

REFLECTIONS  
ON  
THE CONTRIBUTIONS TO MANKIND  
OF  
THE LAWTON FAMILY AND ALLIED LINES  
DURING THE LAST 200 YEARS  
As The Result Of Information Furnished  
By Various Members Of The Family  
TO  
Ralph Morrison and Florence D. Lawton

DELIVERED BY:

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## INTRODUCTION

Our attempt to condense some of the anecdotes and achievements of the family into a workable and interesting format has no doubt resulted in errors and abundant omissions. We have avoided dwelling on the war-time services of the family and have chosen instead to attempt a general over-view of the exemplary characteristics of the family. We do not claim to have noted the most important contributions made by some ancestor or relative, though we tried hard to find these. The fact that only a few could be included is self evident.

One will note that simple conformity is not what has made ours an important American family. The prevalent, unifying characteristic found in the natures of these people included in this Skit has been the desire to see America, however they perceive it, as a nation they love and one for which they took a personal interest in helping to build and improve.

It is for these people, those included and those omitted, that we as a family should be proud and for whom we as a nation should be grateful. Our nation has historically been one of strength through conflict. We have supplied a disproportionately large share of both. Our family reflects much that is best in America ... neither is always right (and neither is easily referred to as a single, homogenous group), but somehow we manage to do very well, indeed.

And now company is coming to see Ann and Fay.

ANN: Everybody pull up chairs. It's good to see you; hello, hello!

FRANCIS: I've just become interested in family history. Can any of you tell me anything about the beginnings of the Lawton family?

EDWARD: Yes. The Lawtons originally came from Cheshire, England. George Sherwood, Record Searcher of London, wrote in 1934: "The Lawtons of Lawton Hall, Cheshire, still there, are one of the oldest families in England, dating from the 12th century, when surnames first began to be handed out."

FRANCIS: That's very interesting, but I'm particularly curious about what the Lawtons and their allied families have done in America since our founding. That is, what contributions over and above their actual work have they made to their cities, their states, the country or the world that made living easier and better for their fellow men and for us?

EDWARD: Well, the first Lawton ancestor we have a record of is William Lawton. He was born in Wales in 1723 and emigrated to America in 1748, settling on Edisto Island, near Charleston, S.C.

Joseph Lawton, Jr. was born October 18, 1753. On March 18, 1773, when he was not quite 20, he married 18-year old Sarah Robert. His early years were devoted to planting, rearing seven children to maturity, and founding the Lawtonville Baptist Church, with his brother Benjamin, in 1778. He was elected to the South Carolina House of Representatives in 1784. In 1792 and again in 1795, he served as a Commissioner upon appointment by the State Legislature to lay out public roads. He also served as a Justice of the Quorum and as a Justice of the Peace in the 1790's, the latter office approximating our present-day Circuit Judge.

According to their great-grandson, Joseph Thomas Robert, it is to Sarah Robert Lawton that we owe the precedent of the first Lawton Family Reunion. It was held in 1831 when she "determined" to invite all of her children and grandchildren then living to meet together at her residence, Mulberry Grove. Eighty-five persons came and spent the whole day.

ANN: Determined did you say?

EDWARD: Yes; didn't you know their descendants have a determination gene?

ANN: Well, that's in about all of us, isn't it?

EDWARD: It really is.

As far as we know the next Reunion was hosted by William A. Lawton and his wife on August 6, 1936 at their home - the Lawton-Willingham House - in Lena, S. C.

SUSAN: Did they put much emphasis on education?

LAWTON: Good heavens yes! The Black Swamp Academy was incorporated in 1818 by three Lawtons, two Roberts and two Maners.

SUSAN: We were founding schools that far back?

LAWTON: Sure. A record of this is contained in the Accounts of The General Assembly of South Carolina, dated December 1818. But even before this, Dr. George Mosse was a founder of the Georgia Medical Society. In 1795, he was a founder of the First Baptist Church of Savannah. He died in 1806.

In 1819, Hon. George Rhodes, husband of two sisters who were granddaughters of Joseph Lawton, founded the Lawtonville Academy, and was its first Headmaster. It later became Morrison Adacemy, and is now a part of the Estill Public Schools. In 1860, he signed the Ordinance of Secession.

