

Abell

Abell is an euphonistic form of Ap-Bell, a Welsh Name signifying “son of Bell”. The prefix ‘Ap’ is common in Welsh patronymics and is equivalent to Mac (Scotland) Mc (Ireland) etc. Early members of the family maintained the accent should be on the second syllable i.e. ‘Bell’. Family tradition is that three brothers came from England (two Samuel and Benjamin) with one of Lord Baltimore’s later expeditions in the mid 1600’s and one (Philip) to the Dismal Swamp area of Virginia.

The progenitor of this branch of the family in Maryland was Captain Robert Abell who was born in England in 1628, came to America in 1649 and died in St. Mary’s County. Robert’s son Samuel was born in England in 1658 and is believed to have come to Maryland as a child with this father since there is no record of his entry. He married a girl named Anne whose last name is speculated to be Gardiner. They had five children, four sons named Samuel, John, Richard and William and one daughter.

Samuel (1) died testate in St. Mary’s County in 1698. In his will dated January 8, 1697, probated April 11, 1698 he left his son Samuel (2) his dwelling plantation on one side of Napkin Run. To son John who was under 18 years of age he left “My Lord’s Manor” and 120 acres of land on the other side of Napkin Run. The remainder of his estate real and personal, he left to his wife Anne and appointed her as executrix. Witnesses to the will were Edward Cole, Charles Corly and Edward and Luke Gardiner. Three of the witnesses were prominent Catholics and possibly were relatives.

Samuel (2) was born in St. Mary’s county circa 1675. He was educated for his day, a prominent citizen and office holder throughout his life, a course rendered possible only by membership in the Church of England. Evidence of this exists with his signature to a long petition circulated November 28, 1689 wherein the new Queen was praised for securing “Our religion, lives and liberty from the pit of destruction by the opposition and contradictions of priests, papists and other adherents of popery”. He acted as an Episcopal Vestryman at St. Andrews or All Faith’s church from 1723 to 1742 while his brother John was warden. He held civil offices as justice of the peace, sheriff and member of the House of Burgesses in St. Mary’s county by virtue of his Episcopal connection. As early as 1737 He took the test oath in that church.

Samuel (2) married Winifred Hall before 1700. She was the daughter of Simeon Hall who died testate in St. Mary’s county in 1717 and left all the property he owned in Maryland to son-in-law Samuel Abell and all the property he owned at 6 South Shields, Durham County, England to his cousins the misses Brown. Winifred Abell witnessed a will in 1725. She died in 1754.

Samuel and Winifred had two sons Samuel and John and two daughters Mary and Winifred. Samuel acquired four tracts of land in his lifetime, “Farthings Adventure,” “Little Venture”, “Abell’s Hope”, 64 acres and “Beaverdam Manor 134 acres. He died in 1763 aged 88 years.

John Abell , 2nd son was born in 1721 according to records of the "State of Beaverdam Manor," in 1728 which lists John's age as 47. He married a girl named Ann whose last name is believed to be Greenwell, before 1763. They had four sons; Zachariah, Thomas, Henry and Arthur and a daughter Ann. John acquired lands as bequeathed in his will dated January 20, 1781.

To son: Zachariah "Abell's Scaffle" 99 1/2 acres and "Sogg"
To son: Arthur "Paul's Grief" 164 1/4 acres and "Abells Hope" 64 a.
To son: Henry Paul's Grief" and "Abell's Hope"
To son: Thomas other lands and Negroes.
To wife: Ann ??????

The will was witnessed by brother, Samuel Abell Sr., nephew Samuel Abell and Cuthbert Fenwick. Executors were Wife Ann and Thomas, Arthur and Henry. Note Daughter Ann married a man named Bennett. John was a captain of militia in the Revolutionary War.

Thomas was born before 1754. He wed a girl named Margaret Anne whose last name may have been either Peake or Norris. She was born November 11, 1754 and died September, 1822. They had eleven children as follows:

Thomas Jr. born 177- died 1841
William born 1790 died 1861
James
Margaret wed Thomas Dillehay September 1813
Nancy
Elizabeth wed Clement Norris 1838
Mary
Henry born 1798 died before 1860 wed Anne Greenwell
Joseph born 1796 died 1866 wed Hannah Clark in 1838

Thomas is believed to have possessed those tracts named in his father's (John Abell) will, namely "Paul's Grief", "Abell's Hope", "Abell's Scaffle", and "Sogg". He died circa 1817 and his will was probated in 1822. He is recorded in the census of 1810 as:

One free white male over 45 years of age
Two free white males aged 16 - 26
Two free white males aged 10 - 16
One free white female over 45 years of age
Two free white females aged 26 - 45
Two free white females aged 16 - 26

By 1820 Ann Abell was recorded as over 45 years of age with two free white males in the household aged 16 - 26 and three free white females aged 26 - 45.

Son John born 1777 wed Anne Cole on December 26, 1811 .They had five children As follows:
Alexander (below)

John wed first Susan Maria Dukes in December 1842 and secondly Ann Spalding.
Elizabeth wed Samuel Spalding February 8, 1831
Catherine born 1812 wed Joseph Morgan January 23, 1838

Ann wed James A. Maryman January 20, 1835
Mary Matilda wed William Nuthall January 3, 1843

During John Abell's life time he possessed "Hickory Hollows", 119 acres; "Wheatley's Content", 50 acres; "Two Friends", "Heard's Hardship"; "Coventry", 110 acres and part three of "Friends". He also owned 8 slaves. He died July 26, 1851 at age 74, buried next to his son Alexander (who died at age 36) in St. John's cemetery Hollywood. His will dated October 1, 1858 was probated July 1851. He mentions wife Ann and children John Lewis, Alexander, Elizabeth Spalding, Catherine Morgan, Ann H. Maryman and Mary M. Nuthall. J. Spalding, James Hearst (Heard?) and Francis Heard witnessed the will. In the census of 1840 he was aged 60 - 70 with only one male aged 20 - 30 in the household.

John's daughter Mary Matilda wed William Nuthall at St. John's Catholic Church in Hollywood. Henry Walker and Amanda Floyd witnessed. William and Mary Matilda had Charles who wed Sophie Hammett; Margaret Ann who wed John Francis Duke; John, and Ann Eleanor who wed Benjamin Hooper.

References

- Abell family in America page 286 et al
- The Abell Family pages 58 - 64
- Clements, Spalding and Allied Families page 74 -87
- St. John's Baptismal records Jesuit Archives
- Census 1810 - 1820
- Vestry Proceedings St. Andrew's church
- Hall of Records Wills, Inventories and Accounts
- Archives of Maryland