

## Brigadier General Andrew Williamson and White Hall

### Part II

BY LLEWELLYN M. TOULMIN, PH. D., F.R.G.S.

This article is part II of a two-part series on Brigadier General Andrew Williamson, the “Benedict Arnold of South Carolina.” This part will describe Williamson the spy, analyze his spying techniques and contributions, describe his life and death after the Revolution, and review the history and possible location of White Hall, Williamson’s famous plantation. Information is also provided on a possible link from White Hall to Liberia, and on archaeological efforts to locate White Hall.

### Williamson the Spy

Andrew Williamson probably moved to Charleston early in 1781, and clearly before July 5, 1781, the date of the Hayne affair.<sup>1</sup> Cornwallis was defeated at Yorktown in October 1781. By December 1781 British forces in South Carolina had been driven back towards the coast, losing the second battle of Dorchester and retreating into lines at the Quarter House tavern, about seven miles north of the city of Charleston.<sup>2</sup> Governor Rutledge began to re-establish the Patriot civil government, which had previously disintegrated, and issued conditional pardons to Tories. Hundreds came forward. Rutledge convened a revolutionary legislature at Jacksonborough, just 35 miles from Charleston, an important symbolic and operational act.<sup>3</sup>

From Williamson’s point of view, the time was right to begin spying for the Americans. He could see the tide of war shifting dramatically. Talk of pardons by the Americans for many Loyalists was in the air, but the Patriot Assembly at Jacksonburgh was taking official action against Williamson, and announcing the confiscation of his property. British lines were located just beyond his plantations beside and to the west of the Quarter House tavern, north of Charleston, and the Patriot forces were beginning to invest the city. We do not know exactly when he began spying, or how he initiated contact (or was contacted). The only hint is a statement by General Nathanael Greene (presented later in this paper) that states that Williamson began spying early in 1782. This date is logical, given the political climate and the location of the two armies.

Either General Greene or Col. John Laurens was likely the first contact that Williamson had in his efforts to switch sides again. Greene was from the North, was more neutral in the vicious internecine warfare of the Carolinas, and was known to

---

<sup>1</sup> The last date positively placing Williamson in the Ninety Six area is 5 December 1780, when Cruger writes to Cornwallis that “Williamson and Pickens” have been waiting to go to town, presumably Charleston, for a conference about command of the Ninety Six district. See Ian Saberton, editor, *The Cornwallis Papers, The Campaigns of 1780 and 1781 in the Southern Theatre of the American Revolutionary War* (Uckfield, UK: Naval & Military Press, 2010) Vol. III, pp. 279-80.

<sup>2</sup> John C. Parker, Jr., *Parker’s Guide to the Revolutionary War in South Carolina* (Patrick, SC: Hem Branch Publishing, 2009), pp. 168-9.

<sup>3</sup> Benson J. Lossing, *Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution in the Carolinas and Georgia* (Harper, 1850), pp. 775-6.

pursue a moderate, not a vengeful course of action towards individuals during the war.<sup>4</sup> Laurens had been a colleague of Williamson at the siege of Savannah, and of course was the son of Henry Laurens (Williamson's co-land owner and one of the most influential men in the state).

One item of intelligence of use to General Greene and General George Washington that may have come from Williamson is referred to in Greene's letter to Washington of 21 January 1782.<sup>5</sup> Greene states that, "Through a good channel of intelligence I got information of troops expected, both from Cork and New York." Here Greene at his South Carolina headquarters in St. Paul parish is worried about British reinforcements that may be arriving, and has an intelligence agent who is warning him in advance of this impending arrival. It seems likely that such an agent would have to be well placed to obtain this kind of important and sensitive information. Was this Williamson's first intelligence effort? It seems possible but is unproved.

In the same letter, Greene makes it clear that his position is very vulnerable, with the implication being that having a good source of intelligence is extremely important to make up for his army's many deficiencies. These include: "Our men are almost naked for want of overalls and shirts, and the greater part of the army is barefoot. We have no rum, or prospect of any....We were four weeks without ammunition since we have been in the lower country....The States here have been so tardy [in supplying troops] as to [make] their representations little more than an idle dream or an Eastern tale....We are in a poor position to contend with a very superior force."

*The Royal Gazette* of Charleston seemed to confirm an impending major thrust by the British. It stated in January 1782 that:

Twenty thousand land forces, it is said, will be sent to America very early in the spring, a number of which are to be drafted from the regiments in Ireland, where the military knowledge, and the unshaken loyalty of the people, renders a standing army in any great measure unnecessary.<sup>6</sup>

Despite this supposed massive re-invasion force waiting just over the horizon, in fact the British army in South Carolina was in almost as bad shape as the Rebels. On 27 December 1781 General Alexander Leslie, the British commander of Charleston, wrote to General Henry Clinton that:

The people are daily quitting the town, and a great part of the militia are with the enemy, after getting all they could from us. In short, the whole country are against us, but for some helpless Militia with a number of officers, women, children, Negroes, etc.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> John R. Maass, " 'From Principles of Humanity and Virtue': Moderation and the Revolutionary Settlement in North Carolina," *Journal of Backcountry Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Fall 2007, pp. 15-16.

<sup>5</sup> From: [http://www.familytales.org/dbDisplay.php?id=ltr\\_nag3727&person=nag](http://www.familytales.org/dbDisplay.php?id=ltr_nag3727&person=nag)

<sup>6</sup> *The Royal Gazette*, of Charleston, January 5-9, 1782, p. 2, Early South Carolina Papers, Microfilm Reel 12, University of Georgia.

<sup>7</sup> Clinton-Alexander letter books, Vol. 261 (Nov. 1781-May 1782), Book 1, p. 59, The Clinton Papers, University of Michigan, William L. Clements Library.

In terms of civil administration inside the town, matters were difficult, also. The Leslie papers note that the operation of the Charleston Board of Police, which was set up to investigate and adjudicate matters of crime, property seizure and other internal affairs, was quite “delicate.”<sup>8</sup>

Leslie worried that American General Greene was “constructing boats and galleys” and might use these to attack Charleston and its harbor, and stated that “some intercepted letters” indicated that French troops might move south to invest the city.<sup>9</sup> Clinton’s assessment was that Greene could not take the city without French assistance.<sup>10</sup>

Leslie had intelligence that Greene was moving down to the Ashley River, and was trying to prevent the British from obtaining supplies from farms in the region, and from removing slaves.<sup>11</sup> (The British had a policy of seizing the slaves of Patriots, to punish the Patriots who were seizing and selling the plantations of Loyalists. Since slaves were the most moveable form of property and were very valuable, the British seized them and they became a pawn in the power struggle for the region.)

Leslie felt his position was weak, despite having over 7500 troops in South Carolina, including 7465 rank and file (of whom 904 were sick and 149 wounded), and 251 officers, including a colonel, 8 lieutenant colonels, 10 majors, 70 captains, 96 lieutenants and 66 ensigns.<sup>12</sup> Apparently these troops had been worn down by years of war and sickness, and were not very effective. Leslie also complained that the “great superiority of the Enemy’s Horse renders it impossible to procure any certain intelligence.”<sup>13</sup> This likely meant that Williamson’s advice was valued even more than if the British cavalry had been functioning properly.

Lossing’s assessment of the British army in Charleston at this time was that it was weak, “was unable to damage the Americans in warfare,” and “employed stratagem and bribery to weaken their power.” For example, the British plotted with dissidents in the Pennsylvania Continental Line to abduct American General Nathanael Greene, link up with a British raiding party, and deliver Greene and other senior American officers into Charleston. Apparently over a dozen troopers and the General’s steward were in on the plan. This plot was discovered and “crushed” just 24 hours before the set time.<sup>14</sup> Sergeant Gornell, the leader of the plot, was executed on 22 April 1782.<sup>15</sup> The plot was discovered by loose talk among the conspirators overheard by a “camp woman.”<sup>16</sup> It is not clear if Williamson assisted in revealing this and other similar plots from the British end, but it may be possible.

---

<sup>8</sup> Clinton-Alexander letter books, *ibid.*, Vol. 261, Book 1, pp. 121-123.

<sup>9</sup> Clinton-Alexander letter books, *ibid.*, Vol. 261, Book 2, p. 70, dated about 29 April 1782.

<sup>10</sup> Clinton-Alexander letter books, *ibid.*, Vol. 261, Book 1, pp. 70-72, 8 January 1782.

<sup>11</sup> Clinton-Alexander letter books, *ibid.*, Vol. 261, Book 1, p. 172.

<sup>12</sup> Clinton-Alexander letter books, *ibid.*, Vol. 190, p. 25, “Return of Troops in South Carolina,” 15 January 1782.

<sup>13</sup> Clinton-Alexander letter books, *ibid.*, Vol. 261, Book 2, p. 104, Alexander Leslie to Lord George Germain, 3 January 1782.

<sup>14</sup> Lossing, *op. cit.*, pp. 776-7.

<sup>15</sup> John F. Schroeder et al., *The Life and Times of Washington* (New York: M.M. Belcher, 1903) Vol. 3, pp. 1460.

<sup>16</sup> Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1969) pp. 621-2.

Around this time, a “secret correspondent” wrote a letter describing the situation inside Charleston.<sup>17</sup> This letter states that the writer “arrived here half an hour ago,” and “left Charles Town this morning.” The writer says that “Judge Pendleton is in the Provost,” and “as a prisoner, is tolerably well situated... though from form the General [Alexander Leslie] has ordered a sentinel within his apartment. [Pendleton] will likely be parolled to the town in a little time.” The writer continues to describe the facts that the “York fleet sailed yesterday with some of the Queen’s Rangers and with a number of officers,” that some inhabitants of Charleston have asked Leslie if he can form them into a regiment of 1200 and use them to attack “the army you command,” and Leslie will probably “make the attempt in a very few days.” The writer states that Leslie has likely just obtained some dispatches from England via a small vessel. The writer promises to “wait on you [the recipient of the letter] in the morning.”

This seems very likely to be a letter from Williamson to American General Greene. Interpreting the points above, Williamson has “arrived” at his plantation outside of Charleston, which is some hours ride from the town. Patriot Judge Henry Pendleton, brother of Nathaniel Pendleton (who is an aide de camp to General Nathanael Greene), has been seized and jailed by the British, but is being held in comfortable circumstances and will likely be paroled shortly by General Alexander Leslie, commanding the British forces in Charleston. The British army has been weakened by the departure of some Rangers and officers. General Leslie will order an attack soon on the Americans, using a large force of 1200 townspeople as militia. Leslie has new information and perhaps orders from London, and possibly Williamson will be able to find out what these are. Williamson will cross through the lines tomorrow morning and meet with Greene, to give him a full debriefing.

Of course it is not certain that this is the correct interpretation, but the words certainly seem to fit the known facts. Of course the question arises – if Williamson was illiterate, then who actually penned the letter?

It is certain that Williamson used very innovative if rather risky techniques to spy for the rebels, while right under the noses of the British:

The Whig ladies were sometimes permitted to enter [British-controlled] Charleston, and Mrs. Thompson [wife of American Col. Thompson] obtained from one of the British officers a passport for herself and little daughter, Charlotte. On her way down, she had an interview with her husband and passed on. She made the intended purchases, and while so engaged, left her child in a room, only saying that a gentleman or two might step into the room, and she must not be frightened, he would not hurt her, but that she must keep in her bosom anything he might place there. Accordingly while alone in the room, a gentleman entered and looked anxiously around, then bowed to her, put a folded paper into her bosom, and went hastily out, without saying a word. The mother returned, and they left the city immediately: the father again met them, conducted them into General Green’s camp, and introduced them to the general. The little girl was asked by the general, if she had not something for him, but she, having

---

<sup>17</sup> “Letter from a Secret Correspondent, April 1, 1782,” in R. W. Gibbes, *Documentary History of the American Revolution* (New York: Appleton, 1857), pp. 287-8. Gibbes collected a number of letters from or to Greene, including a letter clearly to Greene from Col. Peter Horry on the same date as the mystery letter, thus supporting the idea that this letter is to General Greene.

been much amused with the novelty of everything that she saw, had forgotten all that passed in the room, and told him “No.” He then asked more particularly for a paper, that had been put in her bosom, and she gave it to him. It has since transpired that General Greene had agreed with General Andrew Williamson for a particular description of the British forces in Charleston, on condition that he should be screened from confiscation and other injury.<sup>18</sup>

A letter from Col. LeRoy Hammond, brother-in-law of General Williamson, hints at another possible channel of information transmission. In this letter, of 15 May 1782, Hammond asks permission for his sister-in-law, Mrs. Winter, to return to the back country from Andrew Williamson’s plantation “near the Quarter House” tavern, north of Charleston. Hammond is seeking a flag of truce to send a baggage wagon to fetch Mrs. Winter and her children and belongings.<sup>19</sup> What better way to smuggle out some more intelligence and communications to Greene and other Patriot leaders, than in a large wagon loaded with numerous household effects of a lady and children?

Williamson reportedly worked closely with spymaster Col. John Laurens. Laurens:

...preserved a veil of secrecy over Williamson and referred to him as ‘W’ in his correspondence with Greene. To facilitate their meetings, Laurens relocated near Thomas Fuller’s Pierponts plantation on the Ashley River in St. Andrew Parish.<sup>20</sup>

According to the definitive biography of Col. John Laurens, “one of [Laurens’] principal and most reliable sources was Andrew Williamson.”<sup>21</sup> Williamson provided the information that it was the lack of transports that prevented the British from conducting an earlier and prompt withdrawal from Charleston, a matter of great concern to Greene. In addition to his military duties, Col. Laurens was on the Patriot confiscation committee and a member of the Jacksonborough Assembly<sup>22</sup> -- a very useful person for Williamson to have as a spy-master and intelligence client.

