

CATHARINE FULKERSON
Wife of Richard Abbott of Halifax County, Virginia

Research Report by Joan Horsley
Based on Research as of December 2013
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CATHARINE "CATY" FULKERSON

Daughter of John Fulkerson and Sarah "Sally" Roberts
Born: Abt. 1789, Halifax County, VA
Married: 1 Sep 1818, Halifax County, VA to Richard Abbott
Died: December 1875, Pittsylvania County, VA

RICHARD ABBOTT

Son of Joseph Abbott and wife Frances
Born: Abt. 1770, Halifax County, VA
Died: Abt. December 1848, Pittsylvania County, VA

CHILDREN of CATHARINE FULKERSON and RICHARD ABBOTT

John J. Abbott (m. Paulina S. Lax/Lacks), Joseph M. Abbott (m. Martha J. Fitzgerald), Sarah F. Abbott (never married), William Abbott (m. Mandeline F. Davis), Richard M. Abbott (m. Letitia J. Downs), Cassandra Abbott (m. Moore W. Dollahite)

CATHARINE "CATY" FULKERSON was born in Halifax County, Virginia abt. 1789, a middle child among six sisters and two brothers. Her parents, John Fulkerson and Sarah "Sally" Roberts, and siblings are proved by a deed of agreement dated 12 Sep 1821 between the children and their then-widowed mother, Sally Fulkerson, affirming the personal property distribution stated in John Fulkerson's 1803 will. [HWB6:545] Since married women could not hold property in their names alone, the husbands of the married daughters are parties to this agreement, thus Caty's husband, Richard Abbott, is also proved by this deed. (The only ones named in the deed who did not sign were Caty's sister Mary Fulkerson and her husband Thomas Pentecost. They had moved abt. 1805 from Halifax to Wilson County, TN, where Thomas Pentecost died abt. 1813, and Mary died abt. two years after this 1821 deed. The others still lived in Halifax at this time.) Caty signed as "Catharine Abbott" and was the only female to sign by signature rather than mark.

"...the children of the said John Fulkerson dec'd to wit, Betsy who has intermarried with Hardaway Chandler, Mary who has intermarried with Thomas Pentecost, Milly who has intermarried with John W. Nance, James Foulkerson[sic], CATY who has intermarried with RICHARD ABBOTT, Debby who has intermarried with Orrel Chandler [also spelled Orril Chandler], John Fulkerson and Jenny Fulkerson [named in her mother's will as Jane Fulkerson]..."
[Source: Halifax Deed Book 28, p. 572. Halifax Courthouse. Excerpt transcribed by J. Horsley. Caps and comments in brackets added.]

Caty comes from a richly diverse heritage on both sides. Her father, John Fulkerson, descends from a Norwegian carpenter/builder Dirck Volckertszen and his French Walloon wife Christina Vigne who married in New Amsterdam (today's New York City) abt. 1630-1631. They raised their family near today's Bushwick on Long Island, NY. In the third generation, John's ancestors moved to southeastern New Jersey, where his father, known in Virginia as Fulker Fulkerson, was baptized as Volkert Volkertson on 10 Jan 1724/25 in Raritan, Somerset County, NJ. *[Documentation of the early line is from the research of the late Bob Fulkerson]* Fulker along with his parents and brothers moved bet. 1748-1752 to the new frontier of then-western Halifax County, VA, now Henry and Patrick County, and the adjacent parts of old Rowan County, NC. While Fulker's brothers remained in that area on both sides of the VA-NC line, Fulker moved abt. 75 miles to the northeast, perhaps influenced by Indian hostilities that previously affected his family to the southwest. At least by 1763, Fulker Fulkerson with wife Catharine and son John (apparently their only child) were well-established at Difficult Creek in north-central Halifax County. *[HPB4:119]* They lived a tract removed from Richard Abbott's family, where both families were closely involved since before either Caty or Richard was born.

