

NANCY MURPHEY
[Alexander¹ Archibald² Nancy³]

Nancy Murphey was born, it is guessed, about 1783 in Caswell County, North Carolina. She married her first cousin, Solomon Debow, on 22 March 1804, with Herndon Haralson acting as their witness.

Solomon Debow, born in 1780, was the son of Reverend John Debow [Jane Debow Murphey's brother] and his wife, Lucy Rice Debow. John Debow died on 08 September 1783 in the Revolutionary War. Solomon's mother, Lucy Rice Debow married John Robert [known as Robert] Scoby on 24 January 1786.

Archibald Murphey, Nancy's father, acted as guardian for Solomon and his brother, Stephen, following the resignation of their initial guardian resigned. Archibald looked after his nephews' interests from about 1797 until 1801 when Solomon became of age.

Solomon and his brother Stephen inherited large holdings of Tennessee lands. The History of Memphis cites that Solomon was "Rice's stepson" in the following. However, given that Solomon's mother was married to Robert Scoby at the time of the acquisition of the lands in question, the relationship may have been that of uncle/nephew:

"In 1789 John Rice obtained 80,000 acres of land on the Big Hatchie River for a partnership composed of him self, his brothers Joel and Ellisha, and Jesse Benton. He removed from Caswell County to Nashville in 1785, engaged in trading, land speculation, and surveying, and was killed by Indians seven years later. He owned nearly 50,000 acres exclusive of his rights in these lands. After his death Judge John Overton, Gen. Andrew Jackson, and others set up claims to the Hatchie lands, which could not be finally adjudicated until the extinguishment of the Indian title in 1818. In 1805, Rice's devisees and heirs contracted with Solomon Debow, **Rice's stepson**, to give him 70% of all lands which he could recover for them, and on the same day, Debow formed a partnership with his brother, Stephen, his cousin, Alexander Murphey, and Capt. Haralson, to effect this object. After the Chickasaw treaty, Solomon Debow instituted a suit for 15,000 acres of the Hatchie lands in the Supreme Court at Nashville in the name of the devisees and heirs [Hugh Gwynn and others v. John Overton and others]. In September 1821, he assigned to Judge Murphey his interest in the contract of 1805 in partial payment for Murphey's losses by him through suretyship. Subsequently Judge Murphey acquired the interests of Stephen Debow and Capt. Haralson and also the rights of all devisees and heirs of John Rice to the lands involved in the suit." [History of Memphis, 1873, pp. 7-25.]

By 1810, Stephen Debow had removed to Huntsville, Madison County, Alabama where he remained until his death in 1850 at the age of 67. Stephen Debow was thus born in 1783. During the War of 1812, Stephen served as Ensign in the 7th Regiment, Perkins Battalion of Mississippi Militia. His records show that he was from North Alabama. Stephen is reflected on the Madison County census from 1810 through 1850. In 1830 his family consisted of himself, his wife and six children, three sons and three daughters. The 1850 & 1860 census identifies two sons:

i. Dr. John T. Debow, born 1820 in Madison County, Alabama.

ii. Solomon T. Debow, born 1821.

Madison County marriage records identify two daughters:

iii. Elizabeth Debow, married William M. Barton on 03 August 1837.

iv. Sally Ann Debow, married Ewing B. Bell on 23 November 1841.

Lucy Rice was the daughter of Thomas "Cabin Branch" Rice and Marcey Higgeson. He was born about 1724 in Hanover County, Virginia. She married first John Debow, by whom she had two sons: Solomon and Stephen. Following his death, she married John Robert Scoby on 24 January 1786.