Williamson, on the advice of his friends and anticipating a British withdrawal from Charleston, considered surrendering to the Patriots and accepting the terms offered by Governor Mathews, to serve six months in the American militia or furnish a substitute, in order to obtain an American pardon. But he was discouraged from doing so by Col. Laurens, who explained to General Greene: “I have discouraged it, assuring him of your protection...”<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Alexander Samuel Salley, Jr., *The History of Orangeburg County, South Carolina* (Orangeburg, SC: R. Lewis Berry, 1898) p. 381.

<sup>19</sup> Dennis M. Conrad, *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000) Volume XI, p. 195. This would seem to clearly show that Williamson did have a residence near the Quarter House at this period.

<sup>20</sup> Gregory D. Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2000) pp. 221-4.

<sup>21</sup> Massey, *ibid.*, p. 222.

<sup>22</sup> Rebecca N. Brannon, *Reconciling the Revolution: Resolving Conflict and Rebuilding Community in the Wake of Civil War in South Carolina: 1775-1860* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 2007, Ph.D. dissertation), p. 156.

<sup>23</sup> Massey, *op. cit.*

Of course, from Laurens' point of view Williamson was the perfect spy: highly trained and experienced in military affairs, observant, socially adept, with ready access to senior commanders, highly motivated, probably able to instantly produce "finished intelligence" (albeit verbal), and perhaps even able to act as an "agent of influence." Naturally Laurens discouraged Williamson's re-defection back to the rebel side.

Williamson began his campaign to avoid banishment and confiscation well before the actual British departure from Charleston (on 14 December 1782). On 24 June 1782 he wrote a letter to General Greene, referring to a letter written earlier by LeRoy Hammond, that discussed how Williamson could avoid punishment by the Patriot side. Williamson said that he was "sensibly affected" by the "good wishes" of General Greene.<sup>24</sup>

General Williamson also supplied information to rebel Colonel Thaddeus Kosciuszko. For example on 20 September 1782 the Colonel reported that he had just seen "Mr. W," who told him that Major Thomas Fraser crossed the Cooper River with 100 cavalry, and who advised that on British-occupied James Island, the Crown forces only had 500 men, many of whom were sick. "W" also supplied the Colonel with a "Negroe [named] Prince" who was "well acquainted with James Island" and who could "safely go onto James Island and obtain any information" needed. "Mr. W" also agreed to supply a map of the island, with the British works and encampments identified.<sup>25</sup>

American General "Mad" Anthony Wayne arrived at Ashley Hill near Charleston from Georgia on 15 August 1782<sup>26</sup> and talked with General Greene,<sup>27</sup> asking him how long British General Leslie intended to hold Charleston. Greene "answered him gloomily, that, in his private opinion, the British intended never to evacuate Charleston or accept the peace. The war would go on, God only knew how long."<sup>28</sup> Wayne was discouraged because he had heard on May 29 of that same year, three months earlier, that peace negotiations were under way in Europe and both sides supposedly wanted to cease or reduce hostilities. (Greene had received the same information eight days earlier.<sup>29</sup>) But the two armies had been fighting for so long that it was hard to stop. And of course any victories at the last minute might dramatically affect the peace negotiations.

Andrew Williamson also spied for General Wayne. Wayne states in a letter of 12 December 1782 to General Greene that:

General Williamson is gone in [to Charleston] this morning and will be out this evening. He says that Gen'l (Alexander) Leslie had it in contemplation to leave the 60<sup>th</sup> Regiment in town until we relieve them. I took the hint, and just observed that if such a measure was thought absolutely necessary for the protection of the inhabitants, that the Corps ought to be permitted to embark

---

<sup>24</sup> Conrad, op. cit., Volume XI, p. 368. Perhaps this letter from Hammond was triggered by a letter smuggled out to Greene via Mrs. Winter's wagon? Recall that Hammond had surrendered to the British but returned to the Patriot side. He clearly preserved his respect for and relations with his brother-in-law Williamson despite the fact that they were on different sides in the war for a time, and indeed Hammond eventually served as an executor of Williamson's estate.

<sup>25</sup> Conrad, *ibid.*, p. 680.

<sup>26</sup> Paul D. Nelson, *Anthony Wayne: Soldier of the Early Republic* (Bloomington: Indiana Press, 1985) p. 179.

<sup>27</sup> Charles J. Stille, *Major General Anthony Wayne* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1893) p. 292.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas Boyd, *Mad Anthony Wayne* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929) p. 212.

<sup>29</sup> Nelson, op. cit., p. 173.

inviolable, which I expect will produce an overture from Gen'l Leslie on this subject.<sup>30</sup>

In other words, here Williamson is not only spying for Wayne, but is serving as a go-between negotiator between Wayne and the commanding British general, Leslie. Leslie is trying to extricate himself from Charleston by sea without having his rear guard annihilated by the Americans, and at this point just wants a quiet, seamless handover to his enemies.

On 22 December 1782, just days after the British withdrawal from Charleston, General Greene wrote a letter to Governor John Mathews recommending clemency for Williamson. This letter was read before the South Carolina House of Representatives on 25 January 1783, and referred to the Committee of the Members of Ninety Six District.<sup>31</sup>

The letter stated, in part:

I take the liberty of Addressing you upon the subject of Andrew Williamson...I pretend not to judge of his former conduct or of the justice of his punishment, but only to represent what he has since done to extenuate the transgressions of his earlier offenses. Lt. Col. Laurens employed him early last spring [i.e., early in 1782] in the business of intelligence. He has faithfully served the Army; and has given generally the best information we have had, being very much in the confidence with the enemy and a man of sense and observation. You are too fully acquainted with the infinite importance of good intelligence...nothing so effectually prevents the waste of blood and treasure. Mr. Williamson has run every risk to tender his information useful. Lt. Col. Laurens promised him on his acting with fidelity that he would recommend this case to the Governor and legislature. [Williamson] was exposed to greater dangers and of much longer duration than he could be in discharge of his duty in common with other Citizens. Upon this principle I beg leave to recommend his case.<sup>32</sup>

### **Analysis of Spy-craft**

Reviewing the General Greene papers and other sources listed above, with an eye to analyzing Williamson's contributions as a spy to the American cause, we can discern or at least reasonably infer the following points:

- Williamson served as a spy at least from early in 1782 (and perhaps earlier but there is no evidence) through December 1782, almost a year. Since he defected from the South Carolina militia in the summer of 1780, he began working for the rebel side as a spy within about 18 months of defecting to the British. During this

---

<sup>30</sup> Conrad, op. cit., (2002) Volume XII, pp. 288-9.

<sup>31</sup> *Journals of the House of Representatives 1785-1786* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1979) p. 500.

<sup>32</sup> Conrad, op. cit., pp. 331-2. It should be noted that Williamson was not the only spy inside Charleston. Others included Edmund Petrie, who had publicly congratulated Sir Henry Clinton and Admiral Arbuthnot, and had consequently had been on the same confiscation list as Williamson; and Edward Fenwick, member of a prominent South Carolina family and captain of the (Loyalist) South Carolina Light Dragoons (Joseph W. Barnwell, "The Evacuation of Charleston by the British in 1782," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, Vol. XI, No. 1, January 1901, p. 235.) Also, merchants on both sides of the siege lines secretly sent supplies out to the Americans, and food in to the British (ibid., pp. 235-236).

time, he was located at one or more of his several plantations near Charleston and later perhaps in the city.

- His methods of intelligence collection were personal observation, interaction with senior and other British officers and officials, and use of trusted slaves or free blacks as observers and subordinate spies. He must have had a literate aide or confederate who assisted with producing letters, notes, maps and reports, and possibly also with intelligence collection. He apparently did not intercept British documents or signals, but he may have obtained direct knowledge of them (as hinted at vaguely in the “mystery letter” discussed earlier). His work was largely “human intelligence” rather than signals intelligence or recent esoteric disciplines such as imagery or “measurement and signatures” intelligence. He also likely did work in what today would be called “open source intelligence” – picking up gossip, newspapers, broadsides, proclamations and the like inside Charleston, and passing them on his American contacts outside the British lines.
- His intelligence targets apparently included tactical items such as the strength and location of particular outer bulwarks in the British defenses around Charleston, intentions to add more redoubts or strengthen existing ones, intentions to stage raids into rebel territory to gain much-needed foodstuffs, order of battle information on the British troops in Charleston and its outworks, desirability of staging false “designs” on locations away from the main thrust of American attack against the town’s defenses, tactics, equipment and timing needed to attack various redoubts successfully, state of disease in the British army, British supply sources, threat of famine in the town (this was a major issue), status and number of Loyalist refugees in the town (nearly 4000 whites eventually left on the evacuation fleet)<sup>33</sup>, intentions of the residents to form militia organizations, local gossip, morale of the troops, officials and occupants, likely British and Loyalist reaction to the possibility that the rebels might use black troops,<sup>34</sup> impending raids by the British to seize black slaves, as recompense to Loyalists whose property had been confiscated or amerced,<sup>35</sup> and related items. He likely did not focus on new technological developments or other exotic matters.
- Order of battle information alone could have occupied much of Williamson’s effort. The British had about ten regular army regiments in the town, five units of German auxiliaries, over twenty provincial and militia Loyalist units, up to ten warships (mostly frigates), and eventually “300 sail” used in the evacuation fleet.<sup>36</sup> Today each of these targets could probably occupy the efforts of a full time intelligence analyst.

---

<sup>33</sup> Wallace Brown, *The Structure of Loyalism During the American Revolution* (Berkeley, CA: University of California at Berkeley, 1965, Ph.D. dissertation) p. 246.

<sup>34</sup> Greene to Washington, 21 January 1782, op. cit.

<sup>35</sup> General Alexander Leslie wrote on 4 April 1782 to American General Nathanael Greene, protesting the confiscations and ameracements of Loyalist estates, and justifying “the seizing of the negroes of your friends” by the British in a recent raid “toward Santee,” with the object of giving restitution to the Loyalists whose property had been seized by the rebels. See <http://www.familytales.org/results.php?tla=all>.

<sup>36</sup> See [http://www.carolana.com/SC/Revolution/revolution\\_evacuation\\_of\\_charleston.html](http://www.carolana.com/SC/Revolution/revolution_evacuation_of_charleston.html). Also Lossing, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 779.



- His intelligence targets also likely included strategic items such as changes in ministers and in the leadership of the British government,<sup>37</sup> the intention of the British to either depart from Charleston or just contract the defensive ring around it; order of departure of particular units, British intentions and actions at Savannah and Tybee, movements of enemy transports, fleets and ships, movements and successes or defeats of the vital French fleet, the effects of American privateers on the British, reinforcements anticipated or brought in from New York, England, Ireland and elsewhere, votes and initiatives in the British House of Commons to end the war,<sup>38</sup> expiry of terms of enlistment of Hessian and other British troops, proclamations issued in the town, intentions of the Loyalists to possibly defend the town “with the aid of Negroes” even after the British withdrawal, and the intention of the Refugee Committee that “Charles Town shd be burnt upon the evacuation.” This latter action was proposed in the Committee but overruled, but showed that some locals, and perhaps the British, were willing to destroy the town rather than let it fall intact into rebel hands. Near the time of the departure of the British from Charleston, he was clearly involved in the negotiations of the details of the departure, and he may have advised on matters such as allowing British merchants to continue operating in the town for a time; ways to prevent incidents during the handover that might escalate into a battle; keeping the stores, warehouses, homes and especially liquor supplies locked up tight during the handover; use of militia vs. regular troops by the Americans during the entry into the city; etc.
- He was also perhaps somewhat involved in counter-intelligence, in that Williamson apparently reported to John Laurens on at least one American deserter who reached the British camp. This may have led to attempts to discredit or minimize the intelligence damage of this and other deserters, and to develop tactics to reduce desertion.<sup>39</sup> But unfortunately there is no evidence.
- As mentioned earlier, when the date of the British departure from Charleston approached, Williamson moved up the intelligence ladder to almost become an “agent of influence,” and to certainly becoming a go-between and subtle negotiator between the two sides, whose interests actually started to coincide. The fascinating question here is, did the British finally realize that Williamson was an American spy, but just ignored that fact because it was convenient to have a well-placed and intelligent go-between?
- It is clear from General Greene’s statement and General Wayne’s letter that Williamson had ready and frequent access to the highest levels of British decision-making in Charleston. This is quite remarkable, considering the usual British officer’s distaste for traitors and lower class persons like lowly and illiterate “cow drivers.” It is a testament to Williamson’s social skills and intellect that he could survive and even prosper in such a rarified circle.

---

<sup>37</sup> On 24 September 1782 Francis Marion wrote to Nathanael Greene that the “death of Marquis Rockingham” had brought into power Lord Shelburn, “who is our most inveterate enemy....” See <http://www.familytales.org/results.php?tla=frm>.

<sup>38</sup> A motion in February 1782 in the House of Commons to order a cessation of hostilities failed by just one vote; Lossing, *op. cit.*, p. 777.

<sup>39</sup> Conrad, *op. cit.*, Vol. XI, p. 496.

