

THE LAWTONS'

On many pre Civil War Maps of Hilton Head Island there appears the name Lawton written across much of the southern end of the island. An examination of the federal land sales which took place on the island, after it was captured by federal troops during the Civil War, reveals a "Lawton Place" of 1200 acres, the largest plantation on the island. Who were the Lawtons'? The purpose of this paper is to give the reader a glimpse of the pre Civil War society which dominated the area from the coast to about one hundred miles inland; in that way the Lawtons' position may be explained.

The association of the Lawtons' with the prominent families of antebellum Hilton Head Island give a good idea of the family's involvement in the area; for example the Lawtons' were related to the Seabrooks', Sams', Grimballis', Ficklings', Baynards', Davants', and the Mosses', all of whom at one time or another held land on Hilton Head Island.

Little more than genealogy could be discerned from the family connections, if it were not for a magnificent collection of Lawton papers in the South Carolina Library. Primarily, the papers are the collection of one man, Alexander James Lawton of Blackswamp Plantation near Robertville, South Carolina. His father, Joseph Lawton, bought the Blackswamp Plantation in 1776 and was married to Sarah Robert (daughter of the former Sarah Jaudon). Alexander

James Lawton was born 21st of November, 1790, married Martha Mosse, November 15, 1809 and died April 8, 1876. The Alexander Lawtons' had twelve children. One was the Confederate A. R. Lawton.

The Lawton-Mosse connection is very important for this social history (see chart). Dr. George Mosse, a Baptist, settled on St. Helena Island ^{c. 1770} shortly before the Revolutionary War and later moved to Savannah, Georgia ^{after 1790}. Dr. Mosse owned property on Hilton Head Island. He had seven daughters. Three Lawton sons of Joseph Lawton ~~of~~ Blackswamp, married three Mosse daughter: Alexander J. married Martha; his brother Joseph J. married Phoebe; and Jane married Benjamin T. D. Lawton. Another Mosse daughter, Elizabeth married ^{in 1793} James Stoney of Hilton Head Island; they had a daughter, Martha ^{Sarah}, who first married a Hilton Head Islander, Thomas Henry Barksdale, and later married ^{in April 1836} a Lawton. Her connection will play a particularly important role in this account.

Alexander J. Lawton of ~~Blackswamp~~ ^{Mulberry Grove} Plantation near Robertville, South Carolina, represents a person who had to take on many jobs and be responsible for much of the social, religious, political, and economic life of his region. ~~[He was probably one of the few educated and capable persons around at the time.]~~ Just the responsibility of running his plantation was quite sufficient to keep him busy and create the bulk of his papers; however, the many facets involved in running a plantation prepared and involved him in carrying out community responsibilities. Alexander J. Lawton was a colonel of the South Carolina Militia, deputy surveyor of Beaufort District, Post Master of Robertville, justice of the Peace,

appraiser of estates, executor of wills, trustee of estates, and treasurer of Blackswamp Baptist Church. As post master he was asked by the "Baptist Missionary Magazine" to collect a subscription fee from Miss Cordelia P. Snell. Often someone's relative in Europe, mostly Scotland and Ireland, would send money to a relative living near Robertville. Alexander J. Lawton would have the responsibility of dispersing the money through a credited account.

In the Lawton papers, many letters were addressed to Alexander in Savannah. He very likely had a house there. He also received mail in Coosawhatchie, where he probably did not have a house, for it was too near Robertville, but during the ^(he never lived thru!) ~~the~~ ^{erz} Coosawhatchie was the 3rd circuit of the Court of Equity, and Alexander's many involvements required him to appear at court quite often.

It appears that business matters, as well as ^{almost} ~~most~~ every-thing else, involved relatives and Baptists. In Savannah, Colonel A. J. Lawton dealt with Lawton and Behn, factors. He even had a business partnership with J. B. Jaudon (his mother's family) in Savannah. Taylor and Lawton and Company of Savannah and Charleston sent merchandise up the Savannah River by boat to ^{Sisters' Ferry,} the nearest landing to Robertville, where Colonel Lawton's wagons would meet the boats and ship the goods to ^{the} Blackswamp plantations.

