

August 30, 1957

Dear Florence:

Enclosed for you to keep is my poorly typed (done by me) of the William Lawton paper which is being forwarded to the publications committee of the S. C. & M. They speak as if they'll be delighted to have it. Thus, you'll be able to get a good, printed copy, either this fall, or the 1st of next year.

Thank you so much for your help. In my foreword of the paper, I included you and Little as being among those who had rendered valuable assistance.

I must correct the number of documents Lord Robert Lawton had when he died. Was it 126?

Love,
John
Ganton

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1

~~CAPTAIN WILLIAM LAWTON: 18th Century Planter of Edisto~~

Recorded documents give a rather comprehensive picture of the life of William Lawton, who died on Edisto Island between October 9, 1757, and October 15, 1757.¹ His will referred to him simply as "Planter" of St. John's Parish, Edisto Island, Colleton County,² but when Joseph Seabrook, Daniel Townsend, and David Adams appraised his estate on December 19, 1757, they listed him as "Captain".³ Whether he was a retired sea captain, a captain in either His Majesty's Service or the local militia, or whether his appraisers merely conferred this title as a mark of respect, is not known.

Inferences are that Captain Lawton was a Presbyterian or an Anglican, although there are few extant records of early Edisto Churches. James Clark, in his will of April 16, 1750, names as trustees "My loving brothers in law William Jenkins and William Lawton", of a one hundred pound trust "for the use and support of the Gospell in the Presbyterian Congregation in Edisto Island",⁴ and the minutes of the Vestry of St. John's Colleton, the Anglican Congregation for Edisto, for August 6, 1750, read "Also this Day agreed that Mr. Samuel Jones and Mr. Joseph Phips and Mr. William Lawton Are a Pointed Oversears for the Poor of the said Parish."⁵ Such persons were nominated by the vestries of each parish for the "oversight, ordering and relieving of the poor", with power to demand and receive such gifts, legacies, fines, forfeitures, and "any money or things whatsoever" as were given for the use of the poor, as well as the power to institute suit for their collection or enforcement. Under the statute law, each vestry was required to nominate "two or more sober, discreet and substantial persons" for this post. They were required by statute to meet with the church wardens monthly after services to consult and regulate matters pertaining to the poor, and to make accountings to the vestries of their activities. Both the church wardens and overseers of the poor were subject to fine for failing and/or refusing to accept their appointments.⁶ However, regardless of his denominational affiliation, Captain Lawton was sufficiently concerned with religion not only to request the usual Christian burial in his will, but after the ^{usual} ~~usually~~ salutary clauses to state, "Principally being sincerely sorry for all my Sins and humbly begging pardon for the same I commend my Soul to the Mercies of God my Creator in & thro' Jesus Christ my Blefsed Savior & Redeemer on whom alone I trust for the pardon & remifsion of all my Sins & for Eternal Life & Salvation."⁷

2

William Lawton was also a man of some education and culture. When he witnessed the will of John Sealy on March 13, 1737, he was the only one of the three witnesses to write his name rather than use a mark.⁸ His library at the time of his death in 1757 included "Two Volums Family Instructor", "Driling Court", one large and two small Bibles, a "Dixionary", Burket on the New Testament, Watts Sermons, and a "lott of books". While his household contained the usual ordinary tin wear, "old dishes", trunks, etc., it also had a number of finer items, such as silver forks and spoons, china, damask table linen, curtains, "looking glasses", pictures, tea tables, desks, "teasters and valiants", "pavillions", etc. His personal wardrobe was more than adequate, as he possessed for dress occasions a broadcloth suit, a wig, gold sleeve buttons, and silver shoe buckles. For everyday wear he could select from two hats, three Fustian coats, an old Welch coat, a broadcloth coat, "Coat and Breches Bagathey", a riding coat, a callico "rapper" and a "lott of old clothes". An English horse whip and silver watch were special accessories.⁹

