

JACOB ABBOTT and FAMILY
 Son of Benjamin Abbott of Halifax County, Virginia

Research Report by Joan Horsley
 Based on research as of Nov 2013
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 See notes at the end of the report

JACOB ABBOTT - b. Abt. 1775, Halifax Co., VA; d. Bet. 26 Jan-22 Feb 1830, Madison Co, AL

Married 19 Dec 1799, Halifax Co, VA to Polly Dickson/Dixon

POLLY DICKSON - b. Abt. 1782(?), Halifax Co, VA; d. 1811-1830, Halifax Co, VA or Madison Co, AL

CHILDREN of JACOB ABBOTT and POLLY DICKSON/DIXON:

Benjamin Abbott (m. Jane Winfrey), Elizabeth C. Abbott (m. William Whitfield King), Martha Abbott, Nancy G. Abbott (m1 William C. Wright, m2 Coleman Wicker), Mary C. Abbott (m James Hendricks), Mildred Abbott, and Joel D. Abbott

JACOB ABBOTT, son of Benjamin and Ann Abbott, was born abt. 1775 in Halifax County VA. Jacob and his brother James Abbott both are named for the first time at age 21 in the Halifax personal property tax lists for 1796. This supports traditional information that they were twins.

Much of the unsourced online information about this Abbott family, however, is proved in error. For example, none of the Abbotts were born in "Maresville," as no such place ever existed in Halifax County. (Also, none of this family ever lived or married in Stafford County, VA, as other online files mistakenly say.) By the time Jacob Abbott was born, his parents and older siblings were living in northwestern Halifax on the south side of Banister River at Bye Creek, located a mile or two upriver from today's town of Meadville (est. 1798).

Jacob's father, Benjamin Abbott, died bet. May 1796 - May 1797. Over the previous several years, Benjamin sold his land to his sons and son-in-law. The tract to Jacob was on the north side of the Banister not far from Benjamin's family residence on the south side. There is no deed recorded for Benjamin's original purchase of this land he sells to Jacob, but the number of acres is included in Benjamin's land taxes from their beginning in 1782. Judging from various records regarding this land, this is where Benjamin and his family lived from mid-1771 to mid-1773, when they moved to the south side of the Banister at Bye Creek where Jacob was born and raised.

Date: 23 Apr 1795

From: BENJAMIN ABBOTT

To: JACOB ABBOTT

For: £50

Description: 200 acres on the North side of Banister River

Bounds: Banister River, Nathaniel Royster, the Estate of Epaphroditus Sydnor, Anderson

Signed: Benj'a Abbott [usual mark "B" is omitted]

Witnesses: None

Rec. 27 Apr 1795 - Acknowledged in court by Benj'a Abbott
 [Source: Halifax Deed Book 16, p. 360-361. LVA Reel 7. Abstract by J. Horsley. Comments in brackets added.]

Benjamin also divided his three slaves above age 12 among his three youngest children, Jacob, James, and Elizabeth. As the deed below states, the slaves were gifts so that these children would receive property from their father of equal value to what he gave to his older children over time. Personal property taxes show that Benjamin also divided the four horses he still owned in 1795 among these same three children, including Jacob.

Date: 1 Feb 1796

From: BENJAMIN ABBOTT

To: JACOB ABBOTT

For: Deed of gift "in consideration of the Parental love, good will and affection which I have and do bear unto my Son Jacob Abbott [and] also to do him equal right and Justice with the rest of my children..."

Description: one slave, "negro boy now called and known by the name of Martin"

Signed: Benjamin (B) Abbott (his mark)

Witnesses: James MCraw [McCraw], JOSEPH ABBOTT [Jacob's brother]

Recorded: 22 Feb 1796 - Acknowledged in court by Benjamin Abbott

[Source: Halifax Deed Book 16, p. 534. LVA Reel 7. Abstract by J. Horsley. Comments in brackets added.]

