

## Eli COFFEY / Mary "Polly" COFFEY

**Name:** Eli COFFEY

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Birth: 8 May 1775 North Carolina  
Death: 18 Jul 1833 Russell County, Kentucky  
Father: Salathial COFFEY (~1753-1784)  
Mother: Elizabeth NEWTON (1758-)

~~John COFFEY (abt 1620 - 1717) & Mary JOLLIFEE (abt 1620 - )~~ << **NOT AN ANCESTOR!**

Edward COFFEY (1650-1670 - abt 14 Feb 1716) & Ann POWELL (1683-1685 - )

Edward Jr. COFFEY\* (bef 16 Jul 1700 - aft 1774) & Unknown MARTIN

Chesley COFFEY (Bet 1720-1730 - aft 1760) & Jane CLEVELAND (1725 - aft 1760)

\*Salathial COFFEY (abt 1753 - 1784) & Elizabeth NEWTON (1758 - )

**\*\*Eli COFFEY\*\* (8 May 1775 - 18 Jul 1833) & Mary "Polly" COFFEY (7 Dec 1785 - 1872)**

\*Nathan COFFEY (1760 - 1823) & Mary Ann SAUNDERS (1770 - )

**\*\*Mary "Polly" COFFEY\*\* (7 Dec 1785 - 10 Mar 1872) & Eli COFFEY (8 May 1775 - 1833)**

Newton Eli COFFEY (2 May 1823 - 13 Jan 1890) & Martha Louise VERMILLION (1827 - 1904)

William COFFEY (27 Oct 1848 - 16 Mar 1896) & Malcena BARBRE (1855 - 1920)

Newton COFFEY (23 Sep 1875 - 26 May 1969) & Adelia Gertrude ROBINSON (1878 - 1973)

Leo Newton COFFEY (22 Jul 1901 - 26 Oct 1998) & Elsie Maureen WALKER (1903 - 1983)

Fred Coffey

\* Salathial and Nathan were brothers, therefore \*\* Eli and Mary were first cousins.

### Misc. Notes

Note that there is more information on Eli in the file for his son, Newton Eli. Also there is information on Census and other family information at:  
[www.coffey.ws/FamilyTree/RussellCo](http://www.coffey.ws/FamilyTree/RussellCo)

### NOTES FROM TIMOTHY PETERMAN:

The following work was prepared for Wilkes County Heritage by Timothy E. Peterman. (Extracted from Coffey Cousins Clearing House):

Eli Coffey was born in what is now Wilkes Co., N.C. on May 8, 1775. He married Mary "Polly" Coffey, a first cousin according to tradition, on Mar. 22, 1801, in what was then Green Co., Ky. and what is now Russell Co., Ky. Eli Coffey was probably a son of Salathiel and Elizabeth Coffey. Salathiel Coffey died before July 28, 1784 in Wilkes Co., N.C. His widow, Elizabeth, was administratrix of his estate. Eli Coffey and Newton Coffey (1773-1858) were brothers. Their sister was probably the Elizabeth "Graney" Coffey who married Rutherford Coffey on Mar. 17, 1801 in what was then Green Co., Ky. another brother might have been the Salathiel Coffey who married Polly Blair on Oct. 25, 1808 in Adair Co., Ky, and who was supposedly born in 1781 in Wilkes Co., N.C. Salathiel Coffey (died 1784) was probably a son of Chesley and Jane (Cleveland) Coffey.

Mary "Polly" Coffey was born on Dec. 7, 1785 in Wilkes Co., N.C. A typed copy of the entries made in her husband's Family Bible listed her birth year as 1780. However, considering that her youngest son was born in 1830, the 1785 date is more likely. Mary was the daughter of Nathan and Mary (Saunders) Coffey and probably the granddaughter of Chesley and Jane (Cleveland) Coffey.

The parents of both Eli and Mary Coffey left Wilkes Co., N.C. during the 1790s and settled in that part of Green Co., Ky. that became Adair Co. in 1802 and Russell Co. in 1826.

Eli and Mary Coffey were members of the Baptist Church and must have worked hard to instill their Christian faith in their children, because at least two of their sons became Baptist ministers. Eli Coffey died in Russell Co., Ky. on July 18, 1833. Mary Coffey died there on Mar. 10, 1872.

