

CAPTAIN WILLIAM LAWTON: A CHRONOLOGICAL COMMENTARY
BY PAUL S. LAWTON, JR.--JULY 1989

BIRTH DATE: 1700-1716 Despite the extensive amount of detailed research that has been conducted on Capt. William Lawton since as early as 1911, no one thus far has been able to discover or otherwise determine his precise date of birth. On one of her undated Lawton "Family Group Sheets," which she completed sometime in the early 1900's, Miss Mabel Louise Webber, former editor (1909-1941) of the South Carolina Historical Magazine, recorded "1714 or earlier" as what one presumes to be her best estimate (at that time) of approximately when Capt. William Lawton was born. Miss Webber cited no source to support this date, and provided no clues to indicate how she arrived at it, so now, some seventy-five or more years later, there is virtually no way to determine exactly what records and/or other data she might have used to reach her conclusion. Owing to her vast knowledge of early South Carolina history and her impeccable reputation as a genealogist, it is never the less entirely safe to assume that Miss Webber's "1714 or earlier" year of birth for Capt. William Lawton was based upon very sound reasoning, and is therefore fairly accurate, particularly in view of the fact that, during Miss Webber's time, much less was known about Capt. William Lawton than is known today.

On a more positive and factual note, there is little room for doubt that Capt. William Lawton was born no later than 1716, for on 03/19/1737 he served as one of the witnesses to the will of a certain John Sealy. (See further details, p. 5 herein.) At the time that he witnessed this will, Capt. William Lawton almost certainly would have been at least twenty-one years of age, thus born no later than 03/19/1716.

Then, sometime in 1984, Mr. Thomas O. Lawton, Jr., of Allendale, S. C., brought to this writer's attention the existence of a sheet of paper on which someone (apparently Mr. Lawton's wife) had at some unknown time jotted down certain specific information about Capt. William Lawton, his father, and his grandfather. The source of this information is also unknown, and since Mrs. Lawton has never had any interest whatsoever in genealogy, it is a mystery as to why she would have recorded the biodata of three generations of her husband's ancestors. Whatever the source--and whatever her purpose in writing it down--the information that Mrs. Lawton recorded (presumably in her own handwriting) is as follows:

William Lawton: born at Lawton Hall 1658; baptized
14 Oct. 1662; moved to Wales and left a son:

William Henry Lawton: born in Wales c. 1685, left a son:

William Lawton: born in Wales 1710; emigrated to S. C.
c. 1730, where he was thrice married and died Oct. 1757.

All of the foregoing years of birth are perfectly in agreement with what one would expect (by way of inference) for Capt. William Lawton and the two generations antecedent to him. All the other details "fit" as well: (1) Concerning Capt. William Lawton's place of birth, there has for many years been a "Welsh tradition" in the family, although the basis for this tradition has never been proved; (2) 1730 is approximately when Capt. William Lawton is believed to have arrived in South Carolina; (3) Capt. William Lawton did indeed marry three times (so far as is known), all three times in South Carolina; (4) he did indeed die in South Carolina in October of 1757;

and (5) the name William Henry Lawton did in fact occur at least several times in the early generations of the family, most notably as the name that Joseph Lawton gave to his first son, who was born 02/23/1775 and died 11/14/1827. If possible (and when time permits), all of the foregoing information should be further researched, since it dovetails so precisely with all the known facts--and all the inferences as well--about Capt. William Lawton.

In the meantime, purely for the record (and for what it might otherwise be worth), it is this writer's strictly personal opinion that Capt. William Lawton was born somewhat earlier than any of the dates previously cited herein--most probably between 1700 and 1710, and perhaps even as early as 1695. No tangible proof whatsoever exists to support this opinion, and only time and additional research will tell how accurate it is. It was just recently discovered and quite interesting to note, however, that William Jenkins, one of Capt. William Lawton's brothers-in-law, was born before 1704, according to a Jenkins genealogy that was published in South Carolina Genealogies (Vol. III, pp. 3 and 5). Until someone discovers proof to the contrary, it is not at all unreasonable to assume that Capt. William Lawton might also have been born at about the same time as William Jenkins. Both men are known to have married their Clark wives at about the same time--between late 1728 and sometime in 1734 or 1735.

09/14/1728 * Jeremiah Clark, Planter, of Edisto Island, Colleton Co., S. C., made out his will, which was probated 12/05/1728, and recorded 12/07/1728 (Moore's Wills, 1670-1740, p. 131). Jeremiah Clark was the father of (among other children) Mary Clark, Capt. William Lawton's first wife (so far as is known). In his will Jeremiah Clark referred to his daughter Mary as still single, so she and Capt. William Lawton clearly were married sometime after 09/14/1728. It is possible (but not very likely) that Capt. William and Mary Clark Lawton were married sometime during the brief period between 09/14/1728 and 12/07/1728, and if so, there almost certainly would be some evidence of this fact among Jeremiah Clark's loose probate papers. Has this file ever been examined? If not, someone should investigate it at once.

There is no known Clark-Lawton relationship prior to Capt. William Lawton's marriage to Mary. How/when/where did the two families become associated? Could both families have originated and had ties in Barbados before coming to Carolina? There is a Jeremiah Clark who came to Carolina from Barbados in 1678, aboard the ship Joseph (Baldwin's First Settlers, p. 14), but it is not known whether he was Mary Clark's father. A more remote (but still possible) Clark-Lawton connection might be found by examining the "Clark Genealogy" referred to in the first publication of Fusco's Lawton Issue (Vol. 1, #1, p. 10). In this booklet there is a record of a Sarah Lawton (born 1679, died before 11/15/1733), daughter of Daniel Lawton (born about 1645, died 06/28/1719) and Rebecca Mott (born in September of 1648, died before 1719). This Sarah Lawton married a Lawrence Clark. Both families had for several generations been inhabitants of Portsmouth, Rhode Island. Interestingly, Sarah Lawton Clark had a brother Thomas Lawton (born 03/01/1666, died before 1719) who had a son William (no date of birth or death given). On 09/05/1712, this William Lawton sold to a certain Jacob Mott a tract of land which he (William) had inherited from his great-grandmother, Mary Mott.¹ William then seems to "vanish" from the Portsmouth, R. I. family scene; he at least does not appear again in the Lawton Genealogy. Although no dates are available for him, one can safely infer that William Lawton must have been at least twenty-one years of age when he sold his land in 1712, and thus was born no later than about 1691.² While 1691 is a bit too early (or is it?) to be considered as a realistic year of birth for Capt. William Lawton, William Lawton of Portsmouth should never the less be researched further, when time permits.