Almost all of Dr. Richard Furman's adult life,

aside from his ministerial duties for which he was famed, was devoted to promoting assistance for higher education for young men. Within a few months after his death, on August 25, 1825, the Furman Academy and Theological Institution was founded at Edgefield, S. C., the first of the Baptist Institutions of higher learning in the South. It continues today at Greenville, S. C. as Furman University.

The Robert Family has had its fingers in the founding of Robert College in Istanbul and of Moorehouse College in Atlanta.

MARTHA: Where did Pierre Robert come in?

FAY: He emigrated to Santee, S. C. in 1686, and founded the Huguenot Church in South Carolina. A marble tablet in the church in Charleston, S. C. is in memory of Pasteur Pierre Robert, the first Huguenot minister in Carolina.

His family was forced to flee from the religious persecutions of protestants in France, and, after a brief stay in Switzerland, the Roberts moved to America when the land was still young and religious tolerance was prevalent. It is, perhaps, because of the memory of such religious restrictions that our nation has, since its inception, embraced the freedom to worship as we please as a fundamental right of man.

We have not always been able to remember what brought us here, however.

ELEANOR: I've heard that, in the latter part of 1833, Dr. William R. Erwin and his wife, Mrs. Julia Robert Erwin, and her sister-in-law, Mrs. Rachel Rhodes Robert, kicked up quite a ruckus in the little Kirkland Baptist Church, near Erwinton, S. C. Some one said that they left the Kirkland Church and constituted themselves - just the three of them - a Church of Disciples, or Christians, meeting in a private home for a while. Can anyone tell me what caused this break?

LAWTON: O yes; they were tried for heresy and ex-communicated. The two points of argument were the weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper, and the right of a layman to preside at the Table, break the Bread and pass it to others. It was quite a trial, with the Moderator being Deacon William Henry Robert, Father of one defendant and Father-in-Law of the others.

New members soon joined them from the church they had left and from other churches. Among these was Gen. James D. Erwin, the brother of Dr. William R. Erwin. These two brothers built a new little church, a mile beyond Erwinton, and it was named Antioch because in the 11th Chapter of Acts, verse 26 "The Disciples were first called Christians at Antioch."

From this small church many faithful people have used their efforts to organize Christian churches in Atlanta, Macon and Augusta, Ga.

SUSAN: Benjamin William Lawton was born September 22, 1822 at Black Swamp, S. C., the son of Joseph James Lawton and Phoebe Jane Mosse Lawton. He was elected to the House of Representatives from Barnwell District for one term - 1850-52.

He was a delegate to the Secession Convention and signed the Ordinance of Secession in 1860.

In 1862, he was elected to the S. C. Senate. He served in the Senate from 1862 to 1865, until the new Constitution was adopted. He was again elected in 1866.

Before that, however, Hon. Joseph Maner Lawton, Sr., of "Cypress Vale" Plantation, served as Justice of the Peace, State Representative, State Senator, and Delegate to the Nullification Convention in 1832. He was born August 27, 1800 and died December 5, 1862.

FLORENCE: I think it is interesting, too, to remember that Benjamin T. D. Lawton, a planter of St. Peter's Parish, was the founder of the Town of Lawtonville which flourished from 1812 to 1895; and that his grandson:

John Williamson Peeples was a founder of the Town of Estill and one of its first businessmen.

Also Rev. Alexander Scott, who married Elizabeth Robert Grimball, was the founding pastor of Black Swamp Baptist Church. He and Elizabeth were parents of the Hon. Abram Marshall Scott, elected Governor of Mississippi in 1831. Rev. Alexander Scott was also a founder of the Georgia Baptist Association in 1785.

ELEANOR: Yes, that is very interesting. And I don't want to forget that among our forbears are John Adams, John Quincy Adams, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, the second, sixth, twenty-sixth, and twenty-eighth Presidents of the United States, respectively. I wonder when we will have another one.

MARTHA: I have heard that John Lawton, born 1830 and died 1908, deserves a place in family history if for no other reason than that his descendants comprise nearly half of the white population of Estill, S. C.

In his address, The Lawtons of Robertville, E. L. Inabinett quotes from a letter John wrote to a Mr. Hazel at Transpine

Plantation on his return home from the War of 1861 when he found his home had been burned. He asked Mr. Hazel to send him his "circular Saw, which my Uncle, Col. A. J. Lawton, had buried under his house to save for me during the recent invasion." This request was indicative of his dauntless character.