Most of this information is from the publication "The Chesley Coffey Family" By; Timothy E. Peterman. He lives in Kansas City, Missouri. Other sources are from Eli's Bible records and Will. Family Histories from Menard County Illinois, and Cillins County Texas were good sources.

## Eli COFFEY / Mary "Polly" COFFEY

### Fred Coffey Notes:

#### WILKES CO. COURT MINUTES, 1794-1797

**Caution, Caution, Caution:** This does **not** refer to the same Eli! I left the note here as a caution to other researchers:

There are 17 references to an "Eli Coffey" in these minutes from this time period. This "Eli" is found serving as a juror and viewing roads. These are normal civic duties for a citizen of that time. There are many other Coffeys in these minutes.

However it finally dawned on me that this is the Eli Coffey b: 1 Mar 1763 d: 5 Sep 1847, who married Hannah Allen. His father was James, son of John, son of Edward. I believe he is a "second cousin once removed" to OUR Eli.

#### DOUBLE COUSINS, DOUBLE WEDDING: GREEN COUNTY, KENTUCKY, MARRIAGE RECORDS:

The first solid reference to our Eli is found in these records, and what is found there makes for an interesting story:

Eli and Mary Coffey were married in Green County, KY, on 22 Mar 1801. Green was a huge county at the time, and after multiple splits Eli's family ended up in the part now called Russell County.

I examined a transcript of the "Green County Kentucky Marriage Records: 1793-1836", and found their marriage record listed in 1801 as "Bonded – Not Recorded". And I found there was a second marriage listed at the same time, with the SAME players, in different roles. This was an opportunity to investigate marriage practices, and to understand some family relationships.

But first, I need to introduce the players. Salathial Coffey and Nathan Coffey are believed to have been brothers (they may be sons of Chesley Coffey, or of Edward Coffey Jr. if, as seems likely, Chesley did not exist!). Salathial's wife was Elizabeth (Noland?), and Nathan's wife was Mary (Saunders). Salathial and Elizabeth had several children, but only three are players in this event – they are Eli, Newton, and Elizabeth "Graney" Coffey. (I don't know the origin of the nickname "Graney", but it helps distinguish her from her mother who was also an "Elizabeth".)

Nathan and Mary's relevant children were Mary Ann and Rutherford Coffey.

Now, Eli fell in love with Mary Ann, and Mary Ann's brother Rutherford fell in love with Eli's sister Elizabeth "Graney". And both pairs wanted to get married at about the same time. Both pairs were apparently first cousins, but that was not uncommon and not prohibited.

Now, these two men were both over the age of 21, but their prospective brides were much younger. Mary Ann was 16, and Elizabeth "Graney" was apparently about age 17. These girls could not marry without the consent of their parents.

The legal procedure required the prospective spouses to appear at the county clerk's office at the county courthouse, along with the necessary consent people and with a selection of witnesses and bondsmen. Sometimes the marriage consent could be submitted by written proxy, but I think it most likely that all the relevant people physically appeared on the same day. Imagine the county clerk's impression when EVERYBODY on both sides of both wedding parties was named "Coffey" and already related!

The date on the court records transcript was March 7 (a Saturday) for Eli and Mary Ann, and March 17 (a Tuesday) for Rutherford and Graney. However it was a really big deal to make a trek to a frontier courthouse in that era, so I'm sure one of these entries was a transcription error. My guess is that everybody appeared as a group on 17 Mar 1801.

Now, to get a marriage license, the first thing was to sign a bond, which was a formal binding agreement that all marriage laws would be obeyed and that there was no legal impediment to the marriage. The sum of money listed on the bond would not actually be paid, unless it was later found that the marriage was illegal. The bond was signed by the bridegroom, and also signed by a surety, or bondsman.

Also it seems that a couple of witnesses were required. I'm not sure, but I believe the witnesses were there to attest that the appropriate consents for the underage minor girls were being properly given.

OK, everybody ready? Here we go:

For the first license, the prospective groom and his bride were Ely Coffey and Mary Coffey. The bond was signed by Ely, with his brother Newton as bondsman. Mary Coffey (wife of Nathan and the mother of the bride) signed the consent. And this was witnessed by Ely's brother Newton, and by bride

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Mary's brother Rutherford.

