



The Society of
First Families of South Carolina, 1670-1700

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21 July 1989

Dear Paul,

Thank you for the copies of the Passenger & Immigration Lists Index; strange that our William Lawton does not appear therein. Perusing the Lawtons indicates only two possible ancestors for him: George of R.I. and Thomas of S.C. (assuming the "1329" for Joseph of Md. is a typo for 1829). I find it hard to believe that had William descended from George of R.I. there would be no tradition whatsoever of such a New England background of literally decades, since George was "Admitted an inhabitant of the island of Aquidneck in 1638". George's sons leaving sons were: John, George and Robert. Their sons were: George; George, Robert & Job; George & Robert. Nary a Thomas or William in the first three generations!

Of course, there was a Thomas Lawton who settled in Portsmouth, RI 1638, some 2000 of whose descendants had been traced by 1942. Charles Edward Banks' Topographical Dictionary of English Emigrants and the Cranfield Parish Reg. claim this Thomas came from Cranfield Parish, Bedfordshire, although William A. Crozier and John Matthews in their works on amorial families claim that Thomas descended from the Church Lawton, Cheshire family. Hugh Lupus, Norman Earl of Chester distributed most of Cheshire to his followers, founding the Abbey of St. Werburgh at Chester 1093 which he endowed with the township of Lawton of about 2½ square miles. Apparently King John gave about half of the township to Adam of Lawton.

The Cranfield Parish Reg. shows George Lawton m. 13 Nov 1606 Isbell Smith and their sons: George bap. 23 Sep 1607, Thomas bap. 17 Apr 1614. This Thomas m. 29 May 1635 Elizabeth Salsburie. Portsmouth records prove George & Thomas were brothers; George signed his name, Thomas used only a "T" as his mark. Among Thomas' sons were: Daniel & Isaac. Daniel's will 26 Feb 1719 named sons: Benjamin, Joseph, Daniel, Jeremiah, Adam & Jonathan and grandson William Lawton, son of my son Thomas Deceased. On and on, none seems to be our William. *This is the "vanishing William" referred to in my "Chronology."*

As for Thomas Lawton, sentenced Jan 1724, transported in Feb. aboard the ship Anne to Carolina, is it possible to contact the 1974 author/compiler, Peter Wilson Coldham ref. Vol. I, Middlesex 1617-1775 for further information about said Thomas? No stone should be unturned. *I agree.*

I enclose some Ripon/Jenkins notes from my files. Isaac Ripon b. 1734; his parents m. 1730, so his sisters were all too young to have married Capt. William Lawton. Anyhow, they married otherwise, as shown. Isaac's two wives: Joanna Slapter and Mrs. Ann (Delabare) Rhodes, both strangely unrelated to Edisto Island families!

William Maxwell, named as friend and Executor of Capt. Wm's 1757 will, in 1759 owned 200 acres on Edisto which had been registered by William Sams, Sr. 25 Apr 1733. I have studied the Jeremiah Clark family but clearly Isaac Ripon does not appear therein. What about the family of Thomas Winborn of Wadmalaw? Even so, I cannot see how Isaac Ripon could be William's "brother". Sorry to see that Isaac's wife Joanna Slapter was widow of John Sealy; that Sealy family was always trouble, stubborn non-conformists, etc.

(over)

But Isaac did better with his second marriage since Ann was widow of John Rhodes (father or son, I don't know except that neither seems possible; John Rhodes (1747-1827) was only a widower after Oct. 1811 death of his wife Mary Talbird Rhodes.) Possibly the William Rhodes who arrived before 1672 left a son John but he certainly does not belong to the Rhodes family to which we are related, as the above chronology indicates. If Habel Webber and H.A. Read couldn't say how Isaac Ripon was "brother" to Wm. Lawton, and Caroline Moore gave up on same, it's going to take SOME digging to find the answer (which may or may not turn out to be important). We have one cousin who does genealogy by prayer and claims to have received several answers. Shall we enlist her help? *Why not?*

Enclosed is a new brochure from this Society. Please help me sign up a few new members. The Society is actually doing quite nicely but it should have at least 1000 members instead of 459. Many thanks for whatever you can do. (Tommy Lawton is No. 411.)

Miss Cora joins me in sending you our love and best wishes.