The William Lawton Homestead was a six hundred and sixty acre place. It was formed by a two hundred acre tract acquired from the Executors of William Tilly in May, 1744,¹⁰ and an adjoining four hundred and sixty acres purchased from ~~the~~ ^{James} Cuthbert in January, 1756.¹¹ Thirty-six slaves cultivated rice, indigo, pease, corn, and tended the four bee hives, and the birds and animals, which numbered at Captain Lawton's death: twenty-three turkeys, thirty-one fowls, fifteen geese, sixty-five cattle, thirty-six sheep, ~~and~~ ^{and six hogs} fifty-one "hoggs". In maintaining this establishment, ~~some of these, and other, implements were used:~~ coopers tools, reap hooks, branding irons, spades, axes, hoes, bellows, a number of iron and earthen "potts", saws, eight rice mills, three corn mills, two spinning wheels, one quilting frame, and channel pumps. ^{were some of the implements needed,} For transportation the family used either the large or the small sailing canoe. Several guns, including one with a "Silverlight", and shrimp and fish nets helped to provide both food and pleasure.¹²

On at least two occasions Captain Lawton dealt in the money or slave market along with John Calder. Benjamin Gowen gave them a mortgage for three and William Fry executed a mortgage to them on two slaves in March, 1754, hundred pounds securing five slaves in March, 1753.¹³ for one hundred seven pounds, seven shillings, and four pence.¹⁴ At his death his estate was appraised at seven thousand, nine hundred one pounds, seven shillings, and six pence, exclusive of land, and the inventory consists of eight minutely detailed pages.¹⁵

~~FIRST MARRIAGE~~ ¹⁶ First marriage

Captain Lawton first married Mary Clarke, daughter of Jeremiah Clarke. Her sister, Martha, married Mr. Eaton and another sister, Phoebe, married William Jenkins. From the Lawton-Clarke union, four children were born: (James Clark who spelled his name with the "e" mentioned his Lawton niece and nephews in his will)

1. Josiah Lawton, whose will, dated October 15, 1757, designated him as a planter of St. John's Parish, Edisto Island, Colleton County. Proved on December 9, 1757, the will named his brother, William Lawton [Jr.], Isaac Rippon, and William Baynard, Executors. (This will, dated six days after the will of his father, William Lawton, speaks of land left to him by his father and was proved on the same day as that of his father.) Witnesses were John Fry, Ephraim Mikell, and William Crawford. His land was devised to his brother, Jeremiah Lawton; his personal property was bequeathed to his brothers and sisters: William Lawton [Jr.], Jeremiah Lawton, Winborn Lawton, Joseph Lawton, Sarah Lawton, and Mary Lawton. His estate, appraised by Daniel Townsend, David Adams, and Joseph Seabrook on January 30, 1758, was valued, exclusive of land, at one thousand, fifteen pounds, fifteen shillings, and eleven pence. Apparently he died unmarried.
2. William Lawton, Jr. apparently died young and unmarried. His estate was appraised on January 1, 1759, by Daniel Townsend, Andrew Townsend, and John Jenkins.
3. Sarah Lawton was born in 1739, married John Seabrook, and died on October 21, 1798. Her descendants, including her son, William Seabrook, are treated in other articles.
4. Jeremiah Lawton died young and probably unmarried. His personal estate was appraised on May 20, 1762, for one thousand one hundred fifty-five pounds by John Fry, Joseph Russell, William Sealey, and Robert Seabrook.

~~SECOND MARRIAGE~~ Second marriage

William Lawton's second marriage was to Miss Winborn. She was a daughter of Thomas Winborn, whose will dated April 14, 1753, proved January 23, 1756, denoted him as a planter of "Wadmalah Island, St. John's Parish,

Colleton County. Winborn's will mentions, among others, his Lawton Grand-children: ²³

1. Winborn Lawton, born on Edisto in 1745, died on James Island on September 22, 1809. ²⁴ He married the widow, Mary Mathews, a daughter of Jonathan Frampton; she was born on August 22, 1749, and died on February 10, 1839. ²⁵ Mary had one son, William Mathews, by her first marriage. ²⁶ Winborn Lawton and his wife, Mary, had three children: Winborn Lawton, Jr., born 1782, died March 24, 1861; ²⁷ Beulah Lawton, who married Mr. Hughes; and ^{28 28} William Lawton.
2. Mary Lawton apparently died young and unmarried. ²⁹

