

## **The Coffey Family Settlers of "Coffeytown"**

*The Coffey settlers of Coffeytown are described by family legend, and somewhat supported by the public records, as Hudson, Schylar, John Jack, William ("Billy"), Nelson, and Henry Coffey. Jordan's three daughters were Jane, Susanna, and Elizabeth. After their marriage, some of the daughters stayed in the general area for a while but never were involved in the settlement of "Coffeytown", which we define as land along Staton's Creek, which at one time (1894 map) was referred to as "Coffie Creek". This chapter explores the emergence of Coffeytown as a geographic entity and discusses the lives of the Coffey family settlers to the extent we can find written documentation in the public records.*

### **PART I – GETTING SETTLED**

#### **Overview – the Census Reports and the People**

The first census taken after Jordan left Nelson County, the **1830** Census, shows Jordan Coffey as the only Coffey in present day Amherst County. This was also the first census taken, after Nelson county was formed, which shows any Coffey in Amherst County. Jordan and his wife and 9 children are shown. John Jack was the first in this group to marry, in January, 1830, and by the time the census was taken was probably not living with the family (his wife doesn't show in the statistics). He doesn't show as the head of a household either, but this could be because he was living with a different family, as a boarder, possibly with her family. If John Jack was not at home in the summer of 1830, this would mean that 10 children existed. There is no proof that all of these were Jordan's, as the listing is only for the head of the household and others by age range, which was typical of census reports until 1850. One boy child is listed as being between the ages of 0-5. None of the known Coffeys listed above were that young in 1830, and it was too early for John Jack to have a child. If this was Elizabeth's child, she would have been between 47 and 52 years of age when the child was born, which is unlikely. It is likely that such a child, if it existed, may have died before the 1840 census. It could also be that a neighbor's child was present during the census, and was inadvertently counted. Not enough information to be certain, but whatever really happened, a tenth child shows nowhere else and did not figure prominently in the family affairs. Public records are not always as clear as we would like them to be.

In 1830, the Census shows Jordan Coffey living in the same basic neighborhood with Ambrose Rucker, Lindsay McDaniel, and Henry Ogden. A few doors away is William McDaniel, Benjamin Taliaferro, and Joshua Duff with his family, probably including Betsey

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Duff and John Jack, Sr. who were married in January, 1830. In what appears to be a different part of the county not too far away, the census reads like a who's who of Coffey family and Amherst County history: Anderson Sandidge, John Staton, Joseph Dodd, Garland Richerson, Willis White, Aaron Higginbotham, James Clements, John Allen.

By **1840**, John Jack, Nelson, Schuyler, and William are listed in addition to Jordan as the heads of households. This leaves Henry and Hudson unaccounted for by name in 1840. There were two males, aged 20-30 in Jordan's household that year. This is strange because Hudson was too old (35) and Henry was too young (18) to fit into that category. Neither of them is listed anywhere in Virginia as the head of a household in 1840; but in 1839, the following Coffeys paid their taxes in sequence on the same day: John, Schylar, Jordan, Henry F., Hudson, and William. It is likely that the census age range is incorrect and that both Henry and Hudson were living with Jordan in 1840. The first mention of Henry by name is in the Amherst County tax records for 1839 when he would have been 22 years of age. It was 1842 when he paid taxes the next time, for a silver watch. Throughout the next seven years he declares for taxes but owns nothing being taxed. In 1849, after he married the widow Elizabeth (McDaniel) Coffey, he arrives in style with four metallic clocks, 2 slaves and one horse, logging in at the staggering amount of \$0.76 taxes for the year. Given all that and the fact that Henry shows nowhere else by name in any census report, it is likely that he was the ninth child indicated in the 1830 census as well, giving some credence to the family legend that Henry was thought of as Jordan's son. According to his confusing death record, he was not Jordan's biological son, but he could have been and probably was informally adopted by Jordan prior to his leaving Nelson County.

Based on the listing in the 1840 Census, John Jack, William and Schylar were living in the same "neighborhood", Nelson was off elsewhere in the county, and Jordan lived between the two groups. Jordan lived between John Cash and Thomas Mahoney. We didn't recognize any of the other "nearby" names either. William and John were living next to each other, 3 doors down from Schylar who lived next to Meredith Allen, Jane Coffey's husband. Meredith and Jane had two young girls and one boy, all less than 5 years old in 1840. Patsy Cooper was a neighbor and 14 houses down the road was William W. Davis. Not too far away was the Methodist Reverend Pitt Woodroof with his wife and eight youngsters. Pitt is believed to have lived near Oronoco. From the names and the groupings, it appears that Coffeytown was beginning to form itself into a community.

Reubin P. Coffey was living in a different part of Amherst County - just him and his wife. By 1850, he seems to have moved to Augusta County, and Joseph Coffee (59) and his wife Ruth (48) replaced Reubin P. as the "non-Jordan" Coffey in Amherst.

In **1850**, Henry, John, Jordan, Schylar, and William were living in the same "neighborhood", while Frederick and Jesse were living in different parts of the county. Eliza Wilson lived next to John Coffey who lived next to William H. Ogden. Jordan, William, Schylar

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and Henry lived all in a row with James Dodd and Cornelius Clement at the end. This may have been the cluster which ultimately became Coffeytown, but in 1850 clustered on or near Henry's property (McDaniel property in 1850) on both sides of Staton's Creek. Some 100 houses away, Frederick was living with Abram Clement and Rebecca, the widow of Nelson Coffey, along with her children by both marriages. William Hamilton (Hambelton), with James P. Hamilton living in, lived next to Abram Clement.

Even Frederick Coffey (Nelson's son) joined the Coffeytown cluster by 1860. Rebecca and Pauline, with 15 year old Nelson were still living with Abram Clement, in Nelson's old house, in the same neighborhood as William Sandidge, and next door to James Taliaferro. Charles E. Coffey, son of John Jack, was living near 36 year old Edward Drummond who ended up with Pauline Coffey before 1870, and next door to John Whitesides and his family. The cluster which Frederick joined consisted of the following men and their families: Henry Coffey, John Coffey, William Coffey, Frederick Coffey, William W. Davis, Ben H. Davis, Hudson Coffey, and Nelson Clark flanking Hudson. This was all probably within the general area of present day Coffeytown. Meredith Coffey and family were next to James Taliaferro and Peter Lawhorne. Schylar Coffey was still farther away from the cluster, but still in Amherst County, probably way up Rt. 634. Coffeytown had finally taken a firm shape, only to face the tragedy of the Civil War in the first half of the next decade, which substantially affected the ability of all southerners to grow and prosper.

After the War, in 1870, Reubin C. Coffey and wife Margaret, sons Augustus (23) and Marcellus (27), along with her mother Martha Bolling (60) and a black cook named Victoria Briggs, lived in the Courthouse district of Amherst, probably near Thrasher's Creek since he and Edgar Whitehead bought 467-3/4 acres from John R. Haden in 1869 (DB "JJ"/pg 170). Meredith Coffey and his wife Martha, and four young children lived in the Temperance District of Amherst County. Pauline was living with Edward Drummond and her two children Moses (6) and William (2). They were also in the Temperance district. All other Coffeys were in the Pedlar District and seem concentrated in one area, which surely by 1870 had somewhat recovered from the War, and was a well-defined little "Coffeytown".

