



Debreth Ancestry Research

LIMITED

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Dear Mr Lawton

Thank you for your recent telephone call; I apologise that I was not in when you rang. Having reviewed carefully the substantial volume of data which you sent us concerning the Lawton and related families, we have been able to carry out limited research.

PART I: 'Captain' William Lawton

'Captain' William Lawton was believed to have been born between about 1714 (possibly earlier) and the beginning of 1716. He had emigrated to America, and settled on Edisto Island, South Carolina, by 1736, the date of birth of his first known child, Josiah. We consulted a wide range of sources concerning early emigrants to America. Unfortunately the period of the early/mid-eighteenth century is not well-covered in original sources. We traced a Moses Lawton, who was convicted and sentenced, and transported on the 'Tryal' in 1765, but we have not been able to trace his destination. Of more interest and possibly more significance is the reference we traced to Thomas Lawton who was sentenced in January 1724, and transported in February in the ship 'Anne' to Carolina. The master of this ship was Thomas Wrangham (English Convicts in Colonial America, Vol.I, Middlesex 1617-1775, by Peter Wilson Coldham, 1974, and P.R.O. Ref.T53/31/77). We also searched English Estates of American Colonists 1700-1799, which records persons in America who left wills proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury. There was no reference to Thomas or William Lawton.

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PART II: Mary, third wife of 'Captain' William Lawton

We were requested to research, as precisely as possible, full biographical details of the wives of Captain William Lawton; in particular our attention was directed towards William Lawton's third wife, who was born Mary Stone. She was born in about 1720 (according to A Grimball Plantation by Rev. Dr Robert Peebles), the place unknown. She married first Paul Grimball; secondly, in August 1751, Captain William Lawton, and thirdly, Samuel Fickling. She was believed to have died in January 1804, the place being uncertain. Her will was said to have been proved on 31 January 1804.

We began by searching the Lawton papers at the South Caroliniana Library. There was no will for Mary Fickling (previously Lawton). However, there is a sale (not a will or inventory) dated 31 January 1804, about 8 pages long, listing purchasers, including several Lawtons. There are several other papers which help us narrow down the date of death - for instance, a deed from Mary Fickling to her granddaughter Mary Hadley, dated 3 October 1803; a note signed by Mary Fickling dated 10 November 1803; a bill or return entitled "1803, The Estates of Mrs Mary Fickling to Ann Varner Dr", and a statement that the will was probated by 9 January 1804. We conclude from this evidence that she died in November or December 1803, rather than 1804, and this does, of course, agree with your findings, as set out in your letter of 9 February.

We have made a preliminary examination of the Lawton family papers, but we do not feel that they will shed much light upon the problem of specific dates and places of birth, marriage and death. There is a section designated "land papers", probably original deeds and grants. These could be useful for land holdings, signatures and dates; it is extremely doubtful that they would give any indication of the place of


birth or death of anyone. We searched for Mary Fickling's will among Charleston wills, but there was no trace of it. Colleton and Beaufort District records perished in 1865, as I am sure you appreciate.

Incidentally, you mentioned that St Peter's Parish is now a part of the Black Swamp area of Hampton County, South Carolina. Actually the converse is the case. The Black Swamp area was once a part of St Peter's Parish. Please find enclosed a rough map of the early parish system in South Carolina. The lower districts (including, of course, Beaufort) used this parish system until 1868.

In conclusion, we have now surveyed the sources carefully, and we feel that little will probably be achieved by further work in South Carolina because of the loss of Beaufort District records. We recommend that if further research is to be undertaken, we concentrate solely upon attempting to trace the origins of Captain William Lawton. There is certainly ample scope for further research in this sphere, starting by identifying Lawton families in England and Wales, and attempting to place William in the correct family network. However, the project may well be a long one, and I fear we cannot resume work on a budget less than our normal standard fee of \$490. I look forward to hearing from you again, hopefully with your renewed instructions.

Kind regards.

Yours sincerely



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