In August of the same year, 1796, Jacob Abbott purchased another 200 acres with the same bounds as the land from his father in 1795, so presumably adjacent but the deed merely copied earlier bounds. This was an expensive purchase for such a young man who already owned land. His father apparently died between the time he signed his last deeds on 16 May 1796 (which, unlike his previous deeds, Benjamin did not personally appear in court to acknowledge), and the spring 1797 personal property tax lists, when Benjamin is no longer included there or in any subsequent Halifax record. If Benjamin died before Jacob's land purchase on 30 Aug 1796, Jacob would then be able to use or commit his share of the money left in Benjamin's estate to buy this additional land. (Jacob's apparently-twin brother James Abbott also bought land in 1796 in addition to the land from his father, but James' land was only 22 acres for a little over £11. [HDB16:642])

Date: 30 Aug 1796

From: Benjamin Hubbard [Jr.] of Wilkes County, NC

To: JACOB ABBOTT of Halifax

For: £50

Description: 200 acres in Halifax County on the North side of Banister River,

Bounds: Banister River, Nathaniel Royster, Estate of Epaphroditus Sydnor, Anderson

Signed: Benj'a Hubbard

Witnesses: ELISHA ABBOTT [Jacob's brother], John Montgomery, William Montgomery

Recorded: 26 Sep 1796 - Proved in Halifax Court by oaths of the witnesses

[Source: Halifax Deed Book 16, p. 692-693. LVA Reel 7. Abstract by J. Horsley. Comments in brackets added.]

Jacob Abbott married in Halifax County, VA on 19 Dec 1799 to Polly Dickson (also spelled Dixon). [Halifax Ministers Returns] The minister was Rev. Hawkins Landrum, a Methodist

minister who officiated at a number of Abbott family weddings. The Halifax Abbotts after the Revolution were generally either Methodists and Baptists. (Prior to the Revolution and a Virginia law effective 1781, only ministers of the Church of England could perform legal marriages.) Several Landrum family members are on records with the Dickson/Dixon family, and the families apparently were related as well as neighbors. For example, Elizabeth Dickson married Joseph Landrum in Halifax by bond dated 22 Oct 1798, but parents are not named in marriage bonds.

Jacob's marriage bond has not survived, nor has any parental consent for Polly, which would give her father's name if she were then under age 21. Halifax Court road orders in 1772 show that Benjamin Abbott's family was living close to Benjamin Dickson Sr., although Jacob Abbott was born and grew up on the opposite side (south side) of Banister River. When Jacob moved in 1797 to the land he purchased in 1796 on the north side of the Banister, the families of Benjamin Dickson Sr. and Jr. were the only Dicksons in that area. In 1797, Jacob's tax list is the same date as Benjamin Dixon Jr., and in 1798, Jacob's list is the same day as Benjamin Sr., showing they all lived nearby.

Benjamin Dickson Sr. wrote his will 17 Oct 1805, proved 23 Jun 1806 in Halifax Court. [HWB7:261 (copy of original to me from Joel H. Hutto)] Benjamin Dickson Sr. loaned one-half of his real and personal estate for lifetime use to his wife Elizabeth. (She was Elizabeth Whitehead, his second wife, whom he married 21 Sep 1780. [Halifax Marriage Bond Register No. 1]) The other half of his estate Benjamin bequeathed to son Joel Dickson, who also was to inherit Elizabeth's half after her death. Joel was then still a minor (tax lists show Joel was born abt. 1787), and the will stipulates that if Joel died without heirs or not "of age to make a will," then the estate was to be divided among "all my children." The will names only one other child, "my son Thomas Dickson," who was appointed an executor along with John Light. However, both Light and Thomas Dickson declined. Four months later on 27 Oct 1806, Jacob Abbott applied for administration of Benjamin Dickson Sr.'s estate, and "for reasons appearing to the court," Jacob was granted administration.