Listed in a cluster in 1870 were Coffeys as follows: **Schylar** and "Mary" Coffey (perhaps her name was Mary Elizabeth), with **Fanny (Frances)**, **Jordan** and **John Coffey**; **Hudson** and **Mahala Coffey**, with 16 year old **James E. Coffey**; **Daniel** and **Mildred Coffey**, with one year old **Ella** and **Catherine Sandidge**, 43 years old at the time (she was Mildred's mother and the "Kate" featured in Maryon Harper's book **Old Cold Mountain Tales**); **John** and **Elizabeth Coffey** (60 and 62 years of age); **John** and **Patara Coffey**, with **Marcia**, **Henley**, **Lena**, **Emma Jane**; 30 year old **William Henry** and **Virginia Coffey**; **James** (son of Billy) and **Sophia** (daughter of Schylar) **Coffey**, with **Andrew** and **Edmund**; **William "Billy"** and **Sarah Anne Crawford Coffey**, with **Edward**, **Bettie**, **Sarah Fannie**, and 11 year old **Arthur Coffey**; **William "Buck"** and **Sarah Granville Coffey**, with **Willis** (3 years old at the time); **Harden** and **Elizabeth Crawford**, with **Nathan** (listed as 3 years old); **Charles E.** and **Sarah Jane Ogden**, with **Pitt**, **Charlie**, **Mary Jane**, and **Eleanna Coffey**;

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**Henry** and Elizabeth McDaniel Ogdan Coffey, with Henry F. Coffey; Frederick and Catherine Ogdan Coffey (daughter of Elizabeth McDaniel and Zachariah Ogdan), with Tressa, Marble, Rebecca and one year old Lucy S. Coffey; and Mary M. Coffey, 32, with Mollie Coffey (this was probably Mathew Coffey's widow and their daughter Mollie. Mathew was Nelson's son, who died in the War).

Delayed by the War and its aftermath, Coffeytown would eventually develop into a self-contained community, as the population grew and became large enough to support its fundamental needs with a store, church, school and even its own post office. It never was large enough to support its own doctor and full-time preacher. Daniel Rufus Coffey's mother-in-law, and William Henry "Cripple Henry's" mother-in-law as well, Catherine Sandige, functioned as the town midwife, doctor, "assistant pastor", and generally was the person everyone in need could depend upon. If Coffeytown ever had a Mayor in those early days, it was "Miss Kate". She was a role model for "the best neighbor you ever had", a true unsung heroine who lived to be over 100 years old.

It was in 1888 (same year that pensions were first available to Confederate Veterans and their survivors) that Charles E. Coffey deeded land to the Methodist Church, and built himself a new home, and 1896 when the present church, in the process of restoration, was constructed of chestnut lumber cut from Coffey land. The schoolhouse (land deeded by Charles E. Coffey in 1899 to Pedlar School Board - DB "YY" pg 405/ 498) was located just up the hill from the church site, and the post office was down by the road, next to the church. The southern economy was finally beginning to stabilize and people felt more comfortable about the future. This concentration of Coffeys continued through the peak of Coffeytown's existence as a family town, but it too would find its optimum size and strength, and ultimately decline in population as the world around it changed.

### "Coffeytown" – Deeds and the Land

There seems to be some controversy as to when Coffeytown was actually settled by the Coffeys. The earliest deed in present day Amherst County, which we could find relating to the Coffey family, was the 1827 Deed of Trust by Hudson to his father Jordan. This document is discussed in detail in the chapter "Jordan Fitzgerald (Alias Coffey)", and briefly again under the heading HUDSON COFFEY in this chapter.

The next earliest deed is dated 1842, when Nelson bought his father-in-law's property for \$475 from the estate. Our guess at this time is that he was living with his wife Rebecca on or near this property on Thrasher's Creek in 1841 when Robert Hamblton, Rebecca's father, died. Census reports indicate that he was next door to Robert in 1840. Nelson died sometime between 1845 and 1847 (based on tax records). His wife Rebecca Hamilton married Abram Clement in 1849. Toward the end of Stonewall Jackson's Valley campaign,

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Abram was killed near Harrisonburg in 1862 during the Civil War. It appears that Rebecca stayed on the property for some time, but Frederick and Nancy each sold their share of the land 20 AUG 1859 to James P. Hamilton. This land was related only to Nelson and his family and did not contribute to the overall development of Coffeytown. Had Nelson lived, however, Coffeytown would probably have been developed along Thrasher's Creek, which is more like rolling hills than the mountainous area around Coffeytown. Family legend has it that the Coffeys bought into Coffeytown land because the land they wanted was not available. It may have been the land around Thrasher's Creek they would have preferred, or it may have been the Allen land, but with contiguous land the other property owners were not willing to sell.

In 1848, William Coffey signed a deed of trust for \$225.00 for Eliza White, his neighbor, who bought 230 acres with the money. This lien was released 12 April 1855. Also in 1848, William bought 105 acres from Meredith Allen and William's sister Jane, lying on the south side of Fork Mountain. The land was adjacent to property owned by Aaron Higginbotham and Anderson Sandidge. This is probably the date the Allens left the area and eventually ended up in West Virginia, although they owned other property in the area which we have not tracked. Meredith and Jane were in Tazewell County in 1850, with six children. William sold this 105 acres to Willis White for a \$10 loss on 6 October 1851, a few months after Henry's land was purchased.

The Allen land was no doubt sold because Henry Coffey, freshly married to Elizabeth (McDaniel) (Ogden) Coffey, bought 340 acres on both sides of the middle fork of the Pedlar River (Staton's Creek) on 8 May 1851 (DB "BB"/pp 188-189), having paid \$1000 to William McDaniel, Elizabeth's father. The deed had the will built-in, so that when Henry died, it went back to Elizabeth. Sort of a rubber string attached. McDaniel then wrote his will (5 JUNE 1851) leaving his plantation to his son Lindsay McDaniel, Elizabeth's brother. The property bought by Henry was previously purchased by McDaniel from Benjamin Sandidge in 1811. This is the earliest deed for Coffey land which mentions Staton's Creek, even in such cryptic terms. It is likely that Jordan, Hudson, John Jack, Schylar, and William, since they were living in the same "neighborhood" in 1850, may have been living on McDaniel land, used by Elizabeth and her husband Zachariah Ogden, until Zachariah's death, as Henry married Elizabeth in 1848, although there are indications he was there earlier. Even before Henry bought the McDaniel property on both sides of the middle fork, all his Coffey cohorts came with him, looking for similar property in the same area where they could stay together and support each other. 340 acres could contain, but not support, six families in those days, especially when much of the land was very steep.

Cognizant of Henry's "rubber string" deed, in 1859 John Jack purchased land from Thomas, James, and R. Richerson (DB "HH"/329), which was probably northeast of Henry's property. This was expanded, 14 years later in 1873, when William and John Jack jointly purchased 1335 acres along Staton's Creek for the sum of \$4000 from the estate of Jesse Richerson. This was the same year John Jack married 25 year old Virginia C. Campbell of Rockbridge County. Jesse had purchased it from Richard and John Cooper; Captain

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Benjamin Taliaferro's heirs, and James Taliaferro. This land, which we believe became a larger part of Coffeytown, was known as "Cooper's Place" and included land which was around and behind Hersey Coffey's place. In 1874, William and John sold a small portion, 275 acres, to McDaniel Crawford, then split the remaining land between themselves, and John Jack sold portions to Charles E. and John Jack, Jr. By the time the land was split, each had already built a cabin. The next few years are filled with land deals among the children and with a few outsiders, no doubt all centered around Coffeytown. (See Deed book "JJ" and later in Amherst County Courthouse.)