- It is not clear if Williamson utilized “disinformation” techniques. He was certainly well placed to do so, since he clearly had access to high British officers. He could have discouraged British attacks on vulnerable American positions or raids for much-needed food, exaggerated American strengths, discounted (true) reports of the American’s many weaknesses, and undermined British confidence and morale in a subtle way. Unfortunately, there is no evidence on this point.
- Williamson’s primary methods of transmitting information were notes passed via using a child as a mobile “dead drop” (!), possible other carriers of information (e.g., relatives with wagons), production and delivery of maps and sketches, and meetings with American officers for personal de-briefing. The location of his multiple plantations on the outskirts of the city almost certainly facilitated this. Methods such as secret writing, codes and ciphers, deceptive letters which could be decoded using paper “masks,” “quill letters,” brush passes, physical dead drops, etc. are not in evidence but are possible.<sup>40</sup> It is unfortunately not clear how often he met with his spy-masters, or otherwise transmitted information.
- Williamson’s motivations as a spy were fairly apparent: to get back in the good graces of Patriot forces and officials, who were quite evidently winning the war. Recall that his spying apparently began early in 1782, while the dramatic surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown had occurred on 19 October 1781. His ultimate motivations were to preserve his fortune, and avoid banishment or possibly even hanging. There is no evidence either way of his being paid for his spying efforts, but this seems unlikely. At this point he was playing for bigger stakes than a spy’s salary and expenses.
- The risks he was running were high. If caught red-handed in spying, Williamson could perhaps have raised the feeble defense that he had “not taken up arms” against the British. This argument would not have lasted more than a few minutes in the face of British officers who had quickly hung Col. Hayne. If Williamson was considered to be under parole, as discussed earlier, that concept and document usually had an explicit prohibition against communicating with the enemy. And if he had taken the oath of allegiance to the King, as he likely did, then he would be adjudged a traitor. Cornwallis, in a famous private letter which was exposed to the public view, had specifically stated that any person who broke his oath of allegiance to the Crown would be treated with “greatest rigor.” And Lt. General Alexander Leslie had issued a proclamation on February 2, 1782, stating that “the severest Punishments shall be inflicted on all those...who in Violation of every Principle of Honour and good Faith, again take up arms against His Majesty’s Government, or shall serve in any civil Capacity under a second Usurpation.”<sup>41</sup> Consider for a moment the courage of Williamson, who initiated his spying early in 1782, within a few months of the hanging of Hayne, who had been executed in August 1781. And Williamson was in danger from the mob, also. Lynching, tarring and feathering, blinding, beatings, summary execution

---

<sup>40</sup> For a description of Revolutionary spy letters and communications methods, see the University of Michigan site: <http://www2.si.umich.edu/spies/index-methods.html>

<sup>41</sup> *The Royal Gazette*, of Charleston, February 2-6, 1782, p. 1, Early Newspapers of South Carolina, Microfilm Reel 12, University of Georgia.

and torture were known to occur to unpopular men on both sides.<sup>42</sup> To begin spying at that point, with the dangers so apparent, must have taken nerves of steel. Perhaps part of Williamson's motivation was a feeling of guilt over the death of Hayne, as well as fear of loss of his property.

- The motivations of Williamson's spy-masters are also clear. Even though victory at Yorktown had been achieved, careful generals like Nathanael Greene were quite worried that the British could make a comeback, and thwart ultimate Patriot victory.<sup>43</sup> Britain was after all a super-power, with a huge navy that could quickly transport troops to Charleston and the south, and could try yet again to re-ignite the Southern Campaign. The British might attempt to split off South Carolina and Georgia from the rest of the colonies, and settle for "half a loaf."
- Williamson's success was very high: he was not caught (an ever-present danger), and his information (to the Patriots) was highly reliable and relevant, and was apparently delivered in "finished" form, so that a large effort was not needed to assemble bits and pieces of intelligence. His main weakness from an intelligence point of view was his illiteracy, which must have been quite problematic when trying to develop and transmit finished intelligence and notes to set up meetings, and which increased the risk of detection, since he had to have a trusted literate assistant available at all times. Other weaknesses probably included his lack of training in spy-craft, his limited focus on one geographic location, and the need to "manage" his relatively "high maintenance" anxieties about his estates, slaves and future. And of course it must not be supposed that just because he had a large number of intelligence targets, as described above, that he was successful in reporting on all these topics.
- Although other American agents and double agents are reported in various sources for the Revolutionary War<sup>44</sup>, Andrew Williamson is the highest ranking officer to be so designated. And according to General Nathanael Greene himself, Williamson was his "best" source of information, and he supplied it at great hazard to his own life over an extended period. Hence he can fairly claim to be America's first important double agent.

## The Evacuation of Charleston

Williamson had been working for the Americans for almost a year when the British finally evacuated Charleston in December 1782. This departure was his goal, but it could have easily gone awry at the last minute. In the worst case scenario, in a major battle, Charleston could have been burned to the ground, its inhabitants and resident refugees slaughtered, and the evacuation fleet attacked with great loss of life. Ultimately,

---

<sup>42</sup> Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 249-50.

<sup>43</sup> Greene's letter to Washington of 21 January 1782 (*op. cit.*) states that, "I perfectly agree with your Excellency that we should improve every moment this winter, to be in readiness to open the [spring] campaign to advantage."

<sup>44</sup> See the various sources mentioned in the first footnote of this paper, in Part I. Major General Benedict Arnold held a higher rank than Williamson, but was of course for a short while a spy for the British, during the period when he was attempting to gain control of West Point and hand it over to the British. When he joined the British forces, Arnold was given a commission as a Brigadier General. The point being made here is that Williamson was the highest ranking double agent working for the Americans.

this did not happen, thanks in part to Williamson's (and others) successful negotiations, and the common sense of both commanders.

The most detailed account of the evacuation was written by Joseph Barnwell, in an analysis of whether the evacuation was completely peaceful, or was marred by attacks against Loyalists.<sup>45</sup> Barnwell's detailed analysis quotes a number of contemporary and later sources; unfortunately Williamson is not mentioned. Some of the highlights of the evacuation are described below, to give an idea of what he was living through.

In advance of the evacuation, British merchants resident in the city "obtained leave from General Leslie, who commanded the British troops...to make an agreement with Governor John Mathews, the Governor of South Carolina...permitting them to remain in Charlestown for eighteen months after the evacuation for the purpose of collecting the debts due them, and of disposing of their goods and stores."<sup>46</sup>

A "Citizen of Charleston" named "Mr. Morrice Simmons," acting as a representative of the Adjutant General of General Leslie, "hinted to General Wayne" that "an attack...might lay the Town in Ashes, and that if the [British troops] were permitted to embark without interruption, every care should be taken for its preservation."<sup>47</sup> Morrice (Morris?) Simmons' initiative likely happened just before the actual evacuation of December 14<sup>th</sup>, and thus was probably just after or perhaps simultaneous with Williamson's negotiations on behalf of General Wayne on this same important point, which definitely took place on December 12<sup>th</sup>, as reported in the letter of that date from General Greene (presented earlier in this paper). As reported by Greene, the American forces would allow the British to embark "without molestation" if the British agreed not to fire on the town "after getting on board."

The embarkation took two days, and involved about 50 transport ships bound for Jamaica, escorted by the sloop-of-war *Vulture*, 14 guns, which departed on December 17; 20 ships bound for England, which departed on December 18; and 50 transports bound for New York, escorted by the warships *Assurance*, *Charlestown* and *Hound*, which departed on December 19. During this period, "the rebels were so extremely polite...as to not hoist the rebel standard for three days, while the British fleet lay in the Bay."<sup>48</sup>

To prevent problems, all warehouses and shops were shut up during the takeover, and citizens forbidden from assembling or wandering the streets. Sentinels were posted to prevent plunder from being taken on board the departing British ships, and the vessels were searched to detect any plunder, which if found "was returned to the inhabitants of the town from whom it was taken."<sup>49</sup>

American forces that led the troops entering the city were all regular troops, not militia forces or State troops. This policy was intentional, apparently initiated by Governor Mathews, who feared reprisals by the less disciplined troops against remaining Loyalists. Greene protested this policy but then went along with it,<sup>50</sup> probably quietly

---

<sup>45</sup> Joseph W. Barnwell, op. cit., pp. 1-26.

<sup>46</sup> Later this time was extended even more by the state legislature. Joseph Barnwell, ibid., pp. 7-8.

<sup>47</sup> Letter from General Greene of 19 December 1782 to the President of Congress, presented in its entirety in Joseph Barnwell, ibid., pp. 8-10.

<sup>48</sup> *The Royal Gazette* of New York, 4 January 1783, quoted in its entirety in Joseph Barnwell, ibid., pp. 13-15. HMS *Vulture* was the sloop which earlier in the war carried defector Benedict Arnold from American lines to his new home with the British.

<sup>49</sup> Joseph Barnwell, ibid., pp. 12-13.

<sup>50</sup> Joseph Barnwell, ibid, p. 8.

agreeing with the principle at stake – of trying to prevent bloodshed which might escalate into a major battle.

General Leslie’s representatives and the Governor initially had an agreement that the carrying away of slaves belonging to American citizens would not be allowed. However, this agreement “was subsequently abandoned.” Eventually “5327 blacks” were evacuated by the British, most going to Jamaica or East Florida. If one assumes that most of these were slaves that belonged to rebel Americans, and that the value of each was perhaps \$1000 on average at the time, then this was a huge financial loss to the Americans and the South Carolina agricultural, slave-based economy.<sup>51</sup> The chart below shows the destinations of the blacks and whites evacuated from the city.<sup>52</sup>

The Americans reportedly attempted to hinder and harm the evacuating forces by cutting off their “necessary supply of fresh water from the shipping,” but “a detachment, sent out by General Leslie, forced them to abandon the enterprize.”<sup>53</sup>

To	White Men	White Women	White Children	Blacks	TOTAL
Jamaica	600	300	378	2613	3891
East Florida	796	363	456	2211	3826
England	137	74	63	50	324
Halifax	163	133	121	53	470
New York	100	40	50	50	240
St. Lucia	20			350	370
TOTAL	1816	910	1068	5327	9121

The Americans also reportedly “refused, to the last, any supplies of fresh provisions to be sent into the town, by which much specie was brought hither [to New York], which otherwise would have remained in that province.”<sup>54</sup> The Americans were continuing their policy of trying to starve out the town, to prevent the British from having any incentive or excuse to remain.

According to General Moultrie, Brigadier General Anthony Wayne led the American forces into Charlestown, crossing the Ashley River with 300 light infantry, 80 of Lee’s cavalry, and 20 artillery pieces. He approached the three redoubts protecting the British lines north of the city. General Leslie sent a message to General Wayne that the British forces would begin retiring from their advanced works the next day at the

<sup>51</sup> Joseph Barnwell, *ibid.*, pp. 8, 26. Of course this line of thought is politically incorrect today. But at the time slaves were worth much more than land, and this is exactly the way the Americans and British whites would have thought of the matter. The large number of slaves removed was likely a substantial portion of the total number of slaves in South Carolina at the time. During the evacuation of Savannah, 5000 black slaves, about three-quarters to seven-eighths of all the slaves in Georgia, were removed by the British. See Barnwell, *ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>52</sup> Joseph Barnwell, *ibid.*, p. 26. Robert W. Barnwell, Jr., in his *Loyalism in South Carolina, 1765-1785* (Durham NC: Duke University, 1941), p. 397, notes that this chart does not include members of the provincial troops who were evacuated. He also states that the numbers for those whites evacuated to Florida were substantially higher than reported in the chart.

<sup>53</sup> *The Royal Gazette*, *op. cit.*, in Joseph Barnwell, p. 14.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

morning gun, at which time Wayne should move on slowly and take possession, and from thence to follow “at a respectful distance (say about two hundred yards). . .”

According to American Major Alexander Garden, the British messenger then warned that “in the event of an attack [by the Americans], he “could not be answerable for any consequences that might follow.”<sup>55</sup> The British troops would then file off to Gadsden’s wharf for embarkation, while Wayne could proceed into town. This plan was carried out, although “now and then the British called to General Wayne that he was too fast upon them, which occasioned him to halt a little. About 11 o’clock, A.M. the American troops marched into town and took post at the state-house.” At 3 o’clock, “General Greene conducted governor Mathews and the Council . . . into town . . . with thirty of Lee’s dragoons . . . and 180 cavalry; we halted in Broad Street, opposite where the South Carolina bank now stands, there we alighted, and the cavalry discharged to quarters . . . The great joy that was felt on this day was inexpressible . . . citizens on balconies, in doors and windows . . . congratulating us on our return home.”<sup>56</sup>

Major Garden noticed that the British “were not without suspicion that they might not receive a parting blow—for gallies [galleys] in the Ashley and Cooper Rivers dropped down in a line with our troops, the whole length of the Neck; and in front of the Bay, as the cavalry moved in their view, the men of war and armed vessels were ranged, with lighted matches, and every preparation for action; but not a shot was fired on either side, and the articles of convention strictly adhered to.”<sup>57</sup>

The next morning, nineteen British sailors were found in the town who stated that they had “only remained on shore to see the end of a frolic,” and they were allowed to rejoin the British fleet, “with a proper compliment to General Leslie for the handsome manner in which he had prevented the town from being injured.”<sup>58</sup>

There is some dispute about whether reprisals were taken against Loyalists at this point. One source states that “twenty-four reputable Loyalists . . . were hanged in sight of the British fleet” (still at anchor) and that other Loyalists were “turned out of their houses . . . tarred and feathered . . . dragged through horse ponds . . . till near dead . . . tied up and whipped.”<sup>59</sup> However, Joseph Barnwell cites other less biased, present and contemporaneous sources, and concludes that most or all of these incidents were fabrications and rumors. It seems very unlikely that the Patriots would risk such reprisals in full view of the British fleet, thus making a devastating bombardment very likely.