Caty's mother was Sarah Roberts, usually called Sally, born abt. 1762 in Halifax County. Sally's parents were John Roberts and Janne/Jane Levereau (spelled variously, including Leveran, Levrant, etc.) of Manakin Town in Henrico County, VA. Manakin Town was established in 1701 as a safe haven for French Huguenot refugees fleeing persecution in their homelands. On 24 Sep 1737, the baptismal records for the French community church of King William Parish name "Jean Robert" and "Janne Levrant" as godparents to the daughter of Janne's half-brother "Moyses Forquerant" (Moses Fourqurean) and wife "Susane." John and Jane married shortly after, and on 23 Oct 1738, their first child "Jean Roberd, son of Jean Roberd and wife Janne" was baptized in the same parish church. *[R. A. Brock, "Documents, Chiefly Unpublished..." (1886)]* John and Jane Roberts raised most of their 10 surviving children on their land just south of the "French Line" in what became Chesterfield County before moving to Halifax County abt. 1761. *[CDB4:212]* They settled on an upper part of Winns Creek near a main north-south road (roughly today's Anderson Road) just south of the Fulkersons and Abbotts. *[HDB3:100]* Sally's sister Betsy Roberts was the first wife of Hatcher Owen, whom she married in 1781 (about the same time Sally married John Fulkerson), but she died within the next year. Then in 1787, Hatcher married Richard Abbott's sister Mary Abbott, and they continued to live and raise their family just west of the Roberts family and Sally's widowed mother. Thus Sally Roberts' family also knew and was involved with the Abbotts and Fulkersons since before Richard and Caty were born.

John Fulkerson married Sally Roberts in Halifax County, VA abt. 1781. Not only had they known each other since childhood, but perhaps they also were drawn together by their diverse yet shared out-of-the-ordinary family heritages. No marriage record has survived, but the date can be closely approximated from the special 1782 and 1785 heads-of-house enumerations and the ages of their children. These enumerations also indicate that John's mother, also named Catharine (her maiden name is unknown), died about the year he married, but John and his father, Fulker Fulkerson, continued to share a household until Fulker's death in Halifax around 1800. As mentioned above, the Fulkersons originally lived one tract removed from Caty's future husband Richard Abbott's family, but by the 1790s, the Fulkerson and Abbott properties adjoined.

Richard Abbott's father and the Fulkersons' long-time neighbor Joseph Abbott died abt. April 1788, and his will was proved in Halifax Court 27 Oct 1788. [HWB2:298] Richard's older brother William Abbott was executor, and Caty's father, John Fulkerson, was a security on William's executor's bond. Also, John's father, Fulker Fulkerson, was one of the three neighbors who made the inventory and appraisal of Joseph Abbott's estate in Nov 1788. [HWB2:308]

Catharine "Caty" Fulkerson, fourth daughter of John and Sally Roberts Fulkerson, was born abt. 1789, as she first appears in Halifax records in 1810. A court road order dated 24 Apr 1810 ordered that the "male labouring tythes" of "Catey Fulkerson" be assigned to work on the road whereof Richard's brother William Abbott was surveyor. [HPB28:114] This birth date for Caty of abt. 1789 fits with her census ages 1820-1840, with her mother's age, and with the sequence of her siblings' ages as shown by tax lists, censuses, marriage dates, and other available records. This birth date also fits with Caty's last child being born abt. 1835, when she would be age 45-46 and ending her childbearing years. (The 1850 and 1860 census for Caty show her born abt. 1800, proved wrong by this court order and all combined evidence, as we shall see.) Interestingly, information passed down and around by Catharine's Alabama descendants that gives her husband the wrong first name also says she was born in 1788. This is surprisingly close to abt. 1789 that the 1810 court order shows, even though the Alabama researcher in the mid-1900s never found that court order and drew her conclusions from family letters written after Caty's widowhood.

Catharine almost certainly was literate, which was not the norm for females born in her time and place outside of the elite. (At least two of Richard Abbott's sisters, both much older than Caty, also were literate.) Two deeds with her husband in the 1840s record Catharine as signing by mark [HDB47:478, 49:165], but other evidence overrules them. Her marriage consent statement seems to be written in her own hand, and she did not sign by mark (as did her mother, a witness). As mentioned above, Caty was the only one of the five Fulkerson sisters who signed the 1821 deed of agreement who was recorded as signing by signature rather than mark. A descendant who died in 1967 possessed a letter that Catharine wrote in 1854 to her son John J. Abbott in Alabama, and the 1850 and 1860 censuses both list her as able to read and write. Caty also made sure that all her children could read and write, including her two daughters.

