

Gen - Chambers

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James Absolom Chambers & Mary Ann Dorman

Document prepared by S. J. Overstreet--not direct descendant
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James Absolom Chambers--son of Joseph Sanders Chambers and Frances Asbury Stinchcomb--was born 10-20-1833 and died 10-4-1905. On 6-17-1849 married Mary Ann Dorman--born 9-4-1824 died Feb. 1908. The wedding was performed by William S. Chambers, the groom's uncle. Their children were:

- 1--Joseph Alfred--b. 2-12-1852, d. 3-20-1914, m. 1) Margaret Lewis 2) Lillian Bohannon
- 2--Sarah A. E.--b. 9-7-1853, d. 12-31-1876, m. F. P. Dorton
- 3--John William--b. 2-28-1855, d. 3-15-1928, m. Iola Ellen Celestia Womack
- 4--Mary Frances--b. about 1857, m. John Archer
- 5--James Absolom Stinchcomb--b. 4-22-1859, d. 12-6-1938, m. Minerva Frances McLucas
- 6--Martha Caroline--b. 2-22-1861, d. 4-4-1934, m. David Young Jones
- 7--Lucy Catherine--b. 7-29-1862, d. 12-7-1932, m. Lemuel Evans Womack
- 8--Daniel Wesley--b. 3-8-1866, d. 6-4-1940, m. Lizzie Ophelia Martin
- 9--Dora--b. 11-24-1867, d. 11-20-1920, m. Ned Whitmarsh

This historical review lists Mary Ann Dorman's father as being Alfred Dorman. In *The History of Fayette County 1821-1971* she is listed as a child of John Dorman, and her brothers are Alfred and Hiram--both Methodist ministers.

This family is well-represented in the history of Liberty Chapel/Inman Methodist records.

Excerpts from *The Chambers Family Record* by Sadie Chambers Burdett, 1950:

In the year 1900--which is as good a year as any for the opening chapter in this pilgrimage into the past--our family had come to live on the northern outskirts of Atlanta. My father had been a singing-school teacher and singing schools were now out of fashion. There were, however, organs, pianos, and talking-machines to be sold; there were protracted meetings--where song leaders were needed--to be held; and song-books, occasionally, to be compiled. In a suburban community, convenient to outlying villages--yet near enough to the city for its advantages, educational and economic--there was a rambling which house to be had for a song. A song was our principal form of currency. So we came there to live.

A white frame church stood in a grove of trees across the road. Whenever either of its two front doors was opened, some--or all--of our family crossed its worn threshold. When church sociables--ice cream festivals, watermelon cuttings, or oyster suppers--were held, the place, more often than not, was the large front parlor, the long porches--front and back--or the lawn at our house. This place had been the summer home of a well-to-do Atlanta family and afforded more space than the parsonage next to the church.

These parties usually ended with the singing of songs, both secular and sacred. Among the favorites of that period were "Two Little Girls In Blue", "I have Seen Such a Pair of Bewitching Brown Eyes I Can Never Love Blue Ones Again", "Ship That Never Returned", "Bird In a Gilded Cage", "Just Tell Her That You Saw Me", and one called "No, Sir" which the grown-ups always ended in gales of laughter. One of the popular tunes for the children was a Sunday School song--"Over The River". As we used to sing it, vaguely we thought the words referred to

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our grandfather's home a little way "over the river" from the village of Inman in Clayton County; from which we had come, and to which we often returned for family reunions, Sunday School celebrations and all-day singings.

"Over the river faces I see---" happily we would sing, while our minds went wandering to the curving road which led from the railroad station at Inman to Over the River; wandering to the sugarcane fields in the bottoms; to the little bridge from which we could catch a first glimpse of the house--a story-and-a-half dwelling with a door-yard of hard-packed sand; to the orchard and the birds singing in the tree-tops; to the fresh-plowed ground in the garden, to the fig-bushes, the bee-hives and the scuppernong arbor; to Grandpa's flower-yard where pairs of cape-jessamine and evergreen bushes made a dark-green background for the bright color in the beds of roses, petunias, nasturtiums; of "old Maids", garden pinks, lilies, lemon-verbena and ribbon-grass.

"Over the river faces I see

Watching and waiting, looking for me-

Fair as the morning, bright as the day,

Dear ones in glory, looking this way."

Whatever these words may have meant to the others, to me at the age of five or six years, the faces in the song were the faces of the dear ones at Over the River, smiling a welcome to the children coming home.

The face of Grandpa himself--JAMES ABSOLOM CHAMBERS, Esquire--I can barely remember. It was a ruddy, full face which grew ruddier still when he talked politics with Papa and the boys. Grandpa's blue eyes were of a size and shape which caused him to be known in some circles as "bid-eyed JIM CHAMBERS". I never heard that until a year or two ago--(when for a startled moment I thought my informant had said "Big-I" JIM.) This same informant referred reminiscently to Grandpa as a "singin' piece o' plunder". He accented "singin'" in a complimentary manner, as one would say "He really was a fine singer." I was told by someone later that Grandpa had frowned upon that gentleman, years ago, as a beau for one of his daughters.

