

Volume IV

Our Alabama Hendersons

Descendants

of

William Franklin Henderson (1811-1890)

&

Agness Robinson Stephens (1818-1873)

FOREWORD

Volume IV (of 5 volumes) is a compilation of vital statistics for more than 800 families who are direct descendants of William Franklin Henderson (1811-1890) and Agness Robinson Stephens (1818-1873). This book is specifically intended to help Henderson family researchers get started with their own genealogical research by identifying most of their ancestors and relatives they will be dealing with. One effective way to get started would be to complete 'filling in the blanks' for any individual of whom you have relative information.

Henderson family information was compiled from literally hundreds of sources including ancestry.com, find-a-grave.com, Mormon database, plus a variety of other online query sites. Author particularly wishes to thank several Henderson family researchers who granted him 'guest privileges' to their family tree on ancestry.com such that he could view information of living individuals. Without such access, it would have been impractical for author to identify the large number of younger Henderson families. Hopefully, this series of Henderson family reference books will encourage other Henderson descendants to learn more about their hard-working grandparents who were early pioneers in Alabama and Mississippi.

One caveat: There can be no assurance that any specific vital statistic in this book is either complete or accurate. For certain, there are some descendants not listed because author was unable to locate any online information regarding them - especially younger family members. For any error or omission the author apologizes and solicits your help in improving the book's accuracy and completeness. After all, family members are usually the most reliable source of information regarding their relatives. Author has learned (the hard way) that all genealogical information should be taken with that proverbial 'grain of salt'. There are frequent errors and inconsistencies in the information - it is up to the reader to analyze the information presented and compare it with other reliable sources - e.g. verify with a knowledgeable family member.

William Franklin Henderson and Agness Robinson Stephens emigrated from Abbeville County, South Carolina to Greene County, Alabama in 1824 as youngsters and were married on November 24, 1835 in Greene County. William purchased an 80-acre homestead located along Snoddy Road about 1.5 miles north of Beulah Baptist Church in January 1832. He and Agness spent their lives raising their family and working their homestead. The young couple (as well as their parents) joined Bethel Baptist Church at Ralph, Alabama sometime prior to 1840. As of June 2017, author is still trying to determine whether or not these Henderson and Stephens families were charter members who helped found Bethel Baptist Church. As many of you know, both Beulah and Bethel Baptist churches played a vital role in the daily lives of our 'Alabama Hendersons'.

This volume (volume for each Henderson sibling) is organized to maximally assist the individual researcher with descendants of William & Agness Henderson. As such, the reader should keep the following in mind:

1. Author began his Henderson family research because William Franklin and Agness Henderson are one set of his wife's GGGrandparents. Her (i.e., Ann Ella Henderson Collier) Henderson ancestral lineage is Eugene Archie "E.A." Henderson to John Clifton Henderson to Edmund Waller Henderson to William Franklin Henderson. Ten (our of 16) of her GGGrandparents emigrated from (near Abbeville) South Carolina to Greene County, Alabama in the 1820s while four more of them emigrated to Starkville, Mississippi about the same time. The 15th emigrated to Stevenson, Alabama while the 16th emigrated to near Abbeville, Alabama. Author was astounded to learn that all sixteen (16) of his wife's GGGrandparents emigrated to Alabama and Mississippi within a few years of each other. Twenty nine (29!) of her grandparents are buried in Greene County, Alabama - there is a reason she still calls Alabama "God's Country" even though she has never actually lived there. Twenty seven (27) of Ann Ella's grandparents are buried in four church cemeteries in Greene County: Beulah Baptist (12), Bethel Baptist (9), Mt Hebron Presbyterian (3), and Pleasant Ridge Presbyterian (3).

