

## A Biography of Oliver Reed Abbott

Oliver Abbott was born in 1800, the son of Moses Abbott and Alice Stearns. Oliver's father died while he was still very young, and when he was six years old his mother married Stephen Lane.

Stephen Lane owned the Deacon Job Lane House, although he and his family didn't live there - he probably rented it out. In 1826, the year before he died, he sold it to his stepson Oliver for \$1000. It was a twenty-six-acre farm with small house and a barn, carriage house and granary plus some outbuildings. (At Stephen's death, Oliver received eight more acres of pastureland.)

Oliver was in the throes of a tragedy. His wife, Mary Ann (Wilson), whom he had married in November of 1825, had died only a month and nine days later of consumption (tuberculosis).

However, Oliver married again in 1827. Coincidentally, his second wife's name was also Mary Ann (Buttrick). Probably about this time, he added the west side to his new house, and rebuilt the chimney and fireplaces. Between 1830-1835 he hired Rufus Porter, who lived in Billerica, to paint the monochrome murals in the parlor. (Note: the steamboat painted on the north wall does not help to date the mural - Clement invented the steamboat in 1807.)

Oliver and Mary Ann had five children: Eliza, Harriet Ann, Mary Alice, Oliver Davis, and Benjamin. (Benjamin died young). Oliver must have had a good voice, for he was the assistant singing master in Bedford's singing school. Well respected in Bedford, he was elected hog reeve and surveyor of highways when he was still in his twenties. Later, he served as a selectman and finally as Bedford's representative to the legislature.

In 1842, when he was 43, he died of consumption. His children were quite young; his son was only fourteen. The executor of his estate, Isaac Bacon, thought it best to sell the farm. Hiram L. Dutton bought it in 1843. SMcD 2018