From several different indexes, these are the earliest deeds we have been able to find. Since other researchers seem to have the same problem with earlier Coffey property in Coffeytown area, we assume that 1851 was the first Coffey foothold along Staton's Creek, but 1859 was the first year Coffeys freely owned land at Staton's Creek. The census supports the idea that the Coffeys settled in the area in the early days, but were probably renting. Jordan and Elizabeth were most likely dead by this time, but they did live to see Henry's land and probably saw the general area before it developed into "Coffeytown". Henry, we believe, lived south of Bridgehill Cemetery, in the general area of Embree Crawford's present house but probably up the hill off the roadway. There is still an Ogden cemetery on the hill behind Embree's old house. Since Henry lived on what was Ogden/McDaniel land at one time, and Jordan and Elizabeth died around 1852-1854, it is possible that Jordan and Elizabeth may be buried within the largely unmarked Ogden cemetery, as this was the only land they owned any part of when Jordan died. Henry Coffey's land extended on both sides of Staton's Creek, and although the creek itself was more recently relocated, a portion of this property may also have included the hill behind Elsie's home, which is where Jordan and Elizabeth are said to be buried. The other Coffey children crowded around on Henry's land, possibly to help him with his instant family, and saved their money until 1859 and beyond – determined to accomplish what Jordan had been unable to do – own land free and clear.

It had been more than 30 years since Jordan left Nelson County. None of these Coffeys ever went back to Nelson County to live. The strong family ties which developed between the six Coffey boys, probably as a result of so many difficulties they faced together, left them and their families determined to stay close together and support each other in a way which had not occurred in Nelson County, as they perceived. The Coffeys must have felt they had been essentially abandoned by their family in Nelson County, and were determined to establish their own identity and supportive community. They succeeded, but it took them over 30 years, some good luck, and involved many hardships. It took more than rugged independence. It also took many daily sacrifices for the good of their own children and the overall community. It took cooperation.

"Clarktown" and "Oronoco" were other communities in the general area. Each had its own genesis and developed differently than Coffeytown. Clarktown developed as a mining town along Irish Creek in Rockbridge County and spilled over into Amherst County

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along the Pedlar River. A rough and tumble town, it mostly came and went with the mines, most of which were owned by David Garland, the same man to whom Jordan's debt was assigned. Oronoco (which is a name for harsh Indian tobacco which John Rolfe, of Jamestown fame, learned to blend with "sweet-scented" tobacco of European origin and saved Jamestown from economic doom) developed as a farming community centered around Asberry (as it is often spelled) Methodist. Both communities also had their one room schoolhouses and churches, and both peaked and declined a little earlier than Coffeytown, but there are still remnants and relics of each community along the roadways and back in the woods, silent reminders of an era of almost self-sustaining groups of closely related family and friends, usually splinter groups from an earlier generation, who set out to make their own way in life, and who stuck together to support each other in times of hardships and celebrated together in times of harvest. These communities were very different from the gold rush towns of the West, or "company" towns where the essential bonds holding people together were money, not blood.

Having reviewed the evolution of Coffeytown from a census perspective, and then as a real estate transaction, we turn attention now to each of the six "Coffey" boys whose relationships throughout these years held the family together and finally culminated in a tight-knit, more or less self-contained community of children and grandchildren. Family charts for each of these is located at the end of this chapter, to enhance comprehension of the family structure of these early settlers in Amherst County.

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### **HUDSON COFFEY (Ca 1804/5 - >1870 <1880)**

**Hudson "Huddie" Coffey** was the eldest son of Jordan and Elizabeth Rippetoe Coffey. He was born in 1804-1805, approximately two years after their marriage, in what is now Nelson County, probably along the Tye River in the general area of what is now Tyro. Nothing is known of Hudson's early life, since no one is living to tell it and since he was too young to do things which made their way into the records.

Apparently, Hudson, and perhaps Schylar, left Nelson County to come to Amherst, probably to make some money. They were still in Nelson in 1826 so they hadn't been living long in Amherst County when William the elder died (before March, 1828).

Hudson deeded some of his property - a mare, feather bed and some furniture - to his father in 1827. This deed of trust is listed in the Amherst County files, and is dated Dec. 31, 1827. It is prepared as a "loan" from Hudson to Jordan, not for money but for "love and benefit of Jordan". Most likely it relates to Jordan's Deed of Trust, written in 1817 in Nelson County, where he promised to pay his

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debt by the end of the year, or Edmund F. Coffey, acting in his official capacity as Constable of Nelson County, and a signer of the note, was to confiscate the collateral and sell it at auction to pay off the debt, and give Jordan anything which might remain after the note was satisfied. In 1817, Jordan put up as collateral “... a mare, feather bed, some furniture” and some animals. After many postponements, the note was due and Jordan couldn't pay. This 1827 Deed was intended to circumvent the original Deed of Trust. Jordan couldn't pay it off, and couldn't live very well without his horse, feather bed and some furniture. This occurred years before the Homestead Act, which allowed similar exclusions from creditors. That Act was intended to prevent just this sort of devastating collection, which happened to many in the early 1800's. Nevertheless, Jordan outfoxed his creditors. If the mare, feather bed and furniture actually belonged to Hudson, it couldn't be confiscated to pay a debt owed by Jordan.

Hudson seems to have devoted himself to the care of his parents. In the 1850 census report, where person's names are first listed, Hudson is living with Jordan and Elizabeth in Amherst County. He was probably also there in 1840, taking care of his elderly parents. Before 1860 both his parents presumably died, as they do not show in any later census reports, and he was free to marry.

On 20 September 1855 Hudson married Mahala Lane, a widow. We don't know if there were any children by her first marriage, but census reports (1860 and 1870) show a James E. Coffey, presumably the son of Hudson and Mahala, living with the family in the Pedlar District of Amherst County. James was 5 in 1860 and 16 in 1870 when the census was taken. His father may have died in the early 1870's when he was very young, and he may have left to make a living elsewhere. If Mahala had other children, they were apparently too old to be living with the family in 1860. Perhaps Hudson continued living in his parent's house after they died. His place of residence would be interesting to discover since it is likely that this is where Jordan and Elizabeth lived out the latter portion of their lives, but since other dwellings, known to have been constructed later, have all rotted away, it is very unlikely that anything remains. And since it was built on land they did not own freely, it was probably a temporary log cabin, on a wooden foundation.

Census reports show both Hudson and Mahala as illiterate. Probably most of the Coffeys prior to this time were also illiterate, but it simply didn't get recorded, because the census takers didn't ask. The whole county, indeed most of the state, was peppered with illiteracy. The government wanted to get a handle on the depth and extent, so it could devise a plan to reduce illiteracy. Being illiterate by no means implies that they were stupid or ignorant. It simply says they were too busy with survival to spend the time to learn to read or write. In their lifetime, the ability to read and write was a luxury. If modern day census takers were to test everyone on their knowledge of agriculture, most people today would end up being listed as “illiterate”.

James Coffey, son of Hudson, shows in the 1880 Census in Campbell County, next to Lynchburg, with his mother Mahala, wife and children. He was too young and Hudson too old to have been involved as soldiers with the Civil War. There is no specific mention of

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James in connection with Coffeytown history. Hudson is not listed in the Amherst County death records through 1896, and we don't have later census reports clear enough to establish his death date. He was 66 or 68 years old in 1870, and does not show in the 1880 Census. Presumably he died between 1870 and 1880. Place of burial is unknown. He may be one of the early settlers of Coffeytown buried with only a boulder for his marker. The cemetery behind Elsie Coffey's house is the oldest known "Coffey" cemetery, but there may be some scattered farther north for these very early settlers without permanent markers, and long since forgotten. The property bought by John Jack and William in 1873 may have been owned by Coffeys when Hudson died, or he may have been buried with his parents, who are most likely buried in the Ogden cemetery. (Bridgehill was not used until about 1907.) The use of headstones was not as popular then as it is today, largely because of the economic conditions prevalent at the time, but boulders were used to mark the spot, as a measure of respect.

### **SCHYLAR COFFEY ( Ca 1806 - >1870 <1880)**

**Schylar** may have been the second son of Jordan and Elizabeth Coffey, born around 1806. The marriage records do not list his parents, and death records have not been found for him. Schylar and Nelson (and Henry) are the only ones of the original 9 for whom no specific listing of parentage has been found. When Nelson married in 1833, Schylar gave permission, not Jordan and Elizabeth, although they were alive and living in Amherst County at the time. When Schylar married in 1832, he was over 21 and did not need permission from his parents, but we believe it was deeper than that.

