

This is a copy of a letter written to my cousin, Clara Lawton Lienhard, by Annie Lawton Long, Daughter of Alexander Cater Lawton and Sarah Godfrey Lawton. Alexander Cater Lawton was my great uncle. He and my grandfather, Winborn Theodore Lawton were brothers.

Sycamore, Georgia
August 16, 1942

My dear Mrs. Lienhard:

Your letter in which you ask about the Lawton genealogy is received, and I am most happy to reply and pass on to you what I know and perhaps together we may be able to carry the lines a little further.

Some years ago I was voted into the organizations Daughters of American Revolution. I didn't think I would have one bit of difficulty in tracing my line back to the Revolution - but I soon found out I had quite a lot of research to tackle before I could prove anything acceptable to the National Society, D.A.R., at Washington. I am glad to say I was successful and have been a member many years of the D.A.R., as well as of the French Huguenot Society of S.C. Our patriot of the Revolution being Lt. Joseph Lawton and our ancestor in the Huguenot Society was Pierre Robert, who came to S.C. from Basle, Switzerland in 1686 - a minister of the gospel. I can furnish you with a copy of our line back that far. Of course, your line and mine, until we diverge where my father married my mother and your grandfather married your grandmother. From that point on you can easily fill in your line as I did.

I remember seeing your father when I spent a Christmas with Uncle Winnie (Winborn Theodore) at Frog Level, Caddo Parish; and he was a little fellow and Uncle Winnie introduced him to me so proudly saying, "Ralph Waldo, I want you to know and love your cousin Annie Narcissa Lawton." After that visit Uncle did not live long and when I visited Cousins Lona and Winnie (the doctor) in 1911, I saw only those two of the family in my brief stay at Lona's in Blanchard. But while there I saw my first, and only, burning oil well at Vivian, La. It was an awful sight to me, and is still vivid in my memory - the boiling black smoke - oh!

Your grandfather and my father were deucated magnificently. They had private tutors that our grandfather selected with great care, and Uncle Winnie was a deep student. Papa said he spoke seven languages with ease. Papa was an unusual Latin scholar. He could recite page after page of the original from memory. When ready, they were sent to a military school in Yorkville, S.C., where they were cadets until war was declared and they returned to their home "Summer Oaks", near Thomasville, in Thomas County, Ga., to join the Company of Volunteers commanded by their father, Captain Alexander Benjamin Lawton. Unfortunately, he died before taking out his company, and the two brothers went to Albany, Ga., and joined under our Uncle, Captain W.J. Lawton, (afterward promoted to Colonel).

The brothers thus became members of the;

Dougherty Hussars
Co. D. Cobb's Legion (for the famous T.R.R. Cobb)
P.M.B. Young's Brigade of Cavalry
Hampton's (Wade) Division
J.E.B. Stuart's Corps
Army of Northern Virginia

Your grandfather, Winborn Theodore, and my father, Alexander Cater, camped together on the banks of the Chattahoochee River, near the state line, one night. They separated to retire saying, "Goodnight, I'll see you tomorrow", and they never saw each other again for twenty five years. Papa's orders took him to Virginia and Uncle Winnie's to the trans-Mississippi Division, with no opportunity to communicate. When the war ended Papa returned, and of course, when Uncle Winnie never returned to Thomasville, he never saw a single member of his family again, except Papa, who visited him while we were living in Atlanta, Texas, for a short while.

There were six thousand acres in the Lawton Plantation, with a magnificent colonial type mansion, surrounded by majestic oak trees, and furnished with imported furniture and silver that our grandfather had made in Philadelphia from silver coins that he sent. There were a hundred and fifty slaves in their neat brick cabins. Of course, there was no money to operate the plantation after the war, slaves were freed, and all the family left for South Florida. The place was closed with everything in it excepting a few of the silver sets and one night it burned to the ground, with nothing saved. I visited the spot many years later and there were some of the stumps of the fine trees left to mark the desolation. The old Mount Lebanon Cemetery is near, where sleep our grandparents, and, nearby, the poor lonely slaves, many of whom died broken-hearted.

Should you come this way in the Fall, I will be delighted to go with you down there. It will be a rare treat to go again to see what can be found.

Under separate cover I am mailing you a book - Carolina Pioneers - by Mrs. Annie E. Miller, of Macon, Ga. She found she had made so many errors and omitted so many important people, that she prepared a second volume and it is replete with much of interest. You may obtain this second book from J.W. Burke Co., in Macon, and may return mine when through with it. A cousin, T.B. Matthews of Albany, has made the numerous annotations - said it stopped far short. I also enclose a copy of the Lawton Coat-of Arms. We are English, you know. You can have a handsome one made for framing by writing J.E. Caldwell & Co., in Philadelphia, Pa. I have written a long letter but I hope it will help you. Anything I can furnish you, please let me know. I would be most happy to know you, and would certainly like to hear something of your experiences in Egypt. It must be an alluring country.

With kind regards, and all good wishes for your success with your work on Lawton Genealogy -

I am sincerely yours,
(signed) Annie Lawton Long