

NANCY ELIZABETH LOWERY
1859 – 1887
Wife of Nicholas W. Abbott

Report by Joan Horsley
Based on research as of April 2013

Name: Nancy "Nannie" Jane Elizabeth Lowery

Born: 13 Nov 1859 in St. Clair Co, AL

Married: 25 Jan 1874 in St. Clair to

Nicholas Wade Abbott, son of John J. Abbott & Paulina S. Lax/Lacks

Died: 11 May 1887 in Cooks Springs, St. Clair Co, AL - Died from measles

Children:

John J. Abbott, Susan "Sudie" Kate Abbott (m. William W. King), Minnie Mae Abbott (m. Eugene LaTaste), Mary Ella Abbott (m. Wm. Joseph Horsley), Robert Wade Abbott later known as Henry Robert Abbott (m¹st Mary Ethel Robertson; m²nd name unknown), and Edgar Cook Abbott. Sons John J. Abbott and Edgar C. Abbott died of measles the month after Nannie died from the same disease.

Parents:

Nannie never knew either of her parents because her mother died when Nannie was a newborn infant and her father then moved away. Her mother was Elizabeth Dycus, born c1836 in Rutherford Co, NC to Edward and Martha Mullins Dycus. Although no marriage record has yet been found for Nannie's parents, strong indirect evidence and Dycus family information show Nannie's father was Martin S. Lowery (Lowrey), born 22 Feb 1832 in adjacent Lincoln Co, NC, son of William and Nancy Lowery. Elizabeth Dycus and Martin Lowery married abt. 1854 in Murray Co, GA, where both of their families were living, and moved abt. 1855 to St. Clair Co, AL with the Dycus family. Nannie's mother, Elizabeth Dycus Lowery, died in St. Clair a few weeks after Nannie was born [per Nannie's obituary, below].

Martin S. Lowery left Nannie and her two older sisters (ages 3 and 5) in the care of Elizabeth Dycus' siblings and moved out of the area. He may be the M. S. Lowery (27, b. NC) in June 1860 in Sumter Co, AL. When the Civil War began, he enlisted in Company A, 49th Regiment, Alabama Infantry and was captured 15 Jun 1864 at the Battle of Big Shanty in Kennesaw, GA, part of Battle of Atlanta campaign. Martin was sent as a prisoner of war to Rock Island, IL, where, on 6 Oct 1864, he joined the U. S. Army to serve on the western frontier against hostile Indians. He was mustered out as corporal on 6 Nov 1865 at Fort Leavenworth, KS. He then enlisted with the 13th Regulars and served 3 years at Fort Benton, Montana, where he married Clara M. Demery in 1869. They raised 12 children (9 living in 1900) in Kansas, Missouri, and Arkansas. Martin S. Lowery died in Polk Co, AR on 9 Jan 1918 at 85 years old. [Civil War record images on Fold3. Death date/place from obituary on FindAGrave]

Foster Parents:

Nannie was raised first by her mother's eldest brother and his first wife. Nannie's uncle James G. Dycus married Sarah A. Hoyle in Murray Co, GA on 13 Aug 1854, about the same time as Elizabeth Dycus and Martin Lowery married. In the 1860 census, Nannie (listed as Elizabeth Lowery) is living with James and Sarah Dycus in St. Clair Co. The other Dycus siblings, younger and still unmarried, were next door caring for Nannie's two older sisters.

Nannie's aunt Sarah Hoyle Dycus died abt. 1867 when Nannie was 7 or 8, leaving four children of her own. James Dycus remarried in Oct 1868 to widowed Nancy M. Turner Carmichael, who had two children under 10. Nannie's other Dycus uncle, John B. Dycus, died in 1868 leaving two small children, and his widow went to live with her parents.