2. Author read somewhere that the Henderson surname was the 13th most popular surname in America during the early 1800s. By 1820, author's research indicates there was likely to be at least one Henderson family in every county in America. The earliest Henderson death in Greene County of which author is aware occurred in 1826 - apparently, he was not one of our 'Alabama Hendersons'. Further, extended families (e.g., our Alabama Hendersons) tended to cluster as neighbors and multiple families emigrated together as they moved westward in the early 1800s. Another common practice was to name their children using the same names (e.g., William). Result is that modern researchers are faced with the task of differentiating between multiple first cousins named 'William Henderson' who might have lived in Greene County in the 1840s. In order to cope with this situation, the author adopted practice of identifying an individual by his/her full legal name plus birth and death year (e.g. William Franklin Henderson (1811-1890). Even that differentiation has proven inadequate in a few cases - in those cases, author had to use actual date of birth or date of death to differentiate between individuals. Worse, author has learned (the hard way) that he MUST also associate an individual with other family members in order to ensure that he has the correct 'William Henderson' - frequently there are multiple individuals with same name, living in the same area, and have birth/death dates which are in the same year.

3. The book is organized similar to a family tree with William Franklin and Agness Henderson as its starting point (i.e., paragraph 4.0) and each family unit includes its relationship with this couple. The significant difference with author's approach is that each 'node' in the family tree includes three generations (i.e., children, parents, and both sets of grandparents) of family members. By looking at vital statistics (on a single page) for all three generations simultaneously the researcher can easily perform his/her own 'sanity check' regarding accuracy of the information. P.S., If you have not learned this lesson by now; all information found on genealogical sites (e.g., ancestry.com) and even official census rolls should be taken with that proverbial 'grain of salt' because of the likelihood of errors.

4. Author's career was spent as a systems engineer responsible for design of complex electronic systems. Typically, we were faced with ensuring that a large number of design products were both consistent and timely as we approached a milestone design review. Author became skilled at taking one last overall look (we informally called this review a 'sanity check') at all of our design products considered as a whole. Author performs a similar 'sanity check' on genealogical data by considering all of the vital statistics for three consecutive generations of the family at the same time. All of the names and dates must be consistent - any inconsistency highlights need for further research. This book is organized around such 3-generational family units to as means to encourage the reader to perform his/her own version of a 'sanity check'. Author achieved a significant improvement in readability by dedicating (at least) one page to each family unit - the result is a huge book.

