

# **Geo. W. Abbitt**

**Material Contributed by Herbert M. Abbitt**

*Including letters to his wife*

*Fannie Webb Abbitt.*

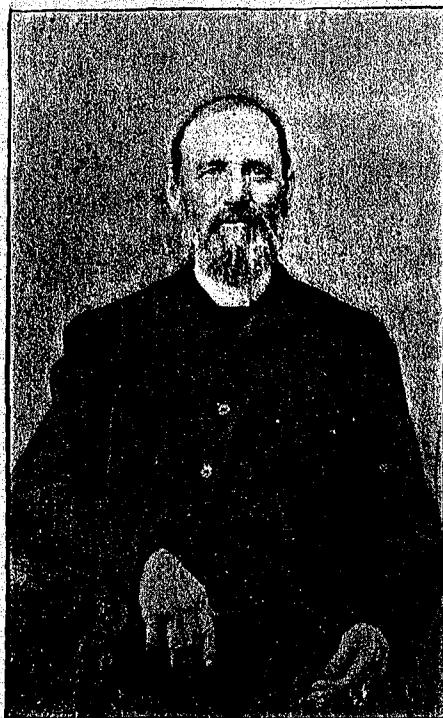
*The letters were sent to her at her home  
at Gravel Knoll during the Civil War.*

*Also included are letters to Fannie from  
her brother Capt. Charles E. Webb.*

*Captain Charles Webb was  
a captain and doctor  
for the Confederate States of America.*

OBITUARY  
AND  
WAR RECORD  
OF  
COLONEL GEORGE W. ABBITT

OF  
APPOMATTOX COUNTY  
VIRGINIA



George W. Abbott was born in what is now a portion of Appomattox County on June 19th, 1828. As a boy and young man he was educated at Union Academy: after graduating from this school he pursued the occupation of farming until the beginning of the Civil War, at which time he was elected First Lieutenant of Company B, 42, Virginia Infantry, Wise's Brigade.

George W. Abbott as a soldier had come into his predestined sphere, his bravery, courage and daring made a splendid example for his men to strive to equal, but which they could never hope to surpass. He was soon promoted to the rank of Captain, from which position he commanded not only the respect and obedience, but also the admiration and love of his men, whom he invariably led into battle charging at the head of his Company with the courage and heroism that only a patriot can exhibit.

At the time of the surrender Colonel Abbott was in command of his regiment, and now behold his actions when he knew the Southern cause to be doomed, yet he lost not one whit of that fidelity that had marked all of his previous conduct. In fact, the incident which I will now narrate forms the climax of a war record that is equaled by few.

The history of Colonel Abbott's life may be summed up in one sentence: He was a brave soldier, honorable gentleman, and true Christian.

#### A. COMRADE.

Richmond, Va., January 24th, 1867.

To W. M. Hannah, of the Senate; and, F. N. Watkins, Esq., House of Delegates:

Gentlemen—I am informed by one of your constituents that the name of Colonel G. W. Abbott, of Appomattox, will be brought before the Legislature for the office of Brigadier-General of Militia.

I take great pride and pleasure in urging his election. No one can know better than I do his worth as a man, a patriot and soldier. He was under my command through nearly the whole war: was with me in Northwestern Virginia, in North Carolina, at Roanoke Island, at Chaffin's Bluff, at Williamsburg and Malvern Hill, at John's Island, in South Carolina, at Walthall Junction, at the defenses of Petersburg on the 9th and 15th of June, 1864, at the storming of the Hawlett's lines, in the trenches around Petersburg, on the right of the Confederate lines at Hatchet's Run, and especially under my eye on the 29th of March, 1865, at the forks of the Military Road and the Buckingham Plank Road, and on the 31st of March, 1865, on the White Oak Road, and during the entire retreat from that ground to the surrender at Appomattox. He was with me in that retreat in the fight at the Magazine

On the 8th of April, 1865, Colonel Abbott obtained permission to spend the night with his family, but next morning he was back at his post marching at the head of his regiment to the Old Court House, knowing full well that surrender was imminent, and that there was no means of escape for Lee's shattered forces; yet notwithstanding this, and also the fact that he left his wife and six children unprotected, he returned to his post, from where in all probability he would soon be sent to some Northern prison.

