

Story of Joseph Chaffin  
author unknown  
The Jackson Co. Family History Book  
200 Years of Memories  
presented by the Jackson Historical Society – 1996  
pgs. 94-95

**Joseph Chaffin** was born January 3, 1793 in North Carolina and died July 28, 1861 in Jackson County, Tennessee. He was the oldest child of Abner Chaffin (b. circa 1765 in Virginia) and Jane “Jenny” Cox, who settled in Jackson County about 1800. Their first settlement was near the head of Flynn’s Creek along Averys Trace. It was not long before the Chaffins were land owners from the headwaters of Flynn’s Creek and Cub Hollow to the headwaters of Morrison’s Creek and then Roaring River and Blackburn’s Fork.

Joseph Chaffin married October 18, 1812, TN, **Nancy Norvell Fox** (b. July 29, 1793 in VA; d. July 21, 1859 in Jackson County, TN). She was the daughter of **Benjamin K.** and **Martha Norvell Fox**. (*Martha was the daughter of Thomas Norvell/Narvell and Judith Parish. Martha was a half-sister of John K. Fox, son of Benjamin Fox and Elizabeth Anderson.*) (*Martha’s last name “Norvell” came into the Chaffin line through Nancy and has been used as a first name and spelled many different ways ie, Narl, Narvell, Narel*). They reared their family in Jackson County, near Gainesboro and we believe that all the Chaffins living in Jackson County at this time are descendants of **Joseph Chaffin**.

Joseph and his father, **Abner**, were by occupation “makers of powder.” They also farmed and cleared land. Joseph Chaffin’s family continued to grow, along with the Fox family that had settled in the same area and so the story is told that a drummer (salesperson) was traveling up Flynn’s Creek, moving from one house to the next, one would be a Fox, the next a Chaffin. As he made his last call for the day, introducing himself, the customer replied, “my name is Fox Chaffin.” Bewildered, he replied, “you must be the granddaddy of them all.”

The children of Joseph and Martha “Nancy” Fox Chaffin:

1. Benjamin Franklin Chaffin (b. July 31, 1813, Jackson Co., TN; d. December 31, 1877) md Rebecca Lovall, June 23, 1836.  
\* See *Story of Benjamin Franklin Chaffin, at the end of this story.*  
Both are buried in the Rash Cemetery on Flynn’s Creek, Jackson Co., TN.
2. **Martha Chaffin** (b. October 18, 1814; d. January 31, 1897) md **John Harvey Birdwell Sr.** – (b. 25 April 1812, Jackson Co., TN – d. 1 October 1892, Jackson Co., TN). Both Buried: Rash Cemetery, Jackson Co., TN.
3. Sarah “Sally” Chaffin (b. 181; d. before 1850) md William R. Dennis, ca. 1836.

4. Abner Chaffin (b. January 15, 1819 - d. September 9, 1869) md Elizabeth Young, March 22, 1838 – d/o Robert Young & Barbara Gallion.  
\*See *Story Abner Chaffin & Elizabeth Young*.  
Both Buried: Chaffin Cemetery, Jackson Co., TN
5. William “Bill” Chaffin (b. 1821; d. 1876) md Barbara Young.
6. Elizabeth “Besty” Chaffin (b. 1823; d?) md Joseph Stafford.
7. Nancy Chaffin (b. 1825; d?) md Soloman Mayberry, March 26, 1844.
8. John K. Chaffin (b. 1827; d. 1858) md Sally Dennis.
9. Fox Chaffin (b. February 5, 1829; d. June 21, 1902) md Jane Fox.
10. Almirah Chaffin (b. 1832; d. ?) md Joshua Jackson.
11. Narl Chaffin (b. 1834; d ?) md Sarilda Brown.

#### The Abner Chaffin Family

Abner Chaffin was born ca. 1765 in Virginia. In 1792 he signed a petition to have a road built from Catawba River to Montford Cove, in Burke County, North Carolina. His first child, Joseph, was born in 1793. Abner bought land in 1794 on Crooked Creek near Montford Cove, joining Amos Chaffins’s land. This land lies about 10 miles southwest of Marion, North Carolina. Three other children were born in Burke County: William (b. 1795), Baalim (b. 1797), and Martha (b. 1799).