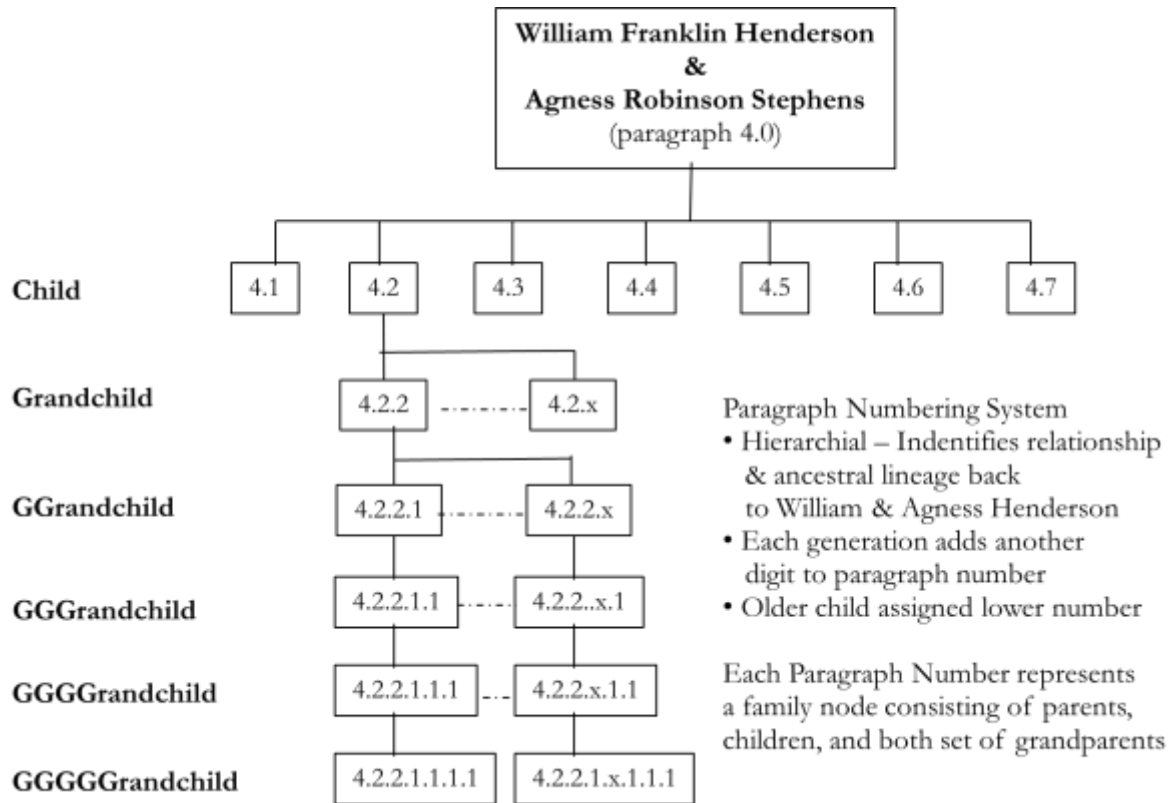
5. A reference book such as this one can never be complete (or 100% accurate). There is always further information (e.g., residence) which could be learned about your parents and grandparents. Also, there will be continuing births, weddings, and deaths along the way. Author specifically designed this book such that individual reader can update and maintain his/her own version of Henderson family tree as conditions warrant. The book is available both as a hardcopy notebook (i.e., one family unit per page) with replaceable pages and in digital form (using standard MS software) such that you can easily make needed modifications or additions to your family's node(s). You can also easily print one or more pages and substitute them in the hardcopy version of this book. In this manner, you can maintain your own personal copy of the Henderson family tree.

6. An early researcher erroneously identified middle name of William Franklin Henderson's wife and that error has been propagated ever since. Her (and her daughter's) name is listed only as Agness R Stephens whereby this earlier researcher interpreted the R. as denoting Roebuck. Author's research indicates that this unusual spelling of "Agness" and "Robinson" goes back five generations in the Stephens and Henderson families. Further, this same lineage indicates that the R. denotes "Robinson" not "Roebuck". Even though the Henderson and Roebuck families had been neighbors for nearly 75 years in Greene County, the first Henderson/Roebuck marriage did not occur until 1928. Author's research indicates William's wife was "Agness Robinson Stephens". Thanks to Tina Henderson, a fellow Henderson family researcher, for suggesting that middle name should be 'Robinson' rather than 'Roebuck'. Author recently experienced an 'ah ha moment' when he recognized that Agness' was named for her grandmother "Agness Smith Robinson".

Paragraph Numbering System

Author has identified more than 800 direct descendants of William Franklin Henderson (1811-1890) and Agness Robinson Stephens (1818-1873). Author estimates there are an average of nine individuals (i.e., 4 grandparents, 2 parents, plus 3 children) associated with each direct descendant - he arbitrarily assigned the name "family node" to this grouping of family members. In order to show relationships among this many people, the author chose to arrange the "family nodes" in a hierarchal fashion as illustrated below. All paragraph numbers were assigned based on hierarchal relationship of the direct Henderson descendant (i.e., Child).

Note: One implication of this hierarchal arrangement is that name of any one individual (e.g. the reader's name) will appear ONLY in one 'branch' (or perhaps 'twig') of the Henderson family tree. Tracing lineage of an individual will be as simple as looking at the paragraph numbers.



- Vol I Overview of Henderson Family Lineage
- Vol II Descendants of Samuel Taylor Henderson and Sydney Mayo Head
- Vol III Dexcendants of David D Henderson and Vianna Nix
- Vol IV Descendants of William Franklin Henderson and Agness Robinson Stephens
- Vol V Descendants of Cynthia Henderson and Griffin Cockrell

Interpretation of Family Node Information

Each Henderson family node (there are 800+ of them) is documented using the format shown below. At least one page is dedicated to each family node.