The following list of Catharine Fulkerson's siblings comes from their names in the 1821 deed of agreement (excerpt above). [HDB28:572] The ages of her two brothers are based on the Halifax personal property tax lists that show when they turned age 21. Her sisters' ages are based on their marriage records and censuses. All were born and married in Halifax County.

Children of John Fulkerson and Sarah "Sally" Roberts

1. Mary Fulkerson - b. 1782-1783; m. 22 Oct 1798 to Thomas Pentecost; d. abt. 1823, Wilson Co, TN
2. Mildred "Milly" Fulkerson - b. c1784; m. 13 Nov 1815 to John W. Nance; d. 1860-1870, Pittsylvania Co, VA
3. Elizabeth "Betsy" Fulkerson - b. c1785; m. 9 Jun 1804 to Hardaway Chandler; d. 1850-1860, Halifax Co, VA
4. Catharine "Caty" Fulkerson - b. c1789; m. 1 Sep 1818 to Richard Abbott; d. Dec 1875, Pittsylvania Co, VA

5. James Fulkerson - b. 1792-1793; m. 29 Mar 1826 to Sarah Willingham; d. 1860-1870, Lauderdale Co, TN
 6. Deborah "Debby" Fulkerson - b. c1794; m. 23 Aug 1814 to Orrel Chandler; d. 1840-1850, Halifax Co, VA
 7. John Fulkerson - b. c1796; m. 28 May 1834 to Martha Chandler; d. 1860-1870, Halifax Co, VA
 8. Jane "Jenny" Fulkerson - b. c1800(?) - never married - d. aft. 1849
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Caty's father John Fulkerson wrote his will 31 Mar 1803. [HWB6:545] One of the witnesses was John's close neighbor Fleming Abbott, youngest brother of Richard Abbott. Fleming was still living with his family for whom Richard had been the acting head-of-household since their father Joseph Abbott's death fifteen years before. John Fulkerson died soon after writing his will, which was proved in Halifax Court 27 Jun 1803.

WILL OF JOHN FULKERSON - Abstract

Written 31 Mar 1803 - Proved 27 Jun 1803, Halifax County, VA

Halifax Will Book 6, p. 545

"I John Fulkerson of Halifax County being of sound mind do make this my last Will and Testament..."

Legacies:

"I lend unto my loving wife SALLEY Fulkerson after paying all my Just debts, all the ballance of my Estate both real and personal during her natural life and at her death it is my will and desire that all my land be equally divided between my two sons, JAMES and JOHN, and it is my desire that as long as any of my daughters live single, that they may have the privilege of living on the land that I gave to my two sons and no longer, and it is my will and desire, at the death of my wife Salley Fulkerson, that all my personally [personal] Estate is to be equally divided between all my surviving children."

Executors appointed: "my loving wife SALLEY FULKERSON," Isham Britton, Jonathan Vasser

Signed: John Fulkerson

Witnesses: Thomas Harris, Flemmin ABBOTT, David Allen

Halifax County Court

27 Jun 1803 - Will of John Fulkerson proved by the oaths of two witnesses and ordered recorded

26 Sep 1803 - Executor's bond of \$5000 posted by Isham Britton with securities John B. Scott and Henry E. Coleman. Liberty granted to other named executors to join in probate when they think fit.

29 Aug 1810 - In margin: - Probate granted to SALLY FOULKERSON[sic] the Executrix

[Source: Halifax Will Book 6, p. 545. LVA Reel 37. Abstract by J. Horsley. Comments in brackets added.]

The only other surviving probate is an estate account submitted by Isham Britton, acting Executor of the Estate of John Fulkerson, dec'd and recorded 27 Jun 1814.

[Source: Halifax Will Book 9, p. 493-496. LVA Reel 39.]

John Fulkerson was around 47 years old when he died, and his daughter Caty was then abt. age 14. One of Caty's three older sisters was already married and another married the next year. Caty's mother, Sally Fulkerson, then abt. age 41, was left at John's death with seven children still at home ranging in age from under 5 to 19, and the oldest son was only 10-11 years old. Richard Abbott's mother, Frances Abbott, had been left in similar circumstances

when her husband died in 1788, and one imagines Frances gave support and encouragement to her long-time close neighbor and friend at such a time. Caty's mother, Sally Roberts Fulkerson, lived another 39 years as a widowed head-of-house.

