

Parents for Nancy M. (Jones) Jones Cox, a Widow in Antebellum Mississippi

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Who were the parents of Nancy M. [—?—] Jones Cox, who was born in North Carolina *ca.* 1792-3 and died in Panola County, Mississippi between 17 December 1851 and 16 March 1853?

Nancy M. Jones was born in about 1792-93 in North Carolina.¹ She first appears in early 1837 as an unmarried woman in newly-formed Panola County, Mississippi.² From that point until her death, she was a neighborhood fixture on Hotopha Creek.³ Her five daughters and one son soon married and settled around her. Nancy herself also married—presumably for at least the second time. She outlived this husband and three of her children and died sometime between December 1851 and March 1853. No record in Panola County connects Nancy to a father.

Tracing a woman who lived and died in the antebellum South poses particular challenges. Birth records often survive only when families have managed to hold on to their “family records,” the blank pages in the front of their Bibles used to record family events. Death records were still decades in the future. To cap it off, an incredibly common name like “Nancy Jones” can make the challenge almost seem not worth the effort.

In this case, however, the fragility of property rights for married women led Nancy to carefully record the names of her children, her grandchildren, and the enslaved people she conveyed to those offspring. Nancy and her daughters made frequent and sometimes creative use of legal documents to shore up their property and independence. A record created after Nancy’s death ties her to a

Note: All URLs were current as of 6 January 2022.

¹ 1850 U.S. census, Panola County, Mississippi, population schedule, no district, p. 353 (stamped), dwelling 662, family 662, Nancy Jones, age 57; digital images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com>); citing NARA microfilm M432, roll 379.

² For Nancy’s first appearance in a Panola County record, see Panola Co., Miss., Deeds, C:162, Needham Stevens and Angelina A. Stevens to Nancy Jones, 15 February 1837; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C39P-5JRN>); digital film 008484089, img. 123. For Panola’s founding act, see *Laws of the State of Mississippi; Embracing All Acts of a Public Nature from January Session, 1824, to January Session, 1838, Inclusive* (Jackson: printed for the State of Mississippi, 1838), pp. 535-9, “An Act to define the boundaries of certain counties therein named, and for other purposes” (approved 9 February 1836), Sec. 9, p. 537; digital images, *Google Books* (<https://books.google.com>).

³ Panola Co., Miss., Deeds, C:162, Stevens and Stevens to Jones, 15 February 1837. The deed was for E½ Section 1, Township 9 North, Range 6 West (Chickasaw Meridian). On 6 April 1853, her administrator described her land as the “West half of the South west quarter” of the same section: Panola Co., Miss., Estate Inventories and Appraisals, unnumbered volume covering 6 April 1853 to 13 March 1855, pp. 1-4, petition of James Morris to sell land of Nancy M. Cox, 6 April 1853; Office of the Chancery Clerk, Sardis.

mother, and thereby to a father: Nancy was the daughter of Elizabeth (Goodloe) Jones and Samuel Jones of Franklin County, North Carolina and Maury County, Tennessee. The proof process also uncovered the name of Nancy’s first husband: James Jones. Nancy was thus a Jones twice over.

NANCY’S MISSISSIPPI FAMILY

Nancy’s children and grandchildren are well-attested in Panola County records—in no small part due to Nancy. County marriage records from the period are lost, and pre-1850 censuses name only the head of each household.⁴ However, on six separate occasions between 1838 and 1851, Nancy recorded gifts to her children and grandchildren or other transactions with them.⁵ As the mother of five married daughters, she took particular care to keep her gifts of property—typically, one or two enslaved people to each child—from the control of her sons-in-law. In 1840, for instance, she specified that her three daughters would be able to sell or convey the six enslaved people she was giving them “without the assent of [their] husband[s].”⁶ Moreover, if her daughters’ property rights were not respected, Nancy reserved to herself “the right and power to take said slaves...out of the possession of my daughters...or their husbands...and hold the same...in trust for the use and benefit of my daughters.”⁷

It should hardly be surprising, then, that Nancy had a marriage contract drawn up before she married Bray G. Cox, soon after 20 February 1841.⁸ This husband, her last, died in November 1846 without disposing of any of the property Nancy had owned at the time of their marriage—

⁴ “Panola County, Mississippi Genealogy,” *FamilySearch* Research Wiki (https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Panola_County,_Mississippi_Genealogy).

⁵ Panola County, Mississippi, Deed Book C: 285-6, Jones to Stevens, 21 October 1838; digital images, *FamilySearch*; digital film 008484089, img. 188. Also, *Ibid.*, Book D: 22-3, Nancy M. Jones to Martha Eliza Stevens, Sophronia Macon Stevens, and Mary Ruth Turner, 9 October 1840; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C39P-667L>); digital film 008484090, img. 31. Also, *Ibid.*, Book H: 323, Nancy M. Cox to Mary Ruth Turner, 16 September 1844; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C39P-J938-4>); digital film 008484091, img. 509. Also, *Ibid.*, Book E: 378, Nancy M. Cox to Samuel J. Jones, 8 July 1845; digital images, *FamilySearch*; digital film 008484090, img. 460. Also, *Ibid.*, Book H: 290, William S. Clinton and Sarah A. Clinton to Nancy M. Cox, 5 August 1850; digital images, *FamilySearch*; digital film 008484091, img. 492. Also, *Ibid.*, Book H: 373, Nancy M. Cox to Nancy M. Goodson, 17 December 1851; digital images, *FamilySearch*; digital film 008484091, img. 534 of 633.