Without any solicitation on his part, he was chosen to represent Hampton County in the state legislature for the years 1886-1887.

He was, an ordained deacon of the Pipe Creek Baptist Church, and authored the resolution to change the name to Lawtonville Baptist Church. He handled the construction of the first parsonage and built the baptismal pool at Old Lawtonville Baptist Church. His wife, Elizabeth Stoney Peeples, donated the money, \$500.00, for the purchase of the lot in Estill on which the present Lawtonville Baptist Church stands.

ANN: Hello, Alice. Glad to see you, Sugar.

ALICE: You have anything for me to do?

ANN: You like books?

ALICE: O, yes.

ANN: Well, here is one called Low Country Artistry by your great uncle, Carew Rice. You can sit right down here if you would like to.

ALICE: There are a lot of books on that table.

ANN: Yes, and they have all been written by our cousins. But I think you will have to be a little older to enjoy them.

ALICE: What are their names?

ANN: Annie Elizabeth Wade Miller - Our Family Circle.  
She also wrote Carolina Pioneers, but I don't have a copy here.

James Henry Rice, Jr. - Aftermath of Glory, illustrated  
with original scissors  
silhouettes by Carew Rice;  
Glories of the Carolina Coast.

Annie W. Willis - A Family History.

Henry Martyn Robert - Robert's Rules Of Order.

Clinton Roy Dickinson - Wages and Wealth  
A Short Story - The Ultimate Frog

Edward P. Lawton - A Saga of the South.

Mrs. John Hanpahan - A Place in History - a record  
of the Davant Family.

Rev. Dr. E. H. Peeples: Tales of Ante Bellum Hilton  
Head Island Families.

Xanier Lawton (Mrs. Thos. O., Sr.) - Allendale on  
the Savannah.

Heard Robertson - Augusta and the American Revolution.  
Ed J. Cashin, not related to us, is  
the co-author.

Cecelia B. Robertson - Respect This Stone. It contains  
biographical sketches of people  
buried in St. Paul's Churchyard,  
Augusta, Ga. 1783-1820. Sales  
benefit St. Paul's Church.

T. Heard Robertson and Thomas H. Robertson, father and  
son, resp., compiled that  
Bicentennial Map of Augusta, Ga.  
and Surroundings. Sales benefit  
Augusta Bicentennial Commission.

Mrs. Robert F. Seedlock - Colonial Education in Savannah.  
This is being published this  
month to become a part of the  
public school curriculum.

As you see, a few of the above named publications are  
not here. I thought, however, that you would be interested in  
knowing of their existence.

EDWARD: Did any of you know that 1976 is the one hundredth  
anniversary of the first publication of Rules of Order by Henry  
Martyn Robert? It was first published by S. C. Griggs & Co. in  
Chicago, Ill. on February 19, 1876. A revised edition was published  
in 1915. In 1970, his daughter-in-law, Sarah Corbin Robert, with  
the assistance of her husband, Henry M. Robert III, James W. Cleary  
and William J. Evans published a new edition, known as Robert's  
Rules Of Order Newly Revised. This is the current "Last Word" on  
the subject. As of that printing there were 2,750,000 copies in print.

The principles of courtesy and fairness that Genl.  
Robert wrote are not 100 years old but 100 years young. So it is  
fitting that there is a petition circulating in the country to  
issue a stamp to commemorate this milestone. It says, in part:  
"There is great diversity in the organizations that use Robert's  
Rules. They seek peaceful and correct procedural methods through

the use of these Rules. Therefore, Genl. Robert has been and continues to be a great influence in putting the U. S. democratic principles into practice." Here's a copy of the petition you may all sign before you leave.

Personally he was a man of a great deal of character. He once refused payment for a college lecture, saying: "A man who knows anything is in debt to those who are less fortunate, and he can only pay the debt by imparting that knowledge."

His closing sentence in a letter of August 2, 1916 to his granddaughter was: "So use your talents that others will be glad you possess them." He wrote this seven years before his death, on May 11, 1923.

One of his favorite quotes was:

"Dare to be a Daniel,  
Dare to stand alone,  
Dare to have a purpose firm, and  
Dare to let it known."

MARTHA: I wonder how many of us in our time have taken these Bares!

EDWARD: Oh, I'd say quite a few of us have.

