

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, Nancy 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. They reared their family in Jackson County 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 Nancy Fox Chaffin:

1. Ben Franklin Chaffin (b. July 31, 1813; d. December 31, 1877) md Rebecca Lovall, June 23, 1836.
2. **Martha Chaffin** (b. October 18, 1814; d. January 31, 1897)
md **John Birdwell**
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.
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 2nd, 4th 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.