Wyc_white_1876_generation

Comments by Harry P. Baya 3rd (born July 31, 1939), son of Madge Greenway White. Madge was the daughter of William Young Conn White (b Jan 1876) listed below.

http://www.markhamchesterfield.com/getperson.php?personID=I1440&tree=mkchest

Family	Catherine Markham "Kate" Robertson, b. 20 Feb 1845, d. 23 Jul 1922
Married	1867
Children	1. Wyndham Robertson White, b. Aug 1869, Abingdon, Washington Co, Virginia, USA, d. 1944 2. Annie Campbell White, b. 20 Jul 1871, Abingdon, Washington Co, Virginia, USA, d. 8 Jun 1948 3. Madge Greenway White, b. 26 Jan 1873, Abingdon, Washington Co, Virginia, USA, d. 28 Jan 1945 4. William Young Conn White, b. Jan 1876, Abingdon, Washington Co, Virginia, USA, d. 1950 5. Pocahontas Trigg "Posie" White, b. May 1877, Abingdon, Washington Co, Virginia, USA, d. 1950 6. Frank Robertson White, b. Oct 1879, Abingdon, Washington Co, Virginia, USA, d. 1963 7. Kathleen Robertson White, b. Aug 1880, Abingdon, Washington Co, Virginia, USA, d. 1966 8. Gay Robertson White, b. Aug 1882, Abingdon, Washington Co, Virginia, USA, d. Yes, date unknown

I probably was seen by all of the above 8 siblings as a baby. I remember seven of them by name, and I remember talking with six of them.

I have no recall of the oldest, Wyndham Roberston White, but he died at least 4 years after I was born, so he probably knew me.

I remember that there was an Aunt Posey that I knew, but I have no clear memory of her.

Aunt Annie and Aunt Madge never married. They inherited the Cave house in Abingdon from their father (I assume) and the house next door. I wrote about some memories being in the cave house in the Abingdon section of my memories (click here), but I remembered some more today.

Cave House – some of these memories are also in those in the page linked above. The section below really belongs in those memories rather than here, but I will leave them here for now.

There were two main buildings on the Cave House land. The big wooden structure was the Cave House. To the left and rear of he Cave house was (and still is) a two floor brick building. The West wall was along what is now called White Alley. This property was sold in 1949, so my memories of visiting and staying

there had to be before then. Aunt Mag died in January of 1945 and Aunt Annie in June of 1948, so puts limits on the when these memories could have occurred

Sometimes when I was in Abingdon with my mother, and sometimes my father, we stayed in the Cave House. I sometimes say that I used to live in the Cave House, but that's quite an exaggeration. I may have lived there for a week or two over the years, but more likely I only spent a few night there. I did visit there a number of times. To me, as a young child, the Cave house seem to be many floors and many rooms

Probably in the summer of 1949 or so I remember being in the attic of he Cave house with Madge and maybe cousin Harriet, or Clare, or Phoebe Fullerton, but no adults. I remember that there was a lot of stuff up there, old suitcases, chests, boxes, lamps, and dust. We were only there once or twice and did not go through much stuff, but I suspect there were generations of family history in that attic.

Here's something I have not written about before. Over the years, mostly many years ago, I have had dreams about the Cave House, somewhat scary ones. Keep in mind that when I first began to visit there I was only 3 or 4 years old, and I was only 10 the last summer I could have visited there (1949). I have dreams, haunted ones, about being lost in the basement, going down long tunnels to large, often poorly lit, rooms. The dreams included scary things, maybe monsters, and complicated halls and rooms going down many levels. I think I had some vague association of the lower part of the basement connecting to Hell.

Bad things would happen in the dreams and I would not be able to find my way out to the yard. These were, as I recall, rich intricate dreams, like a well made haunted house movie. I believe I had dreams along this line for a number of years growing up, and probably a few as an adult. I have not had one in the last 30 years or so that I can recall.

I also remember having breakfast in the brick building. There was a kitchen there and I believe Aunt Annie and Mag lived there part of the year. There were black servants who worked there and who I knew by name and knew me. I vaguely recall that the Great Aunts lived upstairs and the lower floor was a living room, dining room and kitchen.