⁶ Panola Co., Miss., Deeds, D:22-3, Nancy M. Jones to Martha Eliza Stevens, Sophronia Macon Stevens, and Mary Ruth Turner, 9 October 1840

⁷ Panola Co., Miss., Deeds, D:22, Jones to Stevens, Stevens, and Turner, 9 October 1840. The enslaved people were named William (age 14), Carroll (age 7), Martha Ann (age 8), Charles (age 11), and Tempe (age about 4).

⁸ *Ibid.*, Deeds, D:76-7, Nancy M. Jones–Bray G. Cox (marriage contract), 20 February 1841; digital images, *FamilySearch*; digital film 008484090, img. 59.

she apparently kept possession of it.⁹ In the meantime, her son Samuel had married, and Nancy had deeded half of her land to him.¹⁰ In 1850, Nancy lived in Samuel's household; her youngest daughter, Nancy (Jones) Goodson, also lived with her family in that household.¹¹ Samuel died soon afterwards, and his mother followed him sometime between 17 December 1851 and 16 March 1853, when the county probate clerk posted notice that the probate process on her will would be opened in ten days.¹² James Morris, a neighbor, was appointed "administrator with the will annexed," since the executor Nancy had designated in her 1846 will, her son Samuel, had died.¹³

An April 1853 petition by Morris to sell Nancy's land names her heirs:

Said decedent left surviving her the following heirs at law, to wit: Nancy M. Goodson, wife of James Goodson[;] Sarah A. Clinton[;] wife of William S. Clinton[;] Sophronia Turner, wife of Berryman Turner[;] Mary Saunders Jones & Samilla Jones, minor heirs of sd Samuel J. Jones dec.^d[;] Susan Ann Turner, Eliza G. Turner, Mary Turner, Berryman Turner, & Emily Turner[;] minor children of Mary R. Turner, dec.^d[;] John Stevens, Elizabeth Stevens, Sarah V. Stevens, Henry R. Stevens, & James M. Stevens[;] minor children of a deceased daughter of said Nancy M. Cox.¹⁴

Nancy's "heirs at law" were her six children or their heirs:

⁹ Panola Co., Miss., First District, Will Book A:13, will of Bray G. Cox, 8 November 1846; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G9Q8-GBHT>); digital film 005818400, img. 45.

¹⁰ Samuel's marriage is inferred from the birthdate of his oldest surviving daughter, Mary Saunders Jones, on 10 December 1846: see Panola Co., Miss., Chancery Court, case files, no. 427, Mary Sanders Jones, minor estate (1856), testimony of Mrs. Mary S. Brooks, 8 December 1870; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ7-L9QD-J9BZ-R>); digital film 005827168, img. 505. See also Panola County, Deeds, E: 378, Nancy M. Cox to Samuel J. Jones, 8 July 1845.

¹¹ 1850 U.S. census, Panola Co., Miss., pop. sch., no district, p. 353 (stamped), dwell./fam. 662, Saml. J. Jones, Nancy Jones, James B. Goodson, and Nancy M. Goodson.

¹² For Samuel's death, see Panola Co., Miss., Probate Court, Minutes Book C:168/198, estate of Samuel J. Jones, 16 December 1850; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G9Q8-J4KN>); digital film 005816599, img. 102. For Nancy's last known living appearance in a record, see Panola County, Deed Book H:373, Nancy M. Cox to Nancy M. Goodson (gift deed), 17 December 1851. For the current *terminus ante quem* of her death, see Panola Co., Miss., Probate Court, Minutes Book D:222-3, "Notice" by W. P. Wootten, 16 March 1853; digital images, *FamilySearch*; digital film 005816599, img. 458.

¹³ Morris owned much of S6 T9S R5W, immediately to the east of Nancy's home: Panola Co., Miss., Deeds, H:248-9, James D. McKay and Elizabeth McKay to James Morris, November 1846; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C39P-J9MB-D>); digital film 008484091, img. 472. For Morris's appointment as administrator, see Panola County, Probate Court, Minutes Book D:222-3, probate of will of Nancy M. Cox, 26 March 1853; digital images, *FamilySearch*; digital film 005816599, img. 458. For Nancy's designation of Samuel, see Panola Co., Miss., First District, Will Book A: 144-50, will of Nancy M. Cox, 19 August 1846 (proven 4 April 1853); digital images, *FamilySearch*; digital film 005818400, img. 116.

