

MOSES ABBOTT
Son of Joseph Abbott of Halifax County, Virginia

Research Report by Joan Horsley
Based on Research as of December 2013
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MOSES ABBOTT

Son of Joseph Abbott and wife Frances

Born: Bet. 1776-1782, Halifax County, VA

Died: Bet. 24 Dec 1815 - 1 Apr 1816, Charlotte County, VA (resident of Richmond, VA)

Never married

MOSES ABBOTT was the next-to-youngest child of Joseph Abbott and wife Frances, apparently Joseph's third wife. He was Frances' ninth child and the fifteenth of Joseph's sixteen children proved by his will. Like several of his siblings, Moses never married, but with one possible exception, Moses was the only sibling who lived his adult life outside of Halifax County, VA, where he was born. Moses' story as revealed in existing records is both sadly touching and intriguing. Much about his short life and sudden death is hinted in the records, but the full story remains unknown.

Moses Abbott apparently was born abt. 1776. He is named in his father Joseph Abbott's 1787 will among "my three young sons namely John, Moses & Flemmon." [HWB2:298] After their father Joseph's death, their eldest brother living in the household, Richard Abbott, acted as head-of-house, and beginning in 1791 (when Richard turned 21) his tax lists included his mother's taxable property and that of several brothers after they came of age. These brothers included Moses' next older brother, Moody Abbott (listed separately in Joseph's will), who by tax lists likely was born abt. 1775 and proved born no later than mid-1777.

Moses' widowed mother, Frances Abbott, first appears on the yearly personal property tax lists in 1797 (9 years after Joseph died), and she is listed as "Frances Abbott & Son." Given the Abbott entries for this and previous years, that "Son" almost certainly is Moses, and by the way the entry is written, Moses would then be 21 years old, thus born abt. 1776. Moses is not listed by name on the tax lists until after he left his mother's house and was living away from his family in 1803. Thus he is proved to be born no later than 1782, but combined evidence, including the ages of his parents and siblings, supports his birth closer to 1776.

Moses' father, Joseph Abbott, died in spring of 1788, when Moses was abt. 12 years old. His mother, Frances Abbott, lived another 34-35 years. She outlived four of her ten children, including Moses, and died bet. 1822-1823 at around 80 or 81 years old.

Other than tax lists, the only Halifax County record for Moses Abbott is a deed between two of his brothers that Moses witnessed with two other brothers for land that was adjacent to where their family was living. This was the same land where their father, Joseph Abbott, settled his family abt. 1762, when they arrived in Halifax from King and Queen County, VA.

In Oct 1798, William Abbott purchased 328 acres adjacent to the land he inherited from their father, Joseph. [HDB18:107] The following month, William sold Richard Abbott just under half that tract, which also was adjacent to Richard's inherited land, where he and his mother and unmarried siblings were then living. William Abbott was a half-brother to the others, but their mother, Frances, raised William from abt. age 9, and William remained closely involved with his younger half-siblings throughout their lives. Although witnesses were not required to be full legal adults, Moses most likely was over age 21 by then. In a house full of adults, they would not be short of finding one as a witness were Moses not yet of age.

Date: 27 Nov 1798

From: WILLIAM ABBOTT

To: RICHARD ABBOTT

For: £90

Description: 150 acres by the late surveys, south side of the upper Difficult Creek

Bounds: Difficult Creek, Ephraim Hill, said ABBOTT

Signed: William Abbott

Witnesses: JOHN ABBOTT, MOSES ABBOTT, LEONARD ABBOTT

Recorded: 22 Apr 1799

[Source: Halifax Deed Book 18, p. 128-129. LVA Reel 8. Abstract by J. Horsley.]

At least by 1803, Moses Abbott was living independently. Moses appears by name that year in the personal property tax lists for the South District of Halifax (which covered the area south and west of the Banister River), while his family home was in the North District. As yet he owned no horses or slaves. After the 1798 deed and the 1803 tax list, Moses Abbott is not found again in Halifax records. (The male enumerated in his mother Frances Abbott's 1804 tax list seems most likely to be Moses' younger brother, Fleming Abbott, who definitely was still living with his mother and siblings in 1803.)

