

The following are transcriptions of two letters I found among my mother's family papers. There are many more!

[text in brackets added by JDS]

To John P. Rainey, Esq., Milton, Caswell County, N.C.
From J. S. Rainey¹ [postmarked at Sharpsburg, KY.]

Sharpsburg Ky Oct. 29th [18]61

My dear uncle Jack,

I have today an hour of leisure and do not know how I can spend it more pleasantly than by writing to my Presbyterian uncle in N.C. And just here, I wish to ask my Cousin Anne L.² how she obtained the information that I would not answer your letters. I suppose it is because I did not answer your last, immediately upon its reception. I confess I have been somewhat tardy, but I supposed, by waiting, I might have something of more importance to write.

In your letter to me, you inquire the age of my Mother. If I am not mistaken, she was born in June 1801, consequently she is 60 years old next summer. And O! what a sufferer she is at this time! With inflammatory rheumatism, she has been confined to her bed almost entirely for three years.

The present condition of the country and politics constitute the theme for conversation and excitement in K. at this time. Our Legislature, which is about to adjourn, refused (and I think wisely) to call a Convention. I mean a State Convention, but they will recommend a Border Slave State Convention to meet in Frankfort during the summer.

The people of our state are strongly attached to the Union. And nothing but a positive declaration by the present Administration, that we shall not have what is just and right, will induce her to think of secession. The friends of the departed Clay never meditate anything of that kind. We know too well what he would say and do, if he were with us.³ And it delights our hearts, & nerves our spirits to know, that the old North State occupies the same position.

I will try to send you by mail, the able article of Dr. R. J. Breckinridge on "Our Country, its Perils, etc." which has recently appeared in the "Danville Review". He possesses the master mind, religious or political, of this country. All others are pigmies [sic] when compared with his. He has forgotten more than John C. ever knew.

I must close by informing you that we are all well - & that we have another boy since I wrote to you last - about a year old, whom we call James after his Grandfather (great) Rainey.

Write to me soon and tell Cousin Ann to do the same, & I will promise not to delay an answer to her. So long

Your Nephew,
J. S. Rainey

Notes:

¹ I do not have a J. S. Rainey in my database, but due to the letter from Henry Clay Rainey of Mt. Sterling KY (near Sharpsburg) to J.P. Rainey's son, Josiah Newman Rainey, I believe that the author of the first letter is H.C. Rainey's brother, James Rainey, son of William Rainey (J. P.'s brother) and Ruthaner Massey (the mother mentioned) and a grandson of Judge James Rainey. At least the second letter puts the William Rainey family in that general area.

² "Cousin Anne L." might be Anna Louisa Rainey (born May 1823), a daughter of another of J. P. Rainey's brothers, James Rainey II (1797-1840), although the latter migrated to Mississippi and I have no record of his daughter's whereabouts in 1861.

³ The praise for Henry Clay may reflect a long-standing respect for the great Senator from Kentucky in the William Rainey family, which would, in turn, explain the name of J. S.'s older brother.

Transcribed by John Douglas Storey, February 23, 2008
(great-great grandson of J.P. Rainey)

[text in brackets added by JDS]

From H. C. [Henry Clay] Rainey to Josiah Newman Rainey, April 26, 1911.

Mt. Sterling, Ky. April 26 - 1911

Dear Cousin Joe,

Your letter of 20th inst. recd. Our dear Coz: Mary¹ was a grand woman. We all loved her. I sent the Obituary Notice to my sister. Mrs. W. O. Goodloe² at Seymour died. Dr. G. has been compelled to leave the ministry on account of bad health. ----- Yes. Coz: Tom C.³ of Kansas City. Mrs. Goodloe. You. and I. are all who are left. "We a little longer wait" ----- You notice that I have returned to my old home. Where I was born nearly 77 years ago - Sept. 15-1834-. On the hill overlooking the city, in beautiful Macpelah⁴ Cemetery, lie the ashes of twenty of my loved ones. I came back to be near the cemetery. I landed here in May last. Since then 16 of my old friends have "passed away". Well, "passing away" is written upon everything in this world.

"Oh, who could bear life's stormy doom
Did not thy wing of love
Come brightly wafting through the gloom
Our peace-branch from above."

"There sorrow, touched by thee grows bright
With more than rapture's ray
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day."