In back of the two houses was a large barn like structure and the cave was underneath the back right corner of that structure, next to Plumb Alley.

I remember visiting them in the house next door (247 E. Main Street). I would meet them in the big living room to the left of the front door. They had birds, caneries I think, that fascinated me. My recall is that one of the two great aunts was fairly heavy and never got out of the large leather chair she sat in. They were nice to me and I enjoyed visiting them.

In particular I remember that one time mother dressed me up for a visit and I was kind of ushered in for what to me (I was 4 or 5 I think) was a kind of formal audience. I had practiced for the visit and, on call, sang "Old Dan Tucker". This is the first song I ever remember singing. They seemed very pleased and amused. I remember wondering if somehow the song made fun of my father.

I knew grandfather (W.Y.C. White) better than any of the others. I remember him in the house on the hill across from the hospital on Court street (Carpet Hill). He would join me at breakfast and let me drink the sugar from the bottom of his coffee cup.

Later he lived with my grandmother, his wife, known as Hattie, in 247 East Main street. Their daughter, Kathleen, the only one of my mother's siblings not to marry, had inherited that house, and the Cave house, from Aunt Annie Aunt Mag (Madge). Kathleen had been sent in to live with her aunts when she and her family lived on a farm (Greendale ?) and she was too sickly for that. The other five lived on the farm for a few years and mother remembered doing farm chores.

My grandfather and I used to walk from that house to the movie theater in downtown Abingdon, about ½ mile to see movies. He would sleep through the movies. I have other memories of him.

Here are a few things I was told about my Grandfather White. He was a good singer and loved to sing. He was probably an alcoholic and may have been diabetic (I remember him giving himself daily shots). My guess is that the family had great expectations for him and that may have weighed on him.

Mother said she thought the family assigned him to run the farm after he failed at some other jobs. I think he was eventually the clerk of the county court for Washing County and I kind of remember that he had an office in the Courthouse

building where I visited him. He was born in 1876 and would have been 63 when I was born.

Jimmy Moore gave me an old newspaper clipping about my Grandfather and friends “disturbing the peace” by drinking and singing late at night in Abingdon.

Another story was that he went to University of Virginia and in his first year received a bid from every fraternity on campus. He did not graduate from there and mother said she thought he was thrown out for drinking.

My cousin Kay White had a book that listed VMI people and we found a W.Y.C. White in a picture that was of a V.M.I. chorus. The year was such that it could have been my grandfather. However, no one ever mentioned him going to VMI, and I think they would have even if he did not graduate from there. I think there may have been other W.Y.C.Whites in some generations.

I think I only met my great uncle Frank White once. He had a large farm not too far from Abingdon and our family visited him there. (Jim – name of farm… rose something?). I remember his wife, Aunt Anita, as being a lively person.

Kathleen Roberson White was called “Big Een” and I remember her as being very tall. Of course I was very short most of the times I met her. I now think she was around 5’ 10” or 5’ 11”, I remember her as being friendly, kind and nice… though kind of haunting – tall, dressed in black.

Gay Robertson White was my favorite of that generation. II got to know her one summer, maybe two, when she lived up at the Barter Inn. I think I was in graduate school so this would have been around 1962. She had moved there from California. She was always spirited, friendly, and full of stories…none of which I can remember. I remember telling her I wanted to tape he stories and would come back on my next visit. She replied “You had better hurry, I don’t plan to be around that much longer.” I don’t think I got to Abingdon the summer of 1963. I finished graduate school and went to Florida for a month or two before going off to the army as a 2nd Lt. She died before I got back to Abingdon, probably in 1965 after returning from Germany.

I think Gay was the one that my mother told me had married her first cousin because “neither of them could find anyone else good enough for them.” I believe they had no children.

I have been meaning to write this for some time. The only surviving first cousin from the Whites who is older than me is Martha. Her sister, Clare, is only about a year younger than me. However, Clare told me that they did not visit Abingdon much and I doubt they knew the above people as well as I did.

My cousin Fred Alexander probably knew them much better than I did and I had meant to get notes from him, but failed to do that before he died.

I will send this to my cousins to see if they remember anything to add.

Harry