

From the "Centralized Abney Archives"

"The Abney Family Researcher"

Newsletter

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

Gravestone Inaccuracies

*Centralized Abney Archives
founded in 1993 by Raymond "Robert" Abney Jr.*

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The Centralized Abney Archives Web Site

created May, 1998 by Gina Lyn Abney

Gina Lyn Abney, Web Master

Generation One
(the first ABNEY's born in America)

Dannett ABNEY Sr. m. Mary (LEE?) and had issue:

1. **Ursula ABNEY (1693 - ????)**
baptized 1693 of whom nothing further
2. **Dannett ABNEY Jr. (est. 1695 - ca. 1757)**
m. Mary MEREDITH (liv.01 Mar 1764)
3. **George ABNEY (est. 1697 - 01 Oct 1766)**
married Unity (n.n.) (liv.20 Jul 1769)
4. **Paul ABNEY (1699 - liv. 30 Sep 1786)**
married (n.n.) of whom nothing is known
5. **Dr. Abraham ABNEY (1702 - liv. 04 Jun 1783)**
m. Cassandra (MEREDITH?) (liv.01 Jan 1787)
6. **Martha ABNEY (est. 1705 - liv. 15 Mar 1759)**
m. Wm. SPRAGGINS (prob.15 Mar 1759)
7. **Bathshua ABNEY (est. 1708 - liv. 25 Oct 1773)**
married Thomas HILL (prob.25 Oct 1773)
8. **Abner ABNEY (est. 1711 - ca. 1752)**
married Anne (KEY?) (liv.11 Jun 1752)
9. **Mary ABNEY (est. 1714 - liv. Jan 1761)**
married John BERNARD (liv. Jan 1761)

A Message from R. Robert Abney Jr.

Dearest cousins,

How the months do fly by. It appears this may be the only newsletter I'm able to publish this year. Times have been hard, not for my family only, but for the U.S. and the free

world, as well. Genealogy is so trivial as compared to the troubles we're having in the world. I (a lifelong, registered Democrat), for one, am quite proud of President George W. Bush. What a marvelous job he is doing.

Still, genealogy is an excellent escape from the troubles of the present; and what a pleasure to know one's family history.

I am currently spending more time working on the English lines. Although Yeatman believed it impossible to construct a good pedigree of the Abney's of Derbyshire (pre-Willesley), Hensell did an excellent job, with what he had. I've discovered a few more records and believe a logical pedigree can be deduced, albeit probably not solidly proved.

It is obvious, however, that the d'Ingwardby family was not synonymous with the d'Abney family, although they were ultimately of the same blood in their male ancestry, the d'Ingwardby's never used the surname d'Abney (and various spellings).

As Yeatman points out - the d'Ingwardby's were knights under the Viscounts Saint-Sauveur (d'Abney ancestors).

I hope y'all enjoy this issue. Happy hunting!

Affectionately,

R. R. Abney Jr.

Fortiter et Honestè

~ Gravestone Inaccuracies ~

The Author's research, of late, has been geared toward correcting, discovering, and documenting the pre-America history of our Abney family.

Partly inspired by the work of Uncle Joe Baker, deceased, in discovering, securing, and having translations made, of the Willesley Muniment Room papers, the Author has been collecting and studying data from old English documents and information.

It is obvious that many of the Abney documents of the Willesley Muniment Room papers are unavailable. Are we to believe that documents of the 14th century have survived in the Muniment Room, but documents of the 17th century have not? The Author can only suspect foul play.

Of course, the matter of the proper ownership of Willesley is of no consequence at this point in time. Our only concern is the proper delineation and documentation of the Abney family history.

With that in mind, we are left with precious few documents with which to delineate the Abney family. It has been written that the direct male Abney line from the family de Saint-Sauveur of Normandie through the d'Albini family of England to the modern Abney's of America cannot be proved. Unfortunately, this statement may be factual.

However, while studying the earlier English documents, the Author believes that a "tentative" (albeit logical) pedigree can, with much thought, calculation, and study, be properly delineated.

With that goal in mind, it is best to start with those references which must (?) be facts, to wit: the gravestones of John Abney, and George Abney, Lords of Willesley, both buried in the Chapel of Willesley. Willesley, originally in Derbyshire, fell into Leicestershire in 1897.