The ancestry of Nelson and Schylar is not firmly established. Both of these names relate directly to Nelson County geography, and are not traditional "Coffey" names, like the other children's names. They were both born around the time when a portion of Amherst was about to be split off as Nelson County. One district in Nelson County is Schuyler District. On occasions, Schylar's name has been written exactly that way. He and Nelson may be brothers (implied by their actions), but only cousins to John Jack and Billy. They may be descendants of some of Edward the twin Coffey's people, or more likely, "excess" children from one or another neighbor. This was not unusual. Historically in the colonies, when even one parent died, the court would sometimes "bind out" the children to ensure their welfare. At age 14, a "bound out" child had the right to choose his guardian. But all of this was much less formal in rural land which, 50 years earlier, had been frontier. Informal guardians were commonplace in those days and even later. The courts did not appoint a guardian unless there was an estate to protect, Henry was so much younger it is difficult to believe he came from the same parentage as Nelson or Schylar (if they were orphans, for instance). NO records have been found which conclusively prove parentage of Schylar or Nelson, and Henry's parentage is not clear from the records we do have. We understand that the absence of proof positive does not automatically prove a negative. But, in the absence of such proof, it is necessary to look at other reasonable alternatives. There is not

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enough evidence to conclusively prove that any of those three were or were NOT children of Jordan and Elizabeth. They were all treated as if they were, and as far as we know, accepted by the family as such, whether biologically related or not, but the records (understood to be sometimes incomplete) do not reflect a biological relationship, and therefore leave the question open. Perhaps someday more definitive records will be located.

Schylar married Elizabeth Hamilton, daughter of Robert "Hot-headed" (Hambelton) Hamilton, and sister of Rebecca Hamilton who married Nelson Coffey, on 30 January 1832. Schylar and Elizabeth had 7 children (see chart). Sophia, Jordan, Schylar and John all married.

No information regarding marriage of any of the older three has been found. All three - Frances, George and Robert - were still living with their parents in Amherst in 1860. Frances Coffey, 40 at the time, was still there in 1870. She is believed to have died 18 FEB 1908 and is buried at Timber Ridge in Rockbridge County. The boys had a different experience within that decade.

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*George Coffey is believed to have enlisted as a Private in Co. B, 49th Regiment, VA Infantry, Confederate States of America on 23 April 1861. He died from wounds and typhoid fever either 1 or 5 March 1862 in camp along the Rapidan River in Madison County. Robert Coffey also served as a Private in the same regiment, from his enlistment on 21 August 1862 until his death in July 1864 from wounds received 12 May 1864, the same day his cousins were listed as "captured". This was the last day of fighting at Spottsylvania Courthouse. He received a Certification of Commendation prior to his death. Jordan Coffey enlisted in Richmond, VA on 25 June 1864, assigned to Co. B, 3rd VA Cavalry. No record regarding his service in the cavalry has been found; but he also enlisted 1 March 1864 in Amherst County, VA, later transferred to Co. I, 49th VA Infantry on 27 June 1864; listed as AWOL as of 1 October 1864. No doubt the death of his brothers and the realization of the lost cause in the mud holes at Petersburg contributed to his absence. Jordan's enlistment in Richmond may have been his attempt to collect a fee for enlisting. There were very few ways to make money in Richmond in June, 1864. No record of Schylar, Jr., nor John serving in the CSA has been found, as both were too young to serve.*

*One lesson of the Civil War resulted in deliberately "mixing up" recruits from different areas when creating regiments. All too often during this War, brothers, cousins, and townfolk, assigned to the same regiment, would be wiped out in a single battle, with devastating results back home. Schylar and Elizabeth were the only "Coffeytown" settlers to lose more than one child in the War. And the only other one lost was Nelson's son Mathew. Coupled with the loss of Abram Clements, who took care of Nelson's children after his death, as well as his own with Rebecca, this was even more devastating to that branch of the family. Losing the breadwinner often meant "poverty".*

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*Life in the military has been described as “long periods of boredom and inactivity, punctuated by moments of sheer terror”. It was during those long periods of boredom when soldiers would read – or have read to them – desperate letters from home describing the hardships faced by the women and younger boys left to tend the farm, in an atmosphere of shortages of all kinds, and occasional “visits” by foraging armies, which were often worse than locusts. It was these letters and their sense of personal and family responsibility, coupled with the growing sense of futility in the War itself, which often led the men to desert their units. The men knew the War was over long before their leaders did.*

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Schylar Coffey, Jr. married twice. His first wife, Isabella Drumheller died 17 February 1870. He then married Mary Coffey, daughter of Reubin W. and SJW Coffey in 1880 and she must have also died fairly young, but there may have been at least one child by the second marriage, *Anne Belle Coffey*, who died of fever in Rockbridge County 12 OCT 1895 at the age of 14. This sets her birth about a year after Schylar’s second marriage. Her “mother” was listed as Elizabeth, but this may have been her grandmother, old Schylar’s wife, which implies that Mary died or left sometime before 1895. Elizabeth Hamilton Coffey would have been too old to have had Anne Belle herself. This Elizabeth died in August, 1895, also of fever. No further record regarding Schylar, Jr. has been found.

Sophia Coffey married Jim Coffey, Billy’s oldest son, and they had several children which are discussed and charted under the “Billy” section.

Jordan Coffey married Rebecca Pettis (Grant) Coffey in 1876 in Rockbridge County and they are known to have had five children: *Alexander Coffey*, born at Irish Creek in 1876, married twice, first to Viola Walker (4 children), then Frances Schreve (1 child). Alexander died in WV in 1960; *Florence Coffey*, born in 1881, in Amherst County. She married James Ramsey and they had eight children. Florence died in Augusta County in 1959. *Fary Letcher Coffey*, also born at Irish Creek in 1888, married Elias Coffey, son of John and Annie Ogdan Coffey, and they had four children. Two other children of Jordan, died fairly young: *Uriah “Rye” Coffey* fell from a train and died in Buena Vista in 1909, and *Finley Coffey* died young of pneumonia.

John Coffey married Annie Mariah Ogdan in 1875 and they had eight children: *Elias Coffey*, born in 1875, married Fary Letcher Coffey in 1906 and they had 4 children; *Nathaniel Coffey*, born 1879 who married Ruth Mays in 1906; *Ollie Coffey* married James Lee Hamilton in 1901; *John Franklin Coffey* who married Hayden Davis in 1906; *Celestial Coffey* married Saylor Marshall Coffey, Sr. in 1905, son of Alford Coffey and Martha Bradley of Nelson County. Celestial and Saylor had 10 children. *Walter Herbert Coffey*, born in 1890, married Gertrude Carr. *William Coffey*, born in 1894, married twice, first to Virgie Mays, and then to Tina. *Sanford Dewey Coffey*, the last child, was born in 1898 and he married twice also: Florence Sterling and then Clarabell.

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### JOHN JACK COFFEY (Ca 1808 - 14 December 1888, Amherst County)

**John Jack Coffey** was born around 1808/9, according to the census reports. He was probably the second son of Jordan and Elizabeth Coffey, but he was third oldest of the group. In 1827/28 when his family came to Amherst County, he was around 20 years old.

On 18 January 1830, John Jack married Elizabeth "Betsey" (Duff) Coffey, the daughter of Joshua and Besley Duff of Fluvanna County. His parents were not listed in that document, but Jordan and Elizabeth were listed as witnesses. Census records imply that this couple had 7 children, including William Henry, who was 10 years old at the time.