Back to Jeremiah Clark, an abstract of his 09/14/1728 will is as follows:

Wife--Sarah (Said to have been a Calder, Sarah married first a Baynard. Nothing further is known about her parents or first husband. According to Mrs. Caroline Moore, Sarah Calder Clark was born before 1693 and died c. 1756. Also according to Mrs. Moore, Jeremiah Clark was born before 1685.)³

Sons--James (Born before 1724 according to Mrs. Moore, James married a Calder, possibly a relative of his mother's. James Clark's will was dated 04/16/1750, and was probated 06/29/1750.)

Jeremiah (Born before 1727 according to Mrs. Moore, Jeremiah married an Ann Wilkins in 1747. Jeremiah Clark's will was dated 11/18/1749, and was probated 03/02/1750.)

Daughters--Phebe (Born before 1720 according to Mrs. Moore, Phebe married William Jenkins and died in 1736. William Jenkins married second Mary Townsend, daughter of Daniel and Abigail Townsend, and third Sarah Sealy, widow of William Sealy who died in 1748. Was this William Sealy possibly some relation to the John Sealy whose 03/19/1737 will Capt. William Lawton witnessed?)

Mary (Born before 1722 according to Mrs. Moore, Mary was Capt. William Lawton's first wife.)

Martha (Born in 1728 according to Mrs. Moore, she married William Sams. Martha apparently married twice, the second time to a man by the last name of Eaton.)⁴

[Jeremiah Clark also had a daughter named Ann, whom he did not mention in his will. Ann married Andrew Townsend. Ann and Andrew Townsend are treated subsequently herein.]

Sons-in-law--William Sames [Sams] (This was apparently Martha Clark's first husband.)

William Binyard (Could this possibly be a misspelling of Baynard? Whichever the case, this man's relationship as Jeremiah Clark's brother-in-law is not clear. Was he perhaps a brother of Sarah Calder-Baynard-Clark's first husband?)

Daughter-in-law--Sarah Fry (This person's relationship to Jeremiah Clark is unknown, and there is no further record of her.)

Granddaughter--Elizabeth Sames [Sams] (This is apparently a daughter of William and Martha Clark Sams.)

Executors--wife Sarah

son James

Mr. Ralph Bayly (This person's relationship to Jeremiah Clark is unknown, and there is no further record of him.)

Mr. William Bower (Relationship unknown, no further record.)

Witnesses--Francis Sullivan (Relationship unknown, no further record.)

Matthew Crech (Could this possibly be the "Mathew Creece" who witnessed the 04/01/1744 will of William Tilly, from whose estate Capt. William Lawton in May of the same year purchased 200 acres of land?

The witness to each will signed with his mark.)

Thomas Hann (Relationship unknown, no further record.)

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On her Jeremiah Clark "Family Group Sheet" dated December 1911, Mrs. Mabel L. Webber noted (as did Mrs. Caroline Moore) that there was a Clark daughter named Ann, who married an Andrew Townsend, and had issue--at least one daughter, also named Ann. In Moore's Wills (1760-1784, p. 320), there appears an Andrew Townsend of Edisto Island, whose 09/25/1775 will (probated 07/20/1781) is abstracted as follows:

Wife--Ann (This is almost certainly Ann Clark, the daughter whom Jeremiah for some reason did not mention in his 09/14/1728 will.)

Daughter--Ann Jeffords

Executrix--wife Ann

Witnesses--Abraham Brish

Daniel Fickling (He and the third witness, Rebecca Fickling, were possibly related to Samuel Fickling, who married Mary Stone-Grimball-Lawton, the third wife of Capt. William Lawton, after his death in October of 1757.)

Rebecca Fickling (She signed with her "mark.")

Also mentioned--Mr. John Jeffords, Jr. (Andrew Townsend's son-in-law?)

There also appears in Moore's Wills (1783-1800, p. 269) an Ann Townsend of Edisto Island, whose 12/27/1791 will (probated 07/13/1792) is abstracted as follows:

Husband--not named (Andrew, above, died sometime prior to 07/20/1781.)

Daughter--Ann Littlejohn

Grandson--John Hendirck [Hendrick, perhaps?] Jeffords (Referred to as a minor, this child was possibly related to the John Jeffords mentioned in Andrew Townsend's will. Apparently Andrew and Ann Clark Townsend had another daughter, or perhaps Ann married twice--first to a Jeffords, and then to a Littlejohn.... obviously the latter.)

Granddaughters--Elizabeth Bailey Seabrook (This person was possibly some relation to the Ralph "Bayly" who served as one of the executors to Jeremiah Clark's will.)

Mary Seabrook Clark ^{married}

Niece--Wilkins Frampton (This was obviously a ^{known} child of Ann Clark Townsend's brother Jeremiah Clark, Jr., who married an Ann Wilkins.)

Great-granddaughter--Ann Wilkins Jenkins (Referred to as a minor, this child's parents are unknown.)

Executor---John Seabrook (He is referred to in this will as "grandson-in-law.")