For ten years after 1803, Moses Abbott is not found in the yearly personal property tax lists for any county searched, including Halifax and all its adjacent Virginia counties, the City of Richmond, Henrico County (where Richmond is located), and adjacent Chesterfield County. During this time, such tax lists were collected annually from all county residents who were free adult males (and certain unmarried adult females) responsible for their own taxes, whether or not they owned taxable property that year. People occasionally are missing for a year or two, either skipped or their list lost or not turned in. However, the most common reason for a man like Moses to be missing continuously is if he were living with an employer and enumerated as part of that household rather than named separately. Later records indicate this probably is what Moses was doing during his missing years.

Finally in 1813, Moses Abbott is listed for the first (and only) time in the City of Richmond personal property tax lists, which were searched from 1804-1816. Richmond is physically located in Henrico County, but Moses likewise is not listed in Henrico taxes searched from 1806 through 1814. (Henrico lists for 1804 and 1805 have not survived and 1815 was not readily available.) In 1813, Moses had no other males over age 16 in his household, and he owned no taxable property; that is, no slaves (only those over age 12 were reported) and no horses or mules.

The 1813 tax list is rather misleading, though, as to Moses' financial situation. Moses Abbott's will written two and a half years later bequeaths at least \$3000 plus interest owed to him, and it devises an undeveloped city lot in Richmond. The executor's bond, which was based in part on the estimated value of Moses' personal estate, was for \$8000. [HenricoWB5:71] No inventory was made that lists his assets, but the accounts show Moses then owned a horse and some sheep (non-taxable), and he had loaned out another \$900 that was repaid to the estate. He owed no unpaid bonds, and his outstanding personal debts were modest. The almost \$600 in the executor's travel expenses and the \$305 the commissioners determined was due to the executor "for his trouble in settling said business" were over half of the total costs to the estate. The travel expenses alone were more than the appraised value of many average people's entire personal estate at that time. An impressive financial position for a relatively young man working his way up, especially one living in a major city in a credit-based economy.

Further evidence of Moses Abbott's up-and-coming financial position and his future prospects and aspirations comes from the following two deeds for the somewhat understated "undeveloped lot" mentioned in Moses' will. As the deeds below show, the lot was an undivided 1/12 of a larger tract Moses co-purchased apparently for investment and development. The land, which was part of the old Byrds Warehouse lot, was at the James River and for over a century had been the site of a public tobacco warehouse where tobacco was inspected, graded, and stored before sale either domestically or abroad. Several of the men named in the deeds as Moses' co-investors were around his same age and in time went on to become wealthy merchants and notable businessmen of their day.

Date: 12 Aug 1815

From: Wade Mosby and wife Susannah of Powhatan Co, VA.

To: Carter B. Page, Jesse Higginbotham, Rosco Cole [also sp. Roscow Cole], Fleming James, MOSES ABBOTT, Hall Neilson, Cary Selden, William Anderson, James Brown Jr., Robert Poore, Thomas Richardson, Edmond Webster, and Micajah Clark [all] of the City of Richmond

For: \$28,550.00

Description: 12 lots, No. 5-16, in the City of Richmond, known as Byrds Warehouse lot

Signed: Wade Mosby, Susannah Mosby

Witnesses: George W. Trueheart, Th's Miller, John H. Steger

Release of Dower by Susanna, wife of Wade Mosby before Thomas Miller and John H. Steger, Justices of Powhatan Co.

Recorded: 2 Apr 1816, Henrico County Court Office

In margin: Original Del'd Wm Dabney Jr [day cut off] Nov 1817

[Source: Henrico Deed Book 12, p. 430-432. Reel 16. Library of Virginia. Richmond, VA. Abstract by J. Horsley. Comments in brackets added.]