By 1870, Nannie was living with William Kendrick and wife Rebecca Dunlap with their two small children. No family relationship has been found with the Kendricks. However, they and the Dycus families lived in the same Kelly's Creek/Eden area, so the Kendricks gave Nanny a home among her relatives and the people with whom she had grown up. Four years later, at age 14, Nannie married Nicholas Abbott, age 23, whose family had lived in the Kelly's Creek area from about 1865, so they had known each other most of Nannie's life..

Siblings:

Nannie's sister Martha J. Lowery was born c1855 and was 4-5 years old when their mother died. Martha and her sister Mary (age 2-3) were cared for by Elizabeth Dycus' brother John B. Dycus (then 22) and his three teen-age sisters in St. Clair Co. Martha married William H. Dickerson, a doctor, on 5 Oct 1873 in St. Clair Co. They had at least two sons before Martha J. Lowery Dickinson died bet. 1880-1886 at about age 28. Whether Martha died in St. Clair Co. or in Arkansas, where her husband remarried in Jan 1887, is not yet known.

Nannie's sister Mary Louise Lowery was born 5 Oct 1858 and lived with her sister Martha in the Dycus siblings' household. One of the sisters, Barbary Dycus, married John W. Alverson on 23 Dec 1866, and "Mary Lowry" was living with them in 1870. Barbary died in 1875, leaving three young children, and on 13 May 1877, John Alverson and Mary Louise Lowery were married. They had nine children, whom they raised in St. Clair, first near Eden, then in Coal City. Mary Louise Lowery Alverson died 5 Dec 1926 while living with a daughter's family in Birmingham and was buried back in Eden, St. Clair. She was 68 years old.

Lowery-Dycus Households Prior to Nannie's Marriage:

1850 - Murray Co, GA

DYCUS, Martha - 34 [b. c1816] - NC [prob. d. 1858-1860, St. Clair Co, GA]

James - 16 - NC [m. 1st Sarah Hoyle; d. 1908, St. Clair Co, AL]

ELIZABETH - 14 - NC [Nannie's mother, d. Dec 1859, St. Clair Co, AL]

John B - 12 - NC [m. Mary Abercrombie; d. 1868, St. Clair Co, AL]

Barbary - 6 - NC [m. John Alverson; d. 1875, St. Clair Co, AL]

Margaret - 6 - NC [named Clarenden in 1860; poss. d. 1860-1870]

Sarah - 9 - NC [m. Jesse Ginn; d. 1876, St. Clair Co, AL]

Note:

Jerry Dycus wrote that Martha's maiden name was Mullins, and her husband (Elizabeth's father) was Edward Dycus, both born in Rutherford Co, NC. Edward died bet. 1845-1849, shortly after moving to Murray Co, GA

1850: Murray Co, GA

LOWRY, William - 49 [b. c1801] - NC

Nancy S - 41 - NC

Thomas - 24 - NC [m. c1856; in Murray Co. in 1860]

Martha - 20 - NC

MARTIN S. - 18 - NC [Nannie's father, b. Feb 1832, Lincoln Co, NC]

[continued]

William M - 12 - GA [1860: single, farm laborer, Murray Co.]
 John W - 10 - GA [1860: w/ parents, Murray Co.]
 Nancy E - 8 - GA
 Barthena A.M.A - 6 - GA
 Julia Ann - 2 - GA

Note:

Martin Lowery's father William Lowery and family are listed in 1830 in Lincoln Co, NC, adjacent to Rutherford, where the Dycus family lived. In 1840 they are in Murray Co, GA, where the Dycus family moved abt. five years later.

No Lowery family was in St. Clair Co, AL in the 1850 or 1860 censuses.