Witnesses--Charles Elliott

James Clark

William Seabrook

NOTE: The John Seabrook who served as the sole executor to this will was the husband of Sarah Lawton Seabrook, Capt. William Lawton's only ^{known} daughter by his first wife, Mary Clark. The William Seabrook who witnessed this will was the son of John and Sarah Lawton Seabrook. This is a rather puzzling situation, since William Seabrook was born in 1773, and thus was only about eighteen years old when he witnessed Ann Clark Townsend's will. Was it legal during this time for people under twenty-one years of age to witness a will? If so, what does this "new development" have on the theory that Capt. William Lawton must have been at least twenty-one years of age when he witnessed the 03/19/1737 will of John Sealy? There is of course the possibility that William Seabrook was born before 1773,

and that he was therefore of age when he witnessed Mary Clark Townsend's will, but until these questions can be resolved, there is definitely a problem with the steadfast assertion that Capt. William Lawton must have been born no later than 1716, simply because he witnessed a will in 1737. Of these facts, however, there is no question: (1) William Seabrook's brother, John Seabrook, Jr., married Elizabeth Bailey Clark, a daughter of James Lardant Clark. John and Elizabeth Bailey Clark Seabrook were obviously the parents of the Elizabeth Bailey Seabrook referred to as a granddaughter in Ann Clark Townsend's will. (2) In his 01/08/1795 will (probated 01/23/1795), John Seabrook, Jr. mentioned a "daughter-in-law" [actually a step-daughter?], Ann Wilkins Jenkins, who was referred to in Ann Clark Townsend's will as a "great-granddaughter." (3) The names Charles Elliott and Ralph Bailey are also mentioned in John Seabrook, Jr.'s will, the former a witness to Ann Clark Townsend's will, the latter an executor to Jeremiah Clark's will. In summary, Capt. William Lawton clearly had an affinity for complicated people.

Back to the previously-mentioned "Family Group Sheet" of Jeremiah Clark, Mrs. Webber indicates that Jeremiah also had a daughter named Sarah, who married a man by the last name of Fry. It is therefore possible that the Sarah Fry referred to as "daughter-in-law" in Jeremiah Clark's will was related to him in some other way--but how?

- 1728-1735 Capt. William and Mary Clark Lawton must have been married sometime between 09/14/1728 (the date of Jeremiah Clark's will) and 1735, since their first known child, Josiah Lawton clearly was born no later than 1735. (See the explanation immediately below.)
- 1729-1735 Josiah Lawton, the first known child of Capt. William and Mary Clark Lawton, could have been born no earlier than mid-1729, since his mother was still single on 09/14/1728, according to Jeremiah Clark's will; likewise, Josiah could have been born no later than October 15, 1735, since he had to have been at least twenty-one years of age on October 15, 1757, when he wrote his will. His year of birth could be pushed up to 1736, were it not for the fact that his brother, William Lawton, Jr., also appears to have been at least twenty-one years of age in 1757--or at least one infers this to have been the case, in reading Capt. William Lawton's will. In his will Capt. William Lawton appoints Josiah and William, Jr. to look after the interests of his younger children, so one assumes that Josiah and William, Jr. were of age at the time. (Capt. William Lawton did not appoint Josiah and William, Jr. to look after the interests of their youngest brother, Joseph, since Joseph's mother, Mary Stone-Grimball-Lawton, was still living, and would have served as the child's guardian.)
- 1730-1736 William Lawton, Jr., the second child (so far as is known) of Capt. William and Mary Clark Lawton, could have been born no earlier than March or April of 1730, and no later than October of 1736. (See the explanation immediately above.)
- 03/19/1737 Capt. William Lawton serves as one of the witnesses to the will of a certain John Sealy, Planter, of All Hope, Granville Co. This is the earliest known record of Capt. William Lawton's presence in South Carolina, although one can very safely assume that he arrived in the Province no later than 1735, since he almost certainly married Mary Clark at about this time. There is a family tradition that he arrived as early as about 1730, but no proof exists to support this claim.

There is no known relationship between Capt. William Lawton and John Sealy, but it is known that the Sealys married into a number of families with whom the early Lawtons were associated: (1) Charles Grimball (c. 1735-1770) in 1756 married an Ann Sealy. (2) Charles' father, Isaac Grimball, married as

his second wife a Rebecca Sealy, who died between January and April of 1767. (3) Joseph Sealy, Sr. and Jr. served as witnesses to the 1721 will of Thomas Grimball. (4) John Jenkins (c. 1736-1764), a son of William Jenkins and his Clark wife, married as his first wife Mary Sealy, a daughter of William and Sarah Sealy. Mary Sealy Jenkins is identified as "the daughter of [her husband's] stepmother," whose name was Ann Sealy--married first Charles Isaac Grimball, and second Oliver Hart, the clergyman. (5) After his death, John Jenkins' widow married second Christopher Jenkins, third Samuel Fickling, and fourth Abraham Bush. (6) Finally--and most interesting of all--William Jenkins, one of Capt. William Lawton's brothers-in-law, married as his third wife, Sarah Sealy, widow of the William Sealy who died in 1748.

Back to John Sealy, his will was probated 08/31/1741, and recorded 10/15/1741. If a Sealy-Lawton relationship did in fact exist prior to 03/19/1737, when Capt. William Lawton witnessed John Sealy's will, there well might be some evidence of this relationship among John Sealy's loose probate papers. Has this file ever been examined? If not, someone should investigate it at once.

An abstract of John Sealy's will as it appears in Moore's Wills (1740-1760, p. 5) is as follows:

Wife--Hannah (Maiden name unknown--no further record.)⁵
 Sons--William, John, and Mikel (All three sons were apparently of age.)
 Daughters--Martha, Hanna, Margaret (All three daughters referred to as under seventeen years of age.)
 Executors--wife Hannah
 Joseph Sealy (Relationship to John Sealy unknown.)
 William Sealy (This is possibly John's oldest son.)
 Witnesses--William Lawton (He was the only witness to sign with his name, rather than use a "mark.")
 William Ashman, his mark (No known relationship to John Sealy or to Capt. William Lawton, and no further record.)
 George Allason, his mark (Same as above.)

06/14/1738 In his "Plantation Journal," Paul Grimball records the death of his first wife, Mary Barnwell (06/25/1709-06/14/1738), and their infant daughter, Providence (03/29/1738-06/14/1738).

11/29/1738 In the same "Plantation Journal," Paul Grimball records this as the date that he m. his second wife, Mary Stone, a daughter of John Stone (no dates known, but married c. 1719) and Susannah Carrière (1703-1780). Mary Stone-Grimball would later become the third and last wife of Capt. William Lawton

1739 According to the inscription on her tombstone, Sarah Lawton, the third child and only daughter (so far as is known) of Capt. William and Sarah Clark Lawton, was born sometime during this year and died 10/21/1798. It is possible that there were other children born between William Lawton, Jr. (born c. 1730-1736) and Sarah, but as yet no records have been found. Sarah Lawton married John Seabrook (born in either 1727 or 1731, died 11/26/1783), and had issue, most notably William Seabrook (born in 1773, died 09/01/1836), father of Carolina Lafayette Seabrook, who was named for (and by) the famous Marquise de LaFayette, when he visited the Seabrook home during his post-Revolutionary visit to this country and served as Godfather to Carolina Seabrook and gave her his name. Caroline Lafayette Seabrook's beautiful portrait by Sully is now on display at the Charleston Museum.