The Author, as well as every known Abney researcher, has been guilty of accepting as fact, the date information supplied on the gravestones...until recently.

We shall take a look at the latter gravestone first. The gravestone of George Abney and Ellen [Wolseley], his wife.

In "the Incised Slabs of Leicestershire and Rutland" (1958), F.A. Greenhill writes [RRA Note: bracketed states are of this present Author]:

III. George Abney, esq., (?1578) and wife Ellen (Wolseley), 1571. On floor of chancel.

Alabaster slab, 77½ in. by 37½ in., badly worn and engraving in large part effaced, bearing effigies of a man in armour (nearly worn out), his head on a helm [helmet] with mantling [a loose sleeveless garment or cloak worn over other clothes as a symbol of preeminence or authority], and a lady, head on cushion; at top, a battlement [a parapet with open spaces that surmounts a wall and is used for defense or decoration], and beneath them a group of children, exact number not now determinable, but given by Ashmole as eleven sons and ten daughters; round the verge [border] a black-letter inscription starting at top sinister [left] corner and reading inwards, with a cross at each corner.

Of the man, hardly anything is left save for the feet and part of the legs; the former are turned outwards at an angle of 180 degrees, with most clumsy

effect. The lady so closely resembles the two wives of Richard Wightman at Burbage that description is superfluous, and the slab is evidently another from the Royley workshop.

From the scanty remains of the children, the sons appear to be in civilian gowns, and have long hair; one of the daughters wears a "French hood".

The inscription is much worn and in some places obliterated. The words in round brackets are supplied partly from Ashmole MS. 854 and part from Cox (Churches of Derbyshire, III, 521).

"Here (lyeth the body) of George Abney / (es)quier and Ellene h(is wife / w[hi]ch George de)ceased the firste day (of M)arche in the year of / our lord God 157(8) and (the said Ellene / deceased the iii) day of december in the year of our lord God M^oD^olxxi."

As Nichols does not mention this slab, it was then, in all probability, entirely hidden under pews.

The will of George Abney "of Willesley in the Countie of Derby gent.", made on January 13 Eliz. (1571) during an illness, and proved on 27 January "anno d[omi]ni iuxta computac[i]o[n]em Ecclesie Anglicane 1578"...is preserved at Somerset House...

He desires to be buried in the chancel of the chapel at Willesley, whereupon he wills that there be a gravestone laid in convenient time with the pictures of himself and his wife and children with the date of their deaths.

The date of proof is interesting, as suggesting that the date of death, 1 March 1578/9, said to have been given on the stone, must be incorrect; it was presumably 1 March 1577 (1578 by modern reckoning). I cannot trace any I.P.M. [Inquisition Post Mortem]

As the year of George's death is shown in Arabic figures, while that of his wife's is in Roman numerals, it looks as though the slab was laid down at her death, leaving the date of his decease to be filled in later.

There are a number of very interesting items given in this most excellent description of our ancestral grandparents' gravestone. Firstly, I find it of great interest that George & Ellen had issue 21 children! It is probable some died young and/or without issue.

However, the most important information for our present concerns is the facts that: a) George's LWT was probated 27 Jan 1578, and b) The gravestone reads

date of death as 01 Mar 1578, which is impossible. Considering these facts: The gravestone was to be laid "in convenient time". We don't know who provided the information for the date of death. We know the date of probate of the will is correct.

With these facts, it is obvious that George Abney absolutely did not die on 01 Mar 1578! We can only guess, as did Greenhill, that he died 1577.

Realizing that George Abney's gravestone is incorrect, the Author decided to take a closer look at John Abney's gravestone.

It has always been generally accepted that the above-mentioned George Abney was son of the John Abney also buried under an alabaster slab in Willesley Chapel. The Author believes this as well. However, if they were father and son, and if we are to believe the dates of death given by histories from inspections of their headstones, then:

We have George Abney (eldest or eldest surviving son) outliving his father by more than 70 years! Although not impossible, This is quite improbable. Let's have a closer look at the gravestone of John Abney & wife:

I. John Abney, 1505, in armour, and wife Mary, under canopy. On floor of chancel [the part of a church containing the altar and seats for the clergy and choir]. Alabaster slab, 77 in. by 36½, very much defaced and in great part obliterated, bearing beneath a canopy with side-shafts the effigies of an armed man and a lady (to dexter [on the right side, ie. of her husband]); between their heads a shield [the coat of arms], beneath them the kneeling figures of three girls [daughters] and three boys [sons]; also a marginal inscription in black-letter.

