

Mary Stone Biography
aka
Mary Stone Grimbball Lawton Fickling

Mary Stone was the daughter of Susannah Carrière and her first husband John Stone. She was born about 1720, probably on Johns Island, South Carolina and died in December 1803 in Black Swamp, South Carolina.

For many years, this important antecedent was erroneously thought to have been "Mary Sams" until family historians discovered the existence of the 3 x 5 inch plantation journal of Thomas Grimbball (d. 1721), which is now part of the *Cunningham and Lawton family papers, 1860s-1970s*, MS 1444, in the Georgia Historical Society in Savannah, Georgia. These family records have been transcribed and annotated by the Rev. Dr. Robert E. H. Peeples in *Transactions of the Huguenot Society of South Carolina* 87 (1982): 64-69.

Mary Stone's father, John Stone, died prior to 23 March 1723 on Johns Island, South Carolina. Her mother, Susannah Carrière, was the daughter of Huguenot immigrant Jean Carrière of Normandy, France and his wife Elizabeth. Following the death of John Stone, Susannah Carrière was married a second time about 1740 to Thomas Winborn, a planter of Wadmalaw Island. Susannah Carrière Stone Winborn died 29 September 1780. An excellent accounting of the Carrière and other Huguenot families can be found in *French Santee, A Huguenot Settlement in Colonial South Carolina*, by Susan Baldwin Bates and Harriott Cheves Leland (Otter Bay Books, LLC, Baltimore, MD, 2015).

The subject of this sketch, Mary Stone, was first married to Paul Grimbball on 29 November 1738. Paul Grimbball (1703-1750) was a son of Thomas Grimbball (d. 1721) and grandson of the English immigrant Paul Grimbball (ca. 1640-ca.1695). The grandson Paul Grimbball had been first married to Mary Barnwell, with whom he had eight children. Five children were born to the marriage of Mary Stone and Paul Grimbball prior to his death in 1750, with the last and sixth child being born posthumously. Mary Stone Grimbball then herself proceeded to make entries in the Grimbball Plantation journal.

The surviving children of Mary Stone and Paul Grimbball included Providence Grimbball (1745-1764; m. Ephriam Mikell), John Grimbball (1747-1780; m. Elizabeth Robert), and Anne Grimbball (1749-p 1807; m. Peter Robert).

About 1750, Mary Stone Grimbball was married a second time to William Lawton. Their only child was Joseph Lawton (1753-1815), progenitor of the Lawton family in South

Carolina. On 18 March 1773, Joseph Lawton married Sarah Robert (1755-1839), a sister to Peter Robert who married Joseph Lawton's half-sister, Anne Grimball.

Following the death of William Lawton, Mary Stone Grimball Lawton was married a third time on 15 January 1759 to Samuel Fickling. Their only son, also named Samuel Fickling (1761-1766), died at the age of five and there were no surviving Fickling offspring.

While little is known of Samuel Fickling, Mary Stone's third marriage endured for about 20 years. She was known as "Mary Fickling" for the remainder of her life. She died in December 1803, leaving a considerable estate. An inventory can be found in the *Lawton Family Papers*, Manuscripts R.102, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.

According to family tradition, Mary Stone Grimball Lawton Fickling was not on particularly good terms with her daughter-in-law, Sarah Robert Lawton. One might imagine that this was an uncomfortable situation as both had relocated to the small community of Black Swamp, South Carolina, which was later to be re-named Robertville in honor of the many Robert family members who settled in this area.

It is further family tradition that this conflict resulted in Mary Stone Grimball Lawton Fickling arranging to have herself buried in between her son Joseph Lawton and his wife Sarah Robert Lawton. No small feat for a woman who died in 1803, her Lawton son following in 1815, and her daughter-in-law living on until 1839.

Estimable family historians such as Thomas O. Lawton, Jr. and Robert E. H. Peeples have unsuccessfully tried to unravel the mystery of the burial sequence in the Robertville Baptist Church Cemetery. According to the 19th century tombstone inscriptions, the order of the tombstones when facing the Robertville Baptist Church from right to left, is Sarah Robert Lawton, George Moss Lawton (a grandson), and then Joseph Lawton.

With no attempt to fully resolve the riddle of exactly where Mary Stone Grimball Lawton Fickling was buried, with gracious permission of the Robertville Baptist Church community and with the assistance of Peeples-Rhoden Funeral Home a marker was erected in 2015 by Grimball and Lawton descendants in honor of our intrepid ancestress.

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