

NANCY ABBOTT and FAMILY
Daughter 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

The following is Joan's note to herself:
WAITING FOR 1807 DEED OF SALE BY WILLIAM & WIFE NANCY

NANCY ABBOTT, eldest daughter of Benjamin and Ann Abbott, was born no later than 1767 (unless born in the first week of 1768), as she signed her own consent to marry on 7 Jan 1789, thus at least age 21 at the time. Her older brother, Elisha, was born in late 1764 or early 1765, and her next younger brother, Armistead, was born late 1770 or early 1771 (both per their personal property tax lists), so the age spread makes it likely Nancy was born abt. 1767 rather than earlier.

Nancy Abbott was recorded in Halifax records only as Nancy, while her mother was recorded as Ann Abbott. (Nancy was a commonly-used nickname for Ann.) It was Benjamin's daughter Nancy Abbott who witnessed the following deed, not his wife Ann called by the nickname, because a wife was not a valid witness to her husband's deeds.

Date: 9 Feb 1788

From: William Pearman of Pittsylvania Co.

To: BENJAMIN ABBOTT

For: £100

Description: tract of land on the north side of Banister River [number of acres left blank but listed as 100 acres in Benjamin Abbott's 1789 land taxes]

Bounds: Banister River, Fowlas, Reed [or Read], Epperson

Signed: William (x) Pearman (his mark)

Witnesses: WM GOODWIN, ELISHA ABBOTT, NANCEY ABBOTT

Recorded: 28 Jul 1788 - Proved in Halifax Court by the oaths of three subscribing witnesses [Source: Halifax Deed Book 14, p. 286. LVA Reel 6. Abstract by J. Horsley. Comments in brackets added.]

The other witnesses with Nancy Abbott were her soon-to-be husband William Goodwin and her older brother Elisha Abbott. Nancy could be 21 years old by the time of this deed, but she did not have to be, since witnesses were not required to be of full legal age. Although William Goodwin obviously was living in Halifax by this time, he does not appear on the yearly personal property tax lists until July 1789, the year he married Nancy in January. No Goodwin is listed in these Halifax tax records from their beginning in 1782 through 1789 when William is first listed, but several other Goodwin families appear in 1792.

Nancy Abbott was married to William Goodwin in Halifax County, VA on 12 Jan 1789 by Rev. Hawkins Landrum, a Methodist minister who performed a number of Abbott family marriages. William's marriage bond is dated 7 Jan 1789, secured by his bondsman Robert Trammel. At the same time, Nancy signed her own consent, showing she was then age 21 or over. [Halifax Marriage Bond Register No. 1. LVA Reel 82.]

By 1792, two other Goodwins lived near William and Nancy, who at that time were living near her father on the south side of the Banister River. They were Richard Goodwin and Peter Goodwin. Peter also had one male age 16-21 in 1792 and a second male that age in 1793 who could be Peter's sons.

Nancy's father, Benjamin Abbott, died bet. 1796-1797. During the two to three years before his death, Benjamin sold the various tracts of land he owned to his children as their inheritance. In 1794, Benjamin sold land to his son-in-law William Goodwin as his daughter Nancy's share. A wife could not own property separate from her husband, so property meant for daughters often was deeded in her husband's name.

Date: 25 Aug 1794

From: BENJAMIN ABBOTT of Antrim Parish, Halifax County

To: WILLIAM GOODWIN of same

For: £100

Description: 165[sic] acres, "all that...parcel of land that the s'd Benjamin Abbott bought of John Diah [John Dyer] Situate lying & being in the County and Parish afores'd & on the South Side of Tureble Creek [Terrible Creek]..."

Bounds: Col'o John Coleman, Milstone Road [Millstone Road], Courthouse Road, Fountain [Fontaine]

Signed: Benjamin (B) Abbott (his mark)

Witnesses: ELISHA ABBOTT, JOSEPH ABBOTT, JACOB ABBOTT [all were William's brothers-in-law]

Partly proved 22 Sep 1794 by the oaths of two of the three subscribing witnesses.

Recorded: 26 Jan 1795, after being fully proved by the oath of the third witness.