Of the male effigy very little survives, and that very faint, but his long hair is visible, with traces of the pauldrons and of his left arm, and part of the sword and sword-belt. The lady is in typical early Tudor costume, with pedimental headdress [triangular form used for decoration] and girdle secured round the waist by a large ornamental clasp. The three girls have long hair; of the boys, hardly anything is left.

The inscription begins at top sinister [left] corner, reading inwards. a good deal is effaced, and the words in round brackets are as recorded on fo. 86 of a book of church notes taken by Elias Ashmole and now in the Bodleian Library at Oxford (MS. Ashmore 854). He visited Willesley in August 1662.

"H(ic iacet Joh[ann]es Abney [armiger?] et / Maria) uxor eius qui quidem Joh[ann]es obiit primo die m(ensis Sep)temb[ris] (Ann)o d[omi]ni, mill[es]imo (D) quinto ?et /? a[n]i[m]ab[us].....deus amen."

Ashmole only gives three sides of the inscription; the fourth (sinister) was presumably covered at that time. In Nichol's time the slab was in the chancel, mostly covered by pews. The word after "Abney" was probably "armiger".

The shield bears a chief that occupies more than half of it; the remaining charges are worn off, but the full blazon was probably (Or) on a chief (gu.) a demi-lion rampt. (arg.), as shown in Ashmole's trick of a coat "in N. window of the Church" which occurred again "in Hall window of Mr. Abney's house at Willesley", or alternatively, Or on a chief gu. a lion passt. arg., as recorded in the 1619 Visitation MS. Harl. 1180, and also in Harl. 1457 and Stowe 670. These are both given as the arms of Ingwardby of Willesley, assumed by the Abneys in place of their own coat (Arg. on a cross sa. five bezants) [this coat of arms is wrong. See article this issue] when they acquired the lordship by marriage, and the first is twice portrayed on glass in the E. window.

The Author's translation:

"Here lies¹ John² Abney esquire³...and Mary his wife which indeed John died the first day (of the) month (of) September⁴ in the year of the Lord⁵, one-thousand⁶ five-hundred⁷ fifty⁸ and⁸ ---?---.....soul.....God Amen.

The Author's translation notes:

1. The word used here is "iacet" not "jacet" as is widely published. The "i" and "j" were often written identically in documents of this time period.
2. "Joh'es" is the abbreviation used for Johannes which is latin for the English name, "John".
3. If, as Greenhill supposes, the word "armiger" was inscribed here, it probably meant "esquire". The latin word "armiger" can mean "squire", "esquire", or "bearing arms". Although John was buried "bearing arms", we note that his son's gravestone read "[es]quier".
4. "Septemb" is the abbreviation used for "Septembris" which is latin for "September". Note many references to this gravestone give his death month as "December" which is herewith proved erroneous. He died in September.

5. "dni" is the abbreviation used for "domini". "Anno domini", presently abbreviated as A.D. which is properly translated as "year of our Lord" or CE (Common Era), being that era following BC or BCE (before the common era).
6. "Mill'imo" ...Mille is latin for 1000.
7. "D" is the Roman Numeral for 500.
8. It is at this point the Author senses what might be considered a great discovery. The latin for five is "quinque". Therefore, had John died in 1505 as is widely accepted, the inscription might read "millimo D quinque (or an abbreviation "quinq" for 5). But it does not! The inscription reads "quinta" (most probably not "quinto" as is widely published, but meaningless as a latin word or abbreviation). No doubt, the transcriber viewed the "a" as an "o". The abbreviation "quinta" is not an abbreviation for quinque (which may have been "quinq")! "quinta" is an abbreviation for "quingenta" (latin for fifty)! Notice that the word "et" follows the abbreviation "quinta". "Et" is latin for "and". It is unfortunate that the word after "et" has been completely obliterated. This Author believes it would give us John Abney's exact date of death. The Author believes John Abney died in 1550-something (as in 1550 and 5 for the year 1555 or 1550 and 8 for the year 1558).