For what it might be worth, the William Seabrook referred to immediately above (a grandson of Capt. William Lawton) at the time of his death left an estate of personal property appraised at \$376,916.60, and this amount was apparently exclusive of real estate, much of which he had bestowed upon his heirs during his lifetime. It is interesting to note that William Seabrook

1740-1744

left a bequest of \$5000.00 to the Presbyterian Church at Edisto. Might this bequest be an indication that Capt. William Lawton was a Presbyterian? At least two significant events occurred during this period: Mary Clark Lawton, Capt. William Lawton's first wife, died; Jeremiah Lawton, the fourth and last child (so far as is known) by this first marriage, was born. It has thus far not been possible to pinpoint the dates of these two events more precisely, but they almost certainly occurred during this time, since Sarah Lawton was definitely born in 1739 (at least according to her tombstone inscription), and Winborn Lawton, Capt. William Lawton's first known child by his second wife (see below) was born in 1745 (at least according to his 09/23/1809 obituary, in which his age is given as 64).

NOTE: Some years ago, this writer had Mrs. Caroline Moore, GRS, of Charleston, S. C., to conduct some considerable research on Capt. William Lawton. Unfortunately, the results of this research were for the most part inconclusive, revealing very little that had not been previously discovered. Among Mrs. Moore's interesting comments about Capt. William Lawton were the following:

1. From a letter dated March 12, 1983: "I just do not know how a person who was so well known as the Captain could leave such a small amount of information....As yet I cannot see how Isaac Rippon was kin (or by marriage) to William Lawton." (To Mrs. Moore's second comment, it should be added that Mrs. Mabel Webber and Mr. Alston Read also devoted a great deal of time attempting to unravel the Lawton-Rippon connection--discussed subsequently herein--and met with no success whatsoever.)
2. From a letter dated May 18, 1983: "Oh, I asked Elias Bull, the former historian of Charleston County, if he could locate any information on Capt. William Lawton. He called the other evening and said that he had looked at everything he had in his library, but could not find and [any] information on him other [than] that [which] is already known. I felt he would know if anyone did. I was really disappointed when he called and gave a negative answer."

One of the things that Mrs. Moore's research did reveal about Capt. William Lawton was that he served on various juries in the years between 1740 and 1757. A verbatim typescript of Mrs. Moore's report on Capt. William Lawton's jury duty records is as follows:

SOUTH CAROLINA JURY JURY LISTS, 1718-1783-Warren

- 1740-15-2 Lawton, William
- 1751-22-1 Lawton, William
- 1757-22-2 Lawton, William
- 1757-15-2 Lawton, William
 - 15-Edisto Island
 - 22-St. John's in Colleton Co.
 - al-Grand Juror
 - 2-Petit Juror

Capt. William Lawton purchased 200 acres of land from the executors of the estate of William Tilly, whose 04/01/1744 will was probated 04/19/1744 and recorded 04/27/1744 (Moore's Wills, 1740-1760, p. 28). This tract of land was to comprise part of the Lawton homestead, to which an adjoining tract of 460 acres would be added in January of 1756. There is no known relationship between Capt. William Lawton and William Tilly, except for the fact that they both seem to have associated with some of the same families, most notably the Grimballs. It is very interesting to note that one of William Tilly's executors was Paul Grimball, who at the time of Tilly's death was

*which - April or May?
04 14+
05/15/1744*

married to Mary Stone Grimball, later to become Capt. William Lawton's third and last wife. In addition to this Tilly-Lawton-Grimball connection, there might be other evidence of family relationships among William Tilly's loose probate papers. Has this file ever been examined? If not, someone should investigate it as soon as possible, but not before investigating the probate files of Jeremiah Clark and John Sealy. It also would not be a bad idea to investigate the probate file of Paul Grimball.

An abstract of William Tilly's will as it appears in Moore's Wills (1740-1760, p. 28) is as follows:

Wife--Not named (In South Carolina Genealogies, Vol. II, p. 216, there appears a Mary Gibbs, born 12/24/1719, died 07/11/1743, who married ^{in 1740} a William Tilly. This Mary Gibbs Tilly died on Edisto just over eight months before the date of the will of the William Tilly from whose estate Capt. William Lawton bought 200 acres of land. Is it possible that these two William Tillys are one and the same? For what it is worth, the Gibbs family came to Carolina from Barbados.)

Son--William, Jr. (He is referred to as nineteen years of age.)

Brother--Joseph Tilly of Warminster, in Wiltshire, England, a joiner

Mentions--Jane Palmerter of Port Royal and her son Joseph

Elizabeth Slack of Edisto Island and her son William

Mr. and Mrs. Hutchinson of James Island, and their children

(These individuals are not identified by relationship to

William Tilly, nor is there any known relationship that they

might have had to Capt. William Lawton.)

Executors--Paul Grimball, Joshua Grimball, Isaac Grimball, John Jenkins

Witnesses--Cathern [Catherine?] Mitchell

Mathew Greece, his mark (Is this possibly the same person who witnessed the will of Jeremiah Clark, also using his "mark"?)⁶

John Wayte

NOTE: The 200 acres of land that Capt. William Lawton purchased from the estate of William Tilly can be found listed in Memorial Book Vol. 7, pp. 141-2.⁷ This was the same tract of land that Capt. William Lawton devised in his 10/09/1757 will to his wife, Mary Stone-Grimball-Lawton, for her lifetime, and then to their only known child, Joseph Lawton. Joseph Lawton on 12/13/1774 sold this land to a John Hanahan, and the area is still today known as "Hanahan's" (Charleston Deed Book 116, p. 450).⁸ When the deed was drawn up, it included the following stipulation: "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 have been accustomed to bury."