Date: 29 Nov 1815

From: Cary Selden and wife Frances of the City of Richmond

To: Daniel Trueheart, Wade Mosby Junr, James Winston, Roscow Cole and Fleming James, MOSES ABBOTT, William Anderson, James Brown Jr, Thomas Richardson, Robert Poore, & Micajah Clarke
For: \$1.00

Description: Whereas Wade Mosby and Susanna his wife by Indenture bearing date 12 Aug 1815 sold unto Carter B. Page "and others" [including Cary Selden] 12 lots in the City of Richmond Nos. 5-16, being parts of the Lot commonly known by the name of Byrds warehouse lot, and whereas the

said Cary Selden having paid no part of the purchase money for the said lots is willing to convey all right title and interest of one undivided twelfth part of the said lots unto [those named above including Moses Abbott] who are desirous of holding and possessing the same...

Signed: Cary Selden, Frances Selden

Witnesses: W'm Dabney Jr., Jas. C. Anthony, L. W. Wilson

Release of Dower 5 Feb 1816 by Frances, wife of Cary Selden

Recorded: 31 Jul 1816

[Source: Henrico Deed Book 13, p. 199-201. Reel 17. Library of Virginia. Richmond, VA. Abstract by J. Horsley. Comments in brackets added.]

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Less than a month after this second deed and within five months of the original purchase, Moses Abbott "of the City of Richmond" wrote his will on Christmas Eve, 24 Dec 1815.

[HenricoWB5:71] He was abt. 39 years old. As we discuss shortly, he probably died very soon after, even though his will was not proved in Henrico County Court until 1 Apr 1816.

Moses, who had no wife or children, left the whole of his estate in specified ways to "my dear mother" (Frances Abbott), "my three brothers Moody, John and Richard" (his only surviving full brothers, as William Abbott, though still alive and living next to the others, was a half-brother and 20 years older than Moses) and "my two unmarried sisters Elizabeth and Patsy." (Moses' sister Mary likely was deceased. His only other sister still living, Frances Abbott Robertson, married in 1795 and had lived many years in southern Halifax. Moses' legatees all lived together with their widowed mother, Frances Abbott.) Moses appointed his brother John Abbott to be an executor along with William B. Banks, a prominent lawyer and Halifax resident, who did not serve. John Abbott posted the \$8000 executor's bond with his brother Moody Abbott as security (which reflects their own financial status as well).

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Will of Moses Abbott - "of the City of Richmond," Henrico County, VA
Written 24 Dec 1815 - Proved 1 Apr 1816, Court of Henrico County, VA
Henrico Will Book 5, p. 71-72

In the Name of God, I, Moses Abbott of the City of Richmond being of sound and disposing mind and memory do make and publish this my last Will and Testament

Imprimis I desire that my whole estate with the exception of the parts hereafter mentioned be equally divided between my three brothers Moody, John and Richard and my two unmarried sisters Elizabeth and Patsy which I do give to them and their heirs forever

I do give to my dear mother during her life the sum of three thousand Dollars [\$3000] which is due to me by Carey Seldon [elsewhere spelled Cary Selden] the interest of which sum is to be paid regularly to her by my Executors hereafter mentioned.

And at her death I give the aforesaid sum of three thousand dollars to my said three brothers and two sisters to be equally divided between them.

Item I devise to my brother John and his heirs a lot of Ground which belongs to me in the City of Richmond upon condition that he pays annually to my two unmarried sisters the sum of one hundred dollars to be equally divided between them during their lives.

Lastly I do hereby appoint Wm. B. Banks of [space left blank] and John Abbott of the same County Executors of this my last Will and Testament. Given under my hand and seal this 24th of Dec'r 1815
/s/ Moses Abbott

Signed sealed &c before us /s/ John A. H. Rutherford, Henry W. Tucker

Recorded 1 Apr 1816, Henrico Court

The will was proved by the oath of the witness Henry W. Tucker, and "the handwriting" of the witness John A. H. Rutherford was proved by Henry W. Tucker and Joshua Crump

At the same court, the executor's bond of \$8000 was posted by John Abbott with Mosby[sic, Moody] Abbott his security

[Source: Henrico Will Book 5, p. 71-72. LVA Reel 56. Transcription of will and further abstract by J. Horsley. Original spelling retained; paragraphing and comments in brackets added.]

