

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES ON THE RIPPONS: TO BE ATTACHED TO THE CHRONOLOGICAL COMMENTARY ON  
CAPTAIN WILLIAM LAWTON

How could Isaac Rippon have been Capt. William Lawton's "loving brother"? There are at least five possible explanations to account for this puzzling relationship, the first two highly unlikely, but never the less worth considering, if only momentarily.

1. Religious--a "brothers-in-Christ" sort of relationship: This is a very unlikely explanation, even though it is known that Capt. William Lawton and Isaac Rippon were both at the same time closely associated with--and possibly members of--the same church (the Presbyterian) at Edisto. (See the 04/15/1755 inclusion in the "Chronology" for a good example of this association.) Anything is possible, of course, but a "loving brother" relationship through the Church is quite implausible, particularly in view of the age difference between William and Isaac, the former at least forty-three years old when he died in 1757 (if born in 1714 or earlier, as Miss Mabel Webber believed), the latter only about twenty-three years old at that time (if born c. 1734, as Mrs. Caroline Moore believed). In this context of the Church, what are the chances that a man in his forties (very possibly in his fifties) would have referred to a young man half his age (possibly less) as a "loving brother"? To say the least, the chances are extremely remote, so the "religious theory" is almost definitely OUT.
2. Military--a "big brother" or "buddy system" sort of relationship originating in Capt. William Lawton's military regiment: This explanation is all but (if not in fact) begging the question, and practically inventing a means of establishing a "brotherly relationship" between William and Isaac, but in view of the almost total absence of known facts about a Lawton-Rippon connection, all things (both known and inferred) must be considered. One of the numerous problems with this "military theory" is that there is no evidence--not so much as the merest suggestion, in fact--that Isaac Rippon even served in the military, let alone in the same regiment with Capt. William Lawton. Like the "religious theory," the "military theory" is almost definitely out.
3. Marriage--another, older Isaac Rippon, and a fourth wife for Capt. William Lawton: This is the most complex theory, involving as it does so many "IF's," but it is also one of the most likely, since the circumstances it involves could so easily have occurred, in view of how very little is known about Capt. William Lawton prior to 1737. There is not the first shred of evidence that there was a second Isaac Rippon, nor is there the first suggestion that Capt. William Lawton had a fourth wife, but the record of his (and the Rippons') early presence in South Carolina is so sketchy and filled with gaps, that one cannot help wondering, WHAT IF? (1) Edward Rippon, Isaac's father, had several siblings, one of them a brother named Isaac, one of them a sister; (2) Capt. William Lawton married this Rippon sister before c. 1734, approximately when he is believed to have married Mary Clark; (3) this Rippon wife died young, possibly in childbirth, very soon after marrying Capt. William Lawton; (4) Capt. William Lawton remained very close to the Rippons, especially to Isaac, Edward's brother, even after the death of this theoretical Rippon wife, just as he remained close to the Clarks and the Winborns, after the deaths of his wives from those two families. In brief, this theory (or rather, this string of theories) would easily account for Isaac Rippon's being Capt. William Lawton's "loving brother": An Isaac Rippon, brother of Edward Rippon, could easily have been a brother-in-law to Capt. William Lawton. As far-fetched as all this reasoning might be, the before-mentioned "age factor" makes this theory of a possible Lawton-Rippon marriage well worth considering. Edward Rippon was born c. 1712, according to Mrs. Moore, so he was within just a few years of Capt. William Lawton's age. An Isaac Rippon, brother of Edward Rippon, would be a perfect explanation to the "loving brother" reference in Capt. William Lawton's will. An Isaac Rippon, son of Edward Rippon, makes absolutely not the first bit of sense, because of his age in 1757, if nothing else. How likely is it that a twenty-three-year-old young man would have been appointed as executor to the wills of three men at the same time? Capt. William Lawton, Josiah Lawton, and Edward Rippon all

appointed Isaac Rippon as one of the executors to their wills, and he seems to have qualified in each case. Again, anything is possible, but was this ordinary in this era--for a twenty-three-year-old young man to have been assigned so much responsibility? Perhaps so, but to this writer it would seem much more logical to investigate the possibility of another, older Isaac Rippon.

4. A sister of Capt. William Lawton--one who married a Rippon, possibly Isaac: As yet, there is no evidence that any relatives (or anyone at all, for that matter) accompanied William Lawton to Carolina. It is possible, however, that he might have been accompanied by a sister who married a Rippon and died young. Even if such a sister had married a brother of Isaac, there could have been an indirect sort of brother-in-law relationship between William and Isaac. If this sister had married Isaac, then of course this event would account perfectly for the "loving brother" reference in William Lawton's will.
5. Capt. William Lawton's mother--a Rippon husband either before or after William's father: If such a marriage had occurred, William Lawton could easily have had a half-brother named Isaac, and he would provide the most perfect explanation for the entire Lawton-Rippon mystery.
6. Capt. William Lawton's father--a Rippon wife (or one who had previously been married to a Rippon): This is a complex theory which can branch out into several directions, so to simplify it, here are two briefly summarized possibilities: (1) William's father married first a Rippon, a girl who had a young relative named Isaac Rippon, about the same age as William, and the two boys developed a brotherly relationship. (2) William's father married second a Rippon widow who had a son named Isaac, who would be William's step-brother.

Whichever (if any) of the foregoing theories turns out to be true, one thing is certain: The Rippon connection to Capt. William Lawton could well hold the key to much if not all of the mystery surrounding William, and this connection needs to be researched in detail when time permits. One last thing: On 04/15/1755, Isaac Rippon, (then twenty-one years old,) served with William Hambelton as one of the sureties for William Edings, James Cuthbert, William Jenkins, William Lawton, and Paul Hamilton, Trustees for the Presbyterian Church at Edisto, in connection with a bond for £473, 3 shillings. How common was such a situation during this time, for a boy barely of age to engage in business dealings of this importance with a group of much older, prominent adults? It must be borne in mind that Isaac's father, Edward Rippon, did not die until 1757, so in 1755 Isaac would not yet have received his inheritance--unless, of course, he had inherited previously, from someone else. The question thus is, what means would Isaac have had at the age of twenty-one in 1755, to enable him to co-sign this considerable bond with William Hambelton? Would it not be more logical to consider the possibility that this Isaac was not Edward's son, but instead, a brother?