

**Volume 9**

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**Nancy Randolph - II**

**Lead:** In spring 1793, a sensational trial packed the Cumberland County courthouse. The accused were first family Virginians – Randolphs – Nancy and her brother-in-law Richard. They were accused of adultery and murder.

**Intro.:** *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

**Content:** Richard and Nancy Randolph were first cousins, descendants of the same family of wealthy Virginia tobacco planters. Nancy lost her mother as a young girl and settled with her older sister

**Judith and Judith's husband Richard at "Bizarre," one of the Randolph family plantations on the Appomattox River near Farmville.**

**In September 1792 the three were visiting another cousin, Randolph Harrison and his wife Mary at the Harrison's James River plantation, Glentivar. According to testimony at their trial, in the dead of night Nancy awakened the household with terrible screams. Mary Harrison brought the narcotic opium mixture laudanum to Nancy's room to calm her "hysterics." Richard Randolph barred the door and would not permit the Harrisons or anyone else access to the distraught woman. Later heavy footsteps were heard going down the**

**back stairs and then up a short time later. Bloodstains were discovered the next morning on Nancy's sheets and the stairway.**

**Rumors began to circulate in the slave quarters that the corpse of a white newborn baby was found on the woodpile. As the rumors flew, the story took on a life of its own to the effect that Nancy Randolph had given birth to Richard's baby, and in order to cover up the improper affair they committed infanticide or as the indictment intimated, that were accused of "feloniously murdering a child said to be borne of Nancy Randolph." Next Time: Verdict and vindication.**

**At the University of Richmond,  
this is Dan Roberts.**

## Resources

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**Dawidoff, Robert.** *The Education of John Randolph.* New York: W.W Norton & Co., 1979.

**Devine, Robert A., et al.** *America Past and Present.* New York: Longman, Inc., 1998.

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