

## "FLIM-FLAM"

I remember my father telling me that when he was young all the children living in the Dry Creek area of Marsh Fork District in Raleigh County, WV, spent many hours hunting for Wilson Smith Abbott's buried treasure. Although no treasure was found, our family still has Indian arrowheads and other artifacts found while Dad was searching for the allusive treasure.

Listening to the old timers spin tales, the favorite story was that of Wilson Abbott, the first area County assessor (1861), who collected the local taxes. Wilson Smith Abbott was a Deputy Sheriff of Fayette County, Va., now Marsh Fork District of Raleigh Co., WV, at the beginning of the Civil War. Wilson settled (1838) and claimed the whole of Dry Creek, living at the mouth of Dry Creek. He had just collected the taxes when the Civil War broke out. At this time there were roving bands of robbers among the confusion throughout the county side. Because of this he was afraid to deliver the tax money he had collected to the county Sheriff's Office. Wilson placed the money of gold and silver coins in a strong box and hid it while waiting for more favorable conditions before taking it to the Sheriff's Office at Fayetteville, Va..

At this point fiction overcomes facts to the curious. My father, a descendant of Wilson's brother, St.Clair Abbott, like other children and adults, believed the old folk's fictitious tale.

### Fiction:

Wilson buried the strong box on his farm where he could see its location from his porch. In this way he could keep watch over the treasure without actual going to it and thereby revealing its location. He died one night without revealing its location to anyone. Believing this to be true, some 40 years later many people, not only children, searched for the treasure of gold and silver coins.

### Facts:

Some time after collection the taxes, an official looking man came to Wilson's home with three Confederate soldiers as his personal guards. After producing official looking papers, he announced that he was sent by the State of Virginia to collect the taxes that local Sheriffs had collected and were unable to deliver to Richmond. Believing this to be true, Wilson gave the tax money to him in exchange for a receipt.

Some months later, the State of Virginia sent a State Official with guards to collect the taxes from the local Deputy Sheriffs. Realizing he had been flim-flamed, Wilson could only produce a receipt.

The State of Virginia sold Wilson's home and farm to recoup as much of the tax money possible. After the sale of his farm, Wilson and his wife, Mary, lived with their son, William, until both died. Wilson and Mary are buried in the Cooper-Bone Cemetery at Dry Creek, WV.

Wilson Smith Abbott, born 1798 in Monroe County and died 1874 at Dry Creek in Raleigh,

County, W.Va., was the son of Joseph and Jemima (Allen) Abbott. He married (9 July 1821) Mary Keatley (born at Pipestem in Mercer County, died 25 February 1866 Dry Creek, W.Va.), the daughter of Francis Keatley. Known children of Wilson and Mary are:

Covington C.	married	#1 Martha J. Carnifax #2 Mary C. Sheaver
Julia Ann	married	#1 Adam Toney #2 Lemuel Calfee Jarrell, Jr.
William H.	married	#1 Mary _____ #2 Evaline Nesbitt "Eve" (Workman) Ballard

Covington C. Abbott (~1821 Pipestem-25 Jan. 1862) died of disease in the Union Army at Buffalo, W.Va. while in the Union's 7<sup>th</sup> W.Va. Cav. Co. I. He married #1 (5 Aug. 1851) Martha Jane Carnifax (d. 20 June 1852) and #2 (27 Nov. 1854) Mary C. Sheaver. His children are: William Wilson (b. 24 May 1852) and Martha Jane (b. 9 Oct. 1855).

Julia Ann Abbott (~1825 Pipestem-Colcord) married #1 (8 Sept. 1847) Adam Toney, divorced with one daughter, Harriett Ann (1848-1883). Julia Ann married #2 (12 Nov. 1856) Lemuel Calfee Jarrell, Jr. [b. June 1826 Little Marsh Fork hollow near Packsville, W.Va.], the widower of Julia F. Windsor. Julia and Lemuel's children are: John Lewis, Mary W., William, James, Charles Lemuel, and Virginia. Lemuel Calfee Jarrell, Jr. served in the Union's 7<sup>th</sup> W.Va. Cav. Co. H during the Civil War. Harriett Ann Toney married (Feb. 15, 1868) Callous Jackson Jarrell (July 23, 1842-April 20, 1922), the son of Anderson and Jane (Carrow) Jarrell. Callous lost a leg on Sept. 14, 1864 at Cold Harbor, Va. while serving in the Confederate's Co. A, 30N, Va. Sharpshooters, CSA.

William H. Abbott's first wife, Mary, surname is unknown by me. William H. and Evaline Nesbitt "Eva" (Workman-Ballard) Abbott are buried in the cemetery at the mouth of Dry Creek, some times called the Burnside Cemetery. William (24 Dec. 1830 Pipestem-5 Feb. 1917 Dry Creek) was a 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. in the Union's 7<sup>th</sup> W.Va. Cav. Co. H. Eva (5 Feb. 1836-9 Aug. 1914) was the widow of James Blackburn Ballard (died of disease 5 Nov. 1862 at Gallipolis, OH while in the Union's 7<sup>th</sup> W.Va. Cav. Co. H). Eva was the daughter of Andrew and Louise T. (White) Workman. William and Eva were married on Sept. 25, 1866 and had no children; each had children with their first spouses. Someone, I assume their "dumb-ass-children", removed his Civil War Union tombstone and replaced William and Eva's with cheap matching tombstones. They then placed William's Civil War tombstone leaning against a cedar tree near by.



Burnside Cemetery, mouth of Dry Creek, WV  
 William H. Abbott's Union headstone against the tree.  
 William and Evaline Abbott's graves in foreground.

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I invite comments, corrections, additions and variations to this bit of southern West Virginia history. You are welcome to copy the contents of this report in part or whole.

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Mouth of Dry Creek Cemetery

William H. Abbott	Dec. 24, 1830	Feb. 5, 1917	1 <sup>st</sup> Sgt. 7 <sup>th</sup> W.Va. Cav., Co. H
Eva N. Abbott	Feb. 5, 1836	Aug. 9, 1914	
Ceba M.. Burnside	1875	1947	
Lewis Burnside	Sept. 5, 1874	Nov. 13, 1956	