 1860: Nannie's mother Elizabeth Dycus is deceased. Nannie, listed as Elizabeth Lowery, is in the family of her uncle James G. Dycus:

1860 - St. Clair Co, AL - PO: Branchville
 DYCUS, James G - 26 - Farmer - NC
 Sarah - 28 - TN [wife]
 Martha - 5 - AL [daughter]
 John - 2 - AL [son]

LOWERY, Elizabeth - 1 - AL [niece; 6 mos old]

Note:

Prior to her marriage, Nannie is usually listed as Elizabeth Lowery, as it is here. The death certificate of Nannie's daughter Sudie Kate Abbott King lists her mother as Elizabeth Lowery; the death certificate of her daughter Minnie Mae Abbott LaTaste names her Liza (possibly the abbreviation "Eliza.") Lowery; and Nannie's daughter Ella said she named her daughter Elizabeth after her mother, Elizabeth.

Listed 3 households away, but living on the same land, are Nannie's sisters Martha and Mary Lowery living with James Dycus' and Elizabeth Dycus Lowery's siblings:

1860 - St. Clair Co, AL - PO: Branchville
 DYCUS, John B - 22 - Farm laborer - NC [brother; m. Mary Abercrombie c1866]
 Sarah - 17 - NC [sister - married Jesse Ginn Dec 1860]
 Clarenden - female - 15 - NC [sister, Clarendon - named Margaret in 1850]
 Barbary - 15 - NC [sister - marr. John W. Alverson Dec 1866]
 LOWERY, Martha - 5 - AL [niece; sister of Nannie Elizabeth Lowery]
 Mary - 3 - AL [niece; sister of Nannie Elizabeth Lowery]

 By 1870, Nannie, again listed as Elizabeth Lowery, is living with the William and Rebecca Kendrick family at Kelly's Creek, where the Abbott family is also listed this census year:

1870 - Kelly's Creek, St. Clair Co, AL
 Kendrick, William - 25 - Farmer - GA
 Rebecca - 26 - Keeping house - SC
 John W - 3 - AL
 Susanah - 8 months - AL
 LOWERY, ELISABETH - 11 - At School - AL

Note:

Nanny's connection to this Kendrick family is unknown. *Heritage of St. Clair County* says William Kendrick's wife was Rebecca Dunlap, and his parents were Thomas J. Kendrick and Mary Warren. William was born in Heard Co, GA, several counties east of St. Clair, and lived there until the late 1850s, while the Dycus family and Martin Lowery came in the mid-1850s from Murray Co. in north Georgia at the Tennessee border. No family relationships are apparent from the marriages of William's or Rebecca's siblings.

Nannie's Family with Nicholas Abbott:

On 25 Jan 1874, Nancy Elizabeth Lowery married Nicholas Wade Abbott in St. Clair Co, AL. The marriage record lists them as "N. W. Abbott" and "N. E. Lowry."

[Source: Alabama, Marriages, 1816-1957," index, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal/MM9.1.1/FQ6D-QXL>) citing film no. 1035443]

Nicholas was born in Halifax Co, VA, the eldest son of John J. Abbott (1821-1876) and Paulina "Perlina" S. Lacks/Lax (1824-1866). Nicholas was raised in Alabama, first in Talladega County, then in adjacent St. Clair County. Nicholas' family lived in the Kelly's Creek area from around 1865 when he was 15, so he probably knew Nannie most of her life. Nicholas was 23 and teaching school when they married, and Nannie was 14.

1880 - Bear Creek, Shelby Co, AL

Abbott, N. W. - 30 - Teaching School - VA-VA-VA

Nancy E. - 20 - Wife - Keeping House - AL-GA-GA

John J. - 5 - Son - AL-VA-AL

Susan - 3 - Daughter - AL-VA-AL

Mary E. - 1 - Daughter - AL-VA-AL

Note:

Their daughter "Mary E." here in 1880 might be a daughter who died in infancy, as their surviving daughter Mary Ella Abbott was always told she was born 10 Apr 1882. Her scant memory of her mother and her foster father's reference to her as a "little girl" in an 1893 letter indicate that when her mother died in 1887, Ella was closer to five years old (b. 1882) rather than eight (b. 1879). Such an age difference certainly would be noticeable, especially since Ella was tall, not small, for her age, and she was raised among Nicholas' relatives who would have a close idea of when she was born.