Settlement of the Estate of Moses Abbott, Dec'd

Statement of accounts and final settlement prepared by John Abbott, Executor.

Accounts date from 1 Apr 1816 - 16 May 1819

Payments include to: Jn'o A. H. Rutherford, Doc't Tucker [Henry W. Tucker], Doc't James Hunt, Allen W. Elliot ("for making coffin"), T. T. Bouldin [all residents of Charlotte Co, VA in late 1815-early 1816]. Approved and signed by commissioners Richard R. High, Nathaniel Barksdale, James Fulkerson [all Halifax residents]

Presented to Henrico Court 14 Apr 1820

Recorded 1 May 1820

[Source: Henrico Will Book 5, p. 390-391. LVA Reel 56. Abstract by J. Horsley. Comments in brackets added]

There are a number of curious surprises about Moses' will and the settlement of his estate (the only probate recorded) that raise intriguing questions. First, how and why were the men who witnessed Moses Abbott's will involved with Moses? Neither lived in Richmond, where Moses' will said he then resided, or in Halifax County, where Moses' family lived, and neither had prior recorded associations or known relationships with the Abbotts. Second, where was Moses when he wrote his will, and where did he die? In the end, after researching the will witnesses and others involved in Moses' estate accounts through yearly personal property tax lists that prove residence and through wills, marriage records, other official documents, and county histories, the unexpected elements tell a revealing and poignant story.

Let us begin with the will witness John A. H. Rutherford (sometimes, as there, spelled Rutherford). John Rutherford lived in Charlotte County, adjacent to Halifax. He operated a tavern with overnight lodging, where he and his family also resided. It could be mere coincidence that Moses stopped at this particular tavern. However, the evidence seems to indicate that Moses' being there was not just happenstance and that Moses knew John A. H. Rutherford personally as a direct or indirect result of Moses' occupation.

Moses Abbott's occupation is not proved, but there are clues in his will and probate. He was not a farmer and did not own farmland, although he did own sheep, as some town-dwellers did at the time, and he acquired a horse the year or two before he died. His executor did not sell any tools that would indicate Moses was a skilled craftsman. He owned no land except what he recently purchased with others for investment and which had no house, so Moses was renting, boarding, or living with his employer. Yet Moses obviously had a lucrative job to leave such an estate. He made at least one large non-land investment (the loan of \$3000) to

profit from the periodic interest due to him, and he recently had loaned another \$900, a significant amount in itself.

An unsourced and undocumented piece of family story published in 1906 said that Moses Abbott and his brother Fleming Abbott were "importers for a time at Richmond, Va." [*Lemuel Abijah Abbott. "Descendants of George Abbott" Vol 2, p. 1039*] However, there is no record or evidence that Moses' brother Fleming was ever in Richmond at all or that he owned any real or personal property anywhere, much less that he had the assets and capital to be an "importer" by profession. The records also give no evidence that Moses ever owned or operated his own business. In fact, they show quite the opposite by the debts paid and collected in the settlement of Moses' estate and by the fact that for a decade Moses Abbott is not listed in his own name in tax records nor is he found in lists of merchants' licenses. Thus, like most passed-down family stories, this one is far from factually accurate. Still, in Moses' case (and only his), the story seems to hold a kernel of truth, in that Moses Abbott probably was employed by a merchant or other business owner who dealt with imported goods as Moses built toward his own future as such a merchant.

Will witness John A. H. Rutherford was a highly prosperous businessman who, according to his will, operated and resided at a tavern in Charlotte County, where he also owned a country estate and was appointed county jailor by 1813. [*Charlotte CC Case Index 1831-001, LVA; CCOB19:167*] The tavern was in the county courthouse town of Charlotte Court House, VA (then officially called Marysville) located about 25 miles northeast of the Abbott family home in adjacent Halifax County. John A. H. Rutherford held the long-term lease on what was known as the Old Tavern, where a tavern had operated since 1765 and where George Washington's diary noted he breakfasted in 1791. [*Hutcheson, "Historical Sketch of Charlotte Court House" (1923), trans. by Brady Fitts*] The will shows Rutherford's tavern was finely furnished and well-provisioned to accommodate overnight guests visiting in and traveling through the area in addition to providing food, drink, and a community meeting place for local residents. Any tavern like Rutherford's near a courthouse was guaranteed a flourishing business, especially during court sessions and any time official business was conducted.