¹⁴ Panola Co., Miss., Estate Inventories and Appraisals, unnumbered volume covering 6 April 1853 to 13 March 1855, pp. 1-4, petition of James Morris to sell land of Nancy M. Cox, 6 April 1853

- Nancy names “my daughter Nancy M. Goodson,” “my son Samuel J. Jones,” “my daughter, Sarah A. Clinton,” and “my beloved daughter Mary R. Turner” in her 1846 will.¹⁵
- “Sophronia Turner, wife of Berryman Turner” is the same person as the “Sophronia Macon Stevens” whom Nancy named as her daughter in an 1840 deed of gift.¹⁶ This daughter married a Stevens, divorced him, and then married a Turner: “Miss Sephronia M. Jones” married Daniel Stevens in Mississippi shortly before 16 February 1836, and “Sophronia Stevens” filed for divorce from Daniel Stevens in the Panola County Circuit Court in November Term 1843.¹⁷ In 1850, thirty-year-old “Safronia M. Turner” was living in Panola County with Berryman Turner and an apparent daughter from her first marriage named Eliza M. Stevens, born *ca.* 1836-7.¹⁸
- The unnamed “deceased daughter of said Nancy M. Cox,” mother of five children with the surname Stevens, is identified as “[my] daughter Martha Eliza Stevens (wife of Moore Stevens)” in an 1840 deed of gift. This daughter’s children are named there as John Jones Stevens, Elizabeth Stevens, and Sarah V. Stevens—a match to three of the heirs named in Morris’ 1853 petition.¹⁹

On 9 January 1856, Albert G. Fox was appointed the guardian of both Mary Saunders Jones, daughter of Samuel J. Jones, and of the four minor heirs of Mary R. Turner.²⁰ Sam Ella Jones and the younger Berryman Turner had both evidently died between April 1853 and 9 January 1856.²¹ See **Figure 1**, below, for a chart of Nancy’s heirs and their relationships.

¹⁵ Panola County, Will Book A:144, will of Nancy M. Cox, 19 August 1846.

¹⁶ Panola County, Deed Book D:22-3, Jones to Stevens, Stevens, and Turner, 9 October 1840.

¹⁷ “STEVENS – Married – In Mississippi,” transcript or abstract, at “Tipton County Newspaper Clippings,” submitted by Helen Row, *TNGenWeb* (<https://sites.rootsweb.com/~tnnews/tipton.htm>). The item cites *The Randolph (Tennessee) Recorder*, 16 February 1836. For the divorce, see “Sophronia Stevens vs. Daniel Stevens: Bill for divorce,” legal notice, *The Weekly Register* (Panola, Mississippi), 10 February 1844, unnumbered p. 2 (top cut off), col. 5; image copy, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/466875069>).

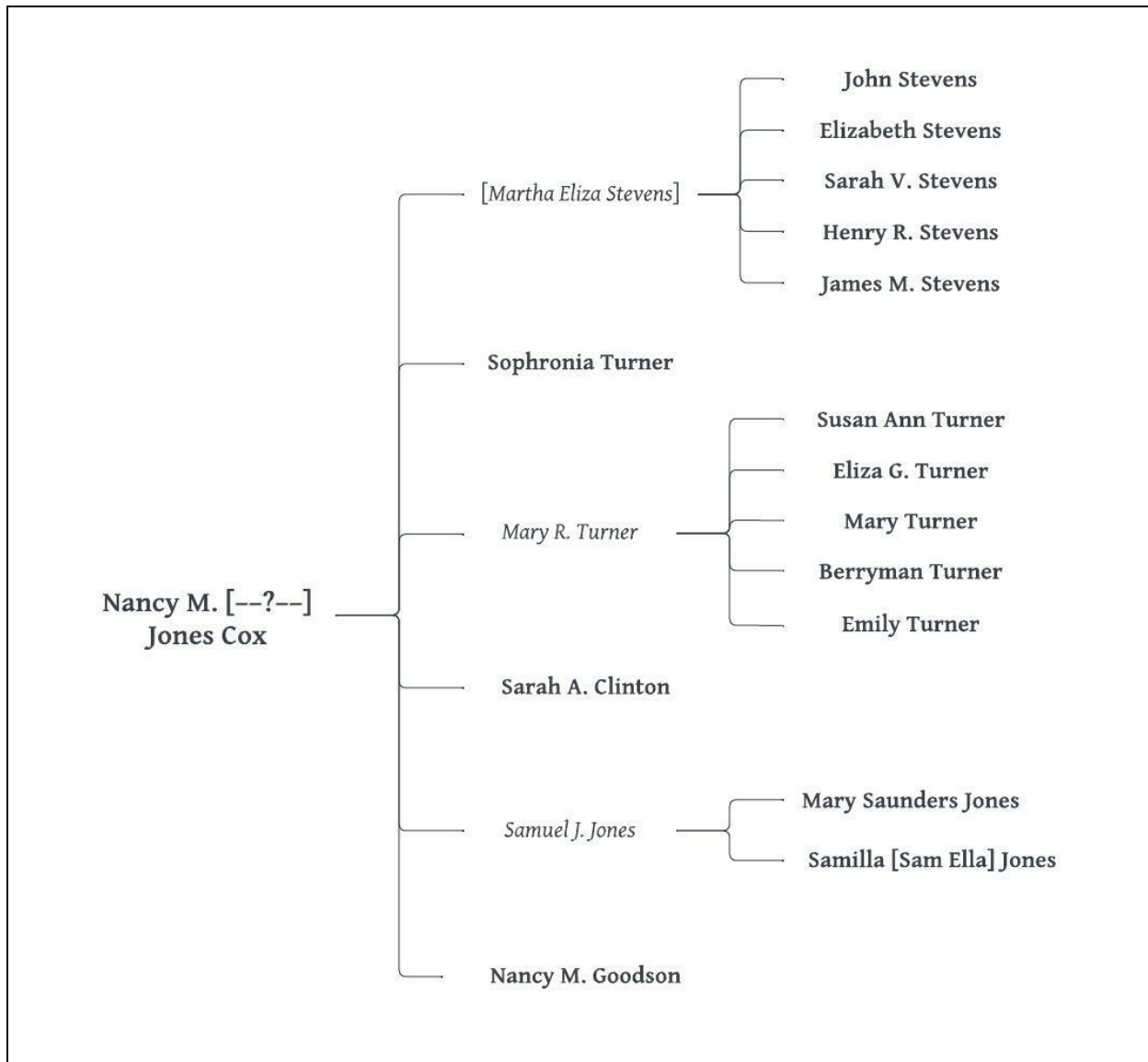
¹⁸ 1850 U.S. census, Panola Co., Miss., pop. sch., no district, p. 312 (stamped), dwell./fam. 54, Safronia M. Turner, age 30.