~~THIRD MARRIAGE~~ *Third marriage*

Sometime after Paul Grimball died between Jan. ²⁹ 29, 1749/50 and Jan. ³⁰ 25, 1750/51, Captain Lawton married his widow, Mary. ³¹ Said to be a Sams, it is known that she was a daughter of Susannah Winborn by a marriage other than Susannah's marriage to Thomas Winborn. ³² (Captain Lawton's second and third wives were step-sisters.) ³³ After William Lawton's death, for her third marriage, Mary married Samuel Fickling and moved from Edisto to Prince William's Parish in Granville County. ³⁴ From the Fickling marriage there were apparently no children. ³⁵ She died in St. Peter's Parish in 1804. ³⁶ Mary's Grimball children were: Providence Grimball Mikell, John Grimball, Ann Grimball Robert and Thomas Grimball. ³⁷ Her issue from the Lawton marriage:

1. Joseph Lawton, born Edisto Island, October 18, 1753, died ³⁸ on March 5, 1815, ³⁹ at his Mulberry Grove Plantation on Blackswamp near Robertville, St. Peter's Parish, Beaufort District, to which he had moved about 1775. ⁴⁰ He married on March 18, ¹⁷⁷³ ~~1773~~, Sarah Robert, who was born at St. James Santee on February 6, 1755. ⁴¹ She was a daughter of Jacques (sometimes called James) Robert, ⁴² a grand-daughter of Pierre Robert, ⁴³ and a great grand-daughter of the Rev. Pierre Robert, ⁴⁴ the minister who came with the Huguenot Group to St. James Santee in 1686. ⁴⁵ Joseph Lawton was a Justice of the Peace and a Revolutionary officer. He, his half brother, John Grimball; his half sister, Ann Grimball Robert; along with members of the Maner, Jaudon, Robert and other related families, settled the Robertville area. ⁴⁵ Previously Episcopalians, Joseph and Sarah Lawton joined the Baptist Church there, becoming

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46

prominent in that denomination. She died on October 6, 1839,
at Transpine near Robertville, the summer home of her son,
Colonel Alexander J. Lawton. ⁴⁷ Her tombstone states that her ⁴⁸
descendants then numbered one hundred and twenty-six. Termed
the Robertville, Blackswamp, and Lawtonville "Lawtons", they
are treated comprehensively elsewhere. ⁴⁹

~~HIS WILL~~ This will

William Lawton's will, dated October 9, 1757, was proved December ⁵⁰
9, 1757. It is more probable that he died between October 9, 1757, the date
of his will, and October 15, 1757, the date of his son Josiah's will, which
speaks of the "land left to me by my father". ⁵¹ Witnessed by John Mikell,
John Fry, and John Frach, William's will named "My loving wife Mary Lawton
Executrix my loving son Josiah Lawton my loving Brother Isaac Rippon and
my loving friend William Maxwell Executors". Only Mary Lawton and Isaac
Rippon qualified as Executors.

Under the will, William's wife, Mary, received nine named Negroes
with their tools; her husband's riding horse, Friske; one-fourth of his
cattle and sheep; one-third of his household goods; and for her lifetime,
the large canoe and sails; and the tract described as "the plantation I now
live on". Besides receiving shares in the estate, each child was provided
for by specific bequest and/or devise:

Josiah Lawton: One Negro man, Cyrus; a large silver spoon; a gun;
one-half of the land "bought from Mr. Cuthbert"; and the large
canoe and sails after the death of his step-mother, Mary.

William Lawton, (Jr.): A Negro man, Agram; and the other one-half
of the land "bought from Mr. Cuthbert".

Sarah Lawton: A Negro woman, Phillis; and her son, Jacob; a riding
horse and saddle.

Jeremiah Lawton: A Negro man, Amos.

Winborn Lawton: A Negro, Peter; and one Mustize girl, Chloe.