This incident is an index to Colonel Abbott's war record. Colonel Abbott as a citizen was loved and respected by all who knew him. He was at one time Commissioner of Revenue, and later County Clerk. He lived to the ripe old age of 84 years, dying on June 25th, 1912. His interment took place at his home, "Gravel Knoll," Appomattox County, on Thursday, June 27th. His grandsons, Messrs. G. R., R. O., W. B. and Ber Abbott, and W. J. and A. W. Covington, serving as pall-bearers, while his grand-daughters acted as flower-bearers.

He is survived by his widow and nine children, viz: A. H. Abbott, of Lynchburg; R. D. Abbott, Mrs. W. J. Covington, R. W. Abbott; Mrs. Andrew White, George F. Abbott, of Appomattox County; A. B. Abbott, of Newport News; C. W. Abbott, of Amherst County, and Mrs. Mark Bernart, of Norfolk, Virginia.

at Big Creek, at Flat Creek, at the memorable fight of the 6th of April, 1865, at Sailor's Creek, and on every occasion he was more than efficient. He was steady at his post, always in his place, calm, cool and sensible in every respect except to fear. On the 31st of March, and some time before that day, he was in command of his regiment, the Fourth Virginia, and when, in attempting a difficult movement under a hot fire, it broke. He mainly rallied it, and my whole left, and enabled me to bring off my Brigade with honor. He led his Regiment in the last rally and volley at Appomattox, and I parted with him as a comrade and brother officer, in whom I gloried as a man, modest, quiet, moral, intelligent; as a patriot, steadfast and constant, and as an officer, self-respectful and obedient, brave and efficient.

I commend him to the General Assembly as worthy among the worthiest of their choice and confidence. He knows nothing of this testimonial. I honor myself in giving it.

Most respectfully,

HENRY A. WISE,  
Brigadier-General C. S. A.  
Prisoner of War on Parole.

In The County Court of Appomattox

March Term 1892 -

Upon the petition of 200 qualified voters of the County of Appomattox asking for an election to take the sense of the qualified voters of the said County upon the question of the removal of the County Seal of the said County to Appomattox Depot in said County.

It is ordered that the Sheriff of the County shall post notice for at least 30 days at all the Precincts and all the public places in said County of the time of the election and that notices be served upon the Registrar and Judge of election of each of the polling places in said County requiring the said Election Office in the said County to hold an election at their respective Precincts on the 7th day in April 1892 to take the sense of the qualified voters of the said County upon the question of the removal of the County Seal of said County to Appomattox Depot in the said County subject to the general election laws of the Commonwealth, except that the returns of the said election shall show the number of votes cast for removal, and the number of votes against removal, together with the

Number of registered voters upon the Registration book of their respective Precincts as  
the time of the holding of the said Election.

A Copy

Yester

Geo. W. Abbott Clerk

136

PARSONS  
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A First class Linen Ledger Paper.  
FOLIO.  
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For Account Books, Law Blanks, Letter and  
Bill Heads and all purposes where a paper for repeated  
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#2500 Cash. & See Tax for  
Recording seed from  
Gov. Indiana assigned to  
said Dr. R. A. North  
John Abbott  
Officer of the  
Asses 12<sup>th</sup> 1888 B

Camp Overflow S.C. May 3rd 1864

My dear Fannie

I recd your letter dated the 28th Ultimo. I was very sorry to hear you were so much afflicted + hope you will soon get much improved from your present condition. Be very careful in future how you walk or otherwise take violent excrise. You ought to have a spare horse now, and when business or will calls you to go, ride or go in the buggy. The colt I wanted to rest after you got through planting corn. You stated that Pat sent for you on important business but did not state wheather you so considered it. I am glad you got pay from uncle martin in a sheep. I thought it would be slow pay there, Jimme knew of it + said he would attend to it. Bens interrogatories were much more inteligent than I expected from him. He was of opinion if God was so good, he only made good things and good people, such a conclusion was quite natural for a child of his age, Buck loves his sheep it seems dearly. I thought he would of been willing to let you have a ram for four bushels of corn. The one he spoke of was at Jho McKinnies and I was under the impression he was willing to give the sheep in pay for four bushells of corn he had already recd, but I suppose I misunderstood him, I am truly glad to hear Eliza is so much better, am on the other hand sorry to hear our old father Walker is so near the grave, His notions were queer about his coffin. It would seem to me I should like to be buried in rather neater stile than the one he purposed, Now as for funeral services I am no strong advocate for them nor do I oppose them, The living might be profited thereby but the dead never. Our arms still continue victorious in the South west from last advices. Gen Smith has gained a second victory over Banks, the reported Yankey loss estimated at ten thousand. Prices Temple has not been left destitute of laurels either He had a decided victory over Steel, capturing his four thousand prisioners, besides wagon trains + other things to tedious now to mention, May 4th I don't know now wheather to say the news are good this morning. The report says we are for Virginia, I command the Regt to day + I have orders to be ready to march at a moments notice, but to wait for farther notice, We will leave here, there is not a doubt of that, I've become quite lean since I been here, Some of the boys have been laughing at me about being so lean + small I thought I would weigh + show them I was not so light as they thought, I did not weigh as much as I thought I would, only 130, I feel tolerable well yet, I hope you will keep your health, for I am as solicitous about it as you are yourself, any thing that pains you