Joseph Barnwell does cite one undisputed source which states that in the year after the evacuation, at least four assassinations took place in Charleston, presumably of Loyalists by Patriots.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> Major Alexander Garden, *Anecdotes of the Revolutionary War in America, First Series*, p. 369, quoted in Joseph Barnwell, *ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>56</sup> General William Moultrie, *Memoirs of the American Revolution*, Vol. II, p. 358, quoted in Joseph Barnwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>57</sup> Garden in Joseph Barnwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>58</sup> Garden in Joseph Barnwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>59</sup> Judge Thomas Jones, *History of New York During the Revolutionary War*, 1879, p. 234, quoted at length in Joseph Barnwell, *ibid.*, pp. 2-4.

<sup>60</sup> Judge Aedanus Burke, *South Carolina Gazette and General Advertiser*, 10 June 1783, quoted in Joseph Barnwell, *ibid.*, p. 25.

Even though we know only a little of Williamson's role in achieving this remarkably peaceful evacuation, it is clear that his policy of accommodation carried the day. His next challenge was holding on to his land and citizenship.

### **Fighting Confiscation**

Confiscation of all his property, and banishment, was a real possibility for Williamson. The Committee governing confiscation reportedly "was more concerned with what estate an individual had rather than what he had done....When a rich man was considered, it was said there was a cry of 'A fat sheep; a fat sheep—prick him! Prick him!'"<sup>61</sup>

And major persons of influence were against him. Williamson's former neighbor John Lewis Gervais had written to Henry Laurens from Philadelphia in 1782 that in South Carolina all of Gervais' "horses, Cattle, Stock of all sorts they have either destroyed or carried off...they have carried off all my negroes...they have left me with nothing but my Land, which thank God they could not carry away....For the great part of these kind offices I may thank the traitors Andrew Williamson and Malcolm Brown."<sup>62</sup> Recall that just eleven years before, Gervais had officiated at a gala wedding at White Hall, marrying a Whitfield to Mrs. Williamson's sister.

On 28 January 1783, General Williamson wrote a letter rebutting some of the allegations recently made against him, asserting that he did his utmost to oppose the British until the surrender of the back country troops in June 1780. Apparently these allegations had been triggered by General Greene's plea in the legislature on Williamson's behalf.<sup>63</sup> He was fighting hard to save his fortune and his life in America.

On 18 March 1784, in a dramatic move, General Williamson:

upon the Report of the Committee on his Case was heard in his defence at the Bar of the House. After some time Spent in Debate, On the Question being put to Agree to the Report of the Committee, It was Carried in the Affirmative. On the Motion Resolved That Andrew Williamson and Such Persons named in the Confiscation list, who are taken off that List and Amerced and have borne any Military Commission under the British Government since the 12<sup>th</sup> of May 1780 be disqualified from serving this State in any Office Civil or Military.<sup>64</sup>

By testifying before the South Carolina House, making his case in person, and using his considerable powers of charm and persuasion, Williamson won his battle to retain most of his property. The restriction preventing him from holding any State office in the future could be avoided, if he produced proof that he had not been given a British

---

<sup>61</sup> Kathy Roe Coker, *The Punishment of Revolutionary War Loyalists in South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: Ph.D. dissertation, University of South Carolina, 1987), p. 30. In the end, a total of 377 estates were confiscated, and 94 were amerced of 12 percent of their value. See Jerome Nadelhaft, *The Disorders of War: the Revolution in South Carolina* (Orono, Maine: University of Maine, 1981) p. 84. These numbers are the sum of the "specifically" and the "unnamed" estates that were affected.

<sup>62</sup> David R. Chesnutt, et al., editors, *The Papers of Henry Laurens* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2003) Vol. 16, pp. 28-31. Friends of Gervais reported that he lost everything to his Loyalist enemies, escaping with only a horse and the shirt on his back. Brannon, op. cit., p. 154.

<sup>63</sup> Conrad, op. cit., Vol. XII, p. 395.

<sup>64</sup> *Journals*, op. cit., pp. 569-70.

military commission. The “amercement” meant that he would forfeit the standard twelve percent of his assets<sup>65</sup> -- thus in effect he was judged to be twelve percent a traitor.

A list of ameracements compiled in 1786-7 showed that Williamson’s estate was assessed at 6242 pounds and 13 shillings, and his payments due as an amercement were 374 pounds, 11 shillings and tuppence in sterling money and the same amount in indents.<sup>66</sup>

On 6 July 1785, in an odd twist, Williamson was issued an indent, number 405, for “2167 pound, two shillings and two pence, by the State of South Carolina, for supplying the Public with sundries in 1779 Per account audited.” So while the government was trying to take his money with one hand, it was giving with the other! The reimbursement payment was augmented with 151 pounds, 13 shillings and one pence to pay for accrued interest.<sup>67</sup>

On 20 September 1785, Andrew Williamson sold his prized White Hall and its 897 acres to James Lincoln, Esq., for the sum of 975 pounds, nine shillings and ninepence sterling money.<sup>68</sup> He was probably seeking to raise funds to pay off debts and perhaps amercement, and realized that he would never again live in the growing Ninety Six District he had worked so hard to create.

One reason for not going back was the vigorous anti-Loyalist sentiment in the District after the war. Residents generally wanted nothing to do with Loyalists, did not approve of mercy for Loyalists who had been confiscated or amerced, and wanted seized Loyalist estates sold off as fast as possible, so they could never be recovered. Also, armed gangs roamed the district after the war, robbing and pillaging with seeming impunity.<sup>69</sup> Trade had reportedly ceased almost entirely in the Ninety-Six, since according to Judge Burke, “no one dared to appear on the road with a wagon and good horses.”<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> Twelve percent was typical, but some ameracements ran as high as 25 or 30 percent, while some were as low as five percent; Brannon, *op. cit.*, pp. 301-2. Brannon notes that the unusually low rate of five percent was taken on the estate of Colonel John Harleston, who had been wise enough to marry a daughter of Edward Rutledge, the Speaker of the House of the Jacksonborough Assembly.

<sup>66</sup> “A List of Ameracements Due 1<sup>st</sup> January 1787,” 1786: S390008 -- 00012, Box 3, Stack location 134009, South Carolina Archives.

<sup>67</sup> A. S. Salley, Jr., *Stub Entries to Indents Issued in Payment of Claims Against South Carolina Growing Out of the Revolution* (Columbia, SC: State Co., 1918) Books U-W, p. 59. On 31 January 1786 Williamson and Jno L. Gervais, contractors, were issued another indent, number 1015, for 158 pounds three shillings, with interest of eleven pounds one shilling and fourpence, for “rations of all species for the Garrison at Fort Charlotte, also for wheat flour for the Indians.” See Salley, *Stub Entries*, (1927) *op. cit.*, Books Y-Z, p. 150. Of course this was the same John Lewis Gervais who was a co-landowner with Williamson, officiated at a wedding at White Hall, was his business partner, and bitterly called him a “traitor” near the end of the war. It must have been a difficult meeting when and if the two got together to divide this payment.

<sup>68</sup> Register of Mesne Conveyance, Charleston, SC, reported in Margaret B. deWetter, “The O’Keefe Family: From the Ould Sod,” unpublished manuscript, 1988. Note that Williamson retained thousands of additional acres in the District, which became part of his estate when he died.

<sup>69</sup> Rebecca N. Brannon, *Reconciling the Revolution: Resolving Conflict and Rebuilding Community in the Wake of Civil War in South Carolina: 1775-1860* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 2007, Ph.D. dissertation), pp. 328-330. Brannon notes that Charleston after the war could be dangerous for Loyalists and “traitors,” too, since there were anti-Loyalist societies and riots in 1783, 1784 and 1785; *ibid.*, pp. 350-61.

<sup>70</sup> Robert W. Barnwell, Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 354.



Williamson was making a very rational choice to not return to the Ninety-Six district. During the war, about 300 Loyalists and Tories were reported murdered in the Ninety-Six district, the southern part of Camden, the upper part of Orangeburg, and in Charleston. It was estimated that this reported number was only about a fourth of the total number killed or hanged. None of these numbers reflect deaths in battle.<sup>71</sup>

Williamson had one last major encounter with the South Carolina House of Representatives. On a sour note, on 8 March 1786, a House committee recommended that:

His Excellency the Governor Cause a proper enquiry to be made into the Truth of the Allegation made by the Headmen and Warriors of the Cherokees respecting two of their Children being detained in Slavery by Andrew Williamson, and that if the same shall be found to be true, the said Indians be released and delivered to their Countrymen.<sup>72</sup>

This recommendation was the result of a letter written on 6 February 1786 from Indian Commissioners Benjamin Hawkins, Andrew Pickens, Joseph Martin and Lachian McIntosh to Governor William Moultrie of South Carolina. This letter informed the Governor that the Commissioners had entered into a treaty with the Cherokees, Choctaws and Chickasaws, but the Commissioners were concerned that previous treaties were not being adhered to, specifically that Indian children were being held in slavery by Andrew Williamson, and the Indians were asking that the children be returned to their families.<sup>73</sup>

No follow-up report was found in the House journals on this matter, but this allegation could not have helped the case Williamson was making to avoid even the twelve percent amercement. Given that he had tried to secure permission to capture and sell Indian slaves during the Cherokee campaign, it seems likely that he was guilty of this charge, in willful disregard of the treaty and of the legislature's directive back in 1776. Williamson could be his own worst enemy.

## Death

According to Johnson, Williamson “toward the close of the Revolution disappeared from his place of residence...called White Hall, and nothing more is said of him in our histories or traditions. The place of his retirement was never spoken of, the time and place of his death are unknown, [and] he died an obscure, heart-broken, poor creature.”<sup>74</sup>

By contrast, the *Dictionary of American Biography* states that Williamson ended his days “in the comfortable seclusion” of his plantation in St. Paul's parish near Charleston, “leaving a name for honesty and benevolence,” and served by his 91 slaves.<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> Robert S. Davis, Jr., “Tories Murdered in the South Carolina Upcountry in the Revolution,” *South Carolina Magazine of Ancestral Research*, Summer 1981, Vol. IX, No. 3, pp. 123-127.

<sup>72</sup> *Journals of the House of Representatives 1783-1784* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1977) p. 42.

<sup>73</sup> *Journal of the proceedings of the commissioners appointed to treat with the southern Indians, 1785—6*, (Original manuscript held in Hargrett Library, University of Georgia: 1786), abstracted at [www.worldcat.org](http://www.worldcat.org).

<sup>74</sup> Joseph Johnson, *Traditions and Reminiscences, Chiefly of the American Revolution in the South* (Charleston, SC: Walker and James, 1851) pp. 145-6.

<sup>75</sup> *Dictionary of American Biography*, op. cit. Williamson's estate papers list 91 slaves.

Wildly differing opinions aside, the facts are that Andrew Williamson died on 21 March 1786 in St. Paul's Parish, South Carolina, in possession of 1100 acres of land in Colleton County, Charleston District, Horse Savannah and St. Paul's Parish, and 7986 acres in the Ninety Six District.<sup>76</sup> His death date was only a few weeks after his last conflict with the South Carolina legislature. Williamson's burial place is now unknown, but it seems certain he was buried in Charleston, near the house of his son in law and executor, John Walker. He was perhaps 56 years old, and doubtless the strain of years of campaigning, a year of spying, and more years of fighting to preserve his fortune, had all taken their toll.

The *Charleston Morning Post and Advertiser* reported that:

Yesterday died, at his plantation at Horse Savannah, Andrew Williamson, Esq.; late a Brigadier General in the service of this State. He rendered eminent services to his country in suppressing its internal enemies at the beginning of the late war, and commanded on the successful expedition against the Cherokee Indians in the year 1776. His excellent endowments as a tender and affectionate parent, a sincere friend, and an honest man are what makes him no less lamented by his friends and family, than regretted by those who revere and admire such admirable virtues.<sup>77</sup> Were it necessary to enumerate instances of the stability of his friendship, and extent of his benevolence, it would appear as unparalleled as it is confessed and admired. His humanity and acts of hospitality were displayed in a manner which seemed not to wish for public notice and applause, but with that silent, disinterested impulse in which a Christian and the good man always finds the most ample reward and satisfaction, unheard of, but by those who found relief beneficence of his hands. And though surrounded and in the midst of plenty of what might have supported him in the style of splendor and affluence, yet he confined himself to that becoming mien (which always governs the wise and considerate) between the extremes of the giddy prodigality and meanness of penury. Thus declined and \_\_\_ in a ripened age, this good and worthy man, in the possession of any virtue that could make his life illustrious, and his end happy.<sup>78</sup> His remains will be interred this afternoon from the house of Mr. John Walker, in Meeting Street.<sup>79</sup>

In the *Columbian Herald* of 3 April 1786 appeared a surprising poem and a "monumental inscription" – apparently proposing a monument – for General Williamson by "a person who was neither a friend nor a foe to the General." The proposed inscription contained the following message:

---

<sup>76</sup> Coker, op. cit., p. 253. See also "1786 Tax Returns," *South Carolina Magazine of Ancestral Research*, Spring 1981, Vol. IX, No. 2, p. 73, and *SCMAR*, Summer 1977, Vol. V, No. 3, pp. 160-1. Williamson's estate owed 72 pounds, 10 shillings and ha'penny tax in 1786 on these large land holdings and "90 Negroes." His son Andrew Williamson Jr. owned an additional 700 acres in the Ninety-Six District in 1785.

