

THE SPECIAL STORY OF NANCY ALLICOCK {1820-1848} THE LAST PRINCESS OF NOITGEDACHT AND UPPER DEMERARA

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The rhythm of life alongside the peaceful and pristine black waters of Upper Demerara holds many secrets of forgotten history of the past two centuries. The story of Nancy Allicock my three times great grandmother is one of those forgotten treasures of antiquity and a lost age. Nancy Allicock was probable the most recognized and remembered one of the nine children of Robert Frederick Allicock of Upper Demerara and plantations Noitgedacht and Retrieve. Very little personal information have survived and the life stories of the children are now lost to time and the fog of history.

Nancy's short life is however a bit of an exception though fragmented and mostly forgotten too. She was believed to be as young as two years old at the time her father's death. In Robert Frederick Allicock's 1822 Will, Nancy was well cared for by her father as expressed in item six, granting her property, slaves and financial maintenance.

Most of the early lineage of my family history was researched by our family historian, Manly VHL Binning {July 1899-1986}, who descended from Nancy. He elegantly wrote of Nancy first having the daughter Catherine-Jane at sixteen years old with David Paterson. Then Nancy in the mid- 1840's had the three other children, John, Maria- Elizabeth, and Lucy with John Spencer {the second}. Nancy's life ended in the late 1840's when she was still in her late twenties or merely 30 yrs old.

Nancy was the only daughter of Robert Frederick Allicock to have children and pass on a lineage. The faint essence of Nancy's short and eventful life survived through both of my parent's lineage. They both descended from Nancy through a Fiedtkou's blood line.

I was told how beautiful, elegant, caring and dignified a person she was. I was also told she was even of royal blood. She was this mystic beautiful figure of a caring princess with long black hair which flowed to the ground, but there was always a vague and never ending sadness of her life which I never understood.

When I started researching and documenting of my family history, I was dumb struck to find everything said of Nancy were indeed true but it was only on 1999 Mother's Day that the mystery of Nancy Allicock was finally solved.

The beautiful stories of Nancy were told to me as a child by primarily my grandmother Nesta and Aunt Nella yet no one in my immediate family knew who Nancy really was.

My mind remained haunted with this puzzling thought throughout life's journey. I had known of Nancy Allicock's marriage to John Spencer and their lineage and though I wondered about Nancy, I felt that I had run into that proverbial brick wall where family links disappears forever.

It was my dear cousin Deanna Peterson née Binning , daughter of Manly Binning who revealed and brought to life Nancy Allicock on "Mother's Day" of all the days on the calendar. I "cried openly" as those fragmented memories and stories were indeed true. I had found my lost great-great grandmother, lost for generations and a true gift from the heavens on that sacred day.

Nancy was the niece of the Indian Chief of the large Akawois tribe in Upper Demerara thus belongs to the prestigious royal clan and was regarded as the princess of the tribe. There was even a court case, of the late 1830's in which Nancy featured, which reflected on her personality, wits, looks and compassion. Nancy Allicock and husband John Spencer were wrongfully accused by a certain man named Couchman with the charge of Amerindian Slavery that was illegal for whites to do at that time and age of vulgarity.

Nancy articulated her defense to the accusation very well as the historical court records reflected by first establishing that even though she looked physically white, she was of Amerindian blood, thus making it legal under the law of that period to actually hold Amerindian slaves. She further went on to say that the children whom were questionable slaves, were actual, orphans, from a recent war between two Indian tribes above Great Falls, Upper Demerara. She also said that her husband John Spencer had rescued these unfortunate children and they were caring for them, in return the children did chores around the home located at Maria Elizabeth. The charge was dismissed and Nancy went on with her short life.

Nancy Allicock's daughter Catherine Jane lost her father David Paterson {1818-1847}, died by drowning in the Demerara River off Watooka. David Paterson was the son of John Dagleish Paterson {1775-1842} and Elizabeth Hill {1778-1860}. For unknown reasons Catherine Jane was removed and brought up by the Patersons of Christianburg. Nancy's tender age of 16 was a suggested reason.

Catherine –Jane Paterson was first cared for by Dr. William Paterson {1814- before 1900} her uncle in Georgetown. She was brought back to Christianburg when Dr. William Paterson left for England. William’s bother, John Paterson, called “Brandy” John,” raised Catherine Jane from that point onwards.

It appears that she was living with her uncle William Paterson and going to school in Georgetown prior to her father’s death. When Catherine Jane Paterson was returned to the area at the age of 12, her mother Nancy had already died. It is my belief that Catherine Jane’s emotional longing and grief for her mother which she never knew to any extent, was passed on through her daughters, primarily.

The essence of this deep sadness was felt by the many generations to follow. This very faint heart beat of Nancy’s life miraculously continued to the present day generation.

The area called Maria- Elizabeth is named after Nancy’s daughter by John Spencer. Nancy was buried next to her husband John Spencer at Maria-Elizabeth, the gravesites, lost beneath the cucurites, corios and the wild.

The calm tides of the Demerara continue its infinite flow, harboring so many secrets of the ages. The spirit of the last Princess of Upper Demerara, Nancy the beautiful and forever young lives on as she is lovingly remembered.