Robert Scobey ____ to Archibald Murphey

To all to whom these present that come J. Robert Scoby and Lucy Scoby, wife of the said Robert Scoby and mother to Solomon Debow and Stephen Deboe, orphans of John Deboe deceased, finding on a ____ made and entered in the Court of Orange County at Hillsborough ____ 1797 of the amount of three hundred and two pounds eight shillings due from us the said Robert Scoby and Lucy Scoby, aforesaid, widow of the said Jno. Debow, have in consideration of the aforesaid sum of three hundred and two pounds eight shillings current money of the state made over and do by these presents make over and confirm unto Soloman Deboe and Stephen Deboe, orphans of John Deboe, dec'd. aforesaid, all the dower and right of dower which we have and enjoy at the day of the date of these presents in trust for the said orphans to Archibald Murphey, the present guardian, to the land and plantation where we now live, known by the name of John Deboe's land, or ____, bought by him, the said John Deboe, dec'd., from William Lackey, and we, the said Robert and Lucy, do covenant and engage to and with the said Archibald Murphey, guardian for the orphans aforesaid, that should the aforesaid sum of three hundred and two pounds and eight shillings aforesaid not be paid at or before the first day of January next, that then it shall be lawful at any time afterwards for the said Archibald Murphey, Guardian ____ for the orphans aforesaid for their behalf, to advertize and sell the said dower land, giving lawful notice for the use and benefit of the said orphans of the time and sale and of the time of the credit for the money arising from the same. In witness whereof we, the said Robert Scoby and Lucy Scoby hath hereunto set their hands and seals this 17th day of April, 1797.

Signed, sealed, and delivered in presence of Abraham Thompson. William McMur ____
Robert Scoby
Lucy Scoby
State North Carolina, Orange County,
February term 1799.

The within deed of trust was duly proved in open court by the oath of William ____ Witness thereto and ordered to be restored.

In addition to his inheritance and farm lands in Caswell County, Solomon Debow owned a grist mill and cotton machine. Like most of the other members of the family, he was a large speculator in lands and at one time was part owner of the land on which the Hawfields Presbyterian Church was built. "The burning of Solomon's mills was the beginning of his financial ruin, and although he made a futile effort to pay his creditors, he was never able to do so and finally moved to New Orleans."²⁷

Archibald Debow Murphey was surety for his brother-in-law, Solomon Debow, in his land speculations in and around Milton and Danville and lost \$24,000, which may have been the beginning of his own financial ruin.

It had been believed that they had no children, but Caswell County North Carolina records show that Nancy and Solomon had a son, Solomon Debow, Jr. It was further disclosed in the lawsuit of Jonathan Worth vs. Dr. John McAden that Nancy and Solomon had another son, Archibald M. Debow.

²⁷ The Dreamer, by Herbert Snipes Turner.

Archibald Murphey provided for his grandchildren in his 1817 will: "And as to the share to which the children of my daughter Nancy Debow are entitled, I direct my Executors to hold the same in trust for their use."

This was an unusual paragraph in that Archibald provided that the fathers of all other grandchildren shall act as trustee. In Nancy and Solomon's case, Archibald left the duty of their children's estates to the executors of Archibald's will. This was presumably done to protect their children's inheritance from collection of the debts of Solomon Debow. Just two years later, Archibald's widow, Nancy's mother, gifted a slave for the benefit of Nancy and her son, Solomon Debow.

"Jane Murphey [widow of Archibald] of Caswell to Alexander Murphey [son] of same, for \$5, negro girl slave Abby age about 5 yrs. In trust; daughter Nancy Debow to have use of Abby for her life then in trust for her son Solomon Debow, said girl not subject to any debts of Solomon Debow husband to Nancy. 08 February 1819. Witnesses: A. D. Murphey, Nathaniel Pass."

Following Archibald Murphey's death, a sale was held on 18 December 1817 of his personal property. Although no purchases were made by Solomon or Nancy Debow, Nancy's brother, Alexander, made a purchase of "400 pounds of pork for Solomon Debow's family" for \$40.00.

In 1819, Solomon and Nancy removed from Caswell County and settled at New Orleans, Louisiana. Solomon is found in 1822, with his profession and address:

1822 New Orleans City Directory — Orleans Parish, Louisiana

Debow, Solomon, M.D. 14 St. Charles ab. Canal & cor. Canal & St. Charles

It is unknown where Solomon was educated and under whom he studied to become a physician.