Alternately, John Abney may have died "in" 1550, and the "et" after the "quinta" may have been leading into the statement of John's "animabus" (soul).

The death of John Abney in 1550 (or in the 1550's), twenty-something (to possibly thirty or just over thirty) years before his eldest surviving son, George Abney, makes more sense than the 73 years popularly accepted.

From these records, Abney researchers should amend our records to read:

John Abney, Lord of Willesley, died 01 September in 1550 or in the 1550's).
George Abney, Lord of Willesley, died 01 March circa 1577.

As usual, the Author appreciates all comments.

The issue of Mattox Mays
suggested by Cousin Charles Andrews

Recently, the Author has seen several references (by researchers more learned on the Mays family) that Mattox Mays had issue by two wives. Mays Genealogist Janet White gives the following:

Mattox Mays m1. n.n. (per Andrews: maybe Elizabeth Gardiner?) & had issue: Mattox Jr., Joseph & John.

To which we add:

Mattox Mays m2. Dorcas Abney [d/o George Abney & Unity] & had issue: Abney, William, Sally, Samuel, & Tabitha.

The Author has no proof of this, but it is noted that Mattox Mays was much older than Dorcas [about 22 years by the Author's estimate]; and it has been written that when she married William Hill [her cousin], she married a man much closer to her own age than her first husband. Any additional information would be appreciated.

It's Football Season Again!!!

(Derek Abney of UK)

Yes, dear cousins, it's football season again; and any fan of the SEC (Southeastern Conference of College Football) can't help but recognize the name of Derek Abney. His hometown is Mosinee, WI. But an article read: *Derek Allen Abney ... Born 12-19-80 in Minot, N.D. ... Son of Larry and Sylvia Abney ... Has Kentucky ties with a grandmother and sister living in Frankfort and other relatives residing in the Commonwealth ... Major is civil engineering.*

Derek is certainly making a name for himself (and the Abney family) by his excellent football skills. In a loss (unfortunately for Derek) to Florida, Derek returned a kickoff 100 yards for a touchdown (in the third quarter) a punt 49 yards for a touchdown (in the last quarter), "becoming just the seventh player in NCAA history to return a punt and kickoff for a score in the same game". Derek also had a pass reception of 14 yards for a touchdown!

The Author is still interested in fitting Derek Abney into his rightful place in our family history. Anyone having any information on Derek's parents, grandparents, ancestry, please write. His distant cousins (unbeknownst to him) are quite proud of him; and will be prouder still when he plays in the NFL!

The Wife of Dannett Abney Jr.

It has long been believed that Dannett Abney Jr. married Mary Meredith. The Author has long questioned her surname.

In light of the reception of recent documents from the Spraggins Collection (much thanks to Mary Gregg for her sharing), it is plain that Thomas Spraggins & Maacah Abney had issue, Samuel Meredith Spraggins.

Maacah's parents were Dannett Abney Jr. and the Mary in question. Thomas Spraggins are considered to have been William Spraggins and Martha Abney (sister to Dannett Abney Jr.). If this be the case, it seems apparent that "Samuel Meredith Spraggins" was named for "Samuel Meredith", father of Mary Meredith as reported by earlier researchers. This is not proof, to be certain. After all, Martha (believed to have been a daughter of Dannett Abney Sr.), may have been a daughter of Samuel Spraggins. For now, the Author will be content to write: *Dannett Abney m. Mary (Meredith?)*. Still, this additional information shows no connection between Mary (wife of Dannett Jr.) and Cassandra (wife of Dr. Abraham Abney).

Ye Proper

d'Abney Arms & Crest

This is the proper Arms for the Abney Family: *or, on a chief gu., a lion passant arg.*
The proper Crest for the Abney Family: *a demi-lion rampant or, a pellet between the paws*

Paul Abney's (direct ancestor of the American Abney's) crest showed the slight difference "a pellet gu. (the pellet is red instead of black), between the paws" to differentiate his line from the hereditary (by primogeniture) Willesley line. Paul entered his pedigree at the Visitation of Leicester in 1619.