1744-1745 At least two significant events occurred during this period: Capt. William Lawton married his second wife, Mary Winborn, a daughter of Thomas Winborn; Winborn Lawton, the first child (so far as is known) of Capt. William and Mary Winborn Lawton, was born. A daughter Mary was also born during the period between 1745 and 1750, but her precise date of birth has not been determined.

2/2&3/1746 Capt. William Lawton, William Jenkins (a Quaker), and Jeremiah Clark, Jr. witness a deed from Paul Hamilton, Planter, of Colleton Co., a son and heir of Paul Hamilton, Sr., to Jonas McLeod, gentleman, of lands at Edisto (Book HH, p. 33, Lease and Release, S. G. Deed Abstracts 1719-1772, Vol. II, 1740-1755, Book V, p. 88 214, edited by Clara Langley).

1746-1751

Mary Winborn Lawton, Capt. William Lawton's second wife, died. Her exact date of death cannot be pinpointed more precisely, but it is certain that she died prior to August of 1751, for this is when Capt. William Lawton married his third and last wife, Mary Stone-Grimball, the widow of Paul Grimball.

01/16/1750

In the same "Plantation Journal" in which Paul Grimball recorded his 11/29/1738 marriage to Mary Stone, she recorded his death.

02/21/1750

In the above-mentioned journal, Mary Stone Grimball recorded the birth of her son, Thomas Grimball, who was born just over a month after the death of his father. The birth dates of Mary's other children by Paul Grimball were also recorded in this journal: Susannah, born 08/16/1741, died 10/04/1743; Paul, born 08/07/1743--no further mention; Providence, born 04/27/1745, died in childbirth 03/15/1764--the child, a daughter named Ann, born 03/01/1764, died 03/07/1764; John, born 11/13/1747--no further mention; Anne, born 02/09/1749--no further mention.

04/16/1750

Capt. William Lawton and William Jenkins, brothers-in-law to the testator, are named as trustees for a £100 trust fund for the use of the Presbyterian congregation on Edisto Island. They, together with John Coulder, are named as the executors to James Clark's estate. An abstract of James Clark's will (dated 04/16/1750, probated 06/29/1750) as it appears in Moore's Wills (1740-1760, p. 116) is as follows:

- Wife--Not named (According to Mrs. Moore, James' wife was a Calder, and she apparently pre-deceased him.)
- Son--James, Jr. (According to his father's will, James, Jr. was a minor, born 10/16/1744.)
- Brother--Jeremiah (Jeremiah pre-deceased James, the former's 11/18/1749 will having been probated 03/02/1750, about six weeks before the latter wrote his will.)
- Mentions--Mr. Daniel Mitchell (Apparently this man had sold land to James.)
- Sister--Martha Eaton (Exactly which Eaton Martha married is not known.)
- Brothers-in-law--William Jenkins
 - William Lawton (Technically, James Clark and William Lawton were no longer brothers-in-law, since James' will was written five years or longer after Mary Clark Lawton had died.)
- Nieces--Referred to but not named.
- Nephews--James Lardent Clark and Jeremiah Clark
- Mentions--Henry Yonge (Relationship not known.)
 - Also John Jenkins, William Jenkins, Josiah Lawton, William Lawton, [Jr.], Jeremiah Lawton, Sarah Lawton, Jeremiah Eaton, Hanoway Eaton, Samuel Eaton, Sarah Eaton--plus another reference to James Lardent Clark and Jeremiah Clark, all of these referred to as minors under sixteen years of age.
- Executors--brothers-in-law William Jenkins and William Lawton; also John Coulder, whose relationship to James and the others in his will is not known.
- Witnesses--John McLeod, Richard Ash, and William Fry, relationship(s) to James and the others herein not known.

* 08/06/1750

Capt. William Lawton, Samuel Jones, and Joseph Phips are appointed overseers for the poor for the Parish of St. John's, Colleton Co., by the Church [the Presbyterian?] on Edisto Island.

08/12/1751

Signing her last name as Grimball, Mary, widow of Paul Grimball, deeds property to her son, Thomas Grimball. This conveyance may or may not have been unusual, for Thomas was only a baby (see above), having been born 02/21/1750. According to the annotations provided by the Rev. Dr. Robert E. H. Peebles for Paul Grimball's "Plantation Journal" referred to frequently herein, Mary Grimball "of St. John's Parish, Colleton Co....deeded property to her son Thomas Grimball on 12 Aug. 1751, shortly before her marriage to William Lawton, planter of Edisto Island." Dr. Peebles then notes that "On 7 April

1758 the estate of her son Thomas Grimbball^{deceased} was shown by Mary Lawton (Charleston Probate Court Book 1756-1758, p. 351)." Thomas Grimbball died in 1757 (see the 09/21/1757 entry herein), at the age of seven and a half years old. Was it common for mere children of this time to have "estates"? If so, Mary Lawton obviously would have inherited the full portion of Thomas' estate, and it would be interesting to see exactly how much it was worth. This writer has not made an effort to trace all the children of Paul Grimbball and his two (perhaps three) wives, but it might someday be interesting to do so, particularly in view of the fact that many of them did die young, according to the entries that Paul made in his "Plantation Journal, and also in view of the size of his estate and the manner in which he set up his will. One cannot help wondering how much of Paul Grimbball's estate eventually came down to Mary Stone-Grimbball-Lawton--perhaps a great deal. [One also cannot help wondering whether at least a portion of Paul Grimbball's estate in some way enriched Capt. William Lawton, and can thus be used to account for how he became so wealthy in such a relatively short period of time.]

A summary of Paul Grimbball's will as it appears in South Carolina Genealogies (Vol. II, p. 263) is as follows:

Paul Grimbball made his will Nov. 24, 1746; Codicil dated 9 Jan. 1749; Will proved 25 Jan. 1750; Paul Grimbball of Edisto Island, Colleton County. Wife Mary $\frac{1}{2}$ of slaves and use of 500 acres on Edisto Island for life or widowhood; [Copy is badly mutilated, and parts are not decipherable.] Son Paul Grimbball Island called Linckley's Island, 842 acres, south west of Edisto; but if son Paul die under 21 without issue, then to the next son born of my said wife,¹⁰ and in want of such son, executors to sell and divide among daughters Mary, Catherine, Elizabeth and Providence and any other daughter or daughters which may be born when 21 or married....Brothers Joshua and Isaac Grimbball, brother in law Robert Sams and friend John Jenkins to be executors. Elizabeth Pinckney, William Pinckney, and Cs. Pinckney witnesses. Codicil states that a son John and a daughter Ann have been born since the making of the will,¹¹ and makes provision for them. C. Pinckney, Wm. Davis and Thos. Grimbball witnesses. Joshua Grimbball and John Jenkins qualified.