John A. H. Rutherford appears closely related to (probably a brother or nephew of) Thomas Rutherford, a prominent and very wealthy merchant in Richmond with high-level political connections. Thomas was born in Scotland, immigrated to Richmond c1784, and married in 1790. His first son was named John and a later son was named A. H. Rutherford. John A. H. Rutherford married then-widowed Elizabeth Price in the City of Richmond on 15 Aug 1804. Earlier that year, in May 1804, Thomas Rutherford, with another adult white male (listed only as "&c") in his household, was the only Rutherford in Richmond personal property taxes, and Thomas and his family long remained the only Rutherfords in Richmond. John A. H. Rutherford moved by spring 1805 from Richmond to Charlotte County, VA. John, too, was the only Rutherford in his county and remained so throughout his life.

It seems very possible, although still speculation, that Moses Abbott may have worked in Richmond for Thomas Rutherford, the prominent Richmond merchant whose business, like all "high end" merchants, would include imported goods. The 1810 census shows the Richmond household of Thomas Rutherford, age over 45, included 3 males age 26-44, which was Moses' age and not the age of any sons of Thomas Rutherford. There were also 5 males age 16-26, only one of whom could be Thomas' son. City merchants with large businesses often had living accommodations for unmarried employees. Moses could have

known John A. H. Rutherford through their mutual connections with Thomas Rutherford. Moses could even have done work for John A. H. Rutherford to obtain provisions, including imported wines and liquors, for John's prospering tavern. In any case, if Moses did not work for these men in particular, he undoubtedly worked for someone like them. Moses' co-purchasers for the Richmond warehouse land show he was in a circle of associates with similar merchant connections and prospects.

The other witness to Moses Abbott's will, Henry W. Tucker, was a doctor and also a resident of Charlotte County, VA. Named in the spring 1815 and 1816 personal property tax lists for Charlotte County as "Doc't Henry Tucker" and "Doc't Henry W. Tucker" respectively, he was also the "Doc't Tucker" paid by Moses' executor, per the final settlement of Moses' estate. Another bill paid by Moses' executor was to "Doc't James Hunt," who also was living in Charlotte County in late 1815 and early 1816 and specifically named "Doc't James Hunt" in the March 1816 tax lists. (Interestingly, James Hunt might be one originally living near the Abbots in Halifax who returned there bet. 1817-1818.) Yet another bill was paid to "T. T. Bouldin" (Thomas T. Bouldin), who was a lawyer and court judge in Charlotte Court House and possibly drew up Moses' will. Most telling, though, is the man paid for "making [the] coffin" for Moses. He was Allen W. Elliott, who tax lists show moved in mid-to-late 1815 from his birth place of Prince Edward County to adjacent Charlotte County, where he was living when Moses died and where Elliott married in 1819.

Thus, the records clearly show that Moses Abbott died in Charlotte Court House, Charlotte County, VA, while staying at John A. H. Rutherford's tavern residence (also paid by Moses' estate). Charlotte County, and particularly the town of Charlotte Court House, was on the primary route from Richmond to Moses' family in Halifax near today's Crystal Hill. The Abbots lived abt. 120 miles southwest of Richmond but only abt. 25 miles southwest of Charlotte Court House. So close, yet so far.

The cumulative evidence indicates that Moses Abbott likely was traveling home to Halifax to spend Christmas with his family when he stopped at John A. H. Rutherford's tavern for business, or to visit with a friend or business acquaintance, or simply to eat and rest. Moses may suddenly have taken ill there or was too ill by the time he arrived to continue the final day's journey home. As we discuss shortly, illness seems more likely than an injury, but the latter is also a possibility. Moses probably died not long after writing his will Christmas Eve 1815, witnessed by his host and his doctor. Moses' will had to be proved in his residence county of Henrico, requiring his executor to travel about 240 miles round-trip. Moses' brother John Abbott in Halifax, the executor, and will witness Henry W. Tucker in Charlotte, easily could have waited until the worst winter weather was over before journeying to Henrico County, where the will was proved in Henrico Court 1 Apr 1816. (There was no legal requirement to file a will immediately, and it was not unusual to file several months or longer after a death. Except for final distribution to the heirs and legatees, an executor was empowered by the will to act for the estate prior to formal filing.)