This district of Shelby Co. is at its northern border with St. Clair Co. and not far southwest of Easonville. The census district was Beat 14. The NARA census image on HeritageQuest labels it Bear Creek. County Road 11 is still called Bear Creek Road and ends at Vandiver, AL on the Shelby County line with St. Clair. (The FHL image on Ancestry.com labels it "Actons." There is an "Old" and new Acton Road, but it runs along the border of Jefferson.)

This area is just to the west of Kelly's Creek that flows through Shelby and St. Clair, where both Nicholas and Nannie were listed in their 1870 households.

1886 – Nannie E. Abbott joined the M. E. (Methodist-Episcopal) Church South, Easonville, St Clair, in the summer of 1886, according to her pastor M. E. Butt, who signed her memorial obituary.

By 1887, Nicholas and Nannie and family had moved to Cooks Springs, St. Clair Co., abt. 7 miles west of Pell City.

Nannie Elizabeth Lowery Abbott died 11 May 1887 in Cooks Springs, St. Clair Co., AL at 27 years old. Her eldest and youngest sons died shortly after her, all from "the dread disease measles." Nicholas wrote this loving tribute to Nannie's beautiful life and spirit, and his loss is heavy between the lines:

Obituary of Nancy "Nannie" Jane Elizabeth Lowery Abbott

Died at her home in Cooke's Springs, Ala., at four P. M., May 11, 1887, of Measles, Mrs. Nannie J. E. Abbott, wife of N. W. Abbott.

Mrs. Abbott was born in St. Clair County, Ala., on the thirteenth day of Nov. 1859, making her 27 years, 4 months, and 28 days old at her death. She was left an orphan in her infancy, when but a few weeks old. Consequently she had to bear the hardships that poor orphans have to endure in this cold and unfriendly world of ours. She was brought up without the advantages of an education, but received true training in household duties that afterwards proved of inestimable value to her in her wifely and Motherly sphere.

She was married to N. W. Abbott on the 25th day of Jan., 1874. She joined the M. E. Church South, at Easonville in the summer of 1886, and remained a faithful and consistent member of that denomination till Jesus called her home.

The subject of this notice was a lady possessed of many amiable and lovely traits of character. Gentle, quiet, retiring, yet positive, faithful and industrious in those relations of life which concerned her.

When a young lady she was not without much personal merit. Comely in appearance, affectionate in disposition, happy and cheerful in spirit, and pure in life.

In her married life she was pleasant and happy, and imparted those qualities to her home. She was truly a Keeper at home, and yet loved and esteemed by all of her neighbors. The many letters that her bereaved husband received from friends in this and Shelby County, where she had lived, expressing their grief and sorrow on receiving the sad intelligence of her untimely death, shows the high esteem in which she was regarded by her neighbors. Nothing she had was too good for them and nothing she could do for them was too laborious for her. Never in all her life did she have a hard word or entertain a hard feeling for anyone, but seemed to love and respect everybody.

Dying of that dread disease, Measles, she had but a short time in her afflictions to consider her preparation for the final hour and for Eternity, but not one doubt seemed to cast its shadow across her prospects for ultimate happiness. Full of joyous hope, and without terror, she met the hour of dissolution, leaving the testimony behind that she please God. The righteous have hope in their death.

She leaves in addition to her relatives and many friends, a bereaved and faithful husband and six children to moan her untimely and irreparable loss. May our Heavenly Father cover

them with the shadow of His wings, guide them by His council, and save them by His grace, and comfort them with the same comfort wherewith she was comforted of God.