Salomon [as it is spelled in the record] Debow is then listed on the 1830 federal census for Orleans Parish. That household consisted of:

One male 40-50	[1780-1790] [<i>Solomon</i>]
One female 40-50	[1780-1790] [<i>Nancy</i>]
One male 10-15	[1815-1820] [<i>possibly Solomon Jr.</i>]
One female 5-10	[1820-1830]

In the early 1800's, medical training was by apprenticeship. By 1810 there were five practicing physicians in Caswell County, North Carolina: Dr. John McAden [Nancy and Solomon's uncle], Dr. William S. Webb, Dr. Samuel Dabney, Dr. James Smith and Dr. Edward Foulks. Perhaps Solomon, as well as his son, Archibald, apprenticed under one of these Caswell County physicians.

In the 23 September 1834 deposition of David G. Brandon [son-in-law of the McAdens], conducted in connection to the Worth lawsuit, he stated that he was told by Archibald M. Debow that he had assumed guardianship of his siblings. This does not necessarily suggest that Nancy Murphey Debow had died by that date. That deposition further refers to the profession of Archibald as doctor.

Nancy and Solomon, as far as can be determined, had three children, but no records have been found to provide any additional information on their lives.

- i. **Dr. Archibald M. Debow**, born circa 1806. Herndon Haralson's diary reflects an entry in May 1840 that he received a letter from A.M. Debow, but nothing further.
- ii. **Solomon Debow, Jr.**, born 1815-1820 [*nothing further known*].

iii. **Female Debow**, born 1820-1830 [nothing further known].

The following obituary appeared in the *Louisiana Courier* [page 1, column 4]:

September 12, 1831

DIED. This morning at 9 o'clock doctor Solomon Debow, aged 51 years a native of Orange County, North Carolina and for 12 years a resident of this city. His friends and acquaintance are invited to attend his funeral from his late residence, No. 92 Girod Street at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

No wife or children are mentioned in his obituary. New Orleans estate and succession records were checked but nothing was found to show distribution of any estate left by Solomon Debow.

The 1832 New Orleans City Directory had a listing for D. Debow, M.D., at 94 Girod. Possibly this listing represents Dr. Archibald M. Debow.

Nancy Murphey Debow is shown on the 1830 census, and to date that is the last known record of her. Perhaps further research, or descendants coming forward, will complete this family's story.

At one time Ms. Mary Taylor published a newsletter for the Murphree Genealogical Association. In Volume IV of *The Murphree Quarterly*, dated March 1971, Ms. Martin published some genealogical records of our Murphey family. In that issue she noted that: "Nancy DeBow was the mother of Archibald Murphey Debow and later she married Grant Allen of Charlottesville, Virginia."

That is the only reference I have found to Grant Allen. There were three by that name in the 1840 census, two living in Kentucky and one in Tennessee. Nothing further is known about whether Nancy remarried or the date of her death.

<p style="text-align: center;">LUCY MURPHEY [Alexander¹ Archibald² Lucy³]</p>

Born about 1785, **Lucy Murphey**, was the youngest child of Archibald and Jane Murphey. Lucy died between 08 March 1816 when her father wrote his will and 20 October 1817 when Archibald added a Codicil to his will, changing the provisions made for Lucy's children.

Lucy Murphey married **Colonel John Daniel**, son of John Daniel and Elizabeth Morton Daniel, on 25 July 1804 in Caswell County. John Daniel was born about 1780 in Charlottesville, Virginia. He was a planter. John Daniel, the father, was the son of James Daniel and Elizabeth Woodson [the daughter of Benjamin and Sarah Porter Woodson]. Herndon Haralson, Lucy's sister's husband, and John Greene Murphey, her brother, were witnesses at Lucy's marriage to John Daniel.