There is yet another curious aspect to this story that supports Moses died from illness a short time after writing his will. John A. H. Rutherford was no older than mid-to-late 40s at Christmas 1815 when he witnessed Moses' will. Yet John wrote his own will 7 Feb 1816 and died before 4 Mar 1816, when his will was proved in Charlotte County Court. [*Charlotte CC Case Index 1831-001, LVA*] In fact, in the Charlotte County personal property tax lists for 1816, the entry for him dated only "Feby" lists "John A. H. Rutherford est [estate]," showing Rutherford

died in three weeks or less of writing his will. One cannot help but wonder whether John died from the same acute illness as Moses. At least John Rutherford's likewise untimely death so soon after Moses died at Rutherford's home makes it seem more likely that Moses died from illness rather than injury. (Four other untimely adult deaths in the Abbott family occurred in Halifax bet. 1813-1815.)

When Moses Abbott's will was presented in Henrico Court 1 Apr 1816, John Rutherford could not testify to Moses' will as the second witness, as he, too, was deceased. Instead, Joshua Crump appeared in Henrico Court to testify to "the handwriting" of witness John A. H. Rutherford along with Henry W. Tucker. Joshua Crump was a resident of Richmond. He likely had business dealings with John Rutherford in order to swear to John's handwriting, since no family relationship between them has been found. Joshua Crump and Moses Abbott also could have worked together in Richmond.

In 1817, the town of Charlotte Court House (then named Maryville) was divided into lots to be sold at public auction. "All the town lots were sold in 1817 subject to a covenant that the owner would open no new tavern for five years in competition with the Widow Rutherford, who had a lease on the Old Tavern." [Hutcheson (1923)] John A. H. Rutherford's will gave his widow the option of remaining in residence at the tavern "if she chooses and thinks my estate will be benefitted thereby," or moving to their estate. If the latter, then his executors were ordered to "dispose of" the remainder of the lease "in the best terms in their power." The covenant restriction seems to imply John's widow chose to remain at the tavern. One of the 1817 town lot purchasers was Henry W. Tucker, Moses' will witness and doctor. Another purchaser was James A. Bouldin, a lawyer in Charlotte Court House who lived near Rutherford's tavern and witnessed John A. H. Rutherford's 1816 will. James A. Bouldin was a brother of Thomas T. Bouldin, also a lawyer in Charlotte Court House as well as a county judge, who was paid by Moses Abbott's estate and could have drawn up Moses' will.

All of the people appointed to served in some capacity in the probate of Moses' estate were Halifax residents. Moses' executor, his brother John Abbott, lived in Halifax, as did William B. Banks, the other executor named in the will. John's travel expenses to Richmond on behalf of the estate over the next two years cost the estate a whopping \$597.62. According to a notation in the final settlement, the other legatees (John's mother and siblings) approved his travel by carriage. Fortunately, Moses' estate could well afford it, since the alternative was for 43-year-old John Abbott to make the 240-mile round-trips on horseback.

The commissioners who examined the settlement of Moses' estate accounts, namely Richard R. High, Nathaniel Barksdale, and James Fulkerson, were all Halifax residents, and at least two were close family friends. James Fulkerson was a near-neighbor and life-long friend of the Abbott family. Moses' brother Fleming Abbott witnessed the will of James' father John Fulkerson in 1803, and in 1818, James became part of the Abbott family when his sister Catharine Fulkerson married Moses' brother Richard Abbott. Nathaniel Barksdale was an adjacent Abbott neighbor by at least 1811. [HDB23:92] Nathaniel's wife Patsey M. Barksdale (*née* Martha/Patsy Hurt) witnessed Moses' mother Frances Abbott's will in 1820 [HWB13:30], and both Nathaniel Barksdale and James Fulkerson were appraisers of the estate of Frances Abbott in 1823. [HWB13:114]