Mary Lawton: A Negro, Pegg; and a pair of "gold sleeve buttons
I now wear".

Joseph Lawton: One Negro boy, Tom; one girl, Hanna; silver watch;
silver shoe buckles, and after the death of William's widow Mary
(Joseph's mother) "the plantation I now live on".

His sons, Josiah and William Lawton, were required to "take charge

of the Parts" of Sarah, Jeremiah, Winborn and Mary Lawton until they arrived at nineteen or until they were married. ⁵² Joseph Lawton, the youngest child, ~~would be~~ had as his guardian his mother, the widow Mary. The other named minors were her step-children.

~~THIS BURIAL PLACE~~ *His burial place*

Captain Lawton and at least one of his wives are probably buried in two now unmarked depressions ^{near the well of a} ~~at the front of a~~ brick-enclosed plantation cemetery in an area known as Hanahan's on Steamboat Landing Road, Edisto Island. ⁵³ Among the graves still marked in this spot are: John Seabrook (d. 1795); Sarah Lawton Seabrook (d. 1798); William Seabrook (d. 1836); and Mary Ann Seabrook (d. 1836). ⁵⁴ *The depressions are near to the tomb of John Seabrook's wife Sarah Seabrook.*

This cemetery is on what William Lawton's will described as "the plantation I now live on". It was devised to his widow Mary for life and then to his son, Joseph Lawton. ⁵⁵ After Mary married Samuel Fickling, she released her life interest to her son, Joseph Lawton. ⁵⁶ *on Dec 13, 1774. 53* ~~she was about~~ John Hannahan, ~~at about~~ the same time Joseph began acquiring tracts that became Mulberry Grove in St. Peter's Parish. ⁵⁸ The deed from Joseph Lawton contains this reservation: "Saving and reserving nevertheless to the said Joseph Lawton and his heirs forever a CERTAIN BURYING Place or Grave Yard containing one quarter of an acre within the tract of two hundred acres of land and where the family of Lawton and other of their near kindred heretofore had been accustomed to bury." This reservation with the right of ingress and egress to the cemetery is mentioned in at least six different places in the deed. ⁵⁹ A number of years ago this area was divided into small tracts and sold to Negroes. ^{58 60}

7

~~FOOTNOTES~~

1. Will of William Lawton, Will Book 1767-1771, p. 507, Also Will of Josiah Lawton, Will Book 1767-1771, p. 513, Charleston County Probate Office.
2. Ibid. William Lawton Will.
3. Inventory Estate of Captain William Lawton, Inventory Book 1756-58, pp. 289-296, Charleston County Probate Office.
4. Will of James Clark, Will Book 1747-52, p. 291, Charleston County Probate Office.
5. Minutes of the Vestry of St. John's Colleton, for August 6, 1750, possession of Dalcho Historical Society, Charleston.
6. Brevard's Digest (John Hoff, Charleston, 1814) Vol. II, p. 123, A.A. 1712, P. L. 104; also, p. 127, A. A. 1757, P. L. 244-5.
7. William Lawton Will, Op. Cit.
8. Will of John Sealy, Will Book 1740-1747, p. 49, Charleston County Probate Office.
9. Inventory Estate of Captain William Lawton, Op. Cit.
10. Memorial Books, Vol. 7, pp. 436-437, S. C. Historical Commission, Columbia.
11. Ibid., pp. 141-142.
12. Inventory Estate of Captain William Lawton, Op. Cit.
13. Mortgage Book 1753, p. 696, S. C. Archives, Columbia.
14. Ibid., p. 285.
15. Inventory Estate of Captain William Lawton, Op. Cit.
16. Will of Jeremiah Clarke, Will Book 1727-1729, p. 204. Also Will of James Clark, Will Book 1747-1753, p. 291, Charleston County Probate Office.
17. Will of Josiah Lawton, Op. Cit.
18. Inventory of Estate of Josiah Lawton, Inventory Book 1758-1761, p. Charleston County Probate Office.
19. Inventory of Estate of William Lawton, ^{Dr. J} Inventory Book 1758-1761, p. ~~240~~ ¹¹² 241, Charleston County Probate Office.
20. ~~Gravestones~~ ^{The South Carolina Historical & Genealogical Magazine} S. C. H. & G. Mag. Vol. ~~XX~~ p. 227.
21. Ibid., Vol. ~~17~~ ^{XVII}, pp. 61-62.
22. Inventory Estate of Jeremiah Lawton, Inventory Book 1761-1763, pp. 240-241, Charleston County Probate Office.
23. Will of Thomas Winborn, Will Book 1752-1756, p. 418, Charleston County Probate Office.
24. Family Papers. Mr. Wm. E. McLeod, James Island, S. C.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. DeSaussure's Equity Reports (Robert H. Small, Philadelphia, 1854), Vol. III, p. 198, "Ex Parte William Lawton," case heard January 1811.
29. McLeod, Op. Cit.