Abner, his brother Joseph, and their families arrived on Flynn’s Creek in Jackson County in November, 1799. Freezing weather was upon them before they were able to construct a shelter. They had 60 head of cattle which they planned to feed through the winter in the can brake. Abner settled near where Antioch Church of Christ now stands. Abner built his house about 150 feet from the huge spring on land now owned by Doxie Birdwell. The area soon became the Chaffin Settlement. The Smith County Court in 1801 ordered a road build from Fort Blount on the Cumberland River to the Chaffin Settlement. Abner’s children born in Tennessee are: Jefferson (1800), John (1803), Elias (1804), Able (1805), Mary Polly (1807), Martin Thomas (1813), Ruth (1819).

Abner and Joseph established a gunpowder business before 1812. They mined saltpeter and lead from the old Peter’s cave on Blackburns Fork. These products were ground by a water mill powered by the big spring on Abner’s property. Parts of the old mill are still visible in the water below the spring. The gunpowder

was sold in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee to a Federal depot which supplied Andrew Jackson in the War of 1812.

Joseph Chaffin, Abner's oldest son (my great-great-grandfather) married Nancy Fox. They brought 100 acres in Cub Hollow, running from Flynn's Creek to the top of the ridge on Highway 56. They had 11 children.

Abner 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> child of Joseph and Nancy (my great-grandfather) married Elizabeth Young. They bought a farm on Roaring River in 1869. My grandfather was only 9 years old then, but he never moved again. Abner and Elizabeth had 12 children. Abner died at age 50, leaving three very young children. Martha and John Robert (who were older) stayed home to help their mother raise the younger children and 3 grandchildren whose parents had died within 12 days of each other.

The oldest dwelling on the farm is a one-room log cabin built by a spring at the head of the hollow. Abner's homestead is on Road 135, 6 miles from Gainesboro. The old house was replaced by John Robert a few years before his mother died. This house is on the site of the log house, it is white with 3 chimneys, and a 3 gable roof. It is still standing, but beyond being restored.

At age 35 John R. married Rachel Rogers. They raised 4 children: Ada Berry, Eve Lynn, Charles Rogers, and Encel Abner. "Charlie" married Ethel Young. They lived on the Chaffin farm until his death at 31 years of age. Charlie (my father) preceded his father in death. After John's death, the farm sold to Roger Lynn, grandson of John Robert Chaffin. It has been in the family 130 years.

*\*See Chapter 4 – John Harvey Birdwell Sr. Family who md Martha Chaffin.*

Benjamin Franklin Chaffin  
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pg. 92

Benjamin Franklin Chaffin, farmer, was born in Jackson County, Tennessee July 31, 1813, the oldest child of **Joseph Chaffin** and **Nancy Fox Chaffin**. He married, June 23, 1836, Rebecca Lovall (b. November 21, 1817; d. February 20, 1857). Their home site was located on what is now the Johnny W. Anderson farm, on the ridges overlooking Antioch Church of Christ. Both are buried in the Rash Cemetery on Flynn's Creek, Jackson Co., TN.

Benjamin Franklin Chaffin was appointed a deacon with Abner Chaffin when the Church of Christ was first organized at "Talley's Old Field" on July 17, 1858.

William Davidson and Thomas J. Loftis were the first elders of this congregation. "Tally's Old Field" church was moved to Antioch, July 16, 1864. He continued to be active to his death.

Their children were: Joseph L. Chaffin (1837-1847); Nancy K. Chaffin (1839-1891) married John Petty; William Riley Chaffin (1840-1916) married Josephine Davis. William Riley was a preacher of much persuasion in the Church of Christ. Sematha Chaffin (1842-1843); John H. Chaffin (1845-1909) married Nancy Caroline Williams. He was crippled and is known as "Crippled John." John H. served about 30 years as County Court Clerk of Jackson County, Tennessee. Malinda E. Chaffin (1846-1908) married Bart Fox; Sarah M. Chaffin (1850-1851); Martha R. Chaffin (1855-1928) married John B. "Biss" Billingsley.