John Jack's sons Charles E. Coffey, John Jack Coffey, Jr., William Henry Coffey and Daniel Rufus Coffey all lived in Coffeytown proper and provided much of the population of the western and northern portions of Coffeytown. No record of marriage has been found for Mary Coffey, but Sarah Jane (Coffey) Davis married William Davis in 1859. They had two children: John Edward Davis, and William Henry Davis, both named after Sarah's brothers. After she died, Davis married Avarilla Coffey, Henry Coffey's daughter. They had children who are discussed and charted under HENRY COFFEY. Sarah and Avarilla Coffey's children contributed to the population of "Coffeytown" as well. William Henry and Daniel Rufus married sisters in a double wedding on 6 April 1868. True to the old wives' tale, it was bad luck. Mildred (Lawman) Coffey died and Daniel later married Sallie Cole (Black) Coffey in 1880. William Henry had already had his bad luck.

Between the two of his wives, the youngest son Daniel Rufus Coffey had 14 children: *By Mildred: Ella Rue Coffey* who married Benjamin Dean Lucas; *Alice Loving Coffey* who married Edwin Henry Wood; *Cora Coffey* who married Patrick Clements; and *Bascom Walker Coffey* who married Cora Lee Sprouse. *By Sallie: Nannie Lou Coffey* who married Philip Kanear Vest; *Daisy Coffey* who married .... Clark; *Myrtle Shepard Coffey* who married William Bell Mowry; *Massie Johnson Coffey* who married Stephen Lewis Loving, Jr.; *Early Brown Coffey* who married Gertia Bliss Davis; *Talmadge Ivey Coffey* who married Mary Elizabeth Lawhorne; *Robert Mahood Coffey* who married Mena Carolina Mays; *Helen McClung Coffey* who married Elmer Hill Loving, Sr.; *Mary Melissa Coffey* who married Robert D. Davis; and *Farrow Lawton Coffey* who married Mary Willie Godsey.

William Henry Coffey married Virginia Lawman in 1868, and they had 8 children: *Willie Anne Coffey* who married Benjamin Carpenter; *Lillie "Walker" Coffey* who married Walter Crist; *Frank Anderson Coffey* who married Minnie Crawford; *Irvine Coffey*

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who married Bertha Gilbert; *Laura May Coffey* who married William P. Barnes; *Minnie Coffey Chaplain* who married (2<sup>nd</sup>) Clarence Campbell; *Nellie Coffey* who married Orrie Green; and *Hattie Coffey* who married Henry Jennings.

John Jack, Jr. married Patara Tyler (pronounced pay - tra), who was listed as a 24 year old "domestic" in Charles' household in the 1860 census, and they had several children: *Marcia "Molly" Coffey* who married Joseph Dodd; *Henley Coffey* who married Avarilla Ogden; *Lena Coffey* who married Pet Campbell; *Emma Jane Coffey* who married Howard D. "Jack" Campbell; *John E. Coffey* who married Mattie Dodd; *Lutia V. Coffey* who married Charles D. Gilbert; *Elizabeth "Lizzie" Coffey* who married Charles D. Gilbert after her sister Lutia died in childbirth; *Ambrose Rucker Coffey* who married Mattie Miles Higginbotham; and *Mary Coffey* and *Jane Coffey*, both of whom died as infants.

Charles Edward Coffey, the eldest son, married Sarah Jane Ogden, daughter of Zachariah Ogden and Elizabeth McDaniel Ogden Coffey, on Valentine's day, 1854. They had *John* and *Irvin Coffey* who are believed to have died young; *Hiter Webster Coffey* who married twice, first to Blanch H. Crist, then Mary Fannie "Mamie" Higginbotham; *Edwin Horsely Coffey* who married Mary Virginia Rucker, who had previously married Dr. Rucker; *Pitt Coffey* who married Lucy White; *Charles "Charlie" Coffey* who married Sallie M. White; *Mary Jane Coffey* who married Albert Waggoner Stratton; *Editha Coffey* who married James Crist; and *Eleanora "Eleanor" Coffey* who married first to George Baxter Stratton, then to Fletcher Higginbotham.

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*John Jack Coffey, Sr.* was too old to be directly involved in the Civil War, but his sons were just the right age. On 22 April 1862, many of the Coffeytown boys were in Gordonsville, possibly selling tobacco or fruit (prices in Gordonsville were artificially inflated since it was a railroad center for the Confederacy and there were many soldiers hungry for non-military food). Up until this time the boys had stayed out of the war. As long as Stonewall was in charge, they weren't too concerned. Charles E., John Jack, Jr., Henry L. (son of Henry and Elizabeth Coffey), James (oldest son of Billy), and William (son of Billy) all enlisted as Privates in Co. E, 13th VA Regiment Infantry. Col. Walker enlisted them, perhaps at gun point. The Confederate States instituted a draft in April, 1862 and these Coffeys stumbled into some serious recruiters in Gordonsville. The record shows that most attended one or a few of the drills and then disappeared, some being listed as deserters. Charles was AWOL on 1 June 1862 and there is nothing in their records until May, 1864 when he "re-enlisted". Family legend has it that they hid from the recruiters but were discovered, routed out of the bushes and drafted. They were farmers, not soldiers. Stonewall Jackson, who had kept the Yankees confounded for some time, especially in the Shenandoah Valley, was mortally wounded 11 May 1863. This was a severe blow to the Confederacy, and his absence soon allowed Sheridan to ransack the Valley, bringing the War to the doorstep of Coffeytown. In 1862 it was all about States Rights. In 1864, it was personal.

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Somehow, John Jack Coffey, Jr. and Charles E. Coffey were "transferred" to Co. F, 50th Regiment, VA Infantry in May, 1864. According to the Compiled Service Records at the Archives, Charles E. and John Jack were captured 12 May 1864 at Spottsylvania Courthouse (some records show the place of capture as The Wilderness, which coincides with family legend. The Wilderness Battle, which extended into the battle at Spottsylvania Courthouse, was over by 12 May, and it may have been only then that they were noted by Confederates as missing. During these battles, Lee was not aware of the exact number of Confederates he had available). They were taken to Belle Plains, VA and shipped to Elmira, NY as Prisoners of War. The record shows John Jack shipped on 30 July 1864, but Charles was sent 2 August 1864. They were both released 23 June 1865, about 2 months after Lee's surrender at Appomattox, under General Order #109, after taking the "Iron Clad Oath" of allegiance to the United States. John Jack is listed as having auburn hair, blue eyes, 5'-9" tall, and fair complexion. Both Charles and John Jack, Jr. were married before the war began and were probably happier than most upon their release.

William Henry Coffey served longer and paid a heavier price. He enlisted 15 August 1861 at Millner's Store by Capt. William Higginbotham and he was mustered into service 24 September 1861 in Staunton, VA. He was promoted to Corporal 1 May 1862, in the 2nd Corp. Co. F, 58th VA Infantry, Stonewall Jackson's outfit. On 28 August 1862, he was sent to the Richmond Hospital. In March and April 1863 he was admitted to the hospitals in Staunton as well as in Richmond. By August 1863 he was a "1 Corporal", which he remained until he was captured 12 May 1864 at Spottsylvania Courthouse/the Wilderness. From there he was sent to Fort Delaware from Belle Plain, VA on 21 May 1864. He was released after taking the oath on 19 June 1865, under the same general order. His complexion was dark, hair dark, eyes dark, and 5'-6" tall. Nicknamed "Cripple Henry", he suffered as a result of his wounds during the war. Legend has it that he walked home from Fort Delaware and could barely make it down the road toward home. Some of the family had lost hope and given him up for dead, but Betsey Duff, his mother, had never given up on old "Hen". She lived to see her faith fulfilled.

Daniel Rufus Coffey served in the local defense (Virginia Reserves) and is not known to have ever seen action. He was 15 when the war began.