[Source: Halifax Deed Book 16, p. 300-301. LVA Reel 7. Abstract by J. Horsley. Comments in brackets added.]

Benjamin Abbott purchased the above land the year before (also paying £100). [HDB15:603] His 1793 deed estimates the size as 242 acres, and the deed to William estimates only 165 acres. However, comparing the plats for both deeds proves they are the same tract with the northwest boundary straightened (a difference of only 3 acres) and the adjacent landowner named correctly in William's deed. In other words, Benjamin sold William the full tract Benjamin purchased a year before and for the same price Benjamin paid (not half again as much, which is how it appears from the incorrect number of acres).

Soon after their purchase, Nancy and William moved to this land, which seems to be abt. 5 miles southeast of her family's land and was located along the east side of Millstone Road, roughly today's US-501. This location placed them in the personal property tax lists for the North District (generally the part of Halifax north and east of Banister River), where they were the only Goodwin family in that district.

William Goodwin is listed yearly in the North District through 1806. Several years he is recorded as "William Gooding." (Goodwins in the South Dist. personal property tax lists also were sometimes spelled Gooding.) William Goodwin is missing in the 1807 lists (as sometimes happened). However, he and Nancy were still living in Halifax in Apr 1807 when they sold their land at Terrible Creek.

Date: 8 Apr 1807

From: WILLIAM GOODWIN and NANCY GOODWIN his wife

To: John Hannor

For: £176

Description: 176 acres on waters of Terrible Creek

Bounds: Millstone Road, Bruces Road, Hannor, Dickson, Col'o Coleman. Carter's and P[___?] line, Easly [Easley]

Signed: William Goodwin, Nancy (M)[?] Goodwin [her mark]

Witnesses: Tho's Clark, John Landrum, William Haynes, Elizabeth (+) Haynes [her mark]

Release of dower by Nancy, wife of William Goodwin

Recorded. 22 Jun 1807

[Source: Halifax Deed Book 21, p. 414-415. LVA Reel 9. Abstract by J. Horsley. Comments in brackets added.]

Note:

This is the only deed of sale indexed for William Goodwin. Presumably the land being sold is the land at Terrible Creek and Millstone Road that William purchased from his father-in-law Benjamin Abbott in 1794. [HDB16:300] (Most of the bounds had been updated, and half of the metes are blacked out on the microfilm copy, so the plat could not be confirmed.) William's wife, Nancy Abbott Goodwin, is consistently referred to in the deed only as "Nancy," but at her signature there is a middle letter or sign resembling an "M." This seems to be only a mark that is unlabeled as such, just as the "+" of Elizabeth Haynes is not labeled "her mark" as it commonly would be. The bound of "Dickson" is a relation of Polly Dickson, wife of Nancy's brother Jacob Abbott.

No tax was levied in 1808. By spring 1809, no Goodwin is listed in the North District at least through 1813 (last year checked). However, in 1809 a William Goodwin is listed for the first time in the South District, and he had a second white male over age 16 in his household. If this is William and Nancy Abbott Goodwin's family (as it seems), the tax list indicates their eldest son was born 1793 or a year or two earlier.

William Goodwin leaves the annual Halifax personal property tax lists after 1809, and the family apparently moved away. At least, Nancy does not appear as a widow in subsequent years. Otherwise, tax lists give no indication of wives, so we cannot prove whether Nancy was still living after signing the deed of sale. Also, I have not been able to learn where they moved. This William Goodwin could not be identified in later censuses due to the prevalence of his name and the absence of wives' names until the 1850 census, by which time both Nancy and William apparently were deceased.

Researched and written by Joan Horsley

Based on research as of Sept 2013

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The following is Joan's note to herself:

WAITING FOR 1807 DEED OF SALE BY WILLIAM & WIFE NANCY

Except for the deed of sale noted above, it appears this is a fairly complete report that Joan Horsley was working on when she died. There were no other 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:

Joan Horsley. *Nancy Abbott, Daughter of Benjamin Abbott of Halifax County, Virginia* (Raleigh, NC: J. Horsley, 2013) Available online at www.joanhorsley.org.

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