**Other sources:**

THE JOSEPH CHAFFIN FAMILY GENEALOGY – CHAFFIN MANUSCRIPT  
Records compiled by: Cousins by the Dozens, 1981

Leonard B. Chaffin  
216 Grape St.  
Canon City, CO

Encel A. Chaffin  
211 Infirmary Rd.  
Dayton, OH

I. Joseph Chaffin (son of Abner of VA & NC) b. 3 January 1793 in NC or VA – d. 28 July 1861 in Jackson Co., TN – md 18 October 1812 in TN to Nancy Fox- b. 23 July 1793, VA – d. 21 July 1857, Jackson Co., TN. Her parents: Benjamin Fox Jr. and Nancy Narvell, d/o Thomas Narvell and Judith Parish. Nancy was a half-sister of John K. Fox, son of Benjamin Fox and Elizabeth Anderson. Joseph and Nancy reared their children: Benjamin Franklin, Martha, Nancy, Abner, Sally, Elizabeth, John, William "Bill" Fox, Almira, and Nathaniel "Narl" Henry in Jackson Co., TN near Gainesboro. pg. 65.

Story Abner Chaffin & Elizabeth Young

pg. 68

Abner Chaffin was the son of Joseph Chaffin & Nancy Fox and the brother of Martha Chaffin who married John Harvey Birdwell.

Abner Chaffin married Elizabeth Young daughter of Robert Young & Barbara Gallion. Abner apparently went to Missouri about 1840 by ox team and returned to Tennessee a year later. "Abner was a preacher. He walked four miles barefooted to baptize Berry Young. Walking that far barefooted was not a mark of poverty but just pure 'scotch economy'. Abner was both a farmer and a

shoemaker. He made shoes to pay someone to 'lay' plows. Living in the days if the 'stuck' bushel and making a tally mark for every ten cents in money as well as pounds or dollars and cents." Abner Chaffin & his wife, Elizabeth Young are both buried at the Chaffin Cemetery, Jackson Co., TN, located on the old Chaffin place on Roaring River in the 1<sup>st</sup> District, at the 9<sup>th</sup> District line, 6 miles east of Gainesboro, on State Route #135.

Children of Abner Chaffin & Elizabeth Young were:

1. Francis Marion Chaffin- b. 10 May 1839 – d. 4 April 1914 md Elizabeth Loftis – b. 20 January 1841 – d. 22 July 1914, Moline, KS, d/o William Loftis sister of Laborn Loftis who md Louisa Chaffin and David Loftis. Francis was a Church of Christ preacher. He moved from TN to Ozark, MO then to Moline, KS. He also md Elizabeth Loveall.
2. Louisa Chaffin- b. 29 December 1841 md Laborn Loftis, s/o William Loftis & Elizabeth Loveall.
3. Martha Chaffin – b. 19 June 1843 – d. 28 July 1924 md James Howard Brown. They never had children. Howard was md to Polly Chaffin first and had a large family. Martha helped raise some of them.
4. William Jasper Chaffin – b. 10 April 1845 – d. 16 September 1873 md Angeline Bean – b. 7 November 1849 – d. 3 September 1873, d/o Polly Bean Chaffin. To them were born three children. Both Buried: Chaffin Cemetery, Jackson Co., TN.
5. Sarah "Sally" Chaffin – b. 28 December 1846. She md George R. Loftis. They had eight children, two girls died when they were small. Their oldest son Abner M. md Vina Carter. Martha married Bill Dennis, f/o Luke Dennis in the hardware and grocery business in Gainesboro, TN. Parazetta married Rufus Genty- they all moved to OK. James M. md Croa Fox, they went to OK also. James died in 1933. Harriett md Hickman Gentry, she lived on Morrisons Creek, TN. Willis md Matilda Allen, d/o Charles Allen.
6. Benjamin Bartlett Chaffin – b. 4 November 1848 – d. 24 April 1926 md Frances "Fannie" Anderson in March 1872. They had ten children. One died in infancy. Their daughter Victoria never married, she died when about twenty years of old of T.B. Benjamin, Frances "Fannie" and Victoria Chaffin are all buried: Chaffin Cemetery, Jackson Co., TN.
7. John Robert Chaffin – b. 5 December 1850 – d. 25 December 1928 md Rachel Rogers – b. 1 March 1859 – d. 30 August 1931. Both buried: Chaffin Cemetery, Jackson Co., TN. To them were born two sons and two daughters.
8. Joshua Lawson Chaffin – b. 11 October 1852 – d. 25 December 1875. He was never married. He went west in 1873 and took sick while living in Iowa. He started for home to go back to his sisters in MO and died at

