

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

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

Tradition says that JAMES ABBOTT, son of Benjamin Abbott and wife Ann, was a twin of their son Jacob. James and Jacob are first named at age 21 in the Halifax personal property tax lists of 1796, showing they both were born abt. 1775, which supports their being twins.

Contrary to undocumented online family files with numerous other proved errors, Benjamin's son James Abbott had no middle name and was not named "James Thomas Abbott." James is never recorded with any middle initial or middle name (including James' deeds from his father), and he did not ever sign with any middle initial. Middle names were uncommon in the South until the early 1800s, and neither James nor his sisters and brothers had middle names/initials.

Also contrary to online files, none of the Halifax Abbotts were born in "Maresville," as no place of that name ever existed in Halifax County. That could have been a confusion for Meadsville passed down through family lore, but none were born in Meadsville/Meadville either, since the town was not established until 1798. Although Benjamin's land at least by 1773 was near where Meadsville eventually was established, James is the only one of his siblings who possibly ever lived there, as we shall see by deeds below.

James Abbott was 18 or 19 years old on 19 Jan 1793 when he and his older brothers Elisha, Armistead, and Joseph witnessed a deed to their father, Benjamin Abbott. [HDB15:603] Like his co-witness Joseph Abbott (b. c1774), James was not yet 21, but witnesses were not required to be of full legal age.

During the two years or so before Benjamin Abbott died (d. May 1796-May 1797), Benjamin divided his assets among his children as their inheritance in lieu of a will. Benjamin divided his three slaves over age 12 among his three youngest children, James, Jacob, and Elizabeth. As the deed states, these were gifts in order to make their inheritance equal in value to what their older siblings had received from Benjamin over time:

Date: 1 Feb 1796

From: BENJAMIN ABBOTT

To: JAMES ABBOTT

For: Deed of gift "in consideration of the parental love, good will and affection which I have and do bare [bear] unto my Son James 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 Dick"

Signed: Benjamin (B) Abbott (his mark)

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

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

[Source: Halifax Deed Book 16, p. 532. LVA Reel 7. Abstract by J. Horsley. Comments in brackets added.]

Later that year, Benjamin sold James the remaining part of Benjamin's family residence at Bye Creek on the south side of Banister River, a mile or two upriver from today's Meadville. Benjamin deeded one part to his eldest son, Elisha Abbott, in 1783, and a second part to his son Joseph Abbott in 1795, both named as bounds on this deed to James. Their combined parcels made up Benjamin's original 404 acres at Bye Creek purchased in 1773. [HDB9:67]

Date: 16 May 1796

From: BENJAMIN ABBOTT

To: JAMES ABBOTT

For: £200

Description: 119 acres, South side of Banister River

Bound: ELISHA ABBOTT, JOSEPH ABBOTT, Banister River

Signed: Benjamin Abbott [usual mark is omitted]

Witnesses: William GOODWIN [Benjamin's son-in-law], Daniel Easley, David Farmer, JACOB ABBOTT, ELISHA ABBOTT [Benjamin's sons]

Recorded: 27 Jun 1796 - Proved in court by the oaths of the witnesses

[Source: Halifax Deed Book 16, p. 605. LVA Reel 7. Abstract by J. Horsley. Comments in brackets added.]

Note:

The witness William Goodwin married James Abbott's sister Nancy Abbott in 1789. They, too, lived on land sold to William by Benjamin Abbott, but their land was located to the east near Terrible Creek.

The tracts Benjamin sold to James' brothers Jacob and Armistead were nearby on the north side of the Banister. Shortly after Benjamin died, Joseph and Armistead swapped properties, so Armistead rather than Joseph was James' adjacent neighbor during the next 15 years or so. Their brother Elisha Abbott lived next to them until 1803, when Elisha moved his family across the Banister and upriver a few miles to Bradley Creek.

Several months after buying Benjamin's land, James Abbott purchased another 22 acres, presumably in the same vicinity, although the seller and adjacent landowners are not named in other Abbott deeds for James' immediate area. "Anderson" may be the same or related to Meads Anderson, whom we discuss shortly.

Date: 23 Jul 1796

From: Allen Whitehead

To: JAMES ABBOTT

For: £11 4s

Description: 22 acres [south side of Banister River, per land taxes]

Bounds: Banister River, Anderson, Cox[?]

Signed: Allen Whitehead

Witnesses: ELISHA ABBOTT, ARMISTEAD ABBOTT, JOSEPH ABBOTT [James' brothers]

Recorded. 25 Jul 1796

[Source: Halifax Deed Book 16, p. 642. LVA Reel 7. Abstract by J. Horsley. Comments in brackets added.]

Two years later in 1798, James purchased an additional property in the vicinity. This one-half acre town lot was one of the original lots sold in the newly established town of "Meadsville" (later called Meadeville, then Meadville) on land owned by Meads Anderson and located a mile or two down-river from James' land near Bye Creek. The deed, written in 1801, required him to build a

residential house on the lot of a specified size and quality within seven years of his purchase or else forfeit the land. He obviously met these requirements, as he sold the property in 1811.