¹⁹ Panola Co., Miss., Deed Book D:22-3, Jones to Stevens, Stevens, and Turner, 9 October 1840.

²⁰ Panola Co., Miss., Probate Court, Minutes Book E:207, guardianship of Mary Sanders Jones and minor children of Sanders Turner, 9 January 1856; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G9Q8-JW5F>); digital film 005816600, img. 144.

²¹ Sam Ella Jones died *ca.* 1855, four years after the death of Samuel J. Jones: see Panola Co., Miss., Chancery Court, case files, no. 427, Mary Sanders Jones, minor estate (1856), testimony of Mrs. Mary S. Brooks, 8 December 1870. Berryman Turner died sometime after 5 January 1854: see *Ibid.*, case files, no. 486, Mary Turner et al., minor estate (1851), inventory of the estate of the minor children of Sanders Turner, 5 January 1854; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-89QD-K96R-7>); digital film 005827171, img. 1058.

Figure 1
Heirs of Nancy M. [—?—] Jones Cox, April 1853



Notes: Boldface type indicates one of Nancy's named heirs. Italics indicates a deceased child of Nancy.

Sources: For heirs, as well as the relationship of Mary R. Turner and Samuel J. Jones to their respective children, see Panola County, Mississippi, Estate Inventories and Appraisals, unnumbered volume covering 6 April 1853 to 13 March 1855, pp. 1- 4, petition of James Morris to sell land of Nancy M. Cox, 6 April 1853; Office of the Chancery Clerk, Sardis.

For Nancy's relationship to Mary R. Turner, Sarah A. Clinton, Samuel J. Jones, and Nancy M. Goodson, see Panola County, Will Book A:144, will of Nancy M. Cox, 19 August 1846.

For Nancy's relationship to Martha Eliza Stevens and Sophronia Turner, as well as Martha's relationship to her children, see Panola Co., Miss., Deeds, Book D: 22-3, Nancy M. Jones to Martha Eliza Stevens, Sophronia Macon Stevens, and Mary Ruth Turner, 9 October 1840; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C39P-667L>); digital film 008484090, img. 31.

NANCY'S MOTHER

No record created during Nancy's lifetime in Panola County connects her to her origins or birth family. However, on 31 December 1858, Albert G. Fox, still acting as the guardian of some of Nancy's minor heirs, applied to the court and named a previously unknown relative:

The petition of Albert G. Fox, guardian of Mary S. Jones, minor heir of Samuel Jones, deceased, and also guardian of Eliza Turner, Susan A. Turner, Mary Turner and Emily Turner, minor heirs of Mary R. Turner deceased. Show[s]...that his said wards are entitled to receive from the executor, administrator_[s] or Clerk of the court for the county of Madison and State of Tennessee a small estate amounting in all to about the sum of two hundred dollars... arising from...the estate of **Elizabeth Jones**, deceased. **Your petitioner further shows that one Nancy M. Jones, who was a daughter of said Elizabeth Jones**, died before her mother, leaving six children, one of whom was Samuel Jones..., [and] another one [of whom]...was Mary R. Turner.²²

Albert's wards are implied to be the great-grandchildren of Elizabeth Jones, whose estate was probated in Madison County, Tennessee. (Technically, Nancy should have been referred to as "Nancy M. Cox," reflecting her final marriage. This is how she referred to herself in all documents she signed after her 1841 marriage contract.²³ However, the local census-taker made the same mistake in 1850.²⁴)

Elizabeth Jones reportedly died in Madison County on 13 May 1854. Soon afterwards, Robert G. Jones applied to administer her estate and sell enslaved people who had "belonged" to her.²⁵ In 1850, Elizabeth was living in Robert's household in Madison County. She was reportedly born in

²² Panola Co., Miss., Chancery Court, case files, no. 427, Mary Sanders Jones (minor estate), petition by Albert G. Fox, 31 December 1858 (emphasis added); digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-99QD-J9YB-R>); digital film 005827168, img. 433. The date, not found on the petition itself, can be supplied from the center fold of the outside of the petition, found in image 426 of the same digitized microfilm roll and imaged from the same case file.