4.2.1	Relationship: Grandchild of William Franklin Henderson and Agness Robinson Stephens	
Child	Marriage	Spouse
Mary Ida Henderson	Date: 2Jan1890	John Edward Henderson
DOB: 25Aug1870	Location: Greene County, AL	DOB: 31Jan1866
City/State: Snoddy, Greene County, AL	Children	City/State: Greene County, AL
Date of Death: 16Jan1935	1. Edmund Lawrence Henderson (1892-1952)	Date of Death: 23Nov1924
Cemetery: Midway Baptist Church Cemetery at Vardaman, MS	2. Elizabeth Caroline Henderson (1893-1980)	Cemetery: Midway Baptist Church Cemetery at Vardaman, MS
City, State: Vardaman, Calhoun County, MS	3. Viola May Henderson (1896-1978)	City, State: Vardaman, Calhoun County, MS
Father: Edmund Waller Henderson (1839-1917)	4. William Wallace Henderson (1898-1960)	Father: William Franklin Henderson (1838-1866)
Mother: Elizabeth Jane Cartee (1851-1885)	5. Martha Jane Henderson (1900-1905)	Mother: Caroline Kate Murphy (1836-1912)

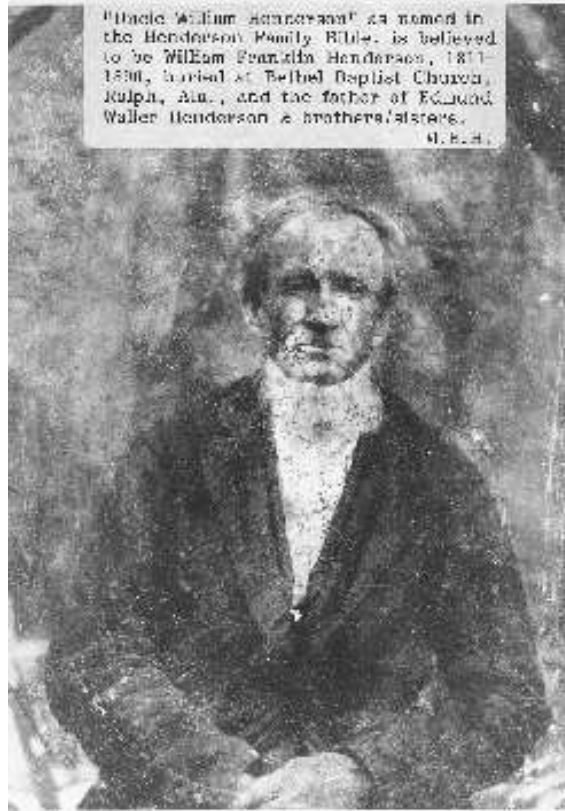
1. 4.2.1 Paragraph Number 4.x indicates direct descendant of William Franklin Henderson
2. Relationship - Indicates ancestral relationship from Child back to William Franklin Henderson and Agness Robinson Stephens
3. Child / Spouse - Person listed in left column is the direct descendant of William & Agness Henderson - Child's spouse(s) is/are listed in the right column(s)
 Note: Descendant child is ALWAYS listed in left column of the table
 Note: Each individual is identified by full name (i.e., all 3 names) plus year of birth and year of death - in some cases month/day are needed to differentiate individuals
4. Marriage - Date and Location of marriage of descendant Child
5. DOB & City/State - Date of Birth and Location of Birth for Child and Spouse
6. Children - List of Children (listed oldest to youngest) sired by the couple
7. Father / Mother - These are the four grandparents of the family.
8. If deceased:
 - a) Date of death
 - b) City/State - Location of residence at time of death
 - c) Cemetery - Cemetery name and location
9. Note: Additional 'nuggets' of information may be included with the description
10. Photos - If available, photos of parent(s) and their tombstone are included