Almost thirteen years after the settlement accounts of Moses Abbott's estate were approved and recorded in Henrico County on 1 May 1820, there still were outstanding debts owed to

Moses' estate. Apparently the legatees did not feel it worthwhile or profitable enough to continue trying to recoup the debts. By a deed dated 12 Jan 1833, Moses' five siblings and legatees--Richard, Moody, John, Elizabeth, and Patsy Abbott--sold their interests in Moses' estate for \$250 to Mel Spragins, also of Halifax County. [HDB40:493] They sold not only their interests and rights to the whole of Moses' estate but "especially [their rights] to all the debts of every description which are now due to the said John Abbott, Exor. of the aforesaid Moses Abbott dec'd as aforesaid or due to the estate of the said dec'd or due to us as legatees of him the said Moses Abbott dec'd..." On the same day, John Abbott, as executor, granted power of attorney to Mel Spragins "to recover all debts owed to John Abbott, executor, or to the estate of Moses Abbott..." [HDB40:495] The witnesses to both deeds included John Owen, related to Hatcher Owen who married Moses' sister Mary Abbott in 1787, and Wesley M. Abbott, son of Moses' half-brother William Abbott (b. 1756).

Date: 12 Jan 1833

From: John Abbott, Richard Abbott, Moody Abbott, Elizabeth Abbott, and Patsy Abbott of Halifax County [all legatees of Moses Abbott, dec'd]

To: Mel Spragins of Halifax

For: \$250

Description: All the right title and interest both real and personal of every description which we have in and to all the estate of Moses Abbott, dec'd (late of the City of Richmond) which we are interested in as legatees agreeably to his last will and testament bearing date 24 Dec 1815 and especially to all the debts of every description which are now due to the said John Abbott, Exor. of the aforesaid Moses Abbott dec'd as aforesaid or due to the estate of the said dec'd or due to us as legatees of him the said Moses Abbott dec'd as aforesaid by virtue of the will of him the said Moses Abbott dec'd which said will was admitted to probat[e] by the County Court of Henrico on the first day of April 1816

Signed: John Abbott, Richard Abbott, Moody Abbott, Patsy Abbott, Elizabeth Abbott

Witnesses: John Owen, Wesley M. Abbott, James P. Roberts

Recorded: 28 Jan 1833

[Source: Halifax Deed Book 40, p. 493. Reel 19. Library of Virginia. Richmond, VA. Abstract by J. Horsley. Comments in brackets added.]

Date: 12 Jan 1833

From: John Abbott of Halifax, executor of the estate of Moses Abbott, late of the City of Richmond [VA] as appointed by the will of Moses Abbott dated 24 Dec 1815 and proved 1 Apr 1816 in Henrico County Court

To: Mel Spragins of Halifax

Description: John Abbott grants to Mel Spragins his Power of Attorney ("Irrevocable") to recover all debts owed to John Abbott, executor, or to the estate of Moses Abbott and to discharge same and any other lawful and needful acts as Spragins deems proper to recover the debts

Signed: John Abbott, exor. of Moses Abbott, dec'd

Witnesses: John Owen, Wesley M. Abbott, James P. Roberts

Recorded: 28 Jan 1833

[Source: Halifax Deed Book 40, p. 495. Reel 19. Library of Virginia. Richmond, VA. Abstract by J. Horsley. Comments in brackets added.]

Moses Abbott's death in late 1815 or early 1816 was the sixth untimely family death in five years, and two other of Moses' siblings likely died within the six years before. Between

1804-1818, Moses' mother, Frances Abbott (who died 1822-1823), lost four of her ten adult children, a stepson she partly raised, his wife, a son-in-law, and two adult step-grandsons, one of whom lived next to her all his life. Four of those deaths left the widowed spouse with young children, and although well-provided, still their lives were made harder.

Yet Moses Abbott's sudden death in his late 30s has its own poignancy as a capable and enterprising young man with a promising future he was unable to live long enough to fulfill.

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