<sup>77</sup> This next portion is from the Draper Papers, *Calendar of the Tennessee and King's Mountain Papers*, Wisconsin Historical Society, 1929, microfilm 13DD135, 22 March 1786. This is an entry hand copied from the *Pennsylvania Packet*, apparently a reprint of the obituary in the Charleston papers.

<sup>78</sup> This is the end of the *Pennsylvania Packet* portion of the obituary.

<sup>79</sup> *The Charleston Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, 22 March 1786, cited in *The South Carolina Historical Magazine*, Vol. 5, Issue 1, p. 177.

Here lie the remains of Andrew Williamson, Esq.  
late Brigadier General of the State Militia  
Reader! Whatever may be thy station  
his story may afford thee useful instruction.  
If setting out in life thy situation be humble,  
thou mayest hope from his example,  
that want of friends and fortune may be supplied,  
if thou hast but sterling merit.  
If thou cannot boast of learning, despair not:  
Tho' wanting aid of letters, genius like his may enable thee  
to serve thy country with luster, in the field or cabinet.  
Or if thou art basking in the warming sunshine  
of high station and popularity, yet remember,  
that fortune may, without any crime of thine,  
one day turn thine enemy,  
render thy best services instrumental to thy ruin,  
and make all thine importance to vanish as a dream.  
Let him who standeth take heed lest he fall.<sup>80</sup>

The key question with Williamson's life and death is always, "was he a traitor, and was he moral?" I would answer that the answer depends on the period under consideration:

From his birth to the beginning of the Revolution, he was a loyal, if critical, British subject. He was not a traitor, and he was moral.

From the beginning of the Revolution to June 1780, while fighting as an American officer, he was a traitor to Britain, just as all other rebellious Americans were, by definition. We now think he was moral; King George III would not have agreed. He was rationally pursuing his own interests, including greater liberty, which must have seemed moral to him.

From June 1780 to early in 1782, while serving the British, he was a traitor to the American cause, but he had seen that cause fail and had then given solemn pledges to the British. It seems apparent that he was serving his own pecuniary interests, but he must have felt that he was being moral and honorable in living up to his pledges.

From early 1782 to the evacuation of Charleston, while spying against the British, he was certainly (again) a traitor to Britain, and he must have had some serious qualms of conscience about breaking his solemn pledges to the British side. But he could see they were losing, and that overcame his code of honor. He became a spy, to secure his old life back at White Hall. Sadly, he could not go home again.

### **Family, Descendants and Fighting Amercement**

As mentioned earlier, Andrew Williamson married Eliza "Betty" Tyler (abt. 1734-- April 1781<sup>81</sup>). No firm marriage date or location has been found. No information has been previously published on her background, but recent research by the author has

---

<sup>80</sup> *Columbian Herald*, 3 April 1786, Charleston, SC, issue 164, page 3. Available on line at [infoweb.newsbank.com](http://infoweb.newsbank.com).

<sup>81</sup> N. Louise Bailey and Elizabeth I. Cooper, *Biographical Directory of the South Carolina House of Representatives* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1984) Vol. III, pp. 769-71.

shown that she was apparently descended from the famous Tyler family of Virginia. Betty's father was John Tyler (d. 1758) who married Frances Graves, and the father of John Tyler was Richard Tyler, the progenitor of the Essex County, Virginia branch of the Tyler family in America. The other two branches were the York County branch and the Westmoreland County branch, all three of which began in about 1690. Some or all of these branches may descend from William Tyler, the earliest immigrant, about 1620.<sup>82</sup> President John Tyler was descended from York County branch, and thus Eliza "Betty" Tyler is likely a distant cousin of President Tyler.<sup>83</sup>

Andrew Williamson and Betty Tyler left four children. Little information on them has been previously published, but recent research by the author has established the following information on these children:

1. Elizabeth Williamson: born 1765 in Virginia; died 1825 in Orangeburg, SC; married to Charles Goodwin (abt. 1765—abt. 1825) on 17 April 1788. Children: Dr. Chamberlain L. Goodwin; Eliza Farmer Goodwin; Anna Walker Goodwin; and Charles Goodwin (II).<sup>84</sup>

2. Mary Ann Williamson: born abt. 1766 in SC or VA; died 26 October 1833 in Jefferson County, Georgia.<sup>85</sup> Married first to John Walker (? – 27 July 1788) on 15 December 1784,<sup>86</sup> with children Agnes Keller Walker and Eliza Williamson Walker. Married second to Judge Ephraim Ramsay<sup>87</sup> (1766—8 November 1801<sup>88</sup>) on 22 February 1790<sup>89</sup> in Charleston, SC, with six children: David John Ramsay, William Ramsay, Richard Ramsay, Sarah Seeley Ramsay, Mary Ramsay and Edward E. Ramsay.

---

<sup>82</sup> Tyler Family Association, Official Report of the Tyler Family Reunion, p. 5.

<sup>83</sup> "Genealogical Notes," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 21, p. 293 and Robert Anderson, "Family Records of the Anderson, Pate, Tyler, Graves and Mouring Families," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 12, pp. 80, 92, 120-1.

<sup>84</sup> John H. Logan, *A History of the Upper Country of South Carolina* (Winnsboro, SC: The Reprint Co., 2009 (reprint of 1859 vol. 1 and 1910 vol. 2) p. 413. As with much of Williamson's life, there are mysteries and issues with the dates of his children. The earliest child born appears to have been born in 1765, suggested a marriage soon before that date. But according to Logan, as described earlier, Williamson "and his family" were attacked by Indians in February 1760 at Ninety Six. This contradiction is unresolved.

<sup>85</sup> "Marriage and Obituary Notices from the *Columbia Telescope*," *South Carolina Magazine of Ancestral Research*, Spring 1974, Vol. II, No. 2, p. 73.

<sup>86</sup> From ancestry.com, *South Carolina Marriages, 1688-1799* database, p. 259, states that "Walker, John of Charleston, merchant, [is marrying] Mary Ann Williamson, a minor daughter of Andrew Williamson, 15 Dec. 1784: David Oliphent, trustee; John Maitland, Richard Lord., wit., Mar Set 1:155-158."

<sup>87</sup> Logan, *ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Boston Gazette*, 21 December 1801, copied in *Calendar of the Thomas Sumter Papers of the Draper Collection of Manuscripts*, op. cit., Vol. V, 8VV130 (119), states that "Died, in SC, Hon. Ephraim Ramsay, aged 35, an associate judge."

<sup>89</sup> Bailey and Cooper, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 465-7.

3. Andrew Williamson (II): born abt. 1771 in South Carolina; died before 1805 in South Carolina, apparently unmarried.

4. William Williamson: born abt. 1777 in South Carolina; died 15 Oct 1805 in Town Creek Mills, South Carolina;<sup>90</sup> apparently unmarried.

A direct line of descent from Eliza Williamson Walker (abt. 1785—22 December 1825) and her husband Lud Harris (1771—May 1827) leading down to the present day and to the author of this report has been established to high genealogical standards, but is not described here for space reasons, and to focus instead on the history and archaeology of the White Hall site.

After his death, Andrew Williamson's controversy did not end. Indeed, his family, executors and descendants battled for at least five years to try to avoid the twelve percent confiscation (amercement) levied by the legislature, and submitted petitions signed by many supporters, requesting a waiver. On 8 February 1787 the House of Representatives took a recorded vote on a motion that, "in consideration of the debts due by the said Estate and the Cause of the Amercement having Ceased," the estate be released from the twelve percent amercement. This motion carried by the close vote of 67 to 62, with Dr. Ramsay, Edward Rutledge and General Pinkney voting yes. In the Ninety Six District, the votes were Mr. Simpkins and Mr. Lincoln, yes, and Mr. Calhoun, Mr. Jones, Mr. Butler and General Pickens, no.<sup>91</sup> But even this was not the end of the matter. This motion only allowed for a bill to be brought forward; this was done on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March but apparently died without action.

---

<sup>90</sup> *The Charleston Times*, 30 October 1805, cited in Brent H. Holcomb, *Marriage and Death Notices from the (Charleston) Times, 1800-1821* (Baltimore: GPC, 1979) p. 125. This states: "Died, on the 15th Instant, at Town Creek Mills, SC, Mr. William Williamson, aged 28 years, the youngest and only surviving son of the late Brig Gen Andrew Williamson of this state."

<sup>91</sup> Williamson before he died stated that General Andrew Pickens raised "much clamor" against Williamson, fearing that he would eventually be reinstated and given a rank superior to that of Pickens. See Robert S. Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists in the American Revolution* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1987), p. 304.

A photograph of a handwritten document, likely a petition, on aged paper. The text is written in cursive. The main body of text reads: "In which case they will ever more gratefully acknowledge the Justice Mercy &amp; Humanity of this Honorable House—". Below this, there are three signatures: "LeRoy Hammond for Andrew Williamson &amp; William Williamson", "Mary Ann Walker", and "Eliza Goodwin".

Signatures, apparently original, of LeRoy Hammond, signing for minors Andrew and William Williamson, and of daughters Mary Ann Williamson Walker (later Ramsay) and Eliza Williamson Goodwin, from “Petition to the House of Representatives of South Carolina,” received on 18 January 1789. Item 1789, S165015—00018, Box 53, Stack location 130C06, South Carolina Archives.

In 1789 another effort was launched to waive the amercement. A petition to the House was signed by 162 inhabitants of the Ninety Six district, and pleaded that the amercement of 600 pounds sterling and 600 pounds in special indents<sup>92</sup> plus interest would “inevitably ruin” the petitioners and bring them to a state of “penury and distress.” The petitioners, the children of Andrew Williamson, entreated “not in the common and formal Style of Petitions but in the Language of the Heart.” This effort resulted in a recorded vote on 13 March 1789 on a motion to stay of the “suit commenced against the executors of Andrew Williamson” to secure the amercement payments until the next meeting of the General Assembly. The vote was 44 in favor and 51 against, and the motion lost. Members of the Ninety Six district voted 6 to 3 in favor of the motion.<sup>93</sup>

Then a motion was made and seconded to stay the suit against the Williamson estate for six months. A recorded vote on this motion failed by just one vote, at 40 to 41.<sup>94</sup>

In 1791 the matter came up yet again, and the petition to stay the suit and waive the amercement was acted upon favorably by a committee, who reacted to the “unfortunate situation of the innocent family of the deceased General Williamson and his former services to the State...” A bill was prepared to exempt the estate from payment of the special indent amercement, and to extend the time for the payment of the specie

---

<sup>92</sup> A hand-written notation in the original records of the House states that the correct figures are 300 and 300 respectively.

<sup>93</sup> *Journals of the House of Representatives 1789-1790* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1984) pp. 277-280.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

amercement. This bill was read twice in the House and once in the Senate, then apparently died without action.<sup>95</sup>

It is unclear what the ultimate result of the action was. It seems likely but not certain that in the spirit of reconciliation, the enforcement of the amercement was dropped. It is certainly clear Joseph Johnson was wrong when he claimed that after Williamson's defection, "nothing more was said of him in our histories or traditions." In fact, he remained a subject of major controversy in the legislature for at least five years after his death, and sparked controversies and accusations in histories of the war for two hundred years – both remarkable achievements!

Eventually, however, the memory of General Andrew Williamson, once a household name in South Carolina and even in the rest of the country, gradually faded from the consciousness of the populace.

His name was revived only once in a play, movie or other cultural event. This was on Friday, July 13, 2007, at a Southern Campaigns of the American Revolution (SCAR) conference at the Southern Revolutionary War Institute in York, South Carolina, when noted historical character actor Howard Burnham "debuted a brand new first person interpretation of SC Patriot militia General Andrew Williamson, the colorful and controversial leader of the backcountry militia..."<sup>96</sup>

Burnham's interpretation included Williamson with a broad Scots accent; defending himself as a "dog with a bad name," saying that he was as literate as most men, thanks to the "finest elementary education in Europe," which he obtained in Scotland; giving quotes in Latin ("not bad for an illiterate!"); reminding his listeners that his contemporaries Morgan and Sumter started off like him, as "a waggoner and a ploughboy;" noting that Judge Drayton of the Committee of Safety told Williamson to "cut up every Indian cornfield and burn every town – the Indian nation is to be extirpated;" and arguing that the invasion of Florida was lost to the mosquitoes, not the enemy.

With regard to the key question of being a traitor, Burnham's Williamson argued vigorously that, "I urged my officers to continue the struggle" but was out-voted and forced to "sue for peace with that odious little Tory turd Richard Pearis..." Williamson was "asked to break his parole by Elijah Clarke...but I believe (and still believe) that a gentleman's word is his bond." Later, he says, "I risked my own neck sending secret intelligences out of Charles Town...to General Greene," and if you "think that I am the 'Benedict Arnold of South Carolina,' then pigs have wings!"<sup>97</sup>

---

<sup>95</sup> *Journals of the House of Representatives 1791* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1985) pp. 79-80, 102, 217, 482. Rev. Jones (1984) contends that the amercement was lifted, but I cannot find proof of this, and the summary of actions for that year seems conclusive that the bill died. The committee report (South Carolina Senate, 1791, Box 30, 253-01, SC Archives) states that "the Attorney General be instructed to suspend any further Proceedings" in this matter, so perhaps that is what occurred.

<sup>96</sup> SCAR Newsletter, op. cit., Vol. 4, No. 2.1, p. 25. Howard Burnham has portrayed over 50 historical characters in mini-plays researched and written by himself; these have included many Revolutionary figures including Gen. Thomas Sumter, Sir Henry Clinton, General Nathanael Greene, Lord Cornwallis, etc. See [www.howardburnham.com](http://www.howardburnham.com) for more information.