²³ Panola Co., Miss., Deeds, H:323, Cox to Turner, 16 September 1844. Also, *Ibid.*, Deeds, E:378, Cox to Jones, 8 July 1845. Also, *Ibid.*, Deeds, H:373, Cox to Goodson, 17 December 1851. Also, Panola Co., Miss., First District, Will Book A:144-5, will of Nancy M. Cox, 19 August 1846. Also, Panola Co., Miss., Chancery Court, case files, no. 486, Mary Turner et al., minor estate (18, guardianship bond of Saunders Turner, 22 October 1851.

²⁴ 1850 U.S. census, Panola Co., Miss., pop. sch., no district, p. 353 (stamped), dwell./fam. 662, Nancy Jones.

²⁵ Madison County, Tennessee, County Court, probate files, Elizabeth Jones, no. 696 796 (1854), petition of Robert G. Jones to sell slaves, 3 July 1854; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:9392-2NSZ-TB>); digital film 004727204, img. 786.

North Carolina *ca.* 1758-9, while Robert, a cabinetmaker, was born *ca.* 1797-8 in North Carolina.²⁶ Elizabeth was an appropriate age for the mother of Nancy M. [—?—] Jones Cox of Panola County, who was born *ca.* 1792–93; Robert was old enough to be Nancy’s brother.²⁷

Two years after Elizabeth’s death, her Tennessee heirs finally sought to distribute her estate. In a petition, they identified all of the heirs who resided outside of the state, including “Nancy Cox and her children of the State of Mississippi.”²⁸ It wasn’t until 1859, however, that “Albert G. Fox of Panola County, Mississippi” appeared “by attorney” before the Madison County Court to claim the share of the proceeds owed to his wards, named as Mary Sanders Jones, Susan Ann Turner, Emily Turner, Eliza G. Turner, and Mary Turner. The court found that “the wards of said Fox... are great grand-children of said Elizabeth,” and thereby entitled to two-fifths of one share of Elizabeth’s estate.²⁹ However, the money was apparently never paid, for in 1860, Fox’s wards joined with Nancy’s two surviving daughters, Sarah A. Clinton and Nancy M. Goodson, to bring suit against the Madison County clerk for his “failure...to pay over to said plaintiffs their distributive share of the estate of Elizabeth Jones.”³⁰ All of the elder Nancy’s heirs familiar from Panola County records are thus named in Elizabeth’s Madison County probate file except for the children of Nancy’s daughter Martha Eliza Stevens. Given how little money was actually received by the heirs who made an effort to be paid, Martha’s widower Moore Stevens may have deemed it not worth his time or money to hire a lawyer.³¹

²⁶ 1850 U.S. census, Madison Co., Tenn., pop. sch., District 10, fol. 306v, dwelling 260, family 260, Robert G. Jones, age 52, and Elizabeth Jones, age 91; digital images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com>); citing NARA microfilm M432, roll 889.

²⁷ 1850 U.S. census, Panola County, Mississippi, population schedule, no district, p. 353 (stamped), dwelling 662, family 662, Nancy Jones, age 57.

²⁸ Madison Co., Tenn., County Court, probate files, Elizabeth Jones, no. ~~696~~ 796 (1854), supplemental petition of Robert G. Jones et al., 7 August 1856.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, County Court, Minutes Book 8:396-410, at 396 and 409, Albert G. Fox as guardian for Mary Sanders Jones et al., 9 February 1859; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QHV-X3CJ-4989-2>); digital film 008662458, img. 234-5.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Minutes Book 9:191, William S. Clinton et al. vs. Thomas W. Gamewell, 3 July 1860; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QHV-X3CJ-498G-Q>); digital film 008662458, img. 469. Also, *Ibid.*, Minutes Book 9:195, Mary Turner et al. vs. Thomas W. Gamewell, 4 July 1860; img. 471.

³¹ Madison Co., Tenn., County Court, probate files, Elizabeth Jones, no. ~~696~~ 796 (1854), calculation of amount owed to Mary Sanders Jones and others, 1 September 1860; digital images, *FamilySearch*, digital film 004727204, img. 798.

ELIZABETH'S HUSBAND

Before she died, Elizabeth Jones also applied for a pension as the widow of a Revolutionary War veteran. Both the timeline of her application and the named descendants of her husband match the woman who died in Madison County in 1854.

In 1849, Elizabeth appeared before a justice of the peace in Franklin County, Alabama and declared herself to be “the widow of the late Captain Samuel Jones of Franklin County_[s] North Carolina.”³² In early 1852, she sent a letter to the pension office asking to be transferred from the Alabama Pension Agency at Huntsville to the Tennessee Pension Agency at Jackson, “to take effect from the 4th of March 1851, the time at which I was last paid at the Huntsville Agency, as I am now living in Madison County_[s] Tennessee near Jackson.”³³ Elizabeth may have moved by 1850, when she was enumerated in the Madison County household of Robert G. Jones; or, she may have been visiting Robert at that time.³⁴