- Louisa's home in MO and was laid to rest in the Gainesville Cemetery, Ozark Co., MO.
9. Nancy Chaffin – b. 31 August 1854 – d. 7 November 1855, buried Morrison's Creek Cemetery, Jackson Co., TN.
  10. Mary Jane Chaffin – b. 29 September 1856 – d. 15 June 1920. She md Frances Marion Loftis and they had six children. Both Buried: Chaffin Cemetery, Jackson Co., TN.
  11. James Monroe Chaffin – b. 23 November 1858 – d. 10 March 1935 md 1<sup>st</sup> Matilda Dudley, d/o P.N. Dudley. They had five boys, one died in infancy. The oldest Norman Bedford md Lucinda Vanhooser, d/o John & Sally (Morgan) Vanhooser. The 2<sup>nd</sup> son Luke Edgar died when he was ten days old. The 3<sup>rd</sup> son Patrick Dudley Chaffin was b. 2 March 1884, he md Mary Bell Young, the oldest daughter of Zeb Young. (Zeb "Zebulin" Young was the youngest s/o J. D. Young). The 4<sup>th</sup> son Abner Cleveland Chaffin was b. 22 February 1887 he md Florence May Anderson, d/o Jim Anderson. The 5<sup>th</sup> son James B. md Janie Vanhooser the youngest d/o John and Sally Vanhooser.
  12. Elizabeth "Betty" Chaffin – b. 12 September 1864, at the age of 26 she md James Sliger. They lived and raised their children in the 10<sup>th</sup> Civil District of Jackson Co., TN in the uplands about six miles west of Cookeville. Several years later they moved from there to the Mack Garrison place on Blackburn's Fork, Jackson Co., TN. On 25 September Betty died and was laid to rest in the Cemetery at the Zion Church of Christ.

**Source:** Bullets, Fire, Moonshine and The Bible: Life in Jackson County, TN From 1903-1907: Vol. 2, Transcribed by Shelta R. McCarter Shrum.

(Pg. 97): GAINESBORO SENTINEL, Thursday, September 15, 1904:

News Local Interest:

Mrs. Elizabeth Chaffin, widow of Abner Chaffin, died Saturday night at 12 o'clock near Pacific, from general congestion after an illness of but a few hours. She was in her 85<sup>th</sup> year, and had survived her husband 35 years. Mrs. Chaffin was a member of the Christina church, loyal and faithful to her duty, a devoted loving wife and mother. She leaves nine children to mourn her death, who are: F. M. Chaffin, Moline, Kansas; Mrs. Eliza Loftis, Nashville; Mrs. Martha Brown, White's Bend; Mrs. Elizabeth Sliger, Cookeville; Mesdames, Sally Loftis, Mary Loftis, John P. James and Ben Chaffin, Pacific, also a brother and sister, William Young, White's Bend, and Mrs. J. J. Stamps, Rough Point. Funeral services were conducted by Bro. J. T. Draper Sunday evening after which the remains were interred in the family graveyard near Pacific. (*Elizabeth Chaffin was born 19 January 1819 the daughter of Robert and Barbara Gallion Young. She married Abner Chaffin on 22 March 1838. Elizabeth passed away on 10 September 1904, she was buried near her husband who died in 1869*). Both Buried: John R. Chaffin Cemetery, Dodson Branch, Hwy. 135. Located: From Gainesboro take Hwy 53 toward Celina and turn right on Dodson Branch Hwy 135 and the cemetery is on the right side of road enclosed in chain length fence

behind 1<sup>st</sup> old house after passing Aaron Branch Road. On old Chaffin Place on Roaring River. Six miles East of Gainesboro.