John and Sally's daughter Catharine Fulkerson married Richard Abbott, whom she had known all her life, by bond dated 1 Sep 1818. Richard was then 48 years old and almost twenty years Caty's senior. Richard's security on his marriage bond was John Fulkerson, the younger of Caty's two brothers, who turned 21 the previous year. Both Richard and John signed by signature. *[Original bond, Halifax Courthouse]* Catharine and Richard's first son, John James Abbott, born 3 Feb 1821, carried the names of Caty's two brothers, John and James, as well as her father and a brother of Richard, both named John.

On the same day as the marriage bond, Catharine Fulkerson wrote her own consent to marry Richard Abbott. The Halifax Marriage Bond Register No. 1, compiled by the County Clerk's staff in 1936, incorrectly lists John Fulkerson and Salley Fulkerson as the ones giving consent. *[LVA Reel 82]* However, the complete original statement proves they were only the witnesses to Catharine's own consent, which reads:

 This is to sertifie that I have given my
 Vollentary Consent to Marre Richard Abbott
 Catharine Fulkerson, given under under^[sic]
 my hand this 1st day of September 1818
 Witness
 John Fulkerson
 Salley (I) Fulkerson (her mark)

[Transcribed by J. Horsley from the original document at Halifax Courthouse, Halifax, VA. Certified by Robert W. Conner, Clerk of Circuit Court Halifax County. Original format and spelling preserved.]

 Caty's husband, Richard Abbott (c1770-1848), is proved to be a son of Joseph Abbott (c1710-1788) by Joseph's 1787 Halifax will. *[HWB2:298]* Richard is proved to be born 1769-1770 by personal property tax lists. No other Richard Abbott is recorded in Halifax through at least 1940, so there is no question of Caty's husband's identity, despite their age difference. Richard's mother, Frances (maiden name unknown), apparently was Joseph's third wife. She was 30 years or so younger than her husband, Joseph, who had 16 children still living when he died in 1788. Richard was the fourth of Joseph and Frances Abbott's ten children and her first-born son. He was abt. 18 years old when his father died, the eldest male still in the household, and he became the acting head-of-house even though still a legal minor. Perhaps Richard's sense of responsibility first toward his younger siblings then to his mother was one reason he waited until age 48 to marry, five years before his mother died. Caty may have felt similar responsibilities in the years following her father's death.

Catharine Fulkerson and Richard Abbott raised six surviving children on the land Richard inherited from his father at Difficult Creek which Richard expanded from 150 acres to abt. 480 acres. They were surrounded by Richard's brothers and their families as well as his mother (until her death in 1823) and his two sisters and a brother who never married and shared a home together. Caty's mother, brothers, and sisters (until they married) lived on

her father's land next to the Abbots that John Fulkerson had expanded before his death to 637 acres from his father Fulker Fulkerson's 220 acres that Fulker and John shared.

Caty and Richard lived on the east side of today's Crystal Hill, VA, in north-central Halifax along and south of a road that is roughly today's Newbill School Road/Route 621. The lands spread south along the branches of Difficult Creek and west toward the road between Crystal Hill and today's courthouse town of Halifax, VA seven miles south, roughly today's Anderson Road/Route 626. John Fulkerson expanded his land to the other side of the old road in 1785. *[HDB13:359]* The families were also just north of Winns/Wynns Creek, where Sally Roberts was born and where a number of her Roberts relatives still lived. In the 1790s, Sally's brother Daniel Roberts acquired land on Difficult Creek around the mouth of Double Branch northeast of today's village of Clays Mill. This was a short distance northeast of the Roberts' Winns Creek lands and almost adjacent to Abbott land on its north side. Several of Daniel Roberts' children and grandchildren were closely involved with the Abbots and appear on their later deed, marriage, and probate records. At least by 1844, Caty and Richard's son John J. Abbott was working as an overseer for Mary R. W. Roberts, widow of Daniel Roberts' son William D. Roberts. *[HDB51:49]*

In late 1843, after a lifetime at Difficult Creek where over two decades of deteriorating economic conditions in Halifax had made life very difficult indeed, Caty and Richard Abbott joined the great exodus from Halifax County. Like the majority of Halifax residents, the Abbots had struggled for years with deeds of trust to secure debts owed to a relatively small group of local merchants who had gained control of vital sources of supplies in the county. Caty and Richard may have waited to move as long as they did in part because Caty's mother was still alive.