There is a footnote to the above: P. C. 1751-54, p. 399 and 1756-58, p. 351. Inventory by Mary Lawton, his [Thomas Grimbball's] mother, of the estate of the child Thomas Grimbball, which includes a legacy left by Providence Hutchinson.

03/ /1753 Capt. William Lawton and John Calder [possibly Coulter?] receive a mortgage for £600 on five slaves from Benjamin Gowen, this mortgage witnessed by Andrew Townsend [husband of Ann Clark?] and Benjamin Weatherly (Mortgage Book Vol. 1753, p. 696).

04/14/1753 Thomas Winborn, father of Capt. William Lawton's second wife, Mary Winborn Lawton (by this time deceased), writes his will, which was probated 01/23/1756. An abstract of this will as it appears in Moore's Wills (1740-1760, p. 203) is as follows:

Wife--Susannah (Her will appears in Moore's Wills, 1760-1784, p. 309, dated Jan. 1778, probated 12/23/1780, and mentions among others her daughter, Mary Fickling, and a grandson, Joseph Lawton.)

Sons--Samuel and Thomas (Both are apparently of age.)

Daughter--Susanna (She is referred to as a minor.)

Sons-in-law--Mr. William Lawton and Mr. John Gibbons

Grandchildren--Winborn Lawton, Mary Lawton, Susanna Gibbons, and John Gibbons (All of these are referred to as minors.)

Executors--wife Susannah; sons Samuel and Thomas
 Witnesses--James Marsh, Thomas Roybould, and James Edes [possibly Edings?]
 (There is no known relationship between these witnesses and Thomas Winborn, nor is there any known relationship that they might have had to Capt. William Lawton.)

- 10/18/1753 Joseph Lawton, the only known child of Capt. William and Mary Stone-Grimball-Lawton, is born on Edisto Island.
- 03/ /1754 Capt. William Lawton and John Calder [Coulter?] receive a mortgage for £107, 7 shillings, and 4 pence, on two slaves from William Fry (Mortgage Book 1753, p. 285). (This William Fry is very likely the same person who served as one of the witnesses to James Clark's 04/16/1750 will.)
- 05/03/1754 Capt. William Lawton collects a £400 debt from William Gibbons, of Wadmalaw Island, Colleton Co., attesting by his signature (the only one known to have survived) that the loan, taken out a year to the day previously, had been paid in full, with all interest.¹²
- 03/01/1755 A bond is issued, designating Capt. William Lawton, William Edings, John Cuthbert, and Paul Hamilton as Trustees for the Presbyterian Church on Edisto Island. A suit on this appointment was brought up in the Common Pleas Court, Judgement Rolls 1768, No. 160-A.
- 04/15/1755 William Hambelton and Isaac Rippon co-sign a bond as sureties for William Edings, James Cuthbert, William Jenkins, William Lawton, and Paul Hamilton, Trustees for the Presbyterian Church on Edisto Island. The amount of this bond was £473, 2 shillings.
- 01/²²/~~23~~/1756 * Capt. William Lawton purchases from James Cuthbert (obviously the same person immediately above) 460 acres of land adjoining the 200 acres that he had purchased from the estate of William Tilly in May of 1744 (Memorial Book Vol. 7, pp. 436-7).
- 05/04/1757 * Just over five months before his death, William Lawton is listed as a Lieutenant of the Edisto Island Company of Foot for St. John's, Colleton Co. (Council Journal 26, p. 84).
- 05/24/1757 By this date, not quite three weeks later, Lieutenant William Lawton has apparently been promoted to the rank of Captain (Ibid., p. 90).
- 09/21/1757 Still making entries in her late husband's "Plantation Journal," Mary Stone-Grimball-Lawton records the death of her son, Thomas Grimball, her last child (born posthumously) by Paul Grimball. This child, born 02/21/1750, just over a month after the 01/16/1750 death of his father, was only seven and a half years old. Since his death occurred just a few weeks before the death of his stepfather, Capt. William Lawton (died between 10/09 and 10/15/1757) and his stepbrother, Josiah Lawton (died between 10/15 and 12/09/1757), one cannot help wondering whether some sort of virulent epidemic was sweeping the area during this time. A casual examination of the probate dates of the wills in Moore's Wills reveals an abnormally high mortality rate for the period between late 1756 and 1758. In addition to Capt. William Lawton, Josiah Lawton, and Thomas Thomas Grimball, others related to or associated with the Lawtons, and who died in 1756 and 1757 included: Joshua Grimball, Thomas Winborn, and Edward Rippon, Isaac Rippon's father, whose 01/18/1755 will was probated on 12/09/1757, the same day that the wills of Capt. William Lawton and Josiah Lawton were probated.
- 10/09/1757 Capt. William Lawton makes out his will, referring to himself as Planter, St. John's Colleton Co.
- 10/15/1757 Josiah Lawton, Capt. William Lawton's oldest child, makes out his will, also referring to himself as Planter, St. John's, Colleton Co. In his will Josiah refers to "my land left me by my father," an indication that Capt. William Lawton had died very soon after making out his will--a week, at the most.
- 12/09/1757 The wills of Capt. William Lawton, Josiah Lawton, and Edward Rippon are probated. Edward Rippon was the father of Isaac Rippon, whom Capt. William Lawton appointed as one of the executors to his will, and referred to as "my loving brother." Josiah Lawton also appointed Isaac Rippon as one of the executors to his will, but did not state any kind of relationship.