bodily or mentally pains me, Tell FA to write, Gus & Zol to write, Tell all them howdy, Give respects to Aunt Nancy,

### Write often

Your devoted Geo

Va. Hospital June 1st 1864

My Dear Fannie

You seem to be so very solicitous about my welfare that I can not be indifferent to your wishes, but do I deserve all this solicitude + anxiety at your hands, I am not such a husband as such a wife should have, you was hearten + affectionate towards me + I was the contrary appear to you to the contrary. It won't always do to judge of the interior by the exterior Fannie if I know myself I love you above all others + I know you are as near perfection as most women

[ ] growls at times [ ] such is the result of my peculiar disposition When fretted that my ill manner gets the uperhand of my better disposition, I must if spared try to correct those ills in my temperament which are hindering to you + killing to my sober thoughts. I am getting very tired staying at the hospital + I shall leave here for my company in a few days if I get no worse than I now am. The attention to the sick

is sick much he certainly gets as good attention as if at home. The Ladies of the City visit here regularly every thing is kept in clean neat order + show a disposition to assist our sick + wounded soldiers by their presence + bringing them little delicacies which wet the appetite. The Goodness of the Ladies of Petersburg will not soon be forgotten by the sick + wounded soldiers of our army. You have not mentioned any thing about my suit lately whether you have gotten on the way with it nor wether you have had luck with your sheep. How may have you got, continue to exchange produce for sheep when an opportunity offers. I would not care if you have a hundred. Write me soon whether Mr Ferguson has planted his tobacco + whether he has gotten his corn land fine like a garden spot or is it lumpy. I am so anxious for you to make a good crop of corn then you can live better, have more meat better horses + you will be better laten fixed. How are your vegetables looking. How are the potatoes I have planted looking I expect a great yield from that patch. You must write how the sugar cane looks.

There is not much news. There was fighting yesterday in nine miles of Richmond + drove the enemy back some little. Butler has withdrawn some of his forces for no division to reinforce Grant. There will be terrible fighting. Yes [ ] this contest is over round Richmond, our Brigrade is still in the same place on the [ ] bank of the James River.

Your devoted Geo.

Petersburg Trenches Nov. 24th 1864

My Dear Fannie,

The last letter I recd from you was Nov. 17th I expected a letter when you sent my trunk by Dick. You sent me a nice assortment of good things. The turkey especially [ ] and butter, potatoes, turnip, and cabbage were all good. I have eaten more heartily of butter + potatoes. Thank those two latties who made the sorghum you sent, It was superior than what you sent me before. The brandy was in rather a limited supply. After giving a drink to those who were present there was but little left, I got only two drinks in fact, I shall send the trunk back again in a very few days I want you to send me some back bones, spare ribs + a little pork + anything you think proper. Tell Gussie I am very much obliged to him for his apples + all the children that sent me something. Dick told me about Gus sending me the apples, about the overshirts, I should like to get them if they are pretty. One of my outside shirts is nearly worn out, I am nearly out drawers, My coat wont last me the winter, I am already getting ashamed of it, what is the prospect for all.