<sup>97</sup> Howard Burnham, *A Dog with a Bad Name: Andrew Williamson Defends Himself...* (Howard Burnham typescript, 2007), pp. 1-18.

## White Hall

This section covers the following topics:

- White Hall before the Revolution
- White Hall during the Revolution
- Chain of ownership of White Hall
- Maps showing White Hall

### White Hall Before the Revolution

Andrew Williamson acquired Hard Labor plantation from Dr. Murray by 1767, and renamed it White Hall. It was located on Hard Labor Creek (sometimes called Stephens Creek) in what is now Greenwood County. The plantation was located about six miles from Ninety Six, on a road running from Charleston northwards to Indian territory. It was only about 18 miles from the nearest Indian lands. It was one of the only major plantations in the area, in a time when most settlers lived in tiny log cabins or small farms. The plantation was described by Thomas Griffiths, who was sent by the famous Josiah Wedgewood of Britain to scout out samples of fine clay from the region. Griffiths reached White Hall in October 1767 and described it as follows:

The next day I Marched on for Andrew Williamsons at Whitehall near a place called hard Labour, about two hundred miles from Charles Town. This is one of the finest plantations in South Carolina; abounding with fine Rich Red Loomy Land, famous for Raising Corn, Hemp, Flax, Cotton, Rice, Cattle, Hogs, Fruits of all sorts and great plenty of innumerable \_\_\_\_\_ friend Williamson said in the year Sixty Six his Peach orchard yielded near Three Thousand bushel baskets; which proved of great use to the poor young inhabitants of the province; besides feeding him a great number of hogs etc.; the woods here consist of fine white and black oak, ash, maple, hickory, birch and many lofty pines etc.<sup>98</sup>

Griffiths noted that at White Hall he met “an Indian woman belonging to the Cheifs [sic] of the Cherokees, who had long been stolen away by the Youghtanous [tribe] and afterwards Ransomed by our Indian deputy of the Illinois who sent her Round to Pensacola, and so conveyed her back to Charles Town.” Griffiths accompanied this much-traveled woman north when he left White Hall, apparently to help return her to her original home.

Griffiths’ five day stay at White Hall on his trip north cost him four pounds and ten shillings; on his way back through the area he stayed another four days and was charged three pounds and fourteen shillings. Apparently Williamson did not subscribe to the idea of sheltering and feeding visitors, even interesting ones, for free. Is this proof of his alleged Scots ancestry?

---

<sup>98</sup> Thomas Griffiths, *A Journal of the Voyage to South Carolina, 1767*, original in the office of Wedgewood and Company, quoted in Margaret Watson, *Greenwood County Sketches* (Greenwood, SC: Attic Press, 1982), pp. 44-50. Watson notes that it is unlikely that Williamson was growing rice this far inland, and doubts the yield of the peach orchard. She does say (p. 47) that “while White Hall did not rank with the fine places of the Low Country, it was one of the very few large scale plantations in this section before the Revolution” in an era when “most of our pioneers had small farms and log cabins for their homes.”



## White Hall During the Revolution

Information on White Hall during the Revolution is available from letters, pension applications, a newspaper account, and a few secondary sources, as follows.

A series of original letters from Andrew Williamson and his principal aide Malcom Brown at their headquarters at White Hall, to Captain John Bowie, commanding nearby Fort Independence, is preserved in the New York Public Library and is known as “The Bowie Papers: 1776-1778.”<sup>99</sup> Many of the letters are about supply shipments by wagon and other mundane matters. Highlights of these letters include the following.

On 28 June 1776, Williamson wrote that he “accidentally received a Kick on the Leg from Major Downes’ Stallion, Which by not taking sufficient Care has thrown me into a fever these few days past and Confined me to my Room, which prevented me being your Way...” This seems to imply that Williamson had a separate bedroom at White Hall.

On 31 May 1777 Williamson write of the “Glorious News” of the surrender of General Burgoyne. He also asks, “if you bring a servant, please let him put up a few Panes of Glass” [to White Hall].

On 13 November 1777 Williamson writes from White Hall that “beef is scarce to be got.” He also again brings up the topic of glass, and say, “By Kimmery you Will please send 14 Panes Glass, we are starved, with broken windows...” The number of panes of glass requested suggests that the plantation house at White Hall is perhaps not just a simple cabin or dogtrot house.

On 16 February 1779, Williamson, camped at Adam’s Ferry, wrote to Henry Laurens an extensive letter, including the fact that:

The Waggon with the Cherokee Goods set out from Whitehall last Saturday escorted by a strong part of the Militia, and an officer and 30 men of the Garrison at Fort Rutledge were to meet and reinforce them...<sup>100</sup>

Turning to pension applications, in June 1776, Solomon Crocker fought at the battle of Fort Moultrie, then proceeded to the command of General Williamson at White Hall:

...after his Enlistment, he marched to Dorchester, where he remained nearly 3 months, and then marched to Charleston, and thence to Fort Moultrie, where the Battle was fought by Parker -- And after a time marched to the command of General Williamson at White Hall, and thence to the Cherokee Nation. From the Nation he marched to Seneca and built the Fort -- where he was taken sick, and discharged on Furlough.<sup>101</sup>

Fifer Magnus Tullock enlisted at White Hall “fort” at the age of 13 in 1777, and returned there when General Williamson took British protection:

---

<sup>99</sup> These were published in *The Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, March 1900, vol. IV, no. 3, and April 1900, vol. IV, no. 4, and are now available on Google Books.

<sup>100</sup> The George Washington Papers, Library of Congress American Memory Project, available at: <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mgw4&fileName=gwpage056.db&recNum=156>.

<sup>101</sup> Solomon Crocker Revolutionary Pension Application, number W9398, available at: <http://www.southerncampaign.org/pen/w9398.pdf>.

Applicant was born in the North of Scotland and the town or city called Kirknilo [Kirkwall?]. He does not recollect the year in which he was born – he has no record of his age that he knows of. Applicant enlisted in Abbeville County in the State of South Carolina in a place called **White Hall Fort on the Hard labor Creek at the residence of one General Williamson** in the year 1777 in the 13th year of my age. Applicant enlisted for three years... myself to play the fife.... We marched through the State of Georgia to the Cherokee Nation...sometimes under the command of General Williamson a militia general.... We were ordered back to the Cherokee Nation under the command of General Williamson in search of a British agent by the name of Cameron...but he fled and made his escape.... We remained [in the Sand Hills] hunting the Villains and Tories ...until after the fall of Charleston, and then we marched back to White Hall [in what is now] Abbeville County. We then gave up our arms and went to a place called Cow Head and took protection, we however at this time were [paroled] and were not to lift arms again for a year and a day....<sup>102</sup>

William Beard mentions a “block house” at White Hall in his pension application some time before the Florida campaign (March 1778), and appears to have been guarding prisoners at White Hall:

I served under Captain John Irwin as a Guard at Whitehall and went from thence to '96 guarding a parcel of Tories. I saw Lieutenant Earls a regular officer at the **block house** in Whitehall. I knew Lt. Earls very well. I then went home and shortly afterwards volunteered with our whole company under Captain Irwin a second time and went to Whitehall, at which place half of Captain Irwin and half of Captain Logan's company were joined together and made one company. I fell to Logan and went [to] Florida under him and remained there from three to five months...<sup>103</sup>

The pension application of George Watts mentions wagon loads of ammunition being transported to White Hall, just before the Florida campaign:

This deponent was sent as one of the Guard with **two loads of ammunition** from Charleston in South Carolina **to a place called White Hall near 96**. This deponent then under the command of his said last mentioned officers marched through South Carolina & Georgia to Fort McIntosh in East Florida and was there taken prisoner by the British who were commanded by Colonel Fazel and were sent home prisoners of war.<sup>104</sup>

---

<sup>102</sup> Magnus Tullock Revolutionary Pension Application, number S6273, available at: <http://southerncampaign.org/pen/s6273.pdf>. (Emphasis added.) By an interesting coincidence, Magnus Tullock married Jemima Logan and moved to Blount County, Tennessee, and the Logan family that now manages and owns the White Hall land has shown through genealogical research and DNA testing that they have links to the Logans of Blount County in that period. The “Cow Head” location mentioned in the application is likely Cow Head creek just about a mile east of White Hall.

<sup>103</sup> William Beard Revolutionary Pension Application, number S2981, available at <http://www.southerncampaign.org/pen/s2981.pdf>. (Emphasis added).

<sup>104</sup> George Watts Revolutionary Pension Application, number R11214, available at: <http://southerncampaign.org/pen/r11214.pdf>. (Emphasis added.)

John Venables also uses the term “Fort White Hall” and describes it as a military store and as a headquarters where orders were issued. In August or September 1778, Venables marched:

...through a small village called Ninety Six, thence crossing Saluda River to a place called **Fort White Hall at which place a General Williamson resided where a Military Store was kept**, at this place orders was given by the Commanding Officers that two companies (to wit) Captain Sadler's & Lt. Henry's companies should be detached from Col. Neal's regiment, when this applicant marched some miles under Lt. Henry's command up the Country not far from the Savannah River to guard the Country against the Hostile Indians and marched by a Fort called Independence...<sup>105</sup>

Lt. Gabriel Tutt reports on being taken prisoner by the British at White Hall after the fall of Charleston. He also explains that soon after being paroled, he was ordered by the British to take up arms against the remaining Patriots, which he refused to do:

In the latter part of the year 1778 and the beginning of 1779 we were stationed on the height of Savannah River opposite Augusta in Georgia under the command of Brigadier General Williamson of the Militia, where we remained until the British left that place & then marched with General Lincoln to the lower parts of the state and remained there until after the battle of Stono, where we were ordered to the frontiers of the state and were immediately detached on an expedition under the Command of General Williamson against some Indians on the waters of the [illegible] and on our return were ordered to Savannah and remained there until after the attack on that place, and then returned to Augusta in which we remained until after the fall of Charlestown, and then **went to a post called White Hall in the State of South Carolina, where we were taken prisoner by the British & Tories under the command of Colonels Paris and Cunningham, and paroled not to serve during the war.** After the British came to Ninety Six they ordered out every man that was fit for duty to take up arms and join them under the penalty of military execution. Myself and many others left the state & joined General Pickens in the upper parts of North Carolina where we remained until General Greene arrived & besieged Ninety Six.<sup>106</sup>

Patriot Thomas Boon reported on guarding prisoners at White Hall in his pension application:

...**many Tories and British were brought to White Hall.** General Williamson sent to Fort Independence for a **Sergeant, Corporal, and 12 men as an additional guard** and I was one of that guard. I remained at White Hall till, I

---

<sup>105</sup> John Venables Revolutionary Pension Application, number W18220, available at: <http://www.southerncampaign.org/pen/w18220.pdf>. (Emphasis added.) See also “Revolutionary Pension Applications; John Venables, National Archives File W-18220,” *South Carolina Magazine of Ancestral Research*, Spring 1974, Vol. II, No. 2, pp. 80-83.

<sup>106</sup> Lt. Gabriel Tutt Revolutionary Pension Application, number S6279, available at: <http://www.southerncampaign.org/pen/s6279.pdf>.

think, in the summer of 1779, when the company to which I belonged was marched to Savannah which was at this time in the possession of the British...<sup>107</sup>

James McCleskey's pension application states that in 1780, White Hall was a storage depot for Patriot arms and munitions:

Some time in the year 1780, the British besieged Charleston. General Williamson gave orders to Colonel Pickens to turn out and March with two divisions of the militia to its relief. The Colonel finding the militia backward in turning Out called on Captain James McCall to raise a company of Volunteers into which company I volunteered as a private Soldier. We were marched to and rendezvoused at a place called White All [sic; should be White Hall] the Residence of General Williamson about two hundred miles from Charleston and from there Started on to Charleston but were informed before we got there that the City had been Surrendered to the enemy. **We then returned to White Hall, this was a place where the Public Stores and arms were Kept.** We remained at this place to **Guard the Stores** until the enemy had taken possession of the surrounding Settlements. General Williamson was called on to Capitulate which he did and the Militia all except Captain McCall's Company of Volunteers took protection. I had then Served a tour of three months.<sup>108</sup>

Colonel Samuel Hammond served under General Williamson at the battles of Savannah and Augusta, and also under his uncle Colonel LeRoy Hammond (brother-in-law of Williamson). In his pension application, Col. Samuel Hammond states that the council of war to decide whether to take parole and British protection or continue fighting, took place at White Hall:

In the month of April 1780, [he] was marched into Georgia under the order of Genl. Williamson & was encamped with a detachment of Carolina & Georgia militia on Cupboard Creek a few miles below Augusta on the Savannah roads on the 16th of May on which day Genl. Williamson notified the commanding officer there that he had received official information of the surrender of Genl. Lincoln & garrison at Charlestown to the British Commander Sir H. Clinton. Called upon the officers to attend a council at McLean's above Augusta, attending there Gov. Howley of Georgia, his counsel [council?] and officers of State with many others attending nothing conclusive adopted for defenses. Governor H. retired with counsel [council?] & State officers. Williamson discharged Militia & **called a council of Officers to attend at White Hall**, his residence near Ninety Six. Counsel [council?] attended. Advised by a majority to send a Flag & purpose to surrender on terms such as was granted to the militia in Service at Charlestown, Applicant protested against that course, withdrew from there & with a few real Patriots retired to North Carolina.<sup>109</sup>

---

<sup>107</sup> Thomas Boon Revolutionary Pension Application, number W23656, available at <http://www.southerncampaign.org/pen/w23656.pdf>. (Emphasis added.)