Relationship: Parents of Samuel Taylor Henderson		
Husband	Marriage	Wife
Unk Henderson	Date: ~1802	Elizabeth ??
DOB: ~1756	Location: Abbeville County, SC	DOB: ~1780
City/State: Ireland	Children	City/State: South Carolina
Residence:	Vol I. Samuel Taylor Henderson (1803-1870)	Residence: 1827+ - Greene County, AL
Date of Death: Circa 1820 in Abbeville County, SC	Vol II. David D Henderson (1806-1895)	Date of Death: 1845 in Greene County, AL
Cemetery: Unk	Vol III. William Franklin Henderson (1811-1890)	Cemetery: Bethel Baptist Church Cemetery (Old) at Ralph, AL
	Vol IV. Cynthia Henderson (1815-1870)	
NOTES		NOTES
<p>Author's Hypotheses:</p> <p>1) Mr Henderson was a poor Irish immigrant who died in SC in 1820. Evidence: Later Alabama census rolls indicate that families of Samuel, David, and Cynthia could not read or write which would tend to confirm family's poverty.</p> <p>2) William Franklin Henderson agreed to 7-year indenture contract - probably w/ Benjamin Stephens - in late 1824. He was to receive 80 acres of land in Greene County - which William purchased in Jan1832.</p> <p>3) David and Samuel Henderson agreed to 7-year indentured contract - probably w/ Benjamin Stephens - in Sep 1828. They were each to receive 80 acres of land in Greene County - which each purchased on 1Oct1835. Cynthia may have also agreed to a 7-year indentured contract in return for cash. Both David and Cynthia married in Dec1835.</p>		<p>Family lore says that Widow Henderson with four children migrated from SC to Greene County, AL. Presumption is this migration occurred between 1820+ (when her husband died) and 1830 when the family was listed in the Greene County census.</p> <p>Family lore says the Widow Henderson was born in 1764 but author considers this to be unrealistic. She married and had (at least) 4 children between 1803 and 1818, migrated to Alabama in the 1820s, and died in 1845. Suggest her birth was in the 1780-1785 time period.</p> <p>Given birth dates of the four siblings, author suspects there were at least two additional infant deaths about 1809 and 1814.</p>
		<p>Given the family ties to Bethel Baptist Church, author believes that the Widow Henderson was buried in the Old Bethel Baptist Church Cemetery. Her tombstone would have disintegrated with a few decades because of acidity of the soil in that location.</p>

4.0 William Franklin Henderson and Agness Robinson Stephens		
Husband	Marriage	Wife
William Franklin Henderson	Date: 24Nov1835	Agness Robinson Stephens
DOB: 24Feb1811	Location: Greene County, AL	DOB: 15Feb1818
City/State: Abbeville County, SC	Children	City/State: Abbeville County, SC
Residence: 1824 - Greene County, AL	1. Agness Robinson Henderson (1836-1861)	Residence: 1836 + - Snoddy, Greene County, AL
Residence: 1832+ - Snoddy, Greene County, AL	2. Edmund Waller Henderson (1839-1917)	Residence:
Date of Death: 23Sep1890	3. John Richard Henderson (1841-1862)	Date of Death: 2Oct1873
Cemetery: Bethel Baptist Church, Ralph, AL	4. Benjamin Henderson (1844-)	Cemetery: Bethel Baptist Church Cemetery (Old), Ralph, AL
City, State: Snoddy, Greene County, AL	5. Samuel Taylor Henderson (1846-1925)	City, State: Snoddy, Greene, AL
Father: (per family lore) Unk Henderson (1756-1820) Irish Immigrant b: ~1756 in Ireland, PA, SC d: ~1820 in South Carolina	6. James Zackary Henderson (1850-1888)	Father: (per Author's Analysis) Benjamin Waller Stephens (1810-1850)
Mother: (per family lore) ?? Henderson b: ~1780 in SC d: 1845 in Greene County, AL	7. Martha E Henderson (1858-1915)	Mother: (per Author's Analysis) Unknown (-) - married Benjamin Waller Stephens in ~1817; died before birth of 2nd child
NOTES		NOTES
1850 census roll indicates following people were living with William and Agness: a) William Leavell - 9yrs - born in AL (grandson) b) Elizabeth Murphy - 30 years - born in AL		Agness' Tombstone lists her name as "Mrs Agness R. Stephens". Both the second 's' and the 'R.' are often misinterpreted by various researchers. Author's research indicates that 'R.' should be Robinson rather than Roebuck. This unusual spelling of "Agness" can be traced back several generations through her Stephens ancestors.