However all of that may be, it is certain that on occasions when we gathered at bedtime in the front room at Over the River, Grandpa's eyes were big enough and sharp enough to penetrate every corner of the room. He always sat at the marble-topped table which held the Bible and the family album. From there he could see the double oaken bed with its spotless white counterpane and stiff white pillow shams, bright with red embroidery. He could see around the organ and the fireplace where a fire was always laid, though seldom lighted, since the everyday life of the family centered in the dining-room. Grandpa's eyes, by the light only of the big china lamp, its white globe decorated (and dimmed) by clusters of red roses, could be very sure that not a single child was missing at family prayers.

I cannot remember clearly the face of my grandmother, MARY ANN DORMAN. She was always so busy--tying on her apron over her Sunday dress as she hurried to the cook-room the minute she came home from church; hurrying the aunts to get dinner ready for the dozens of uncles, aunts and cousins, and for the preachers, both in and out of the family. Important among these were Grandpa's father, ALFRED DORMAN, her brother, HIRAM--both circuit riders--and her brother, ALFRED, who a hundred years ago was the first pastor of Liberty Chapel, nearest church to Over the River. But from scattered communities, other preachers came--from Mr. Zion, New Hope, Salem Camp Ground, Harmony Grove. To my childish imagination, inspired, probably, by the sight of their long gray beards, they came also from Corinth and Philippi and Ephesus-in-the-Bible. There was one silver-haired gentleman--Professor EDWARD T. POUND, my father's teacher and later his singing partner--who, I thought must surely be St. Paul.

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Such Sunday dinners my grandmother served them---chicken and dressing, chicken and dumplings, great platters of fried chicken with gravy and hot biscuits. There was home-made sausage and fresh country ham, when hog-killing time had come. In the summer there were fresh string beans and new potatoes; watermelon-rind and sweet peach pickles; clusters of tiny tomatoes soaked in vinegar. Always there were sweet potato custards and cakes and pies by the dozen.

Grandma seldom sat at the first table. She "waited" with the youngest of the grandchildren, and often saw to it that favorite pieces of chicken were put aside for the second table. Grandma further endeared herself to the children by keeping dozens of tea-cakes (only northern people called them "cookies") on hand, carefully packed in clean white flour-sacks.

Other faces at Over-the-River I recall more clearly; kindly Uncle ALF'D, first-born son in the family; Aunt SARAH, who died before I was born, but whose memory was kept alive by my aunts, her sisters; Aunt FANNY (sweet-faced Aunt FANNY, whose name was written down as MARY FRANCES, as witness on the wedding-certificate of my father and mother). There was Aunt CARRIE, whose fine dark eyes proclaimed that she was a woman of intelligence and spirit, as did her keen observations in times of family council; and the youthful face of Uncle DAN, the "littlest brother", who--to his dying day--was loved by his elders as Benjamin-in-the-Bible was loved by Joseph and his brethren. Uncle JIM (Dr. JAMES ABSOLOM STINCHCOMB CHAMBERS) in the opinion of his kin and of many others besides, was a better doctor than a dozen of the specialists of later years all put together; for Uncle JIM ministered to men's spirits as well as their bodies. There was Aunt LUCY, who was doubly dear to us because of her marriage to LEMUEL EVANS WOMACK, my mother's brother; though no nearer than Aunt DORA who, for many years a spinster, seemed a part of all the families, as she would help about each household in turn, would fashion pretty hats and dresses for her young nieces, and talk about the husbands she might have had. Sometimes her brothers and sisters would smile at these stories, but they loved her dearly. At last, she took her small inheritance from Grandpa's estate and went away to a church school in Nashville (which later became Scarritt College) to learn to be a home missionary. Then her face was happier than she ever had been before or ever was again, though rather late in life she married NED WHITMARSH and went to Lincoln, Nebraska to spend her remaining years.

I recall the faces of the darkies at Over-the-River--field-hands and some who farmed on shares; the darkey wives who helped Grandma with the family washing, and with their children worked in the fields at cotton picking and "chopping" time. There was old Aunt SUSAN who presided, with Uncle JIM, at the "borning" of all "Squire Chambers'" grandchildren. Last but definitely not least, there was Raw-Head-and-Bloody-Bones---that phantom face in the loft, the very mention of whose name was enough to send awe-struck children scampering through the house to the shelter of their mothers' arms.

The sons and daughters of JAMES ABSOLOM CHAMBERS and MARY ANN DORMAN at Over the River were: SARAH, JOSEPH ALFRED, MARY FRANCES, MARTHA CAROLINE, JOHN WILLIAM, JAMES A. S., LUCY CATHERINE, DANIEL WESLEY, DORA.

RESOURCES

The Chambers Family Record, by Sadie Chambers Burdett, unpublished, 1950
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The History of Fayette County 1821-1971, by Fayette County Historical Society, 1977