Like numerous Halifax families in that time period, the Fulkersons lost their land to pay merchant debts. The sale of their last land by the trustee who held it was in Nov 1831 with the formal deed dated 23 Jan 1832. *[HDB39:374]* Sally's son James Fulkerson moved to Lauderdale County, TN within the next three years. By 1840, Sally Fulkerson with her daughter Jane, who never married, and her son John Fulkerson, who married in 1834, were living in southeastern Halifax near John's father-in-law, William Chandler, and next to Sally's recently widowed daughter Deborah Chandler, widow of Orrel Chandler.

Sally Roberts Fulkerson wrote her will 2 Mar 1842, leaving her personal property to her one unmarried daughter, Jane (named Jenny in the 1821 deed of agreement). Sally died at abt. 80 years old shortly before 22 Aug 1842, when her will was proved in Halifax Court. *[HWB20:83]* Sally's will appointed her daughter Jane as sole executrix. However, on 22 Apr 1844, administration of Sally's estate was granted to unrelated Jonathan B. Stovall, with no mention of the appointed executor declining or failing to appear. In 1849, Jane Fulkerson was sued for a debt claimed to be jointly owed by her and her then-deceased brother-in-law Orrel Chandler, but on 12 Sep 1849, a jury found her not guilty. *[CLB4B:45,106]* Sally's daughter Jane Fulkerson is not found in Halifax or the surrounding area in the 1850 census or later. Some think she was the Jane Fulkerson in 1850 in Graves County, KY listed next to some said to be orphans of Orrel and Deborah Fulkerson Chandler, but there are multiple serious conflicts regarding the three people in their 20s living with Jane. Thus, this Graves County Jane Fulkerson's identity remains unconfirmed until those conflicts are resolved.

WILL of SALLY FULKERSON - Abstract

Written 2 Mar 1842 - Proved 22 Aug 1842, Halifax County, VA

Halifax Will Book 20, p. 83

"I Salley Fulkerson widow of John Fulkerson deceased being in my wright and perfect mind and in common health..."

Legatee: "my daughter Jane Fulkerson" - all household & kitchen furniture, one cow and calf, and "all and every other interest that I have...as her proper wright and title forever"

Executor: "my hole and soul executrix" daughter Jane Fulkerson

Signed: Sally (x) Fulkerson (her mark)

Witnesses: Thomas Torian Sr., Elijah Torian [son of Thomas Torian], William (x) Dunn

Recorded: 22 Aug 1842

Halifax Court - 22 Apr 1844 - Administration of the Estate of Sally Fulkerson was granted to Jonathan B. Stovall, with Giles McCraw his security on a bond of \$1000.

[Source: Halifax Will Book 20, p. 83. LVA Reel 44. Abstract by J. Horsley. Original spelling in quotes preserved. Comments in brackets added.]

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Caty and Richard Abbott sold their remaining Halifax land 21 Nov 1843, applying the proceeds to their merchant debts, and left Halifax within the next four weeks. [*HDB49:165*] Caty was then abt. 54 years old, and Richard was abt. 73.

Unlike numerous Halifax relatives and friends, they did not leave the state but moved just one county west to southeastern Pittsylvania County, abt. 30 miles southwest from where they lived in Halifax. Their eldest son, John J. Abbott, had married in Nov 1841 and remained in Halifax, but their five unmarried children went with them. They settled in an area 10 miles or so northeast of Danville near Keeling, VA. Even with the loss of their Halifax land and some personal property, Richard had saved much of his sizable personal estate from the forfeitures and bankruptcies that affected Halifax residents in all economic classes, and he apparently continued to profit from his farming after their move. Richard's will and probate show he was able to provide well for Catharine in her widowhood. (See report on Richard Abbott for probate details.)