Large sections of Alexander Lawton's papers concern the execution of wills, mostly his relatives wills. Among these is the estate of Thomas Henry Barksdale of Hilton Head Island, who died 27th of ^{b. 14 Dec. 1795} August 1832, aged 36 years, 9 months and 13 days. Colonel Alexander J. Lawton handled the estate for his niece, the widow, Martha ^{Sarah} Stoney Barksdale, whose mother, Eliazbeth Mosse, married James Stoney of

Hilton Head (see Chart).

The estate consisted of "The plantation at Scull Creek, on which the Dwelling House stands, containing 2,600 acres.....and the plantation at Calaboga, containing 1,820,"....plus the "Baldwin Tract at Caliboga" of 290 acres, at total of 4,710 acres.

Caliboga Plantaion was bounded on the South by lands of John Stoney, East by the Atlantic Ocean, North by lands of William Pope, West by Broad Creek and Caliboga River. A complete list of the household furnishings of the Scull Creek was inventoried, but there is no mention of the size of the house. However, by counting certain furnishings, a picture of the house can be reconstructed. There were six sets of fire placed apparatus (brass fender, dogs, shovel and tongs, bellows, and hearth broom), four beds, four washstands, and thirty-eight chairs, one sofa, one settee and two foot stools. It seems clear by the number of beds, fireplaces, and washstands and by their disconnected listing in the inventory, there were four bedrooms, a dining room, parlor, and kitchen. There were six conventional fireplaces, one for each room except the kitchen, which probably had wood burning stoves. Typical of an early American home, there was a large number of chairs, twelve of the thirty-eight chairs were in the dining room. Some of the other items listed in the inventory were: one thermometer, three liquor cases, one silk umbrella, one microscope, and one sword cane.

There were eighty slaves on the Scull Creek plantation and one hundred and fifty-six on Calaboga Plantation, with names such as: Hector, Cyrus, Satira, Old Elsey, Quamina, Ned, Mingo, and Pleasant. The value of the whole estate came to \$42,518.25, plus cash on hand

of \$4,410.00, a very large sum for the 1830's; of course, most of the investment was in slaves. Sea island cotton was the main commercial crop raised on these plantations⁵; but by no means was it the only source of revenue, for on the plantations there were 141 head of cattle, 55 hogs, 42 sheep, 8 bee hives, as well as 500 bushels of corn (some of this was for provisioning the slaves).

In 1835, Mrs. Barksdale settled her account with a Savannah factor with the sale of tobacco. Cotton was the money maker, though, for example in 1838, just Calaboga Plantation produced 44 bales of fine sea island cotton, shipped by the steamer William Seabrook to Savannah, and sold to the firm of Taylor and Lawton and Company for \$4,440.37, after deductions were made for freight, landing weighing and storing, dryage and portage and the factor's commission.

After her husband's death, Mrs. Martha Barksdale lived at her uncle's house, the residence of Colonel Alexander J. Lawton, at ~~Blackswamp~~ ^{Mulberry Grove} Plantation. As executor of the Barksdale estate, Alexander Lawton had to settle old accounts with such in-the-family firms as Taylor and Lawton and Company of Savannah and Charleston, and minor accounts with Hilton Head Islanders of the 1830's: George M. Stoney, Louis E. Stoney, and Davant.

Alexander Lawton made an agreement with Elias G. Jaudon to be overseer for Mrs. Martha S. Barksdale of the Caliboga Plantation; as was noted above. Alexander was related to the Jaudon's on his mother side and was in business with a Jaudon in Savannah. (Elias addressed Alexander as "cousin"). But, Elias resigned his post after a few years to go to Florida and take up his own plantation. This was a typical movement of 1830's for the landless gentry to go to the new lands that were becoming available in Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana and establish the plantation system.