Grace Ethel Chaffin Story  
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pg. 93 & 93.

Abner Cleveland Chaffin, (s/o *James Monroe Chaffin & Matilda Dudney*) courted Florence May Anderson for a long time. Almost every day he would leave his home in Tally's Hollow and cross the Roaring River to visit his sweetheart on the Long Branch and chop wood for her. They were married February 2, 1908 and started their life together in the old "weaning house" up in the hollow east of the old Abner Chaffin homeplace. Abner Cleveland worked with his father, James Monroe Chaffin, and his brothers, Patrick, Bedford, and Jim. They did odd jobs and farmed on their land and on that of the neighboring Gores.

Expecting their first child in November, the newlyweds moved back into the big house in Tally's Hollow in order to make it easier for Abner's mother, Matilda, to help out with the delivery and to look after Florence and the baby. My grandmother, Grace Ethel Chaffin, was born on November 23, 1908. The young family stayed with James and Matilda until after Christmas and then moved back into their own home.

Following the end of World War I, gainful employment was difficult to find, and my great-grandfather Abner went west to seek a better living. Once established, he sent for his family to join him in their new home in Coalinga, CA. In April 1921, Florence, who was six months pregnant with their last child (Fred Abner), packed up their possessions and took Grace Ethel, Grady Betty, Bonnie Kate, and toddler Edith Amy to Double Springs, TN by buckboard where they boarded the Tennessee Central Railroad for Nashville and ultimately to Coalinga. How poignant it must have been to leave the greenery of Roaring River just as the dogwood trees were blooming.

**CEMETERY RECORDS:**

CHAFFIN CEMETERY: Jackson County, TN, located on the old Chaffin place on Roaring River in the 1<sup>st</sup> District, at the 9<sup>th</sup> District line, 6 miles east of Gainesboro, on State Route #135; survey taken in 1960 by Encel A. Chaffin.

Family Members Buried at Chaffin Cemetery, Jackson Co., TN:

David Carter Lynn – b. 29 1950 – d. 24 January 1950, s/o Roger & Guinlin Lynn, grandson of Eva Chaffin Lynn.

Child – of Bailey & Tempy McClellan.

Baily Payton McClellan – b. 30 January 1833 – Civil War soldier, Sgt. 8<sup>th</sup>, TN Inf., s/o Josiah & Rhoda Condra McClellan. Wife: Temperance Young McClellan – b. 1838/9, d/o Robert & Barbara Gallion Young, they are buried: Old Young-Chaffin place, Tallies Hollow (now on the N.B. Chaffin place).

Elizabeth Young Chaffin – 19 January 1819 – d. 10 September 1904, d/o Robert Young & Barbara Gallion, wife of Abner Chaffin – b. 15 January 1819 – d. 9 September 1869, s/o Joseph & Nancy Fox Chaffin, both b. 1793.

Mattie – Mary Elizabeth (Netherton) Chaffin – b. 8 July 1873 – d. 4 January 1905, 1<sup>st</sup> w/o Noah S. Chaffin; their child Edna Vergie Chaffin – b. 4 October 1901 – d. 7 July 1904.

Norma Loftis – b. ca. 1920 – d. ca. 1930, d/o Lee & Minnie Gentry Loftis.

Infant of Johnie & Ella Bean Chaffin – he was the s/o Benjamin Bartlett Chaffin.

Luke Chaffin – b. 20 April 1882 – d. 10 May 1882, s/o James M. & Matilda Dudley Chaffin.

Anna Angeline Chaffin – b. 7 November 1849 – d. 3 September 1873, d/o “Polly” Bean Chaffin. Wife of William Jasper Chaffin – b. 10 April 1845 – d. 16 September 1873, s/o Abner & Elizabeth Chaffin.