<p>William purchased 80 acre land patent in the Snoddy Community of Greene County, AL in January 1832. Thus, he had almost four years to clear his land and build a suitable dwelling before he married Agness Robinson Stephens in Nov1835. The couple lived their entire married lives on that homestead near Snoddy. However, they were life-long members of Bethel Baptist Church which is located several miles to the east near Ralph, AL. Benjamin Waller and Margaret Stephens (i.e., Agness' father and stepmother) were also early members of Bethel Church as was William's widowed mother.</p>	<p>Author's research indicates that Agness was born to Benjamin Waller Stephens and unknown wife #1 who died when Agness was born. Thus far, author has been unable to identify Agness' mother..</p>
<p>David Henderson (brother of William Franklin Henderson) also purchased land near Bethel Baptist Church in late 1830s . Benjamin Waller and Margaret Stephens purchased a neighboring tract at about the same time. Author's analysis indicates that Mrs Henderson (i.e.,mother of the four Henderson siblings) was likely living with David Henderson's family and also became an early member at Bethel Baptist Church. Author surmises that she was buried in the Old Bethel Baptist Church Cemetery in 1845.</p>	<p>Author's research indicates that current Bethel Baptist Church Cemetery (i.e., atop Bethel Hill) was not opened until ~1880. Agness, as well as four other grandparents of Ann Ella Henderson Collier, were buried in original Bethel cemetery which is located about 200 yards 'down the hill' from current cemetery location. Agness' tombstone (as well as 6 others) was relocated from the old cemetery (after 1890) and repositioned to their current locations in the Bethel Baptist Church Cemetery.</p>

Note: There is an 8-year interval between birth of James and birth of Martha. Author suspects there were additional infant births/deaths during interval of 1850-1858. Otherwise, Martha was likely one of those 'surprises' which sometimes happen when women are entering menopause.



William Franklin Henderson (c1885)



Tombstones - Agness Robinson Stephens and William Franklin Henderson at Bethel Baptist Church Cemetery

Notice that Agness' tombstone lies flat and is almost completely underground as of 2015. Earlier photo (from 1990s) shows her tombstone in this location to be erect but with its bottom portion eroded away. Author's research indicates that current Bethel Baptist Church Cemetery was not opened until about 1880. Soil in the old (now abandoned) cemetery is acidic which caused bottom of her tombstone to disintegrate within a few decades. Author's research indicates that seven tombstones (including Agness') with deaths prior to 1880 were relocated at about the same time because they are clustered in close proximity to each other. These seven tombstones are the only ones in current Bethel Baptist Church Cemetery which are dated prior to 1880. In early 2016, the author photographed all tombstones (about 600 of them) in the two Bethel Church Cemeteries and compiled two spreadsheets which lists all of the known burials in each cemetery. These photographs proved valuable in resolving uncertainties about several individuals during compilation of this book.

Note that (i.e., Agness' daughter) tombstone (without dates) for Agness Robinson Henderson Leavell (1836-1861) is located in Bethel Cemetery . Given date of death, Agness was buried in the Old Bethel Cemetery in 1861 - her tombstone probably eroded away. Her 'replacement tombstone' was likely placed in Bethel Cemetery sometime after 1890.