Thom Conner was badly, I am afraid mortally wounded through the left lung, It was done day before yesterday when on his return from the picket lines to the main line He is in in the Gen Hospital in Petersburg. He set for me to come + see him. I saw him yesterday. He was so full he could talk but little while I was there. He told me if he died he wanted me to send him home, I told him I would attend to it. He remarked, I want to do better, asked me to send Capt. Gills to see him. I told him when I left he must put his trust in the one above. He said he would, It was an effecting scene, He was of one of the very best men I have no better soldier in no company. I have 4 men that came over to the Yanks this week, Sam Webb, + 8 Manns. I hope those are the last of my company that are so lost to conscience as to forsake all, country + friends and go forever into disgrace,

Nov. 28th, 63 Camp Duke S.C.

My dear Fannie

Don't write to me with a pencil nor with such pale ink. It bothers me to read it when written with either. A portion of your letter I got today was very plain written with black ink a portion with a pencil or very pale ink, I can't determine exactly.

The day you wrote your letter myself + Lt. Parker both convalescents took a trip on the [ ] RR for our health, more for recreation than anything expecting to get a good dinner also but we signally failed. It was a hard matter to get anything at all. We finally induced a woman to cook us some sweet potatoes after she refused to get us dinner, which she did, + made our repast a heavy one too of potatoes + beef. I had a considerable bilious attack lately am much improved now. It lasted me about a week I am fearful I will not keep my health [ ] much longer [ ] now [ ] resign if I could keep out of service after doing so, I will have to make the best of it. I can in my present position for it would not do to resign + be conscripted immediately that would not do so ever. I would rather be a private by far + have my health than an officer with my present health, I thought when I first came to S.C. my health would be good + even after my attack of chills at [ ] I thought probably I would get my health restored again. It may be after I recovered from this last attack I will be hearty again, at least I hope so. A man feels very lonely + disconsolate in the Army sick, Sid is quite sick with rheumatism, but is improving some now. I don't consider him very dangerous. He is more home sick than anything else. He is almost dead for a furlough, Nov. 29th. It is a cloudy dismal, raining day. how comfortable we are to some the other soldiers of the Confederate Army. We have all of us good tents or flies. A citizen would call it bad quarters, but soldiers consider themselves well to do when they have good flies on tents.

I am very much in hopes that our children will escape diphtheria. It is so fatal. If any of them get sick let me know about it. How do you come on getting up your school. Its very important our children should go to school regularly more especially Gus + Nole, I want to give my children an education if nothing else, I want to learn them good manners + to inculcate upon their minds the beauty of good breeding and the great aversion of nice people to ill breeding + vulgarity. Lillie bothers me a great deal, Most always when I think of her I feel sorry for her for because I consider [ ] exactly intelligible express. It may be because she is the only girl and so timid. You ought to be very smooth with her + not [ ] her any

at all unless you are compelled to do so to make her behave herself, that is one duty a parent is bound to comply with if he does his duty to his child. The old adage spare the rod you ruin the child. Some children need the rod others it ruins. The disposition of the child should be taken in consideration. Our children, I believe need but little whipping being rather timid.

You spoke of boarding your Ma, another year, I think your offer to board her low enough. It may seem high to her, but she must take into consideration the worth of the money she pays. If the Parties will take the money in payment of the loan, then you could afford to board her or any of them at a much reduced price, even at five dollars per month.

I am glad to hear you have a good stock of pigs for [ ] very important for everyone at home to raise their own meat if they dont they will probably have to do without.

You spoke of being delighted at getting letters from me, not more so than I am for I would be glad to get one everyday, letters from home are allways a rarity to me, You certainly do not write as often as I do, if so I would get them oftenier, What has become of your likeness, I have been expecting it. Send it by Lt. Patterson

Devoted by your Geo W. Abbott

Camp 2nd Va. Cavalry

April 7th 186

Dear Sister:

Doubtless you will consider this now the second or third letter written unanswered, sufficient evidence of [ ] for you to reply.

I think so[ ] I have not received a line from you since I left. Nor has [ ] replied to one I wrote her but the mails may be in fault, tho some say the Females are generally more so. For several days past I have been suffering with rheumatism consequent(ly) from the present bad weather, it principally affect my back and I think will go off at the approach of good weather when this mornings sun gives early promise by his unclouded rays and genial warmth. We all feel, that now is the eve of fearful times to this Army that we will very soon be called when again to "measure strength" with the Army of the Potomac the result of which will be independence a word degradation to us. I can not think providence will tempelize farther with this great struggle if he is against us, the result will show if for us then we are safe. I hope I think I know our cause is just and right, from whence I conclude we will be victorious and no one can conceive the fulness of meaning belonging to that [ ] who had not passed through the terrible ordeal necessary to obtain it. One very reason of indifference on the part of mankind for the Christian religion is the ignorance of the necessary and terrible struggle from the mire to the rock: from hell to heaven.