“Polly – Betty” Mary Elizabeth Chaffin Loftis – b. 20 June 1873, 1<sup>st</sup> w/o Pierce Loftis & d/o William Jasper & Anna Angeline Chaffin.

Infant of Pierce Loftis

Ollie Chaffin Loftis – b. 27 May 1874 – d. 23 October 1929, 2<sup>nd</sup> w/o Pierce Loftis, & d/o Benjamin B. Chaffin.

Pierce Loftis

Victoria Chaffin – d/o Benjamin B. Chaffin & Fannie Anderson.

“Fannie” Frances Anderson Chaffin – b. 20 November 1855 – d. 18 November 1894, w/o Benjamin Bartlett Chaffin – b. 14 November 1848 – d. 24 April 1926, s/o Abner & Elizabeth Chaffin.

Infant of Thomas Pharris & Mary Gilpatric Chaffin.

Ottis C. Loftis – b. 14 November 1907 – d. 2 December 1908, s/o Harvey Lee & Mertie Lu Berry Loftis.

Four infants – of Mont & Martha Loftis Garrison, son of Mack Anderson Garrison, Martha a daughter of Mary Jane Chaffin.

Three infants – of Paul & “Lizzie” Alizabeth Garrison.

Infant of James & Betty Sliger. Betty a d/o Abner & Elizabeth Chaffin.

Frances Marion Loftis – b. 30 July 1856, s/o John Martin Loftis, wife, Mary Jane Chaffin – b. 29 September 1856 – d. 15 June 1920 , d/o Abner Chaffin.

Fannie Mae Chaffin – b. 28 September 1900 – d. 6 December 1900, infant of David Kay & Ova Sliger Chaffin, granddaughter of Benjamin B. Chaffin. (L.B. Chaffin’s sister).

Ethel Young Chaffin – b. 28 December 1892 – d. 29 January 1936, d/o Marlin & Mary Smith Young.

Charlie Rogers Chaffin – b. 9 October 1891 – d. 17 November 1922, s/o John R. & Rachel Rogers Chaffin. Brother of Encel A. Chaffin.

Ana Vera Chaffin – b. 11 September 1901 – d. 6 October 1901, d/o John R. & Rachel Roger Chaffin.

Rachel Mack Rogers Chaffin – b. 1 March 1859 – d. 30 August 1931, w/o John Robert Chaffin – b. 5 December 1850 – d. 25 December 1928, s/o Abner Chaffin.

Jack Willard Lynn – b. 3 March 1923 – d. 29 November 1961, s/o Eva Chaffin Lynn.

Eva Grace Chaffin Lynn – b. 30 May 1889 – d. 17 August 1962, d/o John R. & Rachel Chaffin, w/o Albert Lynn – b. 14 April 1877 – d. 30 June 1949.

Matilda Chaffin Loftis – b. 1 April 1911 – d. 28 January 1928, d/o N. Bedford & Lucinda Vanhooser Chaffin.

Lucinda Vanhooser Chaffin – b. 16 June 1884 – d. 20 November 1911, d/o John Vanhooser, Civil War soldier, w/o Norman Bedford Chaffin – b. 13 September 1879 – d. 5 February 1943, s/o James M. & matilda Chaffin.

Carmon Chaffin infant – s/o Patrick & Rhoda Young Chaffin, he a s/o Matilda Dudley Chaffin – b. 9 October 1858 – d. 14 Febraury 1924, d/o Patrick Dudley

James Monroe Chaffin – b. 23 November 1858 – d. 10 March 1935, s/o Abner Chaffin.

Infants of Vesel Garrison

Infant of Matilda Chaffin

Infant of Patrick & Mary Bell Chaffin

Cora Nell Chaffin – b. 13 October 1910 – d. 28 February 1911, child of Patrick & Mary Bell Chaffin.

Jack Roger Chaffin – b. 12 April 1933 – d. 1 February 1934, s/o Comer Chaffin & Mary, Comer s/o Darvies & Ova D. Loftis Chaffin.

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