Richard Abbott died in Pittsylvania County, VA about Dec 1848 at 78 years old [*HDB53:52*], and his will was presented in Pittsylvania Court 15 Jan 1849. [*PWB2:68*] Richard bequeathed all his estate to "my beloved wife Catharine" for her lifetime and named Catharine to be his executrix. If she should decline (which she did), then he appointed their son Joseph M. Abbott as executor. Joseph married in Pittsylvania in 1847 and continued to live close to his mother and unmarried siblings. When Richard died, Caty still had two sons and two daughters at home, ages 13 to 22.

In the 1850 census, Richard's widow Catharine Abbott was still living in the southeastern part of Pittsylvania. Both her name and her age are wrong in this census, but extensive research has found this can be no one other than Catharine with Richard's and her children. (Contrary to what some others have thought, Richard's widow was not the only Catharine Abbott listed in the area this census. That Catharine Abbott in Halifax County is proved to be an unmarried daughter of Richard Abbott's older half-brother Joseph Abbott Jr. Joseph Jr.'s daughter Catharine Abbott, also born abt. 1790, was living in 1850 and 1860 with the family of her niece Dianna Faulkner and Dianna's husband Richard Boyd in southeastern Halifax,

where Joseph Abbott Jr.'s family moved shortly before he died in 1811. See report on Joseph Abbott Jr. for more details.)

1850 - Pittsylvania Co, VA - Southern District

Abbott, Susan [sic; Catharine] - 50 [sic; abt. age 61] - VA

William - 23 - VA - laborer

Richard - 20 - VA - farmer

Sarah - 18 [sic; abt. age 24] - VA

Cassandra - 15 - VA

Shortly after this census, Caty and Richard's children began to disperse. Abt. 1851, John J. Abbott with wife Paulina S. Lax/Lacks and family moved from Halifax County to Alabama, eventually settling in Talladega County and then adjacent St. Clair County. Caty and Richard's son William Abbott left about the same time for parts unknown, emerging 20 years later near his brother John in Alabama, where William married in 1871, apparently for the first time at age 44, to Mandeline F. Davis. In 1852, Cassandra Abbott, the youngest of Richard and Caty's children, married Moore W. Dollahite in his home of Person County, NC, just across the state line southeast of Pittsylvania, and settled there. About the same year, Richard M. Abbott married Letitia "Lettie" J. Downs, and when their first child was born in Sep 1853, they were living in Henry County, VA, adjacent to the west side of Pittsylvania. Abt. 1856, they moved just over the state line to Rockingham County, NC, where his brother Joseph and family had moved from Pittsylvania County the previous year. However, in 1854, Joseph M. Abbott with his wife Martha J. Fitzgerald and family were still living in southeastern Pittsylvania.

In May 1854, Catharine Abbott wrote a letter from Pittsylvania County to her son John J. Abbott in Alabama saying she was then living with her son Joseph M. Abbott. (This and other family letters were in the possession of Caty and Richard's great-granddaughter Ernestine Abbott Almon, who died in Birmingham, AL in 1967. In early 2013, Mrs. Almon's grandson told me that the letters are not where he had been told they were kept, but hopefully they are only temporarily misplaced. However, Mrs. Almon made notes about their contents that were passed around the family. These notes were first sent to me by the late Mary Joe Abbott Wise in 2004 and later by another descendant Gloria Furman.)

Catharine Abbott, then in her mid-60s, did not go with Joseph and his family when they moved the next year to adjacent Rockingham County, NC. Instead, Catharine chose to stay in the same general area of Pittsylvania County where she had been living for over ten years. This seems a good indication of Caty's independence and self-sufficiency, qualities she probably had all her life. Her unmarried daughter, Sarah "Sallie" F. Abbott, was living and working with her, as we discuss shortly. Again in the 1860 census, like in 1850, the ages of both Caty and Sallie are wrong, this time by abt. 10 years each, so apparently neither was the informant.