Combining the various records and evidence to date, Jacob Abbott's wife Polly Dickson appears to be another child of Benjamin Dickson Sr. by his second wife, Elizabeth Whitehead, although this is not yet fully proved.

Jacob Abbott continued to be involved with his youngest siblings in particular. For example, in 1803, when Jacob and Polly sell land, his brother James Abbott was a witness (see deed below). Their younger sister, Elizabeth Abbott, married Jasper Wyatt in Halifax by bond dated 20 Jul 1807, and Jacob and his brother James Abbott were witnesses. (James was also Jasper Wyatt's bondsman.) On 2 Aug 1811, Jacob Abbott witnessed the deed when his brother James Abbott sold property he owned in the town of Meadsville (today's Meadville) [HDB23:153], which James bought apparently for investment when the town was established in 1798. [HDB19:102]

Between 1796-1809, Jacob Abbott purchased a total of 731 acres, but most of the land also seems primarily for investment. On 22 Nov 1803, when Jacob owned the 400 acres discussed above, he sold a parcel of 12.75 acres. [HDB20:99] The next month on 13 Dec 1803, Jacob purchased 125 acres from John Dixon (there called "Senr") that John bought in 1797 from Benjamin Dickson Sr. [HDB20:61; HDB17:269] Jacob and Polly sold that land by a deed recorded Mar 1809. [HDB22:64, per Grantor Index] On 26 Dec 1803, the same

month that Jacob bought the Dickson land, Jacob and Polly sold 232 acres of Jacob's original lands where "Jacob and wife Polley now reside." [HDB20:154] Several years later, Jacob purchased 206 acres from Daniel Easley recorded in Jul 1809 [HBD22:137, per Grantee Index], which Jacob and Polly sold to Thomas Wilkerson on 29 Aug 1811. [HBD23:160] All in all, Jacob Abbott consistently owned about 155 acres of his original lands, where apparently he and his family continued to reside throughout their years in Halifax. .

Date: 22 Nov 1803
 From: JACOB ABBOTT
 To: Elizabeth Wilson
 For: £17 4s 3p
 Description: 12-3/4 acres on the waters of Banister River
 Bounds: Anderson, Lacey
 Signed: Jacob Abbott
 Witnesses: None
 Release of Dower: None included
 Recorded: 27 Feb 1804
 [Source: Halifax Deed Book 20, p. 99-100. LVA Reel 9. Abstract by J. Horsley.]

Date: 13 Dec 1803
 From: John Dixon Sen'r
 To: JACOB ABBOTT
 For: \$500
 Description: 125 acres, north side of Banister River, "it being the land deeded said John Dixon by Benjamin Dixon [Sr.]"
 Bounds: along meanders of Banister River; other bounds are trees [Bounds in the 1797 deed to John Dixon are Banister River, Woodings Road, and Landrum (HDB17:269)]
 Signed: John Dixon
 Witnesses: William Phelps, Tho's Priddy, Epa's Sydnor, John (x) Carter (his mark), John Winn
 Recorded: 26 Dec 1803
 [Source: Halifax Deed Book 20, p. 61. LVA Reel 9. Abstract by J. Horsley. Comments in brackets added]
 Note:
 As referenced in this deed, John Dixon purchased this land by deed dated 25 Sep 1797 to "John Dickson" from "Benjamin Dickson Senior" with dower release by Benjamin's wife Elizabeth. The bounds named in that deed are Banister River, Woodings Road and Landrum. [HDB17:269; copy to me from Joel H. Hutto] Jacob Abbott and wife Polly sold this tract of land by deed recorded 27 Mar 1809 to Benjamin Landrum. [HDB22:64, per Grantor Index]

By combined evidence in deeds, tax lists, and wills, the grantor John Dixon (b. c1776) may be a son of Benjamin Dixon Sr. and a half-brother of Jacob Abbott's wife Polly Dickson/Dixon. (The "Sr." here means the elder or "senior" John Dixon in the area.) This John Dickson/Dixon leaves the yearly personal property tax lists after this year, 1803, and apparently moved out-of-state.