Only once was it "changed". For some reason Sir Thomas Abney, Knight, Lord Mayor of London, decided he wanted to change it, probably through a complete misunderstanding. However, John Pym Yeatman *The Feudal History of the County of Derby* explains it much better than this Author:

...It is impossible seriously to contend that the Herald of the time of William III. is entitled to any respect as an authority. He was in all probability Henry St. George, who succeeded Dugdale as Norroy in 1677, and most shamefully tampered with Dugdale's MSS., causing them to be nearly worthless. The probability is that the mistake arose from finding the cross on the shield of Philip Albini, the Crusader, but that was only the Crusader's shield, and not his family arms. All Crusaders used the cross on their shields; they were said to have been signed by the cross.

It is a most unfortunate thing for one writing a history of the Albini family, or in attempting to elucidate it, that efforts should have been made to decry the descent of the Albini arms, because they have only borne them from about 1400 to the present time, a period of 500 years. Sir Thomas Abney, the Lord Mayor (probably with the aid of his chaplain, Dr. Watts), discovered, about 1700, that these arms were properly the arms of the Ingwardbys, and therefore were to be discarded. Ralf Bigland (Norroy), writing a century later, on the contrary, states that the proper arms of the Abneys of Willesley are those which they bore down to the year 1682, which was, then, the last period when any family had been before the Heralds, except Sir Charles Abney Hastings, who came to obtain some special grants for himself, which Bigland warned his clients (the Newton-Burgoland family) could not be enjoyed by them without a new grant. Bigland is unable to understand by what authority Nichols, in his History of Leicestershire, changed the arms. He did not know, apparently, how easy it was for the Lord Mayor of London, who was not afraid, with his saints, to tinker religion and pervert the meaning of the Bible, to alter the laws of the Heralds, which was a very small thing, comparatively; but now that it is seen that the Ingwardbys were Knights of the House of St. Sauveur and of Belvoir, which was never before broached, it would appear that they must have adopted the coat in honour of thier Lords - or it may be that they were akin to them. It does not seem very remarkable that the Abneys or Albinis, when they came to the possession of Willesley, should use the Ingwardby arms, which were in fact their own. These facts only show how dangerous it is, even for so great a personage as Dr. Watts, to tamper with ancient records...

We should all be mindful of our rightful arms, the arms borne by our ancestors.

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

Volume I

3. Leonard ABNEY of TN - RR

9. James T. ABNEY - NR
10. Mary Agnes ABNEY - RR
17. Charles ABNEY (gs/o Dannett ABNEY) - RR/T

Volume II

23. Mary Ann HOLMES GAUSDEN - RR
34. Parentage of Butler ABNEY - NR
37. Iss. of W^m ABNEY & Delilah RICHARDSON - RR
38. Husband of Melicent WILLS (ABNEY) - NR
39. Parentage of Benjamin "Ben" ABNEY - NR
40. Parentage of John B. ABNEY - NR
44. Cemetery of Kentucky ABNEY's - NR
45. Bathshua (widow of ABNEY & LEE) - NR
46. John ABNEY Jr. of SC (1776-1823) - RR
47. OBNEY of OH, PA, WV, & VA - NR
48. William Omer ABNEY (b.1878 Georgia) - NR
49. Pvt. William ABNEY's wives - RR
50. Ward Wilson ABNEY of Virmigy, MN - NR
51. Robert ABNEY who m. Mary RODMAN - NR
53. John Joseph ABNEY of Louisiana - NR

Volume III

55. Parentage of Mary L. ABNEY -NR
56. Issue of Clem ABNEY - NR

57. Another Abner ABNEY - RR
58. Parentage of Dr. James "Henry" ABNER - NR
59. Parentage of David ABNEY of SC - NR
60. Thomas ABNEY of Surrey, England - NR
61. Issue of Dr. Abraham ABNEY

Volume V

62. Cassandra, wife of Dr. Abraham ABNEY
63. Parentage of John Webster of MS & LA

CODES

NR = No Response
R* = Resolved (see this issue)
R = Resolved (see next issue)**
RR = Responses Received
T = Theory Formulated
T* = Theory Formulated (see this issue)
T = Theory Formulated (see next issue)**

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