SUSAN: For one, Cousin Lily Stafford, of Lawton, Oklahoma. She was recognized in 1973 for her contribution to the history of Lawton, Oklahoma, the State of Oklahoma and the Southwestern Plains States as the founder of the now famous "Museum of the Great Plains." She began this museum in an empty basement room in Lawton High School, where she taught, in 1921. For many years she was the only one interested in the project. It is now housed in a beautiful brick building, and contains a very large, authentic collection of pre-historic animal and Indian life. Cousin Lily and her science students prepared these specimens for showing in the Museum. Thousands visit it each year. It is no wonder that, in 1955, she was presented the "Service to Oklahoma Youth Award."

FLORENCE: Alexander R. Lawton and his two sisters, Nora Cunningham and Lulu Mackall, provided Savannah with an auditorium in memory of their father, General Alexander R. Lawton. The city had none at that time. It was called the "Lawton Memorial" and is now the Greek Orthodox Church. It is located on Bull St., two blocks south of Park Ave.

Sarah Cunningham, daughter of Nora was a suffragette in her youth, before Women's Lib as we know it today. She donated the library at Bethesda orphanage, near Savannah. Recently she gave a Golden Age Club, complete with building and endowment, to the city of Savannah. She was a great lady, of the type they're "not making any more." She died just last week.



FRANCIS: I've heard some tales I'd like to verify about Clinton Roy Dickinson. One is that, as an undergraduate at Princeton, one Saturday night with some companions he came to a great 25-foot sun dial entirely covered by canvas, awaiting dedication as a gift from Oxford University. With the help of his companions, he shinnied up under the canvas and hung a Pabst beer bottle by its blue ribbon in the mouth of the swan that was the topmost decoration. When it was unveiled the next day by none other than Woodrow Wilson, the whole thing looked like an Ad for Pabst Blue Ribbon Beer. After avoiding the proctors for several days, he shot it down at night with a .22.

FAY: Did you know he was a member of the Bostick family?

FRANCES: Yes.

FAY: Then surely you should not have any doubts about that being true. It really happened just as you have said.

He also had a serious side. As a young man, he was on the Harding Unemployment Commission. He and the great labor unionizer, Samuel Gompers, were alone in issuing a minority report, recommending that wages be raised and not lowered during that unemployment crisis. He wrote a book, entitled "Wages and Wealth," published by the Princeton Press in 1931, that set forth the same principle. On March 3, 1933, he dedicated a copy to his son, Philemon, with the notation: "To my son in the hope that he will live long enough to see these principles accepted as good economic theory instead of heresy as they are today."

He was also a great short story writer. His tale of a man's impossible quest, "The Ultimate Frog," won the O'Henry prize for the best short story of 1924. It has been published in many forms and languages. It was also used as an example of perfect English in many schools.

His main Credo was "Nothing Too Much", learned from the ancient Greeks.

He made Who's Who in America almost from the beginning.

SUSAN: We all have a wonderful legacy from Cousin Annie Elizabeth Wade Miller in "Our Family Circle." This was first published in 1931 and was reprinted in 1957. This means she wrote it way back before the time of Air Mail and good roads. She really dug for that information. It is a truly impressive contribution to our immediate family and to anyone interested in the history of our part of the country.

In 1974, Rev. Robert E. H. Peeples and his wife, "Miss Cora", of Hilton Head Island took on the job of up-dating this book. They have made it an even more interesting and valuable volume. Copies of this third edition are still available.

FLORENCE: Wasn't there a Miller who was quite a big-wig over in Athens, Ga.?

ELEANOR: Yes; that was Cousin Annie's son, Julian H. Miller, Sr. Though he retired from the University of Georgia Science Department on June 30, 1958, he continued to write scientific and technical articles - about 75 - until he died in 1961. The Plant Science Building at the University of Georgia is named in his honor. He was inducted into the University of Georgia Hall of Fame in November 1972.

MARTHA: Were there other women in our family who have made significant contributions to their areas?

ELEANOR: Yes, there have been several.

Mrs. T. H. Tift, daughter of Col. Thomas Henry and Cecelia Baynard Willingham, founded Tift College in Georgia.

Dr. Nan Lines Robert, of New York City, made the first edition of Who's Who in American Women for her contributions to the world of biology and medicine.