OK NOW, everybody change positions:

For the next license, the prospective groom and his bride were Rutherford Coffey and Elizabeth "Graney" Coffey. Rutherford signed the bond, and his cousin Ely signed as bondsman. Graney's mother Elizabeth (widow of Salathial) signed the consent. And this was witnessed by Graney's brothers Newton and Eli.

OK, it's all legal now. The couples were free to go off and find a minister and get married. Eli and Mary were reportedly married 22 Mar 1801 – I suspect they went back home and found their local minister.

Tim Peterman reported that Rutherford and Graney were married 17 Mar 1801, but I suspect that may be the Bond date rather than the Marriage date. I wouldn't be surprised if they also were actually married on the same date by the same minister as Eli and Mary.

But wait: There was now supposed to be an additional legal step to confirm this marriage. Somebody was supposed to go back to the courthouse and "Record" the actual marriage – this record entry would show the marriage date, and show the name of the minister who performed the marriage ceremony.

But this was apparently never done for these two couples, and their marriages are now in the records abstract as "Bonded – Not Recorded". But this was VERY common. It was typically a very big deal and a major expedition\* to get to the county courthouse in those days, and it was very common that this final step was skipped.

\*(Don't know exactly where the Coffeys lived in 1801, but a few years later they were paying taxes on Greasy Creek, near modern Jamestown. The distance from Jamestown to Greensburg (the county seat of old Green County in 1801) is about 40 miles. Over good terrain a horse can do 50 miles in a day, and over rough terrain only 20-30 miles. So it was probably one or two days travel each way to visit the courthouse? Seems like a lot of trouble just to go back and ask the county clerk to make a book entry!)

### 1810 CENSUS, ADAIR COUNTY, KENTUCKY

(Adair formed from Green, later became Russell):  
Ely Coffee and Mary are found with 1 male child

under 10 and 3 females under 10. Census has correct ages for parents and children. However there is an extra male in the 26-44 age group, perhaps a relative, or a hired hand? No slaves. Also in same county is a Nathan Coffey, of right age to be Mary's father. There are 14 Coffee families living in the county.

### 1820 CENSUS, ADAIR CO., KY

(BECAME RUSSELL CO):

Eli and Mary are found with the right ages, with what appears to be the right number of children and right ages. There is, however, still an extra male over age 45 (see 1810 census above). The family now appears to have two slaves, a male and a female, each age 14 or younger.

### 1830 CENSUS FOR RUSSELL COUNTY, KENTUCKY:

The 1830 Census only names the head of the household, Eli Coffey. However it does also show the age distribution of the family. If you assume that their three oldest children (ages 23 through 28) have already moved away, then the age and sex distribution for the two adults and nine children still living at home is PERFECT. This is obviously the correct family. Our ancestor, Newton Eli, would have been one of those children -- he was age seven at the time of census.

The census also shows that the family owned three slaves: A male under age 10, a male age 10-24, and a female age 10-24. Possibly a family -- ages of adults are consistent with the 1820 census info. As confirmation, the census shows a household total of 14 people (2 adults, 9 children, 3 slaves).

Also of interest, there are 11 "Coffey" families listed on the two adjacent pages for Russell County. Roughly, those 11 families include 84 free people and 10 slaves.

(Eli Coffey died in 1833. See notes with his wife Mary regarding the 1840 census.)

In the name of God Amen

### WILL OF ELI COFFEY:

I Eli Coffey of Russell Co., Ky. calling to mind the uncertainty of human life & knowing that all men have got to die, do make this my last Will and Testament in the following manner & form. My Will and desire that all my property, such as my Land & Stock of all discription & household furniture & Farming Utensils to belong to my wife Polly Coffey during her natural life and at her death an equal

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distribution be made of all my property of any kind among my children. It is my will & desire that as my sons come of age for my wife to give them one horse, bridle & saddle a piece. I appoint Willis Coffey my sole executor of this my last will and Testament. In witness whereof I have hereby set my hand & seal this 10 November 1832

His  
Eli X Coffey  
Mark

Attest:  
Nebuzarner Coffey

William Payne

At a County Court began & held in Jamestown for the County of Russell at the Court House on Monday, 9 Dec. 1833 the last will & Testament of Eli Coffey, decd. was produced in open Court & it appearing to the satisfaction of the Court that Nebuzarder Coffey, a subscribing witness thereto is now deceased whereupon Will Patterson made oath that this signature of the 2nd. Nebuzarder Coffey was his genuine signature and the will be ordered recorded.