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In August of 1871, Betsey died of Cholera. Henry Coffey, same generation as John Jack, died in June of the same year of Colic. About 1-1/2 years later on 1 April 1873, John Jack took a young wife, 25 year old Virginia C. Campbell of Rockbridge County, called "Jenny". Virginia had come to the cabin, so the legend goes, to take care of Betsey during her sickness. Apparently there were no children by the second marriage, but the couple is thought to have informally adopted some Staton children. In this marriage record, John Jack's parents are listed as J and E Coffey, Jordan and Elizabeth. At the time, he was 64 years old. A few months later, he and "Billy" bought the 1335 acres called "Cooper's Place" evidently named after John Cooper, an early trapper who lived in the area. It was this purchase which firmly fixed Coffeytown as a defined piece of real estate in Amherst County. This was John Jack and Billy's solidification of the family as a group, by ensuring, finally, full control over the land on which they lived. Now more permanent houses could be built.

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**John Jack Coffey** died 14 December 1888 at the age of 80, of cancer. We have no specific place of burial for either him or Betsey from public records, but they may be buried behind Elsie Coffey's present house in an unmarked grave, as some believe.

### WILLIAM "BILLY" COFFEY ( 23 April 1815\* - 26 July 1897\*)

\* = See Charts

**William "Billy" Coffey** was probably the third son of Jordan and Elizabeth Coffey, but fourth in age of those in the family. He is not William B. Coffey, who lived his life in Nelson County. According to his headstone he was born 9 April 1815. Other information indicates 23 April 1815 as his date of birth.

He married Sarah Ann "Sally" (Crawford) Coffey on 24 September 1835 in Amherst County. His parents are clearly listed as Jordan and Elizabeth Coffey. Her mother was Sarah Crawford. This couple, along with John Jack, Sr., had most of the population of what became Coffeytown.

Billy and Sally had 9 children:

James "Jim" Coffey married Sophia Coffey (Schylar's daughter) and they had 2 children who married: *Edmund F. "Ned" Coffey* who married Mary Jane Gilbert and they had 8 children; *Andrew Coffey* who married Sallie Jane Ogden. They had no children.

Roxsinia Belle Coffey married Bennett Hudson Davis in 1858 and they had 11 children: *Sarah Catharine Davis* who married William Henry Ogden; *William Edward Davis* who never married; *James Madison Davis* who married Mary Jane "Molly" Tomlinson; *Martha Jane Davis* who married William Henry Coffey; *Paulus Lee Davis* who married twice, first to Magel Agnor, then Alice R. Wheeler; *Daniel Davis* who married twice, first to *Amanda Coffey* (daughter of "Buck" Coffey), then to Dora Margaret Sorrells; *Roxsinia Belle Davis* who married *Willis Coffey*, son of William "Buck" Coffey; *Lou Ella Davis* who married *Nathan Coffey*, son of Harden Coffey; *Laura Davis* who married Uriah Houston Grant; *Eleanor Anna Davis* who married John William "Jack" Whiteside; *Harden McDowell Davis* who married twice, first to Myrtle Fitzgerald, then Catharine Miller.

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William "Buck" Coffey married Sarah Granville Crawford and they had 2 children: *Willis Coffey* who married *Roxsinia Belle Davis*; and *Amanda "Mandy" Coffey* who married *Daniel Davis* who later married Dora Margaret Sorrells after Mandy died in childbirth with their third child.

Harden Coffey married Elizabeth "Bettie" Crawford and they had 9 children: *Nathan Coffey* who married *Lou Ella Davis*; *Hugh Nelson Coffey* who married Ora Wills Crawford; *Nora Coffey* who married Champs Lee Ogden; *Sarah Catharine Coffey* who married Harding Lewis "Tip" Humphreys; *Indianna Coffey* who married William O. Fitzgerald; *Pidge Coffey* who married John Cale Camden; *Sophia Coffey* who married Issac G. Taylor; *Flora Coffey* who married Luther M. Taylor (Issac's brother); and *Bertha Lee Coffey* who married Donald Grant.

Elizabeth "Bettie" Coffey did not marry. She was very close to her mother "Sally"; and shortly after Sally's death, Bettie died of what is believed to be a broken heart.

Edward Coffey married Willie Ann Crawford and they had 8 children: *Signora Coffey*; *Loula Coffey* who married Pitt F. McDaniel; *Willis E. Coffey*; *William A. Coffey*; *Blanch Coffey*; *Clinton B. Coffey*; *Oscar M. Coffey*; and *Harden R. Coffey*. No further information about this couple is known.

Varlana Coffey about whom nothing is known, as she may have died as an infant.

Sarah Fannie Coffey married George Washington Coffey, son of Rubin W. and S.T. Coffey of Nelson County; and they had 7 children: *Cora E. Coffey* who married Herbert Ogden; *Beatrice Coffey* who married Walter J. Crawford; *Reubin Jones Coffey* who married Effie Davis; *Sally J. Coffey* who married Samuel Cumming Parrent; *Beulah B. Coffey* who married John Bunyan Fauber; *Mary Flotelle Coffey* who married Reuben Franklin Douty; and *George Dewey Coffey* who married Lula Dodd.

Arthur Coffey married Virginia Anne "Jenny" Davis and they had 10 children: *Mabel Irene Coffey* who married Emmett Humphries; *Hiram Randolph Coffey* who married Susie A. Catlett; *Ernest Webster Coffey* who married Ethel Stratton; *Alma Gertrude Coffey* who married T. Powell Crawford; *Hallie Pearl Coffey* who married J. Houston Crawford; *Fletcher Beadles Coffey* who married Maggie Harris; *Mina Lee Coffey* who married twice, first to Thompson Massie Davis, then James William Gibson; *Sally Coffey* who married twice, first to Wallace Palmer, then Glenn Wyatt; *Leonard Carlyle Coffey* who married twice, first to Elsie Sales, then to *Elsie Coffey*; and *Essie Rose Coffey* who married Emmett Sales.

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Billy and his family built a house just north of Staton's Creek to the immediate west of Elsie Coffey's present house, where the family grew up. It was not until 1897 that the house Elsie lived in was constructed. This may have been his second house in the general area of Coffeytown. His first purchase of land was made in 1873 when he and John Jack jointly purchased 1335 acres of property in the area. Up until that time, he may have lived on Henry's property or John Jack's land which he purchased in 1859.

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*Billy was too old for the Civil War but some of his sons were of the proper age, including Jim and William. Harden was about the same age as Daniel Rufus and was not known to have been involved. Edward was about 10 years old and Arthur was only two or three years old when the War began. James Coffey was enlisted 22 April 1862 in Gordonsville, VA by Col Walker for 3 years or for the duration of the war, whichever was longest. He was a Private in Co. E, 13th VA Infantry. This is the same group John Jack, Jr. and Charles joined. He is listed as deserted 13 August 1862 (Charles was AWOL in June, 1862). William Coffey has the same record. Evidently, they all came home because the farms needed attention. Later John Jack and Charles joined the 50th Regiment VA Infantry. There are many James Coffeys involved in the war from Virginia. The one record of service later in the War which looks most like it would be Jim's is for a Jim Coffey who joined the same group - 50th VA, and that James is listed as being captured at The Wilderness/Spottsylvania Courthouse and sent to Elmira 30 July 1864, but then that James is listed as having died 14 October 1864 from chronic diarrhea, and they have him buried in grave #714 at Elmira. Independent records confirm there is a Jim Coffey from Virginia buried there. Fortunately, "our" Jim Coffey lived until 1915. (The 1910 Census shows him alive and well). The military records for none of the other James Coffeys seem logical for this man, and it is possible that he never re-joined after the episode in Gordonsville. The same may be true for William.*

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Billy's headstone shows a death date as 11 May 1896. Death records show a William Coffey, unlisted parents, dying 26 July 1897. Evidently Billy's death came as a result of falling down the stairs at the original house, after he had returned from the new house. If this is true and the new house was not built until 1897, the 26 July date may be accurate. Otherwise, it could have been over a year since his death when it was reported in Amherst Courthouse, and the record shows the reported date, not the actual date; or the listed William is not the right one. However, the listed Billy was 81 years old, which is right for his age. No other William of that age was known to be in Amherst County at the time.