An abstract of Capt. William Lawton's will as it appears in Moore's Wills (1760-1784, p. 138) is as follows:

- Wife--Mary (Born Stone, Mary married first Paul Grimball, second Capt. William Lawton, and third Samuel Fickling.)
- Sons--Josiah: To receive $\frac{1}{2}$ of the land purchased from Mr. James Cuthbert.
 William, Jr.: To receive the other half of the above-mentioned land.
 Joseph: To receive "the land where I now live," Joseph's mother to have use of this land during her lifetime.
 Jeremiah: Received personal property, but oddly enough did not receive any real estate.
 Winborn: Same as Jeremiah.
- Daughters--Sarah and Mary: Same as Jeremiah and Winborn.
- Mentions--A possible unborn child: So far as is known, no such child was ever born.
- Guardians--Josiah and William, Jr.: "To have charge of the shares of Sarah, Jeremiah, Winborn, and Mary, who are under nineteen years of age and are unmarried."
- Executors--wife Mary; son Josiah; "my loving brother Isaac Rippon"; "my loving friend William Maxwell."
- Witnesses--John Mikell, John Fry, and John Frach (The Mikells and Frys were associated in various ways with the Lawtons and some of the families with whom the Lawtons were connected, but there is no known relationship that Capt. William Lawton might have had with these witnesses, other than a casual one.)

Only Mary Lawton and Isaac Rippon qualified as executors when Capt. William Lawton's will was probated on 12/09/1757. Josiah Lawton had of course died by this time, but William Maxwell was still living, his name appearing subsequently in Moore's Wills--at least several times. It is not known why William Maxwell did not qualify as one of Capt. William Lawton's executors, but there must have been a reason. Also, it has yet to be determined exactly how Isaac Rippon might have been Capt. William Lawton's "loving brother," but there obviously was some sort of close Lawton-Rippon relationship, since Josiah Lawton also appointed Isaac Rippon as one of the executors to his will. (This Lawton-Rippon connection will be discussed further herein.) Then there is the matter of the witnesses to Capt. William Lawton's will. There is no further record of or reference to either John Fry or John Frach in Moore's Wills or in South Carolina Genealogies, but John Mikell is very likely the same as the person whose 12/13/1764 will (probated 03/15/1765) appears in Moore's Wills (1760-1784, p. 54). Of great interest (although perhaps a mere coincidence) are the names of this John Mikell's children: Ephriam, Mary, Sarah, William, Joseph, Josiah, and Martha--five of these seven children having the same names as five out of seven of the children of Capt. William Lawton. The name Josiah is of special interest, since it was quite rare in South Carolina during the early 1700's. Last, it is interesting to note that two of the witnesses to Josiah Lawton's will were John Fry (who also witnessed Capt. William Lawton's will) and Ephriam Mikell, who was very likely a son of the John Mikell who witnessed Capt. William Lawton's will.

An abstract of Josiah Lawton's will as it appears in Moore's Wills (1760-1784, p. 139) is as follows:

- Wife--not named (Josiah is presumed to have died young and unmarried.)
- Brothers--Jeremiah: To receive "my land left me by my father, next to the land of William, Jr."
 William, Jr., Winborn, and Joseph: Not devised any real estate.
- Sisters--Sarah and Mary: Not devised any real estate.

Executors--brother William Lawton, Jr; Isaac Rippon and William Baynard.
Witnesses--John Fry, Ephriam Mikell, and William Crawford.

The William Baynard who served as one of the executors to the will of Josiah Lawton is apparently the same as the person by that name whose 11/18/1772 will (probated 02/05/1773) contains some interesting names, and appears in Moore's Wills (1760-1784, p. 188) and is abstracted as follows:

Wife--Elizabeth
Sons--Thomas (Under twenty-one years of age.)
William (Age not stated.)
Daughter--Elizabeth Ann (Age not stated.)
Executors--wife Elizabeth; ^{cousins} Archibald Calder; James Clark; Ephriam Mikell.
Witnesses--William Jackson; Ann Williams; John Graves, his mark.
Mentions--Mrs. Sarah Fry and "cousin William Jackson."

These details are included herein purely as a matter of incidental curiosity, since some of the names seem to recur again and again in the overall context of Capt. William Lawton's elusive presence in South Carolina.

Purely for the sake of completeness, an abstract of Edward Rippon's 01/18/1755 will (probated 12/09/1757) as it appears in Moore's Wills (1760-1784, p. 139) is as follows:

NOTE: Edward Rippon is referred to as Planter, Edisto Island, and signed with his "mark."
Wife--Anne (Her maiden name was Mikell, according to a Rippon "Family Group Sheet," recently sent to this writer by Robert Peebles.)
Son--Isaac
Daughters--Elizabeth Smely (Husband's name not known.)
Martha Jenkins (Her husband was Richard Jenkins, born 1730 or earlier, will proved 1772; married first, before 1750, Abigail, daughter of Daniel and Abigail Townsend; married second, before 1755, Martha Rippon.)

12/19/1757 Witnesses--Joseph Hambelton, John Frampton, and William Hambelton
Capt. William Lawton's estate is appraised by Joseph Seabrook, Daniel Townsend, and David Adams, and is valued at £7901, seven shillings, and six pence, exclusive of land. The inventory of his personal property consists of eight minutely detailed pages. It would be interesting to see exactly who bought what at his estate sale. Is there a record of this sale? Has anyone ever examined it? If so (in the first case), and if not (in the latter), someone should most certainly study this record in great detail--and at the earliest convenience--since very often family relationships are listed beside sales transactions.

01/30/1758 Josiah Lawton's estate is appraised by Joseph Seabrook, Daniel Townsend, and David Adams (the same three men who had appraised Capt. William Lawton's estate about six weeks earlier), and is valued at £1015, 14 shillings, and 11 pence, exclusive of land. (Note: According to Mrs. Caroline Moore's research notes, the appraisal of Capt. William Lawton's estate appears in Miscellaneous Charleston County Probate Court Records, Vol. 84, p. 310; the appraisal of Josiah Lawton's estate appears in the same records, Vol. 84, p. 340.)

Late 1758 William Lawton, Jr. dies, intestate.
01/01/1759 William Lawton, Jr.'s estate is appraised by Daniel Townsend, Andrew Townsend, and John Jenkins (Daniel Townsend having previously appraised the estates of Capt. William and Josiah Lawton), and is valued at £1045, 17 shillings, and 3 pence (Ibid., Vol. 85-A, p. 182).