1860 - Pittsylvania Co, VA - Southern Dist. - PO: Spring Garden

Abbott[sic], Catharine - 60 [sic, abt. 71] - Seamstress - Real Est: 0; Pers. Est: \$3000 - VA

Sallie F - 25 [sic, abt. 34] - Seamstress - VA

Another indication of Caty's self-sufficiency is that she did not live solely on her dower income or by the lease of her slaves. Given her personal estate value, probably half of

which reflects her slaves, Caty had those options. Instead, she and Sallie made their living as seamstresses, a talent that passed down through many of Catharine's descendants, some of whom also made their living by this same skill. For example, in 1920, two of Caty's granddaughters, Joseph M. Abbott's widowed daughters Emma J. Hill and Kate Wray, were living together in Danville, VA and listed as professional dress-makers. Five years later, a great-great-granddaughter of Caty through son John J. Abbott in Alabama began a career teaching sewing and home economics in high school, as several younger ones in this line did later. Other of Caty's descendants are remembered by their children and grandchildren for their exquisite needlework and sewing (including my own Abbott grandmother).

Since Caty owned no land for her slaves to work and since her slaves in the 1860 slave schedule are mostly female, Caty and Sallie with the slaves may have had a sewing "cottage industry" akin to running a small business from their home. The slaves may include children of the three slaves remaining in Richard Abbott's estate inventory after several others were sold. Caty is missing in the 1850 Slave Schedule, but according to Richard's will, Catharine had lifetime use of his slaves and their children.

1860 U.S. Federal Census Slave Schedule - South District, Pittsylvania Co, VA

Slave Owner: Catherine Abbott

Female slave - age 17 - Black - "fugitive"

Female slave - age 16 - Black

Female slave - age 13 - Mulatto

Male slave - age 8 - Black

Female slave - age 6 - Black

Neither Catharine Abbott nor her daughter Sallie Abbott was found in the 1870 census. (The 1870 census, on the heels of the Civil War, is considered generally incomplete and problematic.) Since neither of them was living this year with any of Catharine's children, we may assume they were still living together in Pittsylvania.

In a letter dated 6 Jan 1873, Catharine's son Richard M. Abbott wrote his brother John J. Abbott in St. Clair County, AL saying their mother was living with him and his family. [*Letter formerly in possession of Ernestine Abbott Almon, as discussed above*] Richard M. Abbott and his family moved from Rockingham County, NC back to Pittsylvania County, VA in 1871 or early 1872. Richard's letter and his 1870 and 1880 censuses show he, like the majority in the South, suffered severe financial losses during the Civil War and its economically devastating aftermath. Caty, then in her early 80s, probably was at the least infirm, if not actually ill, with no other option than to add to his burden.

Mrs. Almon's short notes about Richard's letter make no mention of Sallie, so apparently Sallie, then abt. 47, was able to find independent work and lodging. As her mother's daughter and a woman used to making her own way, Sallie likely would not want to impose on a financially-stressed brother unless she could not find employment. In fact, almost certainly Catharine and Richard's daughter Sallie F. Abbott is the literate "Sallie Abbott" listed in the 1880 census as a "cook" and "servant" in a Pittsylvania County household near Chatham, the county seat, and listed in 1900 as a literate "servant" for a family back in the Abbotts' original neighborhood in Pittsylvania. (In 1880, she is listed by age as born c1830. In 1900, finally "Sallie Abbott" is listed by the right age of 73, and her birth year is specifically given as 1826, the birth year that matches her family's early censuses and her siblings')

ages.) No other unmarried Sarah or Sallie Abbott in the various age ranges was found in any census anywhere in the area other than Richard and Catharine's daughter. Following the Civil War, it was not unusual for unmarried women from "good families" to have to take domestic service in order to support themselves. An unmarried daughter of Sallie's sister Cassandra Abbott Dollahite did likewise in her home place of Person County, NC.

Catharine "Caty" Fulkerson Abbott died at abt. 86 years old in December 1875. (The date comes from Mrs. Almon's information, although no specific letter or other source is given.) Presumably, Catharine was still living with her son Richard when she died. The Dec 1874 birth record for Richard M. Abbott's last child lists their residence as "Tunstall Township" in Pittsylvania. Such a town does not exist today. However, the 1880 census for Richard's family lists them in "Tunstall District," which was in southwestern Pittsylvania and ran from Chatham, in the center of the county, down to the southwestern corner, covering an area just west and northwest of Danville, VA (although not Danville itself).

Catharine Abbott is not included in the surviving death records for Pittsylvania County. No burial place is known, and her grave is not listed in any of the cemetery and graveyard books published for the county. Like her husband Richard Abbott, whose burial place is also unknown, we, their descendants, are the memorials to their lives.

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