"Sally" and Billy Coffey are buried on the hill behind Elsie Coffey's house in a fenced-in area which includes Bettie Coffey, their

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unmarried daughter. Bettie evidently died of grief, as she was very attached to her mother. Others in the cemetery include Walter Campbell, perhaps related to John Jack's second wife, or to one of John Jack Jr.'s two daughters, Lena and Emma Jane, who married Campbell men in sufficient time to have had Walter. Robert H. Coffey, great-grandson of Billy Coffey, grandson of Harden Coffey and Hersey Coffey's brother, has the only other marked grave (1903-1907) in this cemetery. John Jack and his wife Betsey Duff are also believed to be buried in this vicinity, although there is no marker.

### **NELSON COFFEY (Ca 1810-1820, died 1845-1848)**

**Nelson Coffey's** birth date and parents have not been pin-pointed. It seems clear (although still speculation) that Nelson was Schylar's brother, but the two of them were probably not brothers with the others. Like Schylar however, Nelson was fully accepted by the Coffey family as one of their own.

Nelson married Rebecca Hamilton, daughter of Robert Hamilton, on 5 February 1833 in Amherst County. Schylar Coffey gave permission for Nelson to marry. We believe this was his older brother, not his father. Jordan and Elizabeth, although they were in the area, are not mentioned as being part of the ceremony. Surely they were there, perhaps as best man or something, but not as listed witnesses. Since they had no possessions, they also could not provide security. They could have been listed as parents, but were not.

Nelson and Rebecca had Frederick, Nancy, Julia, Mathew, Pauline, and Nelson Coffey. Nelson the older must have died sometime between 1844, when little Nelson was conceived, and 1849, when Rebecca remarried, to Abram Clement. According to tax records in Amherst County, Nelson paid the taxes in 1845, Rebecca paid in 1848, no one in that family paid taxes in Amherst County in 1846 or 1847.

In the 1850 Census, Frederick was a 16 year old farm laborer, living with Rebecca and her new husband. Rebecca and Abram had 2 children - Missouri (female) and John Clement - before Abram was killed in Civil War action in Harrisonburg in 1862. Missouri married late in life, after she had 2 children, to Levi Truslow. John J. married Elizabeth Hamilton. By 1870, Rebecca is alone again as the head of the household. Robert Hamilton, father of Rebecca and 2 others who married into the Coffey family, died in 1841. Nelson and others filed petition in Amherst County court to have the court appoint an executor to sell the assets. In 1842, Nelson paid \$475 for 170 acres of land along Thrasher's Creek. This is the first recorded deed of Coffey land in present day Amherst County which we found. Rebecca continued to live there with her new husband and even beyond his death. In 1859, Frederick and Nancy sold their 29

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acres to James P. Hamilton, who lived nearby and was a young son of Robert Hamiltons who had his older brother John P. Hamilton (he married Elizabeth Coffey, Jordan's daughter) appointed as his guardian when Robert died. Another young son, Robert Lewis Hamilton, had Nelson and Rebecca appointed as his guardian. The Hamiltons and Coffeys were very close in those days in Amherst County, having left behind some of the court cases of assault and battery between the two families in Nelson County.

Apparently Frederick Coffey settled on a farm near or in Coffeytown, and Nancy (Coffey) Lawhorne settled south of Dodd's Ford, with her family centered around Allwood (El Bethel) Methodist. Two of Frederick's sons, "Fed" and Zack were in Coffeytown in 1900, living next to "Big Hill" Henry, behind what is now Steve Wright's property. Zack was married to Mary Catherine Crawford, but "Fed" was still a bachelor at that time. He eventually married Mary's sister Susie Massie Crawford and they had at least four children, one of whom was *Thomas F. Coffey* who lived only 26 years, but married Flarie Taylor. They had one child George W. Coffey who lived only two months. Thomas, Flarie, and George are buried at Bridgehill Cemetery in Coffeytown. Mary Catherine and Susie Massie were sisters of Ora Wills Crawford who married Hugh Nelson Coffey.

Frederick Coffey married Catherine H. Ogden, daughter of Zachariah and Elizabeth McDaniel Ogden, in 1856 in Amherst County. This couple had 8 children which show in the public records, although "Fed" and "Zack" are the only two known to have been involved in Coffeytown. *Masero, Tressa, Marble, Rebecca* who married Thomas Widdiefield, and *Lucy S. Coffey* who married Thomas H. Kilpatrick are all children shown to have been born between 1856 and 1867. Family legend has it that Marble froze to death when very young, although there is no death record for him or the others, and they don't seem to have figured prominently in the family. *Frederick "Fed" Coffey*, born in 1868, married Susie Massie Crawford and they had 4 children, including Inez Coffey who married Herbert E. Wright. The Wrights settled in the northeast corner of Amherst County, where there is a cemetery on the backside of the Shadow Ridge golf course which contains many family members of Fed and Zack, and both of them. "Fed" also had Nettie, Thomas F. who married Flarie Taylor, and Owen L. Coffey. Owen was the only one not to marry. *Zachariah "Zack" Coffey* married Catherine Crawford, Susie's sister, and they had 6 children: Taliafero who married Annie Byrd Tomlin; Annie M. who married Wiley Brichett; Drewry, Lucy, Rawley who married Mamie N., and Mary Coffey, all of whom married. The birth index shows an eighth child of Frederick and Catherine – *James Coffey* - born 29 AUG 1873, but there is no further record of him.

*Frederick Coffey* was a Private in Co. I, 49th VA Regiment Infantry, having enlisted 1 March 1864 in Amherst County for 3 years. He appears on the final disposition of Conscripts at Camp Lee, VA (in Petersburg) on 14 March 1864, no further record. There is no record for Nelson, son of Nelson and Rebecca, which we could find, although he would have been the right age if he lived.

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Nancy (Coffey) Lawhorne married Holman "Delaware" Lawhorne in 1867, but prior to that she had *Isaiah "Zet" Coffey* who married and had one daughter and 3 sons. Nancy and Delaware had *Sarah Elizabeth Lawhorne* who married James Burley; *Emma Lawhorne*, and *Ollie A. Lawhorne*; *Phelia Lawhorne* who married Will W. Wheeler; *Sam Lawhorne* and *Andrew Lawhorne*.

Julia (Coffey) Rogers married Benjamin Rogers 10 November 1856. They had six known children. Both Julia and Ben are buried in the Asberry Cemetery at Oronoco. They had *Sarah M. Rogers* who married Benjamin L. Tomlin; *Mary Jane Rogers*, who married Palantine Byas (Byers); *Ida Ross Rogers* who married Isaiah S. Coffey; *Calvin Rogers* who did not marry; *Lucie Ella Rogers* who did not marry; and *Benjamin F. Rogers* who died as an infant in 1880.

Pauline Coffey's marriage record has not been located by us. She had 2 children, *Moses* and *William*, both named Coffee. She was living with Edward Drummond in Amherst County for a while, perhaps as a domestic - he was much older than she. Application was made for a marriage license when she was 36 years old, and her children were teenagers. According to others, she married Edward Drummond 24 MAY 1878 in Amherst County. By 1880, there were additional children: *Marie (10)*, *Julia (7)*, and *Lawrence G. (2) Drummond*. Lawrence married Olivia Corbin.