Will S. Patterson, C.R.C.C.

## Eli COFFEY / Mary "Polly" COFFEY

Marriage: 22 Mar 1801 Green County, Kentucky

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**Spouse:** Mary "Polly" COFFEY

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Birth: 7 Dec 1785 Wilkes County, North Carolina

Death: 10 Mar 1872 Russell County, Kentucky

Father: Nathan COFFEY (1760-1823)

Mother: Mary Ann SAUNDERS (1770-)

### Misc. Notes

#### FRED COFFEY NOTES FROM VIEWING OF 1840 CENSUS FOR RUSSELL COUNTY:

(See notes with Eli for 1830 census)

The five males in Mary's household have exactly the correct number and age distribution for the remaining at home male children of Eli and Mary. Our ancestor Newton Eli, at age 17, would be one of the two in the "15-20" age group.

There are, however, too many females in the household. There are 9 of them. The oldest female is consistent with the age of Mary, and there are three that could be children of Mary. That leaves 5 unexplained. My best guess is that at least two of the male children living at home are now married, and some of the extra females may represent their wives and children. There are of course other possibilities, including hired free servants.

Mary's household apparently no longer owns slaves. However son Willis lives close by, and has 7 (See also a more extensive discussion with the file for Newton Eli Coffey.)

#### 1850 CENSUS, KY, RUSSELL CO, DISTRICT 1:

"Polly" Coffey is clearly found, she is age 66 and head of household. They have real estate worth \$360. Living at home are Polly Ann age 22, and Reuben age 20.

#### NOTES FOR 1860 CENSUS:

This was tough, but I found her. The nickname for "Mary" is "Polly", and the census taker reported that "Pelley" Coffey, age reported as 78, was living alone, her post office was "Jamestown". She had real estate worth \$250, and personal estate worth \$300. Also, under the name "Polley" she has two female slaves, one age 90 and one age 60, in two slave houses.

#### NOTES FOR 1870 CENSUS:

Mary Coffey, age 85, is living in a household in Russell County with four females. The head of the household is listed as "Elizabeth Wolford", who is of the right age to be Mary's daughter (I checked, and Elizabeth Coffey had married a Jacob Wolford). Another female, name illegible but indexed as "Mahala Chapman", is age 45, another is "Margaret Chapman", age 13. Elizabeth indicates real estate worth \$500, personal estate of \$250. Mary claims personal estate of \$155. The census indicates that Elizabeth is literate, but Mary cannot read or write.

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Eli COFFEY (8 May 1775 - 18 Jul 1833) & Mary "Polly" COFFEY (7 Dec 1785 - 10 Mar 1872)

Maria COFFEY (17 Jan 1802 - Oct 1855)

Willis COFFEY\* (2 May 1804 - 26 Sep 1893) & Violetta "Lotty" HAYNES (17 Mar 1805 - 10 Oct 1869)

Willis COFFEY\* (2 May 1804 - 26 Sep 1893) & Susan PICKETT (abt 1832 - )

Elizabeth COFFEY (14 Aug 1807 - 21 Jan 1891) & Jacob WOLFORD (10 Apr 1803 - 4 Feb 1861)

Nancy COFFEY (14 Oct 1809 - )

Salathiel COFFEY\* (20 Apr 1812 - 29 May 1892) & Nancy DUNBAR (abt 1807 - 31 Jan 1853)

Salathiel COFFEY\* (20 Apr 1812 - 29 May 1892) & Mary A McFARLAND (11 Jun 1822 - 15 Dec 1900)

Sirena COFFEY (9 Aug 1814 - 23 Nov 1868)

Nathaniel Jackson COFFEY (30 Jan 1817 - 16 Aug 1899) & Mary Nancy CARTER (1 Nov 1818 - 16 Feb 1892)

Stanton P. COFFEY (5 Dec 1819 - 16 Aug 1899) & Mary Catherine SAUFLEY (28 Jun 1833 - 7 Dec 1920)

William S. COFFEY (10 Jul 1821 - )

Newton Eli COFFEY (2 May 1823 - 13 Jan 1890) & Martha Louise VERMILLION (4 May 1827 - 27 Mar 1904)

Mary Ann COFFEY (4 Jul 1827 - 24 May 1869)

Reuben COFFEY (13 Feb 1830 - 14 Aug 1865)