of Lewis Davis Yancey. None remembered the name of his mother.

The Yancey section of "Earle Connections", (44), refers to the four brothers, who came over with Sir William Berkeley and to Benjamin Yancey, the father, of Lewis Davis Yancey. A Lewis Davis is reported to have sailed from Bristol England to America in 1685. Possibly it was he, who was a descendant of Sir John Dabney Davis, also mentioned in the reference.

King William County records show that in 1704, a Charles Yancey and a Lewis Davis were neighbors. In 1711 a Charles Yancey and a Lewis Davis are mentioned in the records of St. Paul's Parish, New Kent County. Early town records of Culpeper Court House show a Davis Street and a Charles Yancey, property owner. Was Charles Yancey's full name Charles Benjamin, known to family and friends as Benjamin but using Charles as his legal signature? Did he perhaps marry a sister or daughter of Lewis Davis?

The last two paragraphs are of course only clues some of which may be verified at a later date if more information becomes available.

William Terrell Yancey recalled that among stories repeated in his family was one that Davis Yancey used to tell his children about the four brothers.

Many times when visiting in the Valley as a child an aunt or uncle would refer to Rev. Robert Yancey who was ordained, an Episcopal Priest, by the Bishop of London, and before returning to America, preached

for the Royal Family. His relation to this family, is not clear. Yet, the story was as proudly told as if a close relative had recently been so honored.

Lewis Davis Yancey, born in 1689, married in 1710 Mildred Winefred Cavanaugh, daughter of Philemon Cavanaugh. Two brothers, (1) Charles and Philemon, emigrated to America with their father, Philemon Cavanaugh in 1705. He held a grant of land from the Crown of 40,000 acres, in what was a part of Essex County, later divided to form Culpeper County. According to an old newspaper clipping, Philemon Cavanaugh gave to "daughter Winefred, who married Lewis Davis Yancey," 2000 acres. It is described as "extending westward, and, above the Beverly Line, up Muddy Run, to Judge Field's Mill, across Poor Town, to Gibson's Mill, on Mountain Run." Philemon Cavanaugh refers to his son-in-law in a deed (125) as Davis Yancey. Davis and Winefred lived, for many years, in a large log house on their estate called "Arlington".

In 1915 as we left William Terrell Yancey's home "Oak Forest", he directed us to "Arlington" on state Rt. #685. At the entrance we turned down an alley of trees, through a beautifully landscaped but informal lawn. From the deck roof of the house protruded three chimneys. These served a fireplace in each room including the dining-room, pantry and kitchen on the ground floor. To reach the main floor one ascended a flight of steps to an entrance porch about 10 feet square. Each of the twenty or more windows had panes 12x18 inches, 12 to a window. Ceilings in the eleven rooms must have been 12 feet high. None of the family lived there, only the caretaker. The log house had burned some time after this brick one was completed. It stands on a slight elevation, not far from the site of the log house. Farther down the entrance lane, beyond the back of the brick house, a high wall marks the graveyard. Original stones were gone but more modern ones marked the graves of Lewis Davis Yancey, son Charles and wife and some descendants.

It is evident that Winefred Yancey was still living in 1778 when Davis Yancey wrote his will (56), naming legatees - "Wife Winefred . . ." and "One shilling to the following children, who have received their portion: Charles Yancey, Lewis Yancey, Richard

Yancey, John Yancey, Philemon Yancey, Anne Nalle and Winefred Nalle. If son James does not return ... ,or if Robert should die in the service of his country..". Both returned.

Daughter Elizabeth is not mentioned, but was one of the witnesses. She did not marry and had likely been fully provided for by her father and grandfather. In August of 1731 Philemon Cavanaugh gave (55) "To Daughter Winefred and Lewis Davis Yancey, her husband, 800 acres in Spottsylvania County, in St. Mark's Parish. This is the same area as Arlington, only the division of the county has changed. The following year he gave "for the love and affection I bear Elizabeth Yancey, daughter of Winefred and Lewis Davis Yancey her husband, 100 acres adjoining land given to Winefred.

In 1766, Richard Tutt of Spotsylvania County, in his will (54) leaves to son Richard, money to purchase "that 500 acres of land, that Capt. Lewis Davis Yancey and his son Philemon now live on."

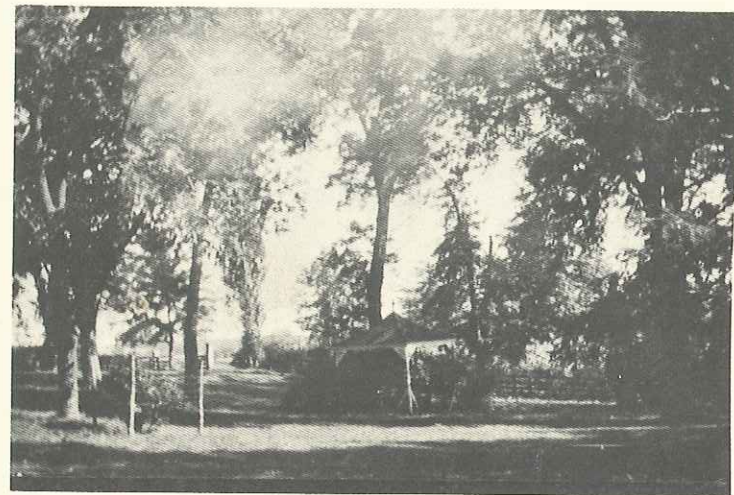
Lewis Davis Yancey had a sister, Elinor, who married Edward Stubblefield. In his will (56) he appoints his wife "Elinor Stubblefield executrix, and brother Thomas Stubblefield, and brother-in-law Lewis Davis Yancey executors."

According to her father's will (45) Winefred Cavanaugh Yancey had a sister, Elizabeth, who married John Conner; three younger sisters Sarah, Anne Elinor and Mary; and two brothers Charles and Philemon.

Regarding the children of Davis and Winefred Yancey, research has been directed only to John, the father of Capt. William Layton Yancey. Notes concerning the others are reported with a few verifications, as clues for further research.



Courtesy of Maj. Gen. T. R. Yancey U.S.A. Ret..
"Arlington"



Grounds of "Arlington"