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30. The S. C. Historical & Gen. Mag., Vol. XXIII (April 1922), No. 2, pp. 39-41.
31. Miller, Annie E., Our Family Circle (J. W. Burke Co., Macon, Ga., 1931), p. 393. Also Grimball Family Papers, Mrs. Marion F. Whaley, Edisto Island.
32. Will of Susannah Winborn, Will Book 1780-1783, p. 47, Charleston County Probate Office. She was the widow of Thomas Winborn, of Wadmalaw Island. Dated Jan. 1788, it leaves one half of her personal estate to her daughter Mary Fickling for life, and the other one half to her grandchildren: Thomas Townsend, John Townsend, Abigail Townsend, and Sarah Townsend. It also states that her daughter, Susannah, by Thomas ~~Townsend~~, Winborn, married Daniel Townsend. Certain property is left to Thomas Little and to Samuel Fickling. Other property is left to other grandchildren: Susannah ~~Pike~~ Pike, Ann Ulmer, and Mary Little. By a codicil, dated Feb. 15, 1779, Susannah gave the one half share left to her daughter Mary Fickling, to Mary's three children: John Grimball, Joseph Lawton, and Ann Roberts. Witnessed by W. McGillivray, John Stanyarne, and Geo: Fickling Jun., it was proved Dec. 23, 1780.
33. Ibid. Also Thomas Winborn Will, Op. Cit. The Thomas Winborn Will mentions his "present" wife Susannah, also a daughter ~~by his present~~ Susannah by his present wife; his sons, Samuel and Thomas Winborn; his grandchildren: Winborn Lawton, Mary Lawton, John Gibbons, and Susannah Gibbons. A bill of sale from Thomas Winborn, dated Oct. 27, 1749, (Book II, p. 59, Microfilm, S.C. Archives, Columbia) to his daughter Susannah Gibbons would indicate that Thomas Winborn had a daughter by a prior marriage who married John Gibbons.
34. Deed Mary Fickling to Joseph Lawton, Deed Book U-6, p. 449, Charleston County R. M. C. Office.
35. Inventory Estate Of Mary Fickling, dated Jan. 31, 1804. Family Collection of late Agnes Tison Smith, Garnett, S. C.; now in possession of A. J. Ives, Jacksonville, Fla.
36. This may be incorrect. A gift of a slave from Mary Fickling to her grand-daughter, Mary Hadley, and ^{grandson} ~~her~~ brother, Thomas Hadley, dated Oct. 3, 1803, would indicate that Mary Fickling's ~~daughter, Mary Lawton, may have married a Hadley, for that Mary had Fickling issue who married a Hadley.~~ Paper Smith Collection, Ibid.
37. S. C. H. & G. Mag., Op. Cit.
38. Mary Fickling Deed, Op. Cit. Also Miller, Op. Cit., p. 323.
39. Tombstone of Joseph Lawton, Robertville Cemetary. Also death notice, S. C. H. & G. Mag. Vol. ~~XX~~ (1939), p. 67, citing Charleston papers, City Gazette of Charleston, S.C., March 18, 1815.
40. ~~Mrs. Miller, Op. Cit.~~ Tombstone of William Henry Lawton, Esq., Bostick Cemetary, Garnett, S.C. states he was born on Blackswamp Feb. 23, 1775. He was oldest child of Joseph and Sarah Lawton.
41. Miller, Op. Cit., p. 323.
42. Miller, Op. Cit.
See also History, Arthur Henry, The Huguenots of Colonial South Carolina (Charles W. Peck, Kershaw N. C., 1928), p. 61.
43. See References Files AA 2211 et. seq., Joseph Lawton, S.C. Archives, Columbia.
44. Memoirs of Georgia (Atlanta, Southern Historical Association, 1895) Vol. II, pp. 396-397. Also National DAR Number 413638.
45. United States Census, 1790. See also Miller, Op. Cit.
46. Undated and Unidentified fragment of newspaper article written by a grandchild of Joseph and Sarah Lawton, from papers of the late Benjamin Lawton; now in possession of the writer. ~~See~~ See also, Townsend, Leah, South Carolina Baptists (1680-1801) (The Florence Printing Co. Florence, S. C., 1935). ^{p. 51,}
~~Tombstone of Sarah Lawton states she had been a Baptist sister for her life for years.~~
47. Jaudon Family Bible, data copied by Miss Lilly F. Stafford, Lawton, Olka.
48. Tombstone: Sarah Robert Lawton, Robertville Cemetary, Robertville, S.C.