I got a letter from Clifton a short time ago he headed it "Camp Fishpond" I wish George would write me also.

I had quite a lively affair in Lynchburg for a short while but stopped it on account of a "bad streak". The troops are in confident spirits. Health good. We are expecting to go towards Fredericksburg in a few days.

My horses are not looking well.

Remember me to all my relations and friends.

Love to Ma, Fat, Gus, Ral, Libby, + Bernard and yourself receive that tender affection which my worthy sister deserves.

Address this

Capt. Chas. E. Webb

2nd Va. Cavalry

September 22, 1862

Charlestown, Jefferson County Virginia

Dear Sister, I recieved your letter some two days ago, but did not have time to answer it immediately. I thought while was in Maryland that I was [ ] from home. I had know way of corrsponding with you all I feel like I am at home again. Enough of that. I am verry glad proud to hear of the birth of my boy. I believe it would be a boy, ever since you told me what you did all about its being so verry small. Bettie you know up such things that makes the hero so small if you will read the life of Francis Marion you will find he was a verry small swarthy child. So you see Marion turned out to be a big man a big man in the eyes of the world. Give my love to my wife and little [ ] let me know shat she thinks of the Baby. I want Nelson to stay at home next year. Sister I want that land I had in oats this year to be fallowed this fall for oats next spring my bay horse and Jenny can do it verry easy. I want [ ] to stay at home next year to help Morris and to clear a big field on [ ] I want all the land that is cut down to be got up and put in corn next spring I mean that that is already cut down I want Morris to get up the land below the dam for corn I want all the work done towards my corn land this fall that can dun. good by C.V. Webb

Direct to gordonsville 2 Briggade 2 Regt

PM please forward you and Bettie must write to me

Camp Near, Petersburg July 6th,  
Mrs. Abbit

I suppose you have, ere this heard of the death of your dear Brother Charles. Allow me one his most intimate friends and associates to offer you my heart felt sympathies in your distress. In your bereavement, I have lost my best + most intimate friend whose place in my estimation cannot soon be filled. Few knew your Brother as I did, and I can testify that I never knew a nobler or more generous hearted man; always ready to share with his friends their joys and troubles alike. No officer of the Regt. Stood higher in the estimation of the men. He was respected and beloved by all who knew him. His company is deeply distressed at their loss which is surely felt by them as he was their best friend in time of need. I had fondly hoped that he + I might be spared through this relentless war, that we might in civil life live together as neighbors + that we might long enjoy the society of each other. Only a short time before his death he + I were riding along + was talking of the pleasures that were in store for us + how we would enjoy the day when these troubles should subside and we be allowed to return to our homes and friends in peace to receive their greetings + enjoy their smiles. But how vain + uncertain are all earthly expectations. It was his wish as he had told me long ago - should he fall in his countrys defence, that his body should be taken to the [ ] burying place and I had promised him to see that his wish was respected if I was near when he should fall. Poor fellow he had been spared through many a hard fought battle; had passed through many trying times - had suffered hardships such as none other that a soldier can know at last to fall a victim to a dreadful feavor. He continued at his post of duty until he could no longer keep up. Much longer than he should have done until the disease had taken to strong a hold on his system to be controlled by the surgeons. I was little prepared to hear of his death as I had no idea he was as sick as he was. I couldn't get to see him as our Regt was in constant motion + I couldn't leave. I sent for Dan'l to go to him but he was too late. I was very sorry I couldn't be with him in his last hours to have rendered all the assistance I could to him + received his last messages to his friends. I hear he was decently buried Richmond. I send Dan'l with his horse and things to you - his pocketbook + private papers. If I can attend to anything connected with his affairs for you I'll do so with pleasure. My Mefs. wishes to hire Dan'l for the ballance of the year and should you think proper you can send him back to me + I'll arrange the matter all right. Hoping you may not have cause to

mourn the loss of any more of your Relatives this cruel war - am with much respect Your  
Friend + My kindest regards to your Ma + others -