Also found in Elizabeth's pension file is the 1857 declaration of Samuel H. Jones in Maury County, Tennessee—not to be confused with Nancy's son Samuel *J.* Jones, who was already deceased by that time. Samuel H. identified himself as the special administrator of the estate of “Captain Samuel Jones...his ancestor” for the purpose of prosecuting Captain Samuel's pension claim.³⁵ His list of the Captain's descendants, though partial, matches many of the heirs named in Elizabeth Jones's Madison County probate file:

Table 1: Correlating the Heirs of Elizabeth Jones and Descendants of Capt. Samuel Jones	
<u>Elizabeth Jones heirs, 1856^a</u>	<u>Capt. Samuel Jones descendants, 1857^b</u>
Robert G. Jones	Robert Jones
David Glass and wife Polly Glass formerly Polly Jones of the State of Texas	Mrs. Polly Glass
Samuel H. Jones	“Declarant”

³² Declaration of Claimant, 14 April 1849, Elizabeth Jones, widow's pension application no. W. 230; service of Samuel Jones (Lt. and Capt., N.C. continental line, Revolutionary War); “Revolutionary War Pensions,” database with images, *Fold3* (<https://www.fold3.com/>); North Carolina > J > Jones > Samuel Jones, imgs. 14-17; imaged from *Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files*, Record Group 15: Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, National Archives microfilm publication M804, roll 1444.

³³ Letter of Elizabeth Jones, 22 January 1852, Elizabeth Jones, widow's pension application no. W. 230; “Revolutionary War Pensions,” database with images, *Fold3*; North Carolina > J > Jones > Samuel Jones, img. 46.

³⁴ 1850 U.S. census, Madison Co., Tenn., pop. sch., fol. 306v, dwell./fam. 260, Elizabeth Jones.

³⁵ Declaration of Samuel H. Jones, 7 January 1857, Elizabeth Jones, widow's pension application no. W. 230; “Revolutionary War Pensions,” database with images, *Fold3*; North Carolina > J > Jones > Samuel Jones, img. 11.

Nathaniel W. Jones	N. W. Jones
Sam. ¹ Thompson and wife Julia formerly Julia Jones	Julia A. Thompson
William K. Jones	W. K. Jones
Frank McBride and wife Henrietta of Gibson County	Henrietta S. McBride
Albert Jones	A. M. Jones
Frances T. Leftwick and wife Ann formerly Ann Jones	Ann W. Leftwick
Mary and Frank Jones minors	Mary T. Jones, Frank A. Jones
Nancy Cox and her children of the State of Mississippi	A. Clinton, Mary R. Stevens (?)
William G. Cockerill	W. G. Cockrill
<p><i>Sources</i></p> <p>a. Madison County, Tennessee, County Court, probate files, Elizabeth Jones, no. 696 796 [<i>sic</i>] (1854), supplemental petition of Robert G. Jones et al., 7 August 1856; digital images, <i>FamilySearch</i> (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:9392-2NS8-BJ); digital film 004727204, img. 779 of 1110.</p> <p>b. Declaration of Samuel H. Jones, 7 January 1857, Elizabeth Jones, widow's pension application no. W. 230; "Revolutionary War Pensions," database with images, <i>Fold3</i> (https://www.fold3.com); North Carolina > J > Jones > Samuel Jones, img. 11; imaged from <i>Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files</i>, Record Group 15: Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, National Archives microfilm publication M804, roll 1444.</p>	

Nancy and her children had evidently not kept in close touch with her Tennessee birth family. The 1856 petition implies erroneously that she was still alive. The 1857 declaration correctly implies Nancy's death when it states that all of Captain Samuel's children had died except for Robert Jones and Polly Glass.³⁶ Indeed, this document, appears to name two of Nancy's daughters in a garbled way:

- "Mary R. Stevens" could be a conflation of *Mary Ruth* Turner and Martha Eliza *Stevens*.
- "A. Clinton" could be Sarah A. Clinton.

Correlation between the pension and probate files created for Elizabeth Jones leads to a simple conclusion: Elizabeth, mother of Nancy M. [—?—] (Jones) Cox of Panola County, Mississippi, was the widow of Captain Samuel Jones of Franklin County, North Carolina.

³⁶ Panola Co., Miss., Probate Court, Minutes Book D:222-3, "Notice" by W. P. Wootten, 16 March 1853.

NANCY'S FATHER

The presence of “Mary R. Stevens” and “A. Clinton” on the list of Samuel Jones’s heirs is promising, but more evidence is needed to connect Nancy to the man identified as her mother’s husband.

Elizabeth’s pension file contains direct evidence of her marriage to Samuel. In her own declaration, she states “that she was married to him the said Samuel Jones in Granville County^[3] North Carolina on the [*blank*] day of October [1790]...that previous to her marriage her name was Elizabeth Goodloe.”³⁷ Eighty-year-old William Goodloe also swore an affidavit for her pension application in which he stated, “I was present and saw Capt. Samuel Jones and my sister Elizabeth Goodloe married...by Col. Charles Eaton...at my Father’s residence.”³⁸

Samuel Jones posted bond to marry Elizabeth Goodloe on 27 September 1790 in Granville County, North Carolina; William Goodloe witnessed the bond.³⁹ Allowing for age-related changes, his signature matches the signature of the man who would make a statement in support of Elizabeth’s pension application nearly sixty years later; note especially the form of the *G* and the large, curled ascender of the *d* in both cases.