Allene Lawton Weyman Stone, working side by side with her husband, Eugene E. Stone III, established, in 1933, the Stone Manufacturing Co. with 5 employees, which was quite a Dare for that time. Today they provide employment for 2,000 people in South Carolina and North Carolina - quite a contribution to their neighbors I would say.

In 1966, Allene, or "Linky" as she is known, inspired the publication of a book entitled "Bridging the Gap." It is a guide to early Greenville, S. C.

Florence D. Lawton provided the inspiration for the founding of the Atlanta Woman's Exchange, which opened in Buckhead on October 1, 1975.

FRANCIS: I think the story of Samuel Miller Lawton, oldest child of Thomas Oregon Lawton, Jr. and Bessie Miller Lawton is a truly thrilling one. He was born in Estill, S. C. and became blind in infancy. Through excellent parental training and personal application, and the partnership of his devoted wife, Alice Stocton, he became exceptionally proficient in his chosen profession of preaching and teaching. He served schools in South Carolina and Arkansas, and had a radio program for twenty years.

His greatest contribution to our country was in his service for the blind of the whole United States. By his zeal, and the work of the good Lord through him, he saw the attitude of society begin to change. People began to accept the fact that the blind can perform valuable services in our world, using their own abilities, creativity and ingenuity.

He founded the South Carolina Aurora Club of the Blind.

He was given a citation by the South Carolina State Legislature and chosen Man of the Year for the Southeastern States by the Sertoma Clubs. Also, he was chosen Man of the Year for the South Carolina Association of the Blind. He was listed in Who's Who in America.

After his death, on November 3, 1971, a request came to his family from London, England that he be listed as one of the "1000 world citizens of greatest renown using his abilities for all mankind."

FAY: What a Man! His was a double Dare.

EDWARD: Going back to 1864 and the subject of education for a moment, I found it interesting to learn that in that year Ephraim Baynard, Uncle of Cecelia Baynard Willingham, made a gift of \$166,000 to an otherwise doomed College of Charleston.

ANN: Isn't "Manny" Lawton pretty much on the ball himself?

MARTHA: Who is Manny?

EDWARD: He is Marion Russell Lawton, and he lives in Estill. You are right, Ann, he has been very much on the ball. He became the first Chairman of the Hampton County Republican Party. He was also founder and first chairman of the Board of Trustees of Patrick Henry Academy. He holds the Silver Beaver Award in recognition of his work on the Boy Scout Council. He serves as an Elder of the Presbyterian Church. He is listed in the National Register of Prominent Americans for 1970-71. He has written numerous newspaper stories, and is in the process of writing a book about his World War II experiences. His survival of these is almost unbelievable.

Presently he is serving on the Coastal Plains Regional Commission, which promotes economic and scientific development in five states.

FLORENCE: R. G. Lawton was one of the founders of the Broadmoor Presbyterian Church in Shreveport, La.

ELEANOR: Edward Lawton Daugherty, visiting here with us tonight, started the Arts Festival in Atlanta 23 years ago. From a few paintings hung on ropes in the back yard of his office building, it has grown to a tremendous event in Piedmont Park for a week in May. Many thousands attend every year.

Edward also conceived the idea of a Wild Garden of Georgia plants in the grounds of the present Governor's Mansion. This has since been moved to the Atlanta Historical Society grounds, and is maintained by the Georgia botanical Society.

FAY: Have any of you heard that Margaret Lawton of Greenville, S. C. lost her husband, Dr. Hugh P. Smith, on January 30, 1976? This was a loss to the entire State and not just to his family. He headed the important medical organizations of the county and region, and served in top leadership positions in the State.

FRANCIS: I keep hearing people referring to "Streak" Lawton. Tell me something about him.

SUSAN: For one thing, he did not start the Streaking Fad. His real name is Winston Alven Lawton. He lives in Estill, S. C. He was graduated from Clemson College, where he played football and earned the nickname "Streak".

He was elected to serve four years in the State Senate. He has served as Chairman of the Board of Deacons in the Lawtonville Baptist Church and has taught the Men's Bible Class for over twenty-five years. He served on the Town Council, was Deputy District Governor of the Lion's Club, District Commander of the American Legion, and past Master of the Masons.

Always interested in sports, he is Iptay Representative for his district, helping raise funds for athletic scholarships to Clemson.

SUSAN: One question started a lot of sharing tonight. It sounds to me like there has been a lot of Daring in our family since General Robert. We enjoyed being with you, Ann and Fay. Good night.