My youngest daughter, [Ruha], who married Mr. Geo. K. [Weining (?)] of Penn. is home also with her husband and two children, Earl Oliver and Florence Elizabeth. The Southern Church here united with the Northern Church 3 yrs. ago, and all are now connected with the Northern Gen'l. Assembly. In other towns in Ky. both churches have gone into the Southern Assembly. God hasten the time when we will all be in the one great Presb. Church, undivided.

Wallis, my preacher boy is now pastor of the church at Atlantic, Iowa. Within 7 months he has received 57 new members and the S.S. has grown from 50 to 140. He is a very popular and successful preacher.

Lizzie Clay, my oldest child is at Milan, Mo. the wife of a M. E. minister with 3 children - a boy of 18 & 2 girls. Wallis has a boy of 18 & one girl. Wm. Owley lives in Memphis, Tenn. He has three daughters all over 12 yrs. of age. He is doing well in business. On the whole I have reason to be very thankful. All of my children (4) and grand-children (10) and all being well-trained ----- Why cant you make me a visit and this grand blue grass country, the "garden spot of the world."

Give my love to Aunt Durham⁵ and dear Coz: Bettie⁶ & children.

Write me again soon, please

Aff. Yr. Coz. H. C. Rainey

P.S. I visited my nephew, H.C. Rainey at [Cints(?)/Aunts(?)] a week ago & while there there were three Henry Clay Rainey's under one roof. He has a son named H.C.

H.C.R.

Transcribed by John Douglas Storey, February 23, 2008
(great grandnephew of J.N. Rainey)

Notes:

¹ "Our dear Coz: Mary" may be Mary Dabney Richmond Harding, daughter of Anne Samuel Rainey and Caleb Hazard Richmond.

² I do not know who Mrs. W. O. Goodloe was, though from context she was probably another Rainey cousin.

³ Cousin Tom C. of Kansas City is most likely Thomas Claiborne Rainey, born 1828 in Cottage Grove, TN., son of Thomas Muttor Rainey, 1799-, and Mary Claiborne Echols, 1797-

⁴ Also spelled Machpelah elsewhere.

⁵ "Aunt Durham" would be Elizabeth A. Durham, 1829-1919, Josiah Rainey's only surviving Aunt with whom he lived at Durham Springs, Semora, Caswell County, North Carolina.

⁶ Coz: Bettie was Bettie Taylor Rainey, widow of Josiah's brother, Nathaniel Thomas Rainey

Perhaps it is easier to outline the kinship and see if it makes sense:

(Judge) James Rainey, 1758-1837
+ Nancy Samuel, 1768-1834
William Rainey, 1795-
+Ruthaner Massey
 ***Henry Clay Rainey** (H. C.), 1834-
 ***James Rainey** (J. S. ?)
James Rainey II, 1797-1840
+Elizabeth Whitehead Rainey, 1799-
 ***Anna Louisa Rainey**, May 1823-
Thomas Muttor Rainey, 1799-
+ Mary Claiborne Echols, 1795-
 ***Thomas Claiborne Rainey**, 1828-
John Parish Rainey, 1803-1872
+Martha Durham, 1807-1900
 ***Josiah Newman Rainey** (Joe), 1847-1931
 ***Nathaniel Thomas Rainey**, 1849-1896
 +Elizabeth Woods Taylor, 1858-1952
Ann Samuel Rainey, 1808-1836
+Caleb Hazard Richmond, 1805-1861
 ***Mary Dabney Richmond**, 1831-
 +E. Ephraim Harding, 1832-

*These were all first cousins.

If this works out as I surmise, it adds a few things to the Rainey Family data:

1. William Rainey's son, James Rainey, had a middle name which began with "S" (possibly for Samuel, his grandmother's maiden name?)
2. Ruthaner Massey, William's wife, was born in June 1801 and was still living in (Sharpsburg?), KY in 1861.
3. Anna Louisa (or whoever "Cousin Anne L." was, either lived in Caswell County, or corresponded with J. P. Rainey regularly)
4. William Rainey's son (Cousin Clay was all I ever saw written) was Henry Clay Rainey and he was born in Mt. Sterling, KY, September 15, 1834.
5. Several of H. C. Rainey's children and grandchildren can be established.
5. H.C. had a nephew and grand-nephew, both named Henry Clay Rainey
6. The Mac(h)pelah Cemetery, Mt. Sterling, KY, would certainly be a good place to look for further Rainey kin. (No complete listing of graves yet on the web.)