Date: 26 Dec 1803
 From: JACOB ABBOTT and wife Polley
 To: Stephen Light
 For: £113 4s
 Description: 232 acres by survey, north side of Banister River, whereon the said Jacob and wife Polley now reside
 Bounds: Banister River, Royster, Lacey, "new line" [dividing Jacob's total parcel]
 Signed: Jacob Abbott, Polley Abbott
 Witnesses: Thomas Davenport jr, Epa's Sydnor, JAMES ABBOTT [Jacob's brother], Spencer Bomar
 Release of Dower by Polly, wife of Jacob Abbott
 Recorded: 25 Jun 1804
 [Source: Halifax Deed Book 20, p. 154-155. LVA Reel 9. Abstract by J. Horsley. Comments in brackets added]

Note:

This land was part of the 400 acres from Jacob's two purchases in 1796. The remaining 155 acres following his two sales this year appear to be where Jacob and Polly continued to live and raise their family.

Date: 28 Aug 1811
 From; JACOB ABBOTT & wife Polley
 To: Thomas Wilkerson
 For: £200
 Description: 206 acres lying on Yellow Bank Creek
 Bounds: Beginning where Thomas Priddy's line corners on the line of the store lot, Humphrey, Mill Stone Road, old c't House Road [old Courthouse road], Yellow Bank Creek
 Signed: Jacob Abbott, Polley Abbott
 Witnesses: H[?] Turner, Fleming Maynard, Alex. Boyd
 Release of Dower by Polley, wife of Jacob Abbott
 [Source: Halifax Deed Book 23, p. 160-161. LVA Reel 10. Abstract by J. Horsley. Comments in brackets added.]

Note:

Jacob Abbott purchased this land from Daniel Easley, recorded 24 Jul 1809. [HBD22:137, per Grantee Index] This same tract naming the same bounds had been passed around at least since 24 May 1790, when it was purchased by the Methodist minister Hawkins Landrum, whose deed was witnessed by Benjamin Abbott's brother William Abbott and by Daniel Easley. [HDB14:719] Millstone Road is roughly today's US-501, and this deed's road leading to the "old" Courthouse just south of today's Crystal Hill ran eastward from Banister River into the main Old Courthouse Road (later Coles Ferry Rd.), roughly today's Anderson Road. Being at an important crossroads and a creek, the land may have been profitable for leasing.

When Jacob Abbott first appears in the Halifax personal property tax lists in 1796, he was living on the south side of the Banister with his father and had 2 horses from his father. (The primary properties in these tax lists were horses, slaves ages 12-15, and slaves ages 16 and over. With only a few exceptions, slaves under 12 were not enumerated.) By the next year, 1797, Jacob had moved to his new land on the north side of the river. By 1800, Jacob was taxed for 2 horses and had 2 slaves over 12 - one under 16, one over 16. By 1810, Jacob had 2 horses and 5 slaves age 16+. In 1815, the only year after 1787 that included

cattle, Jacob was listed with 2 horses, 2 older slaves, 5 younger slaves, and 8 cattle, showing his growing prosperity, which was significantly above the norm.

In his 1817 tax list dated Feb 14, Jacob Abbott added a second white male age 16 and over in his household, indicating a son born in later 1800 or early 1801. Later records show this is Jacob and Polly's son Benjamin Abbott, as we discuss shortly.

Jacob Abbott left the yearly Halifax personal property tax lists after Feb 1818, when he is still listed with the son bet. 16-21 years old in his household. There is no recorded deed whereby Jacob sold or lost to debt his remaining land, which in some cases could indicate Jacob died around 1819 in Halifax. However, there is strong evidence against that possibility. Jacob has no will or probate recorded in Halifax and no mention of guardianship for any children, nor does Jacob's appreciable estate ever appear on the tax lists. Polly (if she were still living) is not listed as a widow in the following years' tax lists, and no Abbott who could be their son appears in later Halifax records. Thus the question becomes, where did they go, since neither Jacob Abbott nor his wife Polly could be located in the 1820 census or later.