<sup>108</sup> James McCleskey Revolutionary Pension Application, number S16475, available at: <http://southerncampaign.org/pen/s16475.pdf>. (Emphasis added.)

<sup>109</sup> Col. Samuel Hammond Revolutionary Pension Application, number S21807, available at: <http://southerncampaign.org/pen/S21807.pdf>. (Emphasis added.)

The 10 June 1780 capitulation document signed by Williamson's officers refers to General Williamson's home, and to the arms and ammunition stored there.<sup>110</sup>

On 12 June 1780 Captain Richard Pearis, of the West Florida Loyalists, stated that, "I am on my march to White Hall (the habitation of General Williamson) to receive the arms etc deposited there..."<sup>111</sup>

On 10 December 1780 White Hall was still in Loyalist hands:

Lt. Col. Isaac Allen and New Jersey Provincial Volunteers, South Carolina Loyalist Militia General Robert Cunningham and Capt. James Dunlop detach to White Hall and then to Long Canes. Two days later, they defeated Col. Elijah Clarke, Lt. Col. James McCall and Col. Benjamin Few near Troy, South Carolina.<sup>112</sup>

A battle took place at White Hall on 5 December 1781, as part of a larger campaign called "The Bloody Scout." Captain John Crawford, a Loyalist militia officer, was detached by Col. Hezekiah Williams to harass Patriot settlers in the Long Cane area. Near the Pine Wood House and Tavern Crawford killed a Patriot named George Foreman and his two sons. According to Parker, he:

then continued on to White Hall, the plantation of Patriot General Andrew Williamson. Crawford attacked the Patriot fortification at the plantation, resulting in the fortification's destruction.<sup>113</sup>

Describing the same battle, Lipscomb writes:

Crawford proceeded on to White Hall, the plantation of General Andrew Williamson, which Pickens' militia had turned into a military post. The **Tories attacked and defeated the garrison and destroyed the works that the Patriots had constructed.** White Hall was situated at a crossroads near Hard Labor Creek.<sup>114</sup>

It is not clear if the White Hall plantation house was destroyed or damaged during this battle.

A contemporary Loyalist source, the *Royal Gazette* of Charleston, described the engagement as follows<sup>115</sup>:

We learn from the Back Country that when Major Cunningham was upon his return from his late expedition to Ninety-six, he was followed as far as the Ridge, by General Pickens with his brigade, which afforded Col. Hezekiah Williams of

---

<sup>110</sup> Saberton, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 95-6.

<sup>111</sup> Letter from Pearis to Colonel Innes, 12 June 1780, Saberton, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 92.

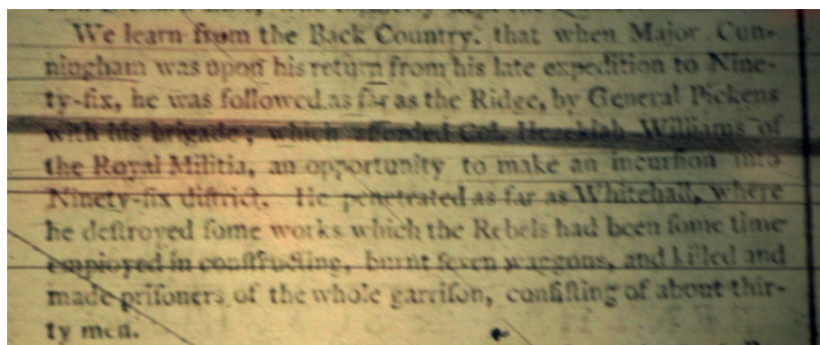
<sup>112</sup> See <http://lib.jrshelby.com/SCAR%20v7se.pdf>.

<sup>113</sup> Parker, op. cit., p. 201.

<sup>114</sup> Terry W. Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary Battles, Part Seven," *Names in South Carolina* XXVI, Winter 1979, pp. 37-39. (Emphasis added.)

<sup>115</sup> *The Royal Gazette*, of Charleston, SC, Vol. 1, No. 88, From Saturday, December 29, 1781 to Wednesday, January 2, 1782, p. 2, dispatch dated January 2, 1782, Newspapers of South Carolina, Microfilm Reel 12, University of Georgia.

the Royal Militia, an opportunity to make an incursion into Ninety-six district. He penetrated as far as Whitehall, where he destroyed some works which the Rebels has been some time employed in constructing, burnt seven waggons, and killed and made prisoners of the whole garrison, consisting of about thirty men.



Dispatch from *The Royal Gazette*

Thus clues to the archaeological footprint of White Hall, derived from the sources above, include the following:

- On Hard Labor Creek
- A fort, blockhouse, military post, depot and/or prison (of course all of these could be one small building, perhaps with some outbuildings – or could have been a fortified plantation house)
- Military headquarters
- 14 or more panes of glass needed
- Possible separate bedroom for Williamson
- “Works destroyed” in the battle of 1781, these had been under construction for some time
- Seven waggons burnt on the property, and likely other fires set
- Recall that an earlier mention of White Hall seemed to imply that it had a separate “parlor.”

Unfortunately, no sketch, detailed map, painting or similar of White Hall plantation house, the block house or prison or military works (if separate from the plantation house), has ever been located.

The inventory of Williamson’s estate in 1786 may shed some indirect light on White Hall, since his death was not long after the war, many his goods in the Charleston area may well have been brought from White Hall, and even if they were locally purchased, they may give some idea of his style of living. Some interesting items from the estate inventory<sup>116</sup> submitted by John Walker and LeRoy Hammond, Executors, include:

- 2 pair of mahogany dining tables: 5 pounds (5/0/0)
- 1 pair sideboards, mahogany, and 2 dressing tables: 5 pounds, 10 shillings (5/10/0)

<sup>116</sup> “Inventory and Appraisement of Part of Goods and Chattels of the late Andrew Williamson,” 3 April 1786, the Records of Charleston District, Court of Ordinary, Inventory and Appraisements Books, Series L10136, South Carolina Court Records Relating to Estate and Personal Assets: Inventories, Appraisements and Sales Books, 1783-1846, Vol. B (1787-1793) pp. 12, 13, 14, 528.

- 1 broken dressing glass, 1 mahogany bedstead, bed, bolster, pillows, blankets and coverlets: 8/4/8
- 1 steel fire grate, 9 mahogany chairs, some of them broken; 1 dozen prints framed and glasses: 5/6/9
- 1 pine square table and [various silverware]: 6/12/0
- 3 pair sheets, 1 pair bed blankets, 3 bed covers...
- 1 musquet and 1 Blunder Buss...
- 1 wind fan...
- 2 waggons complete: 20/0/0
- [thirteen horses...]
- [91 Negro slaves]
- [89 notes in hand and various bonds of money owing to the estate]
- Total all items: 2466/12/1 in Sterling pounds [multiply by about 7 to get value in South Carolina currency, per the inventory]

### Chain of Ownership of White Hall

The chain of ownership for White Hall is still under investigation, and a definitive plat showing the location of the plantation house in relation to Hard Labor Creek and nearby roads has not yet been found. More research is needed. However, the following chain of ownership and time line of construction and possible destruction of the plantation house, “works” and other structures has been generally established:

Date	Transaction	Source
Pre-17 June 1752	Andrew Williamson purchased a diamond-shaped piece of land on Hard Labor Creek; see more details below under the date of 17 October 1789, when the plat map was re-copied.	Plat provided courtesy of Joseph Logan
Pre-1755	John Hamilton bought land on Hard Labor Creek	Watson, <i>Greenwood Co. Sketches</i> , op. cit., p. 44
1755	Dr. John Murray bought land from Hamilton, built Hard Labor plantation on the plot	Ibid.
May 1759	Andrew Williamson purchased 250 acres on Hard Labor creek (but this may not have been the Hard Labor plantation)	Ibid., p. 47
Pre-Oct 1767	Andrew Williamson is in possession of Hard Labor plantation, having obtained it from Dr. Murray, and has re-named the house White Hall. This is the date of the visit to White Hall by Thomas Griffiths from the Wedgewood Company, from England.  White Hall was “a short distance south of Herrenhausen,” the plantation of John Lewis Gervais. It appears that White Hall was north of	Ibid., pp. 44-45. Page 47 states that, “Just when Williamson acquired the place and changed its name has not been established; nor do we know the location of the home, other than it was close by the intersection of two important roads, later known as Barksdale Ferry and Five Notch Road.”  Ibid., pp. 52-3.

	“the Sproull place, built around 1820 and later re-named ‘Green Pastures.’”	
Pre-1767 -- 1780	Williamson lives in the plantation house of White Hall through about December of 1780 or January of 1781, when he flees to Charleston to obtain British protection.	Watson, <i>ibid.</i> , p. 49
5 Dec 1781	A battle between Patriot and Loyalist forces was fought at White Hall, resulting in a Loyalist victory. The “works erected by the Patriots were destroyed.” It is unclear if this destruction affected the plantation house of White Hall.	Parker, <i>op. cit.</i> , p. 201.
20 Sept. 1785	Indenture between “Andrew Williamson, formerly of the District of Ninety Six and now of Charleston,” and James Lincoln, Esq., sale of White Hall, containing 897 acres, situate on Hard Labor Creek, a branch of Stevens Creek, in the District of Ninety Six, butting and abounding northwardly on the lands of Henry Laurens and John Lewis Gervaise. Part of the tract of land was originally granted to the above Henry Laurens and John Lewis Gervaise on the 8 <sup>th</sup> of April 1768. Signed “Wmson.” Price: 975 pounds, nine shillings and nine pence	Register of Mesne Conveyance, Charleston, SC, cited in Margaret B. deWetter, “The O’Keefe Family: From the Ould Sod,” unpublished manuscript, 1988, pp. 6-8, courtesy of Joseph Logan.
17 Oct 1789	A large plat map is recorded, which states it is a copy of a map made 27 June 1752. This map shows a diamond of 250 acres belonging to Andrew Williamson, on Hard Labor Creek. The eastern edge of the diamond is about 15 chains (990 feet) from the main northwest oriented road from Charleston, and the diamond is at the intersection of two trails (one of which is labeled, possibly in a modern hand, as Five Notch Path), running north-south and east-west. Just about 10 chains (660 feet) west of Hard Labor Creek, inside the diamond, is a square which may indicate the location of the Hard Labor/White Hall house, but it may be some other marking. See map section of this report.	Plat provided courtesy of Joseph Logan. Location at the Archives or elsewhere is unknown.
1791	James Lincoln dies.	de Wetter, <i>ibid.</i> , p. 7.
3 May 1792	James Lincoln estate is listed and includes “White Hall”	<i>Ibid.</i> She cites “year: 1792, Box 108, Pack 2940.” This is likely in the Abbeville County records.
2 Apr 1795	Simeon Theus, Treasurer of South Carolina, sells to Hugh O Keef (O’Keeffe) “in pursuance of the Land Act and in consideration of five shillings to him in hand paid by this Hugh O Keef...all the plantation and land in Abbeville County ...containing the whole 897 acres purchased by James Lincoln of the late General	Mesne Conveyance, <i>Ibid.</i>



	Andrew Williamson, bounding on the land of the said Williamson, Colonel Gervais, and the heirs of James Parsons...for the term of one year and yielding at the expiration of that term...one peppercorn, if demanded. To the intent that the said O Keef...may be in full and actual possession of the premises.” (O’Keefe was a relative of James Lincoln and his executor, according to deWetter. There is no explanation of why the price is so low. Perhaps the plantation house had been destroyed by this time, and only the land remained? It is not clear if this is a sale or a lease.)	
1797	Hugh O’Keefe dies intestate. His daughter is Mary Ann Belinda O’Keefe, and she serves as administrator in the County of Abbeville. (She may have married William White of Augusta.) Hugh’s estate is valued at \$3848.	deWetter, <i>ibid.</i> She cites “Box 52, Pack 1228, year: 1797.”
1808	Further action on the James Lincoln estate, with an inventory and a new administrator named O’Driscoll, since O’Keefe was dead. This estate inventory also lists “White Hall.”	<i>Ibid.</i> She cites: “year: 1808, Box 55, Pack 1389, inventory ... taken 6 September 1792.
9 June 1817	White Hall post office established near White Hall plantation area. Allen Glover, who already had a store near the road intersection, was first postmaster. John Lipscomb succeeded Glover as postmaster of White Hall post office on 10 January 1820.	Watson, <i>op. cit.</i> , p. 49.
About 1818	John Lipscomb, first (second?) postmaster, built a “handsome two storey house on a hill on the northeast corner of the intersection” in the vicinity where White Hall “had stood.” It was “similar in design to Scotch Cross, built a few years earlier by his brother in law, Wesley Brooks.” It “faced Barksdale Ferry Road and was flanked on the west by Five Notch Road.”  Modern historian Joseph Logan states that this house was built “around 1820” and is the house shown on the 1825 Mills’ Atlas, <sup>117</sup> although this map shows the house to be east of the road, not west. Logan’s theory is that the house was west of the road, but that there was another structure east of the road, and that is what shows on the 1825 Mills’ Atlas. Logan states that the house west of the road burned to its foundations about 1930-40 and lay unused until about 1960, when the present, still-standing, brick structure was	deWetter., p. 6, citing <i>Greenwood County Sketches.</i>  Watson, <i>op. cit.</i> , pp. 49-50, 288.  Telephone interview with Joseph Logan by Lew Toulmin, 5/27/11

<sup>117</sup> Robert Mills, *Mills’ Atlas: Atlas of the State of South Carolina* (Easley, SC: Southern Historical Press reprint).

