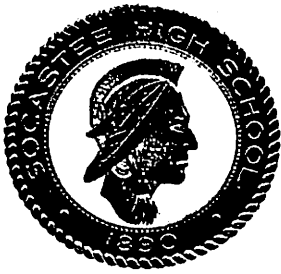


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4900 Socastee Blvd.
Myrtle Beach, S. C. 29577
9 February 89

Dr. J. Philip Dodd
21 Townfield Lane
Frodsham
Cheshire WA6 7QZ
England

Dear Dr. Dodd:

As you no doubt have heard by now, my cousin Marion Lawton is very ill, and can not conduct any research or engage in any correspondence. I therefore hope that you will not consider it presumptuous of me to contact you directly, to ask you about a research matter which, under more fortunate circumstances, I would pass on to you indirectly, through Marion, as I have always done in the past.

The questions I would like to ask you pertain to your findings on William Lawton of Snape, born in 1703, the first child of Thomas and Mary Reeve Lawton, said William (based on your research) being one and the same as our American ancestor, Capt. William Lawton, of Edisto Island, S. C. These questions arose as a result of my recent attempt to reorganize my files on Capt. William Lawton. Among my material was a folder of miscellaneous information, which included the reports and correspondence of a lady in Salt Lake City, Utah, who attempted unsuccessfully to research Capt. William Lawton for me in 1981 and 1982.

In her summaries of the IGI and Probate records of the numerous William Lawtons who lived in and around Cheshire in the early 1700's, this researcher provided certain information pertaining to one William Lawton in particular. The bold type on the next page of this letter represents verbatim what this researcher sent to me. The notations in brackets are my own questions and comments to you.

1. 90100—Not Here: William Lawton, late of Lawton, Admon. 1735 and 1736.

[This was my researcher's response after searching the 1721-1740 Cheshire Probate records for a William Lawton.]

2. We have the probate of John Lawton of Lawton, proved in 1737, but he does not name a William. Extract enclosed. There is an administration (no Will) listed for William Lawton of Lawton in 1735/6, but it is in the infra Wills—i.e., for estates under £100.

[Note: In one of your letters to Marion, you mentioned that your William had an uncle named John, but that William was not referred to in this uncle's Will.]

3. Chester, England—Infra Wills and Probates: Administration Bond 31 March 1736:

Mary Lawton of Snape, Parish of Lawton, Co. Chester, widow

John Lawton of Newcastle, Co. Stafford, carpenter

Charles Lawton of Snape, wheelright

Mary Lawton, widow, is the mother of William Lawton, late of Snape, aforesaid, joyner, bachelor, deceased; she is granted administration of the effects of William Lawton.

Mary, John, and Charles each signed the document.
Estate £40

[Whatever they might mean, the code numbers GS 165294 appear in the left margin beside the information in number 3 above. I am compelled to believe that the William Lawton referred to in numbers 1, 2, and 3, is the same person, and that he is furthermore the same person as your William Lawton of Snape--hence my purpose in writing to you.]

You will notice that all the details seem to "fit" perfectly:

1. The mother of your William was named Mary, as was the mother of the William referred to above.
2. Thomas Lawton, the father of your William, died in 1724, a date which would account perfectly for the above 1735/6 reference to Mary Lawton as a "widow."
3. The Mary Lawton referred to above was from Snape, as were your Mary, Thomas, and William Lawton.
4. The William Lawton referred to above had an uncle named John, as did your William Lawton.
5. In the Will of the John Lawton you researched, there was no mention of a nephew named William Lawton, as I am confident there would not be in the case of the John Lawton referred to above, since his nephew William died first--at least a year before his uncle died.
6. Your William Lawton had a brother named Charles, as did the William Lawton referred to above.
7. Charles Lawton, brother of the William Lawton referred to above, signed the probate documents in 1735/6, at which time he must have been at least twenty-one years old, thus born no later than 1714 or 1715--dates well in agreement with the 1712 year of birth that you provided for the Charles Lawton whom you included on your William Lawton's chart, a copy of which I have before me.
8. You mentioned in one of your letters to Marion that you had been unable to find any record of your William Lawton's having emigrated to America. Is it possible, in view of the Probate information above, that such a record never existed, for an obvious reason?
9. In brief, is it possible that Capt. William Lawton has once again escaped us--that he was not, after all, one and the same as William of Snape, who was born there in 1703, died there (a bachelor) in 1735/6, and never emigrated to America?

Please understand, Dr. Dodd, that my last desire or intention on this earth would be to seem impudent or impertinent to you, or to dispute without any reason whatsoever your research skills, wisdom, and experience. Quite the contrary, my sole purpose in writing to you is one of sincere concern, and a desire to know the truth. If he were well and able, I am certain that Marion also would want to know your answers to the questions herein, as I am confident that they would be well received if he presented them to you himself.

In your letter of 21 March 1986 to Marion, you made the following statements in response to some previous questions we had, concerning the possibility that Capt. William Lawton might be someone other than your William of Snape:

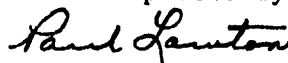
...as a professional historian, I have to assess the evidence as it stands and cannot produce what is not on record. As a researcher of long experience, I personally have no reservations on accepting William born 1703 as your Capt. William. There is no other which fits the time scale. Should the Staffordshire records prove otherwise, I shall be happy to retract. I have seen too many cases of the facts being manipulated to support claims which do not stand up to informed analysis, to wish to enter into this field....

Accordingly, will you please examine the information and questions herein, and consider the possibilities that they imply. I shall be most appreciative if you will be kind enough to do so, as I am certain that Marion would be also, if he were able.

Again, Dr. Dodd, I apologize for contacting you directly, instead of through Marion. Due to the circumstances of his condition, however, I felt that I had no alternative but to turn to you for assistance. I sincerely hope that you will understand, and not be offended--either by my approach, or by anything I have said in this letter.

I shall eagerly look forward to hearing from you at your convenience, and in the meantime I wish you well.

Most respectfully yours,



Paul S. Lawton

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