

dren. I have no doubt that all the Dabneys of Virginia derive their origin from this old English farmer. From the best authority I am assured that the Dabneys scattered through the counties of King William, King and Queen, Gloucester, Hanover, Louisa, and Albemarle, and through many parts of the valley of the Mississippi, belong to the same numerous tribe. Cornelius was a family name among the early Dabneys; and my grandfather affirmed that wherever that designation was found, no doubt could be entertained of the descent of those who bore it from our common ancestor. George is also a frequent appellation in the family, from which it may be inferred that, prior to the Revolution, our progenitors were loyal subjects and staunch partizans of the Hanoverian succession.¹ They were, both before and after our separation from Great Britain, zealous Episcopalians, a class of religionists that, under English rule, were in most instances strenuous supporters of royal prerogative. Those, however, who, in derogation of the principle of hereditary right, upheld the succession of the house of Brunswick to the British throne, as essential to the preservation of liberty, did not, like the bulk of the Episcopalians, assert the slavish doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance. Accordingly, when the Guelphs, like their predecessors, the Stuarts, began to encroach on the chartered rights of the people of this country, these more liberal churchmen did not hesitate to oppose, and in the last resort to resist by force, the usurpations of the crown. That our ancestors belonged to this latter class was sufficiently evinced by their conduct in our revolutionary troubles.²

How many generations intervened between the English farmer above mentioned and my great-grandfather, Captain William Dabney of Aldingham, I have never heard and can not now ascertain. He was, probably, the grandson of the founder of our family in this state³. . . .

My great-grandfather was, according to all traditional accounts, a striking exemplification of a Virginia gentleman of the time. . . . He had the love of his kindred-- the esteem and confidence of all his neighbors and acquaintances. As an evidence of this he was appointed by the will of William Morris, the elder, trustee of the estates devised by that will to the children of Sylvanus Morris, an office of great responsibility.⁴

I have heard my grandfather Morris, who was one of those children, and who, having married his daughter, knew him intimately, speak in high terms of the mildness and benevolence of his character. . . .

The confidence reposed in the truth and integrity of Colonel William Dabney by every class of his contemporaries, was forcibly illustrated by what occurred at the interment of Colonel Chiswell -- one of the opulent proprietors and aristocratic grandees of that period.

¹ This writer did not know that his great-great-grandfather was named George, or that he had a great-granduncle also called George, born about 1670, who held public office from the time of the formation of King William County in 1701. George of Hanover mounted the English throne in 1714 as George I. So it is clear that the name George in the Dabney family had nothing to do with the Hanoverian succession.

² The Daubeneys were loyal to Charles I and belonged to a party called Cavaliers as opposed to the Roundheads, followers of Cromwell.

³ The writer's great-grandfather, Captain William of Aldingham, was the grandson of Cornelius, the immigrant.

⁴ The papers in Colonel Charles' chest show that Colonel William had a large estate and was a vestryman, sheriff, and guardian and executor for several families.