John M. Daniel witnessed Alexander Murphey's will in 1822. My conclusion is that John's full name was probably John Morton Daniel.

John and Lucy made their home in Person County, North Carolina, where John already resided. Following their marriage, John purchased additional land from his father-in-law:

Person County Deed Records – "Archibald Murphey of Caswell sold to John Daniel of Person County, for \$1130, 323 acres both sides middle fork Cain Creek, adjacent Goodloe Warren,

Hemphill, McGhee, Frederick Debow old line, Oliver. 11 January 1806. Witnesses: H. Haralson, Henry Dan Jun."

Following Archibald's death, John Daniel purchased Lot #45 in Milton from Alexander Murphey on 14 March 1818. The Worth suit gives rise to the question as to whether the lot conveyed was part of Archibald's estate and whether the purchase price was distributed.

Archibald Debow Murphey/The Dreamer tells us that: "Lucy and John's children were frequent visitors at The Hermitage, the home of Archibald Debow Murphey. Such were the connections and family loyalties of this closely knit family and there were frequent gatherings of the clan during the summer months at Lenox Castle, the famous resort in Rockingham County, North Carolina."

Lenox Castle was a mineral spring resort consisting of two facilities on 1650 acres. The Tavern or Mansion House was situated about a half mile from the spring, and High Rock about two miles south of the Tavern. At High Rock, gentlemen enjoyed cock fighting, card playing, horse racing and free flowing liquors. Archibald Debow Murphey purchased the resort in 1807 or 1808.

In her early thirties and having given birth to five children, Lucy died, at which time her father altered the provisions of his will:

A Codicil to the Will and Testament of Archibald Murphey:

Whereas, since signing, sealing and executing my said Will bearing date the 8th day of March A.D. 1816, **my daughter Lucy Daniel** has departed this life. Therefore, I do by these presents disannul and make void that part on clause of my said Will which appoints and authorizes **John Daniel** to receive the share or shares which I devised to the children of his late wife, the said **Lucy Daniel**, and hereby appoint my sons **Alexander Murphey and Archibald D. Murphey** and my son in law **Doctor John McAden** in his stead on that behalf and that they or the survivors of them shall hold the same as Trustees for the aforesaid children of my said daughter **Lucy** under the same rules and regulations as other divisions are made in my said Will.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal this 20th October A.D. 1817. /s/A. Murphey [seal]

Lucy and John had five children:

- i. **Martitia Daniel** [see page _____].
- ii. **John M. Daniel**, born circa 1808. As one of the executors of Archibald Murphey's estate, John McAden disbursed funds for John's clothing, and education and boarding at William Bingham's School and Hico Academy. He married his first cousin, **Cornelia Anne Murphey**, daughter of Archibald Debow and Jane Scott Murphey, in 1836 and subsequently removed to Brownsville, Haywood County, Tennessee. [See page 155].
- iii. **Archibald A. Daniel**, born 1810. He died in July 1822.
- iv. **James M. Daniel**, born circa 1812. [Nothing further known].
- v. **Lucy Ann Daniel**, born circa 1814. According to Dr. John McAden, Lucy Ann was a delicate child needing frequent medical attention. Following her mother's death, she lived with John and Betsy McAden from the age of three until she was twelve. She married Harvey J. Baldwin around 1833.

Little is known of John Daniel following Lucy's death. In an 1822 letter to Herndon Haralson, following a trip to North Carolina, John Greene Murphey wrote:

"John Daniel is not worth a Cent. Neather does he appear to pay a parental care towards his children. They yet remain as they were when you left the Country."

Since that short paragraph is all that JGM wrote on the subject of John Daniel, it is not known whether he was speaking figuratively or literally of Daniel's financial situation or his character.

The date of John Daniel's death is unknown, although an entry in Herndon Haralson's diary indicates that he was in good health when John Daniel [John's son] and his wife, Cornelia Murphey Daniel, arrived in Haywood County on 31 December 1838.