Date: 23 Feb 1801 - for land purchased 25 Jul 1798 at public auction

From: Trustees of the Town of Meadville, Halifax County (Est. 10 Jan 1798)

The Trustees were "appointed by and[sic] act of the General Assembly passed the 10th day of January 1798 for vesting in said Trustees twenty-one acres of land the property of Meads Anderson at the Great Falls of Banister River in the County of Halifax to be by them or a majority of them lade [laid] off into lots of half and[sic] acre each with convenient Streets and Establish a Town by name of Meadville..."

To: JAMES ABBOTT of Halifax

For: £26

Description: 1/2 acre lot in the town of Meadville, Lot No. 24.

Conditions: That the said James Abbott shall build on the said lot a dwelling house at least 16 feet square with a brick or stone chimney to be "completed, finished, and fit for habitation" within seven years from the date of sale, as required by the recited Act. If this condition is not met in the required manner and within the allotted time, then the lot will be forfeited and the Trustees or their successors shall and may sell the same for the benefit of the Town according to the recited Act. But if the said James Abbott his heirs or assigns well and truly build upon and improve the lot in the manner and time stated, then "he may enjoy the same with all the privileges and immunities of the said Town or any other Town not incorporated have hold or enjoy."

Signed: John B. Scott, Joseph Petty, Robert D. Milner, Epa's [Epaphroditus] Sydnor, W'm. Hudson, W'm McDaniel [Trustees of the Town of Meadville]

Witnesses: None

Recorded: 29 Sep 1801

[Source: Halifax Deed Book 19, p. 102-103. LVA Reel 8. Abstract by J. Horsley. Comments in brackets added.]

Note:

For more information about Meadville's location and history, see notes for this deed in the compiled list of Abbott deeds included in this report.

In 1807, James Abbott's younger sister, Elizabeth Abbott, married Jasper Wyatt in Halifax by bond dated 20 Jul 1807, and James was Jasper Wyatt's bondsman. Elizabeth, then abt. 29 years old, signed her own consent to marry, and James Abbott and his brother Jacob Abbott were witnesses. [Halifax Marriage Bond Register No. 1, LVA Reel 82] Elizabeth and Jasper left Halifax the same year.

After holding his Meadville lot for 13 years, perhaps renting it out at least some of that time, James Abbott sold the lot with the required house on the lot in 1811:

Date: 2 Aug 1811

From: JAMES ABBOTT

To: Samuel Varner

For: \$50

Description: one-half acre, Lot 24, Town of Meadville

Signed: James Abbott

Witnesses: JACOB ABBOTT [James' brother], Edmund Henderson

Recorded: 26 Aug 1811

[Source: Halifax Deed Book 23, p. 153-154. LVA Reel 10. Abstract by J. Horsley. Comments in brackets added.]

Five months after selling the town lot, James Abbott sold his land purchased from his father in 1796. The land originally described in 1796 as 119 acres was found by a new survey to be 155 acres. James' brother Armistead acquired another parcel of the same tract, and when Armistead sold his parcel in 1818 also to Stephen Light, it had increased from the estimated 115 acres in 1795 to 154 acres "by actual survey," probably made the same time as James' survey. (The 22 acres James purchased from Whitehead in 1796 are not accounted for by other deeds of sale.)

Date: 7 [9?] Jan 1812

From: JAMES ABBOTT

To: Stephen Light

For: \$465

Description: 155 acres "by this survey" on Banister River - "being the same tract deeded by his father"

Bounds: No adjacent landowners named; metes and markers only

Signed: James Abbott

Witnesses: Thomas Davenport, Gerard Banks Junr, Elisha Barksdale, Wm. R. Hagood

Recorded: 25 Jan 1813

[Source: Halifax Deed book 24, p. 165-166. LVA Reel 11. Abstract by J. Horsley.]

James Abbott is recorded in Halifax for another two years after this sale. He last appears on the annual Halifax personal property tax lists in March 1814, taxed for one slave and no horses, whereas in 1811 he was taxed for 6 slaves and 3 horses. From those sales (not deeded) and his land sales, none of which were previously obligated under deeds of trust forcing him to sell, it seems James might be preparing to leave the county.

However, the index of Halifax Court Orders shows James Abbott died by 1815, when administration of his estate was granted to Jacob Faulkner and the inventory of his estate was ordered to be taken. [HPB32:131, per Court Order Index] James was abt. 40 years old. It is possible he could have been drafted to serve in the War of 1812, as some of his Abbott cousins in Halifax were at this time, and did not survive. However, several untimely Abbott deaths occurred in Halifax around this time, indicating there may have been an epidemic in the area. Neither an inventory nor any other probate for James was recorded (per Pippenger's Index to Virginia Estates), but since he had divested himself of most of his assets, if there was no dispute over outstanding debts, then formal probate of his estate would not have been necessary.

James Abbott apparently never married. He has no Halifax marriage record, and no wife is included in his deeds of sale.

Researched and written by Joan Horsley

Based on research as of Sept 2013

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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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