Probably because Jaudon was a sea island cotton grower, Florida, where the crop could be grown, appealed to him.

Peter F. Broughton was made manager of Scull Creek Plantation, but Mrs. Barksdale's relatives, George Edward's wife, Ann Coe; James Kirk's wife, Mary Holbrook, and Thomas B. Bona, contested the estate settlement and won in terms of cash. Alexander Lawton administered Mrs. Barksdale's settlement by auctioning off the Scull Creek estate, furnishings, slaves etc. Mrs. Barksdale purchased most of the household furnishings herself. Calaboga Plantation was kept off the auction block, but for years much of the profits of the plantation went toward completing the settlement.

To highlight the family nature of the socio-religious-economic life of the sea islands to sand hills region of South Carolina, in 1836, Mrs. Martha (Stoney) Barksdale became a Lawton, by marrying her first cousin, the Reverend^e Joseph A. Lawton (see chart). Martha's new husband was a Baptist minister in the, ^{then} Barnwell District, ^{now} Allendale.

The Reverend Joseph A. Lawton built a house near Coosawhatchie swamp next to his father's place, where Martha (S.B.) began to live. The Lawton couple took trips to the north for pleasure. Joseph A. Lawton, using funds derived from the former Barksdale estate of Caliboga Plantation, bought 1205 acres next to his property in Barnwell District. The Caliboga Plantation was maintained by an overseer, but sometimes before the Civil War, the Lawtons built a house and a church on the Plantation. Joseph had 10,362 board feet of lumber shipped to the island shortly after his marriage with Martha. On the maps of Hilton Head Island drawn during the federal occupation of the Island there appears a house and out building on the plantation.

In conclusion, in answer to who were the Lawtons: they represented a vital element of ante-bellum society, the family complex which incorporated the social religious, political, and economic life of the whole region between the sea and the sand hills. The name, Lawton, was not just scrawled across the southern end of Hilton Head Island, but across the entire southern portion of South Carolina as well.

by Alan Calmes

SOURCES

Lawton Papers, South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, South Carolina
Miller, Annie Elizabeth. Our Family Circle. Marietta, Georgia:
Continental Book Company, 1957.

CHART

Jonathan Norton ¹⁷³²
 14 July 1705 - 28 Apr. 1774
 planter, Vestryman
 St. Helena's Parish.
 m. Mary Ann Chaplin
 22 July 1716 - 10 Jan. 1764

(MOSSE FAMILY)

(LAWTON FAMILY)

DR. GEORGE MOSSE (2)
 1742 - 17 Feb. 1808
 Rev. War Surgeon
 m. (1) 30 Oct 1767
 Elizabeth Martin

1771
 daughter

DOROTHY PHOEBE NORTON
 10 Nov. 1751 - March 1808

Rev. War Lt., J.P.

JOSEPH LAWTON

SARAH ROBERT

of Mulberry Grove Plantation

JANE
 27 Dec. 1783 - 23 May 1857

16 June 1803

BENJAMIN T. D.
 22 Dec. 1782 - 18 Apr. 1846

MARTHA
 5 Sept. 1789 -

15 Nov. 1809

Alexander J.
 21 Nov. 1790 - 8 Apr. 1878

PHOEBE J.
 6 Dec. 1781 -

Joseph James
 19 Aug. 1777 - 23 Sept. 1859

ELIZABETH
 30 May 1776 -
 6 Sep 1843 bur. Smyrna Cem.

27 Feb. 1793

JAMES STONEY
 Apr. 1772 - 10 Feb. 1827

Martha +1. Thomas H. Barksdale
 Sarah Stoney 14 Dec. 1795 - 27 Aug. 1832
 B. 24 Feb. 1807
 D. 12 Apr. 1890
 Smyrna Cem.
 +2. Joseph A. Lawton