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- 49. See Miller, Op. Cit., pp. 323-389.
 Also, Willis, Anne Willingham, A Family History (Higgins-McArthur Co., Atlanta, Ga.) 1946), pp. ~~65-80~~ 65-80.
 Also, McCall, Ettie Tidwell, McCall-Tidwell and Allied Families (Privately Printed, Atlanta, Ga., 1931), p. 581, et seq.
 Note: Joseph Lawton has been erroneously called Joseph Lawton, Jr. See Note 82.
- 50. William Lawton Will, Op. Cit.
- 51. Josiah Lawton Will, Op. Cit.
- 52. William Lawton Will, Op. Cit.
- 53. Letter, Mr. William E. Seabrook, (March 24, 1957) of Edisto Island, to the writer.
- 54. Plantation Cemetary, Edisto Island.
- 55. ~~Will of William~~ William Lawton Will, Op. Cit.
- 56. Mary Fickling Deed, Op. Cit.
- 57. Deed Joseph Lawton and his wife Sarah Lawton of Granville County to John Hanahan. Deed Book U-6, p. 450, Charleston County RM R. M. C. Office. Witnesses were Elias Robert, John Audebert, and Charles ~~Amonet~~ Amonet. This deed recites that the property had been devised to Joseph Lawton, under the will of his father, William Lawton, subject to the life estate of Joseph's mother, Mary Lawton; that Joseph's mother, Mary, had subsequently remarried Samuel Fickling, and had released the property to her son.
Willman The deed states that the premises were originally granted to Benjamin Willman, and had become the property of the late William Lawton through Rivers conveyances. From a comparison of the description in the ~~Willman Grant~~ Willman Grant (May 14, 1707), the Deed from the Executors of William Tilly to William Lawton ~~(xopixcit)~~ and the then-current boundaries... "A tract of two Hundred Acres of Land, divided from and out of a larger Tract of three hundred acres originally Granted to Benjamin Willman... which said tract is distinguished by a dividing Line on the original plat... bounding on the South by one hundred Acres part of the said Three Hundred Acres, now belonging to the personage of a Baptist Congregation, pricked off the original Plat and Distinguished by the said line to the West on Lands then belonging to Archibald Calder, now Ephrim Mickels, formerly belonging to John Frampton, now John Seabrooks...?"
- 58. Deed Thomas Daniel to Joseph Lawton, Deed Book Z4, p. 425, Charleston County RM. C. *Also deed Elias Rader to John Hanahan, Deed Book R-5, p. 340*
- 59. Deed Joseph Lawton to John Hanahan. Op. Cit.
- 60. Seabrook Letter. Op. Cit.

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