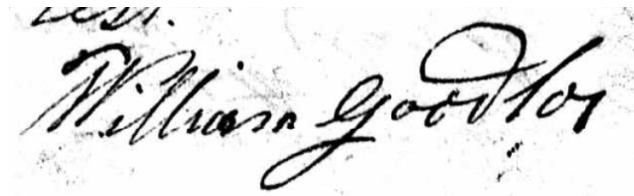


Figure 2: Signature of William Goodloe, 27 September 1790⁴⁰

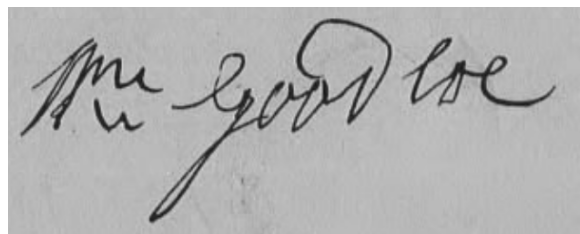


Figure 3: Signature of W^m Goodloe, 30 March 1849⁴¹

Elizabeth’s marriage to Samuel in late 1790 is well-timed for the estimated birthdate of Nancy M. [—?—] (Jones) Cox in about 1792-93.⁴²

³⁷ Declaration of Claimant, 14 April 1849, Elizabeth Jones, widow’s pension application no. W. 230; “Revolutionary War Pensions,” database with images, *Fold3*; North Carolina > J > Jones > Samuel Jones, img. 14.

³⁸ Affidavit of William Goodloe, 30 March 1849, Elizabeth Jones, widow’s pension application no. W. 230; “Revolutionary War Pensions,” database with images, *Fold3*; North Carolina > J > Jones > Samuel Jones, img. 47.

³⁹ Granville County, North Carolina, original marriage bond, Samuel Jones–Elizabeth Goodloe, 27 September 1790; digital images, “North Carolina, Marriage Records, 1741-2011,” *Ancestry.com* (https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/60548/42091_342510-01695); path: Granville > Marriage Bonds (1763-1869), img. 5121.

⁴⁰ Granville Co., N.C., original marriage bond, Samuel Jones–Elizabeth Goodloe, 27 September 1790.

⁴¹ Affidavit of William Goodloe, 30 March 1849, Elizabeth Jones, widow’s pension application no. W. 230; “Revolutionary War Pensions,” database with images, *Fold3*; North Carolina > J > Jones > Samuel Jones, img. 49.

⁴² 1850 U.S. census, Panola Co., Miss., pop. sch., p. 353 (stamped), dwell./fam. 662, Nancy Jones, age 57.

As with Nancy and her children, deeds of gift clarify Nancy’s relationship to her own father. Elizabeth Jones testified that her husband Samuel “removed from Franklin County[,] North Carolina to Davidson County[,] Tennessee and from thence to Maury County[,] Tennessee,” where he lived “until on or about [blank] day of October 1831 at which time he died in said Maury County.”⁴³ Her recollection of Samuel’s death date was confirmed in 1849 by her self-identified daughter-in-law, Katherine A. E. Jones, speaking on oath before a Maury County justice of the peace.⁴⁴ No probate record was found for Samuel in Maury County soon after the date named by both women.⁴⁵

However, Samuel and Elizabeth Jones left ample record of their lives in Maury County and their relationships to their children. Like his daughter Nancy, Samuel had a habit of using deeds of gift to record gifts to his children. Those children include a Nancy M. Jones who was married to one James Jones. All of Samuel’s named children or their spouses are also named in Elizabeth Jones’s probate and pension files. The following five deeds were all executed by one Samuel Jones in Maury County.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Grantee</u>	<u>Property given</u>	<u>Correlation</u>
7 Sep. 1821 ^a	“my son Robert G. Jones”	land	Robert G. Jones was later appointed administrator of Elizabeth Jones’s estate.
18 Jan. 1822 ^b	“David Glass & Mary Glass his wife”	five enslaved people	“David Glass and Polly Glass” are named in an 1856 petition from Elizabeth’s probate file.
30 Jan. 1822 ^c	“my son <u>an law</u> [sic] James Jones, and my daughter Nancy M. Jones”	five enslaved people	“Nancy M. Jones” was named as Elizabeth Jones’s daughter in 1858 and 1859.
30 Jan. 1822 ^d	“my son Edward D. Jones”	five enslaved people	(See immediately below).
15 Sep. 1827 ^e	“my daughter-in-law Kitty A. E. Jones” (also mentions “Edward D. Jones [her] husband”)	five enslaved people, a wagon, two horses	“Katherine A. E. Jones” identified herself as Elizabeth Jones’s daughter-in-law in 1849.

⁴³ Declaration of Claimant, 14 April 1849, Elizabeth Jones, widow’s pension application no. W. 230; “Revolutionary War Pensions,” database with images, *Fold3*; North Carolina > J > Jones > Samuel Jones, img. 14.

⁴⁴ Affidavit of Katherine A. E. Jones, 18 April 1849, Elizabeth Jones, widow’s pension application no. W. 230; “Revolutionary War Pensions,” database with images, *Fold3*; North Carolina > J > Jones > Samuel Jones, img. 3.