Mathew Coffey, son of Nelson, was a Private in Co. I, of the 58th Virginia Infantry, CSA. He died of measles in the spring of 1862 at Stribling Springs, VA, but he married Mary M. Coffey near Buffalo Springs in Amherst County on 21 March 1861. In 1870, she was living in Coffeytown, next to Frederick Coffey, with her nine year old daughter *Mollie Coffey*. She was living in Madison, VA, near Lynchburg in 1888 when she applied for Confederate benefits.

Little Nelson Coffey was born about 1845, but nothing is known of him. No military record or death record was found.

### **HENRY COFFEY ( Ca 1822 - 10 June 1871)**

Although **Henry Coffey** shows for the first time in the 1850 Census as the head of a household, he may have been one of 2 boys his age living with Jordan and Elizabeth in 1840. According to Census reports, Henry was born around 1822. He married, at the "adjusted" age of 31, Elizabeth (McDaniel) (Ogden) Coffey, who was slightly older than Henry, and she had several children of her own from a previous marriage to Zachariah Ogden. Henry seems to have acted as guardian to her older children and they took his surname, at least for the census reports, but, except for Paulin, they are believed to have used their own surnames later. Henry F.

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Coffey died 10 June 1871 of Colic, in Amherst County, according to the Amherst County death records. The information on the death record, including naming his parents as “Charles and Jane Coffey of Nelson County”, was given by Henry’s son, Henry L. Coffey. His place of burial is unknown, but is probably up on the hill behind Embree Crawford’s house, in an unmarked grave, perhaps with Elizabeth.

Henry shows in the public tax records for the first time in 1839 when he paid personal property taxes in Amherst County in line with John, Schylar, Jordan, Hudson and William Coffey. For this reason and others, he is believed to have been informally adopted by Jordan and Elizabeth, and has always been accepted as part of the Coffey family. This likely occurred in Nelson County before the family left in late 1827 or in 1828. At that time, he would have been a pre-teenager. By 1839 he needed to pay taxes.

It seems that the first Coffey settler in the Coffeytown area (geographically) was the youngest of the Coffey clan, Henry Coffey. It was his actions in the 1840’s which would have a substantial effect on both the settlement location and the content of Coffeytown.

Henry married Elizabeth (McDaniel) Coffey on 10 March 1848 in Amherst County, although he was obviously there earlier. In 1848 Henry had nothing and paid no personal property taxes. By 1849, he owned one horse, two slaves, one over 16 and another over 12 years of age, and 4 metallic clocks. By 1850, he was down to one horse and seven children. Reality had set in. On 8 May 1851 he bought 340 acres on both sides of the middle fork of the Pedlar River from his father-in-law William McDaniel. William had bought it in 1811 from Benjamin Sandidge. This deed had a built-in will. That is, Henry paid \$1000 for the use of this land during his lifetime. When he died, ownership would revert to William McDaniel or his son Lindsay. Nevertheless, Henry was happy to have his own land to work. This is the first piece of land adjacent to or near Staton’s Creek (middle fork) which we have found to be “owned” by anyone in the Coffey family.

The same deal may have been made with Zachariah Ogden, when he married Elizabeth. Henry may have been working on Zachariah’s farm when Zach died, then stayed on to help out, since Elizabeth was pregnant at the time with Paulin and had at least 6 other children to care for, only one of whom, “Zack”, was male; and he was only about 8 years of age at the time. Coffeytown was not frontier in 1850, but it was still very rugged living. Someone had to chop the firewood, till the soil, repair the roof. Elizabeth needed immediate help upon the death of her husband. In those days, the death of a husband was often synonymous with poverty. With an instant family, Henry hit the ground running. Caring for an infant is a full time job today. Go back 150 years, add six children and 340 acres of steep, rocky land from which all of the food and cash had to come in order to care for 9 people, 7 of them young children. Henry had his hands full, and he could not have expected to have much time alone with his new wife. He probably knew that the property would not

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come with her, so there was only one reasonable explanation for all of this – Henry was in love with Elizabeth McDaniel Ogden and her children.

It seems perfectly appropriate to us that the establishment of Coffeytown as a dot on the map would be tangled up in a complicated love story between a man with an enigmatic connection to the Coffey family, and a pregnant damsel in distress. Nothing else in Coffeytown history was easy, straightforward, or simple. The only constant was the family's love for each other and their intent to stay together as much as possible.

Henry and Elizabeth had three children of their own, and Paulin apparently never knew his father Zachariah Ogden, who died before he was born. Paulin J. Coffey names Henry as his guardian in his will. He died evidently without marrying, at the age of 24, continuing to use the Coffey surname, obviously proud of Henry's guardianship. His will named the three children of Henry as beneficiaries. He is believed to be that P. J. Coffey who enlisted as a Private in Co. E, 13th VA Infantry in Culpepper on 28 October 1863. The record has him as a deserter in December 1863. At this time, desertions ran about 10% for both sides. It would increase dramatically for the south in 1864 and 1865.

Avarilla (Coffey) Davis listed Henry as her father on her marriage application. She married William Webster Davis, who had previously married Sarah Jane Coffey, daughter of John Jack Coffey. By that marriage there were two children. Avarilla gave him 13 more, as follows: *Virginia Ann "Jenny" Davis* who married Arthur Coffey; *Ida Penn Davis* who married John Edward Johnson; *Cornelia Catherine Davis* who married Thomas McDaniel; *Elizabeth Pendleton Davis* who married Stephen Mallory Johnson; *Amanda Ellen Davis* who married Samuel Johnson; *Houston Carlyle Davis* who married Docia Ridings; *Mary Lee Davis* who married twice, first to Henry Carter, then Aubrey Sales; *Callie Tucker Davis* who married Powell Stinnette; *Tully Ashby Davis* who married Margaret Williams; *Chester Cleveland Davis* who married Jessie Zenobia Johnson; *Royal Wilbur Davis* who married Beulah Woodson; *Harry F. Davis* who died as a child; and *Edna Belle Davis* who married Taylor Casey.

Henry L. Coffey married Lillie Belle (Burch) Coffey on 3 December 1873 in Amherst County. They lived in Coffeytown and had a number of children, including *Georgiana Coffey* who married James Seay; *Mattie Bell Coffey* who married Woody McDaniel; *John Woodson Coffey* who married Nevie Clements; *Emmett Hamilton Coffey* who married Katie Childress; *Bernard J. Coffey* who married Mary Nash; *Albert R. Coffey* who married Caroline Gills; *Harriet "Hassie" Coffey* who married Charles Jones; *Elvira Coffey* who married Elbert Smith; *Ruth P. Coffey* who married Claude Watts; and *Camm Littleton Coffey* who died at the age of three.

## COLD MOUNTAIN CABBAGE

*Henry L. was called "Big Hill" Henry, leaving little doubt as to the topography of his house site. Henry was probably drafted as a Private into the 13th VA Infantry on 22 April 1862 in Gordonsville, along with others in the family, except that Henry was only 14 years old at the time. He is listed as deserted 17 June 1864, but was AWOL much earlier. Most likely he came back to Amherst County, where he and Paulin were needed by their family. It does not appear that he rejoined in another regiment. The battlefield is no place for a 14 or a 16 year old, although it was fairly common in the South.*

Mary F. Coffey married Joseph Crawford on 5 December 1866 when she was very young. Nothing is known of this couple.

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By the end of the Civil War, Jordan Coffey's "sons" were elderly, and it was his grandchildren who now had the opportunity to shape the community to meet its needs and aspirations.

While Jordan's life was influenced by his social status and memories of Indian attacks and the Revolutionary War, his grandchildren were now influenced by a devastated southern economy and memories of the Civil War. The main difference is that now his descendants controlled the land upon which they lived and depended. But they did not control the limits of the resources they owned, the national shift away from an agrarian society to a market economy, or those "Malthusian Mathematics" their ancestors had faced some 150 years earlier in Essex County. The next chapter examines these influences on the continuation of Coffeytown.

*End of this chapter*