The next two items are listed in the same order that they were recorded by Mary Stone-Grimball-Lawton in the "Plantation Journal" of her first husband, Paul Grimball. Mary maintained this journal for a number of years after the 01/16/1750 death of her first husband.

- 10/07/1759 "Ephraim [or Ephriam] Mikell was married to Providence Grimball 7 October 1759 between 9 & 10 o'clock Sunday morning." [According to an earlier entry in the journal, Providence Grimball was born 04/27/1745, the third child and second daughter of Paul Grimball and Mary Stone, later Lawton, finally Fickling.] Is the Ephriam Mikell who married Providence Grimball the same person who witnessed the 10/15/1757 will of Josiah Lawton?
- 01/15/1759 "Samuel Fickling was married to Mary [Stone-Grimball-Lawton] January 15, 1759, it being Tuesday between 2 & 3 o'clock in the afternoon."
- 03/20/1761 In her "Plantation Journal," Mary SGL Fickling records the birth of Samuel Fickling, Jr., her first known child by her third husband.
- 05/20/1762 Jeremiah Lawton's estate is appraised by John Fry, Joseph Rupell, William Sealy, and Robert Seabrook, and is valued at £1155, 18 shillings, and ½ pence.
- 07/14/1766 Mary SGL Fickling records the death of her son, Samuel Fickling, Jr., in her "Plantation Journal." The child was just over five years old. There is no record of the death of Samuel Fickling, Sr.
- 09/12/1803 Mary SGL Fickling and her son, Joseph Lawton, co-sign a \$550.00 promissory note to James B. Bryant, agreeing to repay the latter within six months--the full amount borrowed, plus \$19.25 interest. This note was witnessed by Mary Fickling's grandson, Benjamin Themistocles D'Ion Lawton (Harrell, Kith And Kin, p. 159).
- 10-11 1803 This writer believes he recalls a record of some type, whereby Mary SGL Fickling conveyed to either one of her children or grandchildren some land in October or November of 1803. Unfortunately, this record cannot be located.
- 12/15/1803 Benjamin Themistocles D'Ion Lawton, one of the grandsons of Mary SGL Fickling, submits to the executors of her estate a bill for \$4.00, for "making the coffin for the deceased." For some reason this bill was not paid until 01/10/1806.
- 01/31/1804 According to the record of personal property that was sold by the executors of Mary SGL Fickling's estate, £2688, 57 shillings, and 2 pence of belongings were sold. An analysis of exactly who bought what reveals nothing of particular importance.

THE RIPPON CONNECTION

For what they might eventually be worth in researching the Lawton-Rippon connection, the following bits of information were compiled by Mrs. Moore when she conducted her Rippon research for this writer some years ago.

1. SCHM, Vol. 22, p. 32: "Register of Marriage Licenses Granted, December 1765 to August 1766"--June 3, 1766, Isaac Rippon to Joanna Sealy, widow. Mrs. Martin.
2. SCHM, Vol. 26, p. 145: "Col. Alexander Paris and Paris Island"--Webber: Married before 1758, Ann Fleming; she married (2nd) 1791, Isaac Rippon.
3. SCHS, Manuscript 12-299, Rippon Family: 40 acres bounded by a creek from Edisto (South) and marsh of said Linkley's Island and is commonly called Rippon's Island.
4. St. Philip's Register (printed) p. 221: 1752, December 15--then was buried Mary Rippon.

Comments on the above:

1. According to a record of the Rippon family that was recently sent to this writer by Robert Peeples, the widow Joanna Sealy whom Isaac Rippon married was the former wife of John Sealy. This was apparently the same John Sealy whose 03/19/1737 will Capt. William Lawton witnessed. Joanna-Sealy-Rippon's maiden name was Joanna Staples. She was a daughter of Abraham Staples,

Planter, of Craven Co., and is referred to in his 12/26/1748 will, which was probated 04/04/1750. All this information agrees with the research Mrs. Moore conducted on the Rippon family, but the question remains: How was Isaac Rippon Capt. William Lawton's "loving brother"? This Lawton-Rippon link through the Sealy line is a new and intriguing development, but it does not resolve the riddle.

2. Mrs. Moore's next information is unclear. Who was Ann Fleming, and whom did she marry first? According to Mrs. Moore, this Ann Fleming married second, Isaac Rippon, yet according to the Rippon record, Isaac married Ann Delabare, widow of John Rhodes. Also according to Mrs. Moore, Edward Rippon, Isaac's father, was married three times: (1) Ann, maiden name not known, (2) second wife not known, and (3) Ann Delebar, of Paris Island.
3. This reference to Linckley's Island is interesting, because Paul Grimball referred to it in his will, devising it to his son Paul.
4. This information is also unclear. Who was "then buried Mary Rippon"?

According to Mrs. Moore, Edward Rippon was born c. 1712, so he was more than likely about the same age as Capt. William Lawton. Isaac, his son, was born c. 1734, so he was considerably young than Capt. William Lawton, who married his first wife, Mary Clark, at about the same time that Isaac Rippon was born. Is it very likely that a man would refer in his will to a person some twenty years his junior as "my loving brother"? Anything is possible, of course, but what ^{would} seem more plausible to this writer is that there was another Isaac Rippon, a brother of Edward, and that it was this older Isaac Rippon to whom Capt. William Lawton referred in his will. The most qualified researchers have all failed in their attempts to establish a Lawton-Rippon connection through Isaac, son of Edward Rippon, so is it just remotely possible that an Isaac, brother of Edward, somehow "slipped through the cracks"? If so--and if he can be identified--this "other, older Isaac Rippon" might very well be the missing link that so many researchers have been seeking for generations. Of course, someone still should investigate the loose probate papers of Isaac, son of Edward Rippon, but in the event that these papers reveal nothing pertinent to Lawton research, it should be borne in mind that there is this remote possibility that there was "another, older Isaac."

There is no record of a will for Isaac Rippon, son of Edward, in Moore's Wills. His name last appears in her last volume, 1783-1888, p. 288. On 09/01/1786, he witnessed the will (probated 05/24/1793) of Charles Mitchell, of St. Paul's Parish. Since Isaac had no sons, Charles Mitchell's witness was clearly Edward Rippon's son.