⁴⁵ Maury Co., Tenn., County Court, Minutes Book “2”:99-160, December Term 1831 and March Term 1832; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CS54-HSWV-T>); digital film 008265226, imgs. 82–111, reading page-by-page for decedent Samuel Jones.

Sources:

- a. Maury County, Tennessee, Deeds, Book J (“II”): 325, Samuel Jones to Robert G. Jones, 7 September 1821; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C39N-J3KY>); digital film 008477661, img. 160.
- b. *Ibid.*, Book J (“II”): 320, Samuel Jones to David Glass and Mary Glass, 18 January 1822; digital images, *FamilySearch*; digital film 008477661, img. 158.
- c. *Ibid.*, Book B:346, deed no. 351, Samuel Jones to James Jones and Nancy Jones, 30 January 1822; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSKN-T144>); digital film 008151024, img. 711.
- d. *Ibid.*, Book K:97, Samuel Jones to Edward D. Jones, 30 January 1822; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CS4F-XGJG>); digital film 007896936, img. 376.
- e. *Ibid.*, Book M:459, Samuel Jones to Kitty A. E. Jones, 15 September 1827; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CS4F-6SQH-8>); digital film 007896937, img. 502.

The men Samuel names as his sons and sons-in-law had a habit of witnessing each others’ deeds, suggesting a tight family network in the early 1820s. Nancy’s husband James witnessed the deed to Robert G. Jones dated 7 September 1821 and the deed to Edward D. Jones dated 30 January 1822.⁴⁶ The deed made out to James and Nancy on 30 January 1822 was witnessed, in turn, by both of Nancy’s brothers.⁴⁷

Only one Samuel Jones was enumerated in Maury County in 1820: a man age forty-five or older who lived with a woman in the same age category and fourteen enslaved people.⁴⁸ While no record of Samuel’s birthdate has yet been found in Maury County, his enumeration is consistent with a man old enough to have served in the Revolutionary War. His daughter Nancy almost certainly lived in the adjoining household, headed by James Jones. That household includes a white man and woman, both ages twenty-six to forty-four; three white children under the age of ten; and four enslaved people of African descent.⁴⁹ The data is consistent with Nancy and her known children:

- The tick mark for the white woman, born between *ca.* 1775 and 1794, is consistent with Nancy’s estimated birth year of 1792 or 1793.⁵⁰
- The boy under ten years old may represent a son who died before reaching adulthood.

⁴⁶ Maury Co., Tenn., Deeds, Book J (“II”): 325, Samuel Jones to Robert G. Jones, 7 September 1821. Also, *Ibid.*, Book K:97, Samuel Jones to Edward D. Jones, 30 January 1822.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Deeds, Book B:346, deed no. 351, Samuel Jones to James Jones and Nancy Jones, 30 January 1822.

⁴⁸ 1820 U.S. census, Maury Co., Tenn., pop. sch., no dist., apparent fol. 35v (stamped upper right of recto), line 7, Samuel Jones; digital images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com>); citing NARA microfilm M33, roll 124.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, line 8, James Jones.

⁵⁰ 1850 U.S. census, Panola Co., Miss., pop. sch., p. 353 (stamped), dwell./fam. 662, Nancy Jones, age 57.

- The two girls under ten years old may be Nancy's daughters Martha Eliza (Jones?) and Sophronia Macon Jones. The former was married by *ca.* 1836, suggesting a birthdate before 1820, and the latter was reportedly born *ca.* 1819-20.⁵¹

NANCY'S FIRST HUSBAND

James Jones's 1820 household contains an apparent wife, hypothesized to be Nancy, and three apparent children. Assuming that the couple followed a typical pattern for their time and place of one child roughly every two years, that could imply that they married *ca.* 1814–16. A marriage record exists for a couple of the right names, in the right place, and at the right time: James Jones married Nancy M. Jones on 12 December 1816 in Maury County.⁵²

CONCLUSION

A single, apparently widowed woman with an exceedingly common name and a gaggle of children showed up in a new area of the antebellum cotton frontier. She and her family were neither rich nor famous, but their desire to safeguard and improve their standing left a documentary trail that eventually pierced through a confusion of Joneses. Careful correlation reveals “Nancy M. Jones” as Nancy M. (Jones) Jones Cox, daughter of Samuel Jones and Elizabeth Goodloe.

⁵¹ Martha Eliza's marriage date is estimated from the birth of oldest known child John Jones Stevens *ca.* 1837: see 1850 U.S. census, Lafayette Co., Miss., pop. sch., no district, p. 135, dwelling 879, family 879, John Stevens, age 23. For Sophronia Macon (Jones) (Stevens) Turner's birth year, see *Ibid.*, Panola Co., Miss., p. 312 (stamped), dwell./fam. 54, Safronia M. Turner, age 30.

⁵² Maury Co., Tenn., original marriage license, James Jones–Nancy M. Jones, original minister's return penned on verso, 12 December 1816; “Tennessee, County Marriages, 1790–1950,” database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/1619127>) > Maury > Marriage records, 1807–1870, Jack, Robert D.–McMillan, Angus > imgs. 569–70.