Faithfully,

Robert *

8 Moon Shell Road
Hilton Head Island, SC 29928
5 July 1989

Dear Paul,

We displayed the pictures you sent at the Reunion 16/17 June; although some 75 folks attended, they all appeared to be somewhat younger than I, all seeking rather than possessing knowledge of their heritage. Because of the Rev. Pierre Robert Memorial Unveiling Exercises at St. James Santee on the 17th, we had nearly 20 Robert descendants who have no Lawton blood. Tom's speech on Capt. Wm. Lawton recapped all that we know about him to date. No definitive action was taken on my proposal that we place a marker for him in the Lawton-Seabrook Cemetery on Steamboat Landing Road on Edisto but I think we can push that through now that we have the Robert Memorial Bronze safely in place. It was a great affair, the historic building filled with Robert descendants (plus about 10 folks from Society of First Families). Chaplain Oliveros conducted a Service of Evening Prayer according to the 17th Century French Liturgy, then I presided, introducing Tom Lawton who gave a summary of Pasteur Robert's life and work. All children present under 12 of Robert descent did the unveiling and then we took an offering for the Rev. Pierre Robert Memorial Fund; we had \$330 left after paying for the Bronze and I added another \$100; I haven't heard yet what the final total reached but trust it is sufficient to warrant its being a permanent fund with only the income used for building maintenance, as we asked.

The following Monday 35 Lawton descendants left USA for London whence we settled it at Canterbury for 3 days, having lunch with Alistair & Iris Lawton at Wallets Hall between Dover and Deal. He has failed physically but was able to present an account of the Lawton Hall family and to apologize for the condition of the Hall which he arranged for his son John to show us the following Saturday when we got to Sheshire. Miss Cora was disgusted that neither he nor John have made any effort to shovel out the debris left when the Lawton Hall School was closed down more than 5 yrs ago; books and rotting furniture, everything falling apart and deteriorating rapidly were what greeted us. The view from the beyond the 9-acre lake (created by damming a small stream) is still impressive but obscures the sad fact that Lawton Hall is now ruined. Even the National Trust won't touch it. The garages, etc. built by the Army during WWII are rented out but apparently Alistair uses that for his personal income and does nothing about upkeep of the property, all overgrown and ruinous, while he lives 250 mi. away in Deal, Kent, still the "Squire". I suspect that when John inherits he will sell the entire 400 acres and continue his skiing in Switzerland. He & his wife (no children) live and work in London.

Just as I suggested to you earlier, it is clear that Lawton is Saxon with no roots whatsoever in Normandy. The Bleeding Wolf story explains the rise of Lawton from obscurity to the landed gentry during the reign of John (1199-1216). Alistair told us that Henry VIII sold 25,000 acres to the Lawton during the disposition of monastic lands. Alas, several of the Squires were inveterate gamblers according to what contemporary parishoners told me. Anyhow, the parish celebrated Lawton Heritage Weekend for us with a fete in Lawton Memorial Hall Sat.PM, an elaborate buffet and entertainment featuring dancing, singing, bell ringing, skits, etc. with 1 or 2 of us Americans at each table. Sunday Service in Church Lawton was what we'd call a "general protestant service", all modern music (piano, guitars, flute), no Creed, nothing familiar except for the Lord's Prayer. There was a Parish Queen on the front pew with an elaborate Court in costumes, maid of honor & pages. The walls were covered with hatchments, all bearing the Lawton arms halved with those of their wives (several were heiresses). Parishoners then took us to their homes for Sunday Dinner (Miss Cora & I went with the Parish Treasurer & she had 10 neighbors in for a Sherry Reception before dinner; she lives in Lawton Gate (a housing estate, as they call it).

Enough for now. Miss Cora and I send our love and best wishes.

Truithfully,
Robert



The Legend Of The Bleeding Wolf

This is the story of the Bleeding Wolf. The story tells of what happened at this spot more than seven hundred years ago when John was King of England.

One day, John was hunting in the great forest which covered most of the Cheshire Plain, giving shelter to wild boar, wolves and deer. During the chase, John lost his companions. As he was riding slowly along one of the deer paths, a great wolf sprang from the undergrowth full at the rider. The horse was startled and reared high, throwing the King to the ground. The frightened horse bolted through the trees. The wolf turned on the fallen King, but a nearby keeper, hearing the scuffle, had run towards the sounds. Seeing the wolf about to attack he drew his hunting knife, threw himself at the beast and plunged it into the snarling throat. It was a mortal blow, and the savage creature toppled over, blood streaming from the gaping wound. The King scrambled to his feet, badly shaken no doubt, but unhurt. The forester, recognising the King, fell to one knee but was ordered to rise.

John: Thou art a brave man keeper. But for thee, you great beast would have torn the life out o' me. What is thy name, good fellow?

Keeper: Tatton, Sire.

John: Well, Tatton, thou hast saved my life, the life of the King of England, a goodly reward shall be thine. Seest yonder bleeding wolf? Take that as thy starting point, and all the land that thou canst walk over in one week shall be thine to hold and to keep. Moreover, the head of the wolf shall be on thy crest. Thy deed will go down in History.

And so it did. Tatton took the King at his word, covered as much ground as he could and took possession, thus founding his own estate. To commemorate the incident Tatton had built, on the spot where the wolf lay bleeding, an inn, which was aptly named "The Inn of the Bleeding Wolf".

Thus an incident which may have altered the course of History and ended an unpopular reign was the means of establishing a popular house

"The Bleeding Wolf".