According to thorough and well-documented research by descendant Joel H. Hutto, Benjamin Abbott's son Jacob was the Jacob Abbott who died in Madison County, AL with a will dated 26 Jan 1830 and proved 22 Feb 1830 (recorded 30 Mar 1830). [Book PR2-5, p.58-59; copy to me from Joel Hutto] The court order to record the will includes a statement that Jacob "has no widow and that the legatees are all of lawful age." Indirect evidence of dates, names, ages, birthplaces listed in later censuses for surviving children, and the absence of contradictory evidence all strongly support that this Madison County Jacob Abbott is, indeed, Benjamin Abbott's son Jacob.

(Some undocumented online files mistakenly say the Madison County Jacob Abbott's daughter Nancy Abbott Wright Wicker, b. 1807, was born in New Kent or King William County, VA. However, neither Benjamin Abbott's son Jacob nor any other Jacob Abbott lived in either county in or around 1807, as proved by those counties' yearly personal property tax records that list all free adult male county residents.)

There is no surviving 1820 census for Alabama, which accounts for not being able to locate Jacob in that census. However, we have proof that Jacob Abbott was in Madison County, AL the year after leaving Halifax records by a Madison deed dated 21 Dec 1819 whereby "Jacob Abbot" purchased 64 acres of land in the county from Peyton Worthy and wife Sally (signing as "Sary"). [MadisonDBF:40, copy from J. Hutto.] Researcher Joel Hutto found no earlier record in Madison for this or any other Abbott, which supports the other evidence that this is Benjamin Abbott's son Jacob recently arrived from Halifax. By deed of 8 Mar 1821, Jacob Abbott expanded his 1819 land where he "now lives" by purchasing an adjoining tract from Littleberry Leseuere and wife Penelope. [MDBH:145, copy from J. Hutto.]

The Abbott marriages in Madison County, AL begin 21 Mar 1820 with the marriage of Benjamin Abbott, who is Jacob's son born in Halifax County abt. 1800-1801, per Halifax personal property tax lists. The date of Benjamin Abbott's marriage to Jane Winfrey also fits with the time Jacob Abbott would be at the family's new destination after leaving Halifax. On the same day, 21 Mar 1820, Elizabeth C. Abbott married William W. King in Madison County, AL. Elizabeth is proved to be a daughter of Jacob Abbott by a Madison deed in Sep

1823 whereby Jacob Abbott gave a slave to “my infant granddaughter” Flavilla Eveline King, daughter of “Wm Whitfield King and my deceased daughter Elizabeth.” [From Joel Hutto, citing MDBI&J:53]

Like Elizabeth, Jacob and Polly’s son Benjamin Abbott also predeceased Jacob. Benjamin Abbott died in Madison County, AL in 1825, leaving no children. Benjamin’s widow Jane (Winfrey) Abbott’s statement regarding administration of his estate was witnessed by Joel D. Abbott, who is named as a son in Jacob Abbott’s will.

Jacob left the bulk of his real and personal property to his only surviving son, “Joel D. Abbott.” (Will transcribed below.) An abstract of a Madison Court suit in 1840 indicates Joel moved bet. 1830-1840 from Madison County to Marengo County, AL. [per Joel Hutto, citing Vol 111., pg 16] He appears to be the “Joel Abbot,” born in VA, listed in the 1850 census as a school teacher in Butler County, AL (just southeast of Marengo), and still unmarried. (His listed age of 35 is several years too young for Jacob’s son Joel D. Abbott, but he was living with another family and likely was not the respondent himself.)