Before this notice was sent to the press, two of her darling children, vis.: John J. and Edgar C. Abbott, joined her in the realm of eternal bliss. John J. died on June 27th, 1887, making him 12 years, 6 months, and 18 days old at his death, and Edgar C. died on June the 6th, 1887, making him 9 months and 23 days old at his death. They have gone to Jesus who said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.' /s/ Her former pastor, M. E. Butt

Note regarding the obituary:

Gloria Furman, a granddaughter of Nicholas Abbott and his second wife Molly Alexander, wrote to me in Jan 2006 that she has Nicholas' notebook with the original version of this obituary in his own handwriting but without the last paragraph above. Gloria wrote me, "In the last paragraph he said, 'Before I got this ready for the press one of our darling little children, Edgar Cook, aged 10 months, has joined her sainted spirit in the realms of endless glory.'" John, age 12, died three weeks later, and their sad deaths were then included by the pastor in the final version transcribed above.

An original typescript of the final version was in the personal papers of Nannie's daughter Ella Abbott Horsley, who died in 1949 (and is now in my possession). On the back, in the handwriting of her late years, Ella wrote: "How I wish I could have had her to guide me at all times." Ella was young when her mother, Nannie, died, and she missed her mother all her life. She named her only daughter Elizabeth after her mother.

Nannie's Children After Nannie's Death

After Nannie and the two boys died, Nicholas placed the surviving children in foster homes and left St. Clair County. He settled in adjacent Shelby Co, AL, where two and a half years later, he married Mary "Molly" Isabelle Alexander on 7 Nov 1889. They raised their eight children in the Montevallo area, where Nicholas died at age 71 on 4 Oct 1921. (Nicholas and Nannie's daughter Ella Abbott Horsley raised her three children less than 18 miles from Nicholas, yet her children did not know their grandfather Nicholas other than his name.)

Nicholas placed his three daughters in homes near each other in Easonville. Ella's daughter Elizabeth wrote me that, "Her father knew he could not give his three children (girls) the proper and loving upbringing that a mother could, and he placed them in homes of relatives where all of them could live near each other and grow up with the care and love of complete families." (Elizabeth apparently was unaware of their brother.)

Sudie Kate Abbott, age 10 when her mother died, lived with a Smith family (probably related to Z. O. Smith, who attended a reunion for Sudie in 1956) until she married seven years later. Minnie May Abbott, then age 6, was raised by Nicholas' brother Thomas J. Abbott and his wife Mattie Willingham, who had no children of their own. Ella Abbott, then 5 or so, was raised a few houses from Minnie by George R. Hardwick, a close relative of Mattie Willingham Abbott. George, a merchant confined to a wheelchair, and wife Elizabeth Johnson also had no children and raised Ella with loving care as their own daughter. The three sisters stayed close all their lives.

Nicholas and Nannie's son Robert Wade Abbott was 3 years old when Nannie died. He was raised in the Jessie Ginn family, who lived just west of Eden and about 7 miles from his sisters in Easonville. Jesse Ginn was then 11 years widowed with children ages 12-24 at home. Jesse's deceased wife and their mother was Sarah Dycus, sister of Nannie's mother Elizabeth Dycus Lowery. Although technically Robert was "only" Jesse Ginn's great-nephew by marriage, Robert was raised as Jesse's foster son and his children's "foster brother" (as they listed him at age 16 in the 1900 census), and they continued to care for Robert after Jesse Ginn died in 1897.

Robert moved to Birmingham in adjacent Jefferson Co. abt. 1904. He left there in 1919, and his three Abbott sisters lost touch with him, not knowing he was moving throughout the West doing bridge and tunnel construction. In 1956, he returned for a visit to Pell City and was reunited with Sudie Kate Abbott King, the only sister then surviving, and they continued to correspond after he returned to the Minneapolis, MN area. Sometime between 1918 and 1951, he changed his name from Robert Wade Abbott to Henry Robert Abbott, but still went by Bob.

For more information on Nannie's children, see report:
"Children of Nicholas W. Abbott & Nancy Elizabeth Lowery" by Joan Horsley
Available online at: www.joanhorsley.org

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Researched and written by Joan Horsley
Contact: JHGenResearch-Abbott@yahoo.com
Website: www.joanhorsley.org

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