Joel Hutto’s research further found the full name of Jacob Abbott’s son Joel was Joel Dickson Abbott, and one of Jacob’s daughters had a son named Joel Dixon Hendricks. Same-names can be unreliable for family identification. However, in this case there is significant supporting evidence in the records, and with the maiden name of Jacob Abbott’s wife Polly Dickson/Dixon being passed down through the family, the identification seems secure. Furthermore, as discussed above, the 1805 Halifax County, VA will of Benjamin Dickson Sr. bequeaths his estate to his son Joel Dickson, who evidence shows was born abt. 1787 and who seems likely to be Polly’s brother

The other children of Jacob and Polly Abbott named in Jacob’s will are: Martha Abbott (no marriage found), Nancy Abbott (m1 William C. Wright 1 Jan 1823, Madison Co, AL; m2 Coleman Wicker 2 Jan 1841, Henry Co, TN), Mary Abbott (m. James Hendricks 27 Dec 1827, Madison Co, AL), and Mildred Abbott (no marriage found). [Marriages from FamilySearch Index "Alabama, County Marriages, 1809-1950" and "Tennessee, State Marriage Index, 1780-2002"] (Jacob does not include the married surnames of his daughters in his will.)

Jacob Abbott’s wife Polly Dickson was still alive as of 28 Aug 1811, when she and Jacob sold Halifax land. [HDB23:160] She may have died shortly after, though, since all of her children were “of legal age” when Jacob’s will was ordered to be recorded in Madison County, AL Court on 30 Mar 1830. Assuming “legal age” was the standard 21 years old, the last child was born no later than 1809 or so, when Polly probably was in her late 20s or early 30s and still of child-bearing age. Without further evidence, though, the most we know for certain is that Polly Dickson Abbott died bet. 1811-1830 either in Halifax County, VA or Madison County, AL.

The following is Joel H. Hutto’s transcription of Jacob Abbott’s will, confirmed by the original and included here with his permission. I am greatly indebted to Joel for sharing with me his fine research and for sending copies of pertinent documents, including a copy of the following will.

State of Alabama}
 Madison County}

Know all men by these presents to whom it may concern that I Jacob Abbott in sound mind and memory make this my last will and testament in the name of God Amen.

I give and bequeath to [my] son Joel Abbott the following negros (viz) Daniel and his wife Isabel and her child Nancy and her increase. I also give to my son Joel D. Abbott one other negro man named Burrel also one other negro man named Squire, also one other negro man named Anthony, also one negro girl named Rhoda, also one negro woman named Sally and her children named Peter, David and Henry, also one negro man named Henry. I also give to my son Joel D. Abbott all my land and all my stock of every description and all my household and kitchen furniture and all my farming utensils, waggons, carts & c. I also give my son Joel D. Abbott all my corn fodder oats & meat.

I give to my daughter Martha, one negro woman named Jude, also one negro boy named Jesse. I also give to my daughter Martha thirty dollars in money.

I also give one negro boy (Israel) to be sold and the money to be given to my daughter Nancy.

I give to my daughter Mary one negro boy named Tom also two other negro boys named George and Starling.

I give to my daughter Mildred one negro boy named William.

In testimony where of I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal in presence of
 Test

Wm Kincaid
 Joseph E. Dupree
 Dixon P. Collins

Jacob {his X mark} Abbott
 Jan 26th 1830

Madison Court – Will proved 22 Feb 1830 by the oaths of the subscribing witnesses.
 Ordered recorded 30 Mar 1830.

[Source: Madison County AL, Book PR2-5, p.58-59. Transcribed by Joel H. Hutto.
 Confirmed by J. Horsley from copy of original and used here with Joel's permission.]

Researched and written by Joan Horsley
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This is a fairly complete report that Joan Horsley was working on when she died. There were no notes included in the text that indicated any facts or other lines of inquiry she wanted to pursue. Any correspondence that would have been directed to my late wife should be sent to JHGenResearch-Abbott@yahoo.com

If you use any information from this report, please include the documentation as given here and cite this paper as:

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