	built “by my grandfather.”	
1825	The 1825 Mills’ Atlas shows White Hall just beside and to the west of “Lipscomb’s Ent.,” on the east side of the main road. According to Watson, “Ent.” means entertainment, meaning that White Hall offered accommodation for travelers.	Mills’ Atlas; Watson, op. cit., p. 50.
1861	White Hall post office discontinued.	Watson, op. cit., p. 50.
About 1850 to 1881	White Hall area property purchased by Tolbert family. This family has held the property through to the present day.	Watson, op. cit., p. 50  Correspondence and interviews with Tolbert and Logan family by Lew Toulmin, March 2011
About 1845	Lipscomb sold White Hall “place” to Dr. Samuel Sproull Marshall (1819-1883), physician.	Watson, op. cit., pp. 288, 321.
About 1860	Dr. Marshall sold “White Hall – built by John Lipscomb...in 1818” and removed to Madison County, FL, then Greenville, SC. [Unclear who he sold White Hall to.]	Watson, op. cit., p. 321.
In the 1870s	George R. Tolbert bought “the White Hall place, and his descendants still live there.” Tolbert or “Talbert” family members are listed back as far as the 1790 Census in Newbury County, and came from there to Greenwood County in the 1820s. [Chain of ownership within the Tolbert family not obtained.]	Watson, op. cit., pp. 395, 397.
Late 1800s or early 1900s	Large wooden tenant house, possibly with porch, rough wooden exterior boards, tin roof, and cardboard insulation, was built near the spring on the east side of the main road to Greenwood. This spring is now covered by a triangular shaped pond, which was built in about the 1960s. This tenant house was bulldozed in about 1999-2000. This site has large oaks around it. The Mills detail is not fine enough to definitively identify the exact location, however. It is apparently this tenant house site that is identified as the site of White Hall in the 1978 archaeological quick survey.	Telephone interview with Joseph Logan by Lew Toulmin, 5/27/11
1931	Lipscomb’s house (built in 1818) was destroyed by fire.  This is the house west of the main road to Greenwood, that was destroyed by fire down to its foundations, and lay unused until 1960 or 1961, when a brick structure was built on top of the old burned foundations.	Watson, op. cit., pp. 50, 288.  Telephone interview with Joseph Logan by Lew Toulmin, 5/27/11

1961	Modern brick home built on White Hall property. This home was built upon the burned foundations of the c. 1820 Lipscomb structure.	Watson, op. cit., p. 50.  Telephone interview with Joseph Logan by Lew Toulmin, 5/27/11
1999-2000	Tenant house bulldozed. This is the house built in the late 1800s or early 1900s east of the road. This is apparently the location of the 1978 archaeological quick survey.	Telephone interview with Joseph Logan by Lew Toulmin, 5/27/11

### Maps Showing White Hall

A plat map from 1752 was copied and registered on 17 October 1789. This copy shows a diamond shaped tract marked “A” of 250 acres belonging to Andrew Williamson. It also shows a large tract in the center, marked “B,” with 9350 acres, apparently jointly owned by Williamson, Henry Laurens, John Lewis Gervais and others. (Note that north is in the direction of the upper right corner on this map. Each grid square on the map appears to be 75 by 75 chains, or 4950 feet by 4950 feet.)

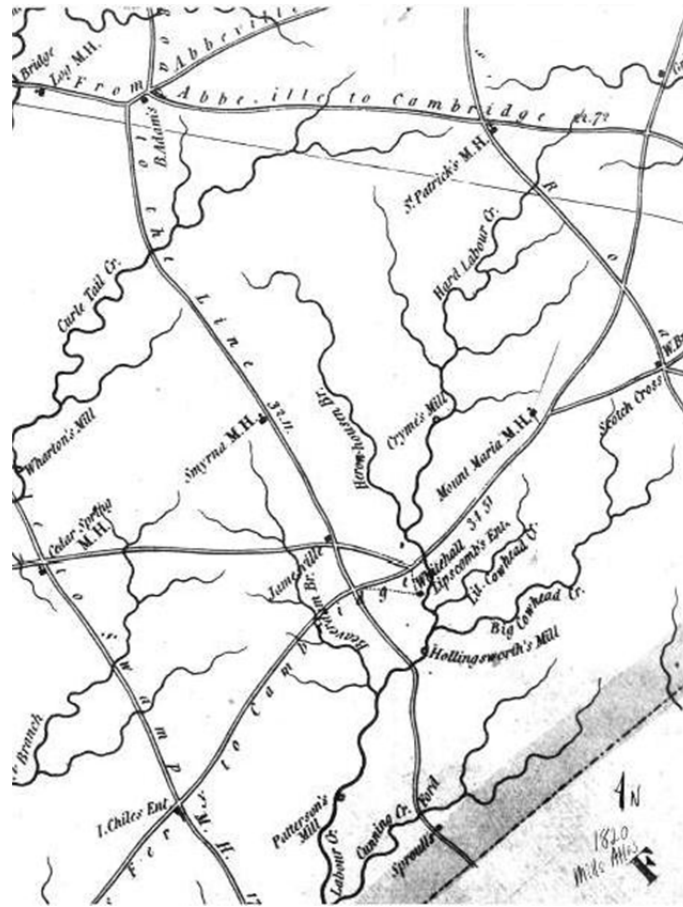
The key words in legend at the bottom are as follows (anything with a question mark in parentheses is reasonable guesswork):

The above plat, being a copy of a one made by Patrick Calhoun Esq. a ??? repre??? of 50,000 acres of land situate in Ninety Six district granted to William Livingston by ??? on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of June 1752 and now owned by James Parsons (?) and John Rutledge Esq. Within (?) this (?) tract are included one of 2900 acres granted to John Hamilton Esq. on the sixth day of and (?) now (?) owned by the said James Parsons and John Rutledge/ 250 acres distinguished in this plat by (?) the (?) letter (?) A (?) belonging to Andrew Williamson Esq., and 9350 acres distinguished by the letter B belonging to the said (?) Williamson (?), Henry Laurens, John Lewis Gervais Esq. and others. These 50,000 acres & 29,000 (?) acres (?) are (?) divided (?) between the said James Parsons and & John Rutledge Esq. by the letter (?) CD A ??? marked P contains about 25,288 and Mr. Rutledge’s marked R about 26612 acres (?)

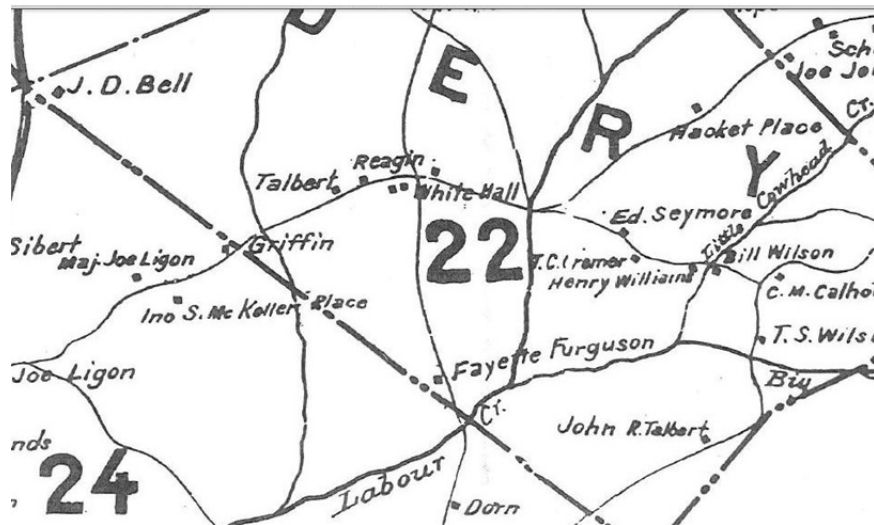
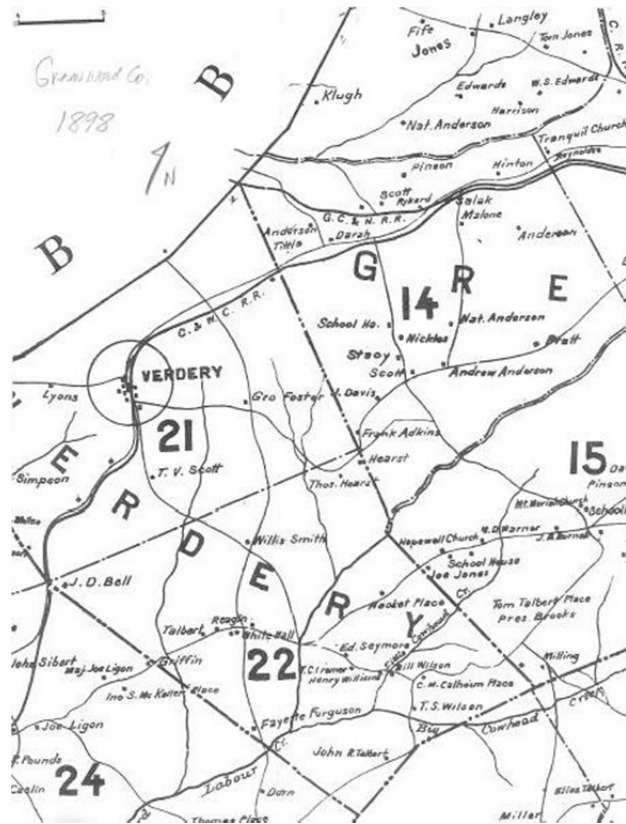
(Signed) Benj Lord (?)

The Williamson diamond of 250 acres marked “A” may have a symbol for a house just above the “A” and just west of Hard Labor Creek, which runs through the property. (The “A” diamond is just south of the large “B” diamond.) Or this symbol may just be a smudge or other mark. Below is a full version of the map and a close-up.





An 1898 map of Greenwood County shows two buildings labeled “White Hall” just east of the “Talbert” home. (See below for a full and a close-up view. “White Hall” is just above the large number “22” in the lower part of the map.) However, it seems likely that this is the community church and small settlement of Whitehall, which is east of Whitehall Road and apparently east of the likely site of the White Hall plantation.



### Possible Link to Liberia

White Hall has a possible and rather dramatic link to the west African country of Liberia. The white Tolbert (or Talbet) family had lived in the area since the 1820s, and had purchased White Hall in about the 1870s, or possibly earlier. (Recall that Dr. Marshall had sold the property in about 1860.) Thus White Hall may have been owned by the (white) Tolbert family during the Civil War, or at least the Tolberts were in the vicinity during the war. It seems possible that African and African-American slaves on the plantation or in the area, upon emancipation, took the last name of Tolbert (especially

since these white Tolberts were reportedly generous to the slaves and were some of the few Republicans in this part of the state, when the area was dominated by anti-emancipation Democrats<sup>118</sup>). The black Tolberts may have settled at and near White Hall<sup>119</sup> and Ninety Six.

From the Ninety Six area, a line of black Tolberts can be reliably traced down to the President of Liberia, William Tolbert, Jr. (1913-1980), who served as President from 1971 to 1980, when he was assassinated.

A partial family tree of the African-American-Liberian Tolbert family is as follows:<sup>120</sup>

- Daniel Frank Tolbert, born about 1849, died 1889, resident of Ninety-Six, South Carolina in 1868, emigrated to Liberia with wife Sarah and son William in April 1878 aboard the *Azor*. “Frank Talbert,” born in 1849, is shown in the 1870 US Census as a black farm laborer, resident of Ninety-Six, and father of Willie and husband of Sarah (father of William Tolbert, Sr., below)
- William Tolbert, Sr., ran coffee and cocoa farms in Liberia, led to founding of the conglomerate Mesurado Group, the largest firm in Liberia (father of William Tolbert, Jr., below)
- William Tolbert Jr., President of Liberia, ordained Baptist minister, assassinated 11 April 1980 in Monrovia, Liberia by the forces of Samuel Doe (father of William Tolbert III, Momo Tolbert and Maria Tolbert, below)
- William Tolbert III
- Momo Tolbert, assassinated 11 April 1980 at the age of 7
- Maria Tolbert, escaped from Liberia in 1980
- Frank Tolbert, president pro tem of the Liberian Senate, (brother of President Tolbert and father of Richard Tolbert below)
- Richard Tolbert, currently a private banker in New York City, former minister in Liberian cabinet, researched his family line back to Daniel Frank Tolbert.

Hence it appears that White Hall may have an unusual link to recent African history. Perhaps a genealogical line from Daniel Frank Tolbert to slaves on the White Hall plantation or in the area could be established. This may prove difficult, or the line may go elsewhere. In any case, this interesting possible link highlights the fact that any further archaeological or historical research on White Hall should not omit research on the extensive slave population of the plantation and vicinity.

---

<sup>118</sup> Interview with Joseph Logan by Llewellyn Toulmin, March 2011. Watson, op. cit., p. 396, notes that “four of the Tolbert sons volunteered for Confederate service, although they and their father opposed Secession. After the war, the four joined the Republican party, and for years they and their descendants were Republican leaders in South Carolina.”

<sup>119</sup> For example, in the 1870 US Census for White Hall township, Isaac “Talbert,” aged 32, a black blacksmith born in South Carolina, is shown with four small children. In the 1880 US Census of White Hall township, Bill Tolbert, a black farm hand, born in South Carolina in about 1845, with both parents born in that state, is shown with wife Sarah and young children Bill and Eliza (sic?). The earliest white Talbert or Tolbert family members found to date were “Daniel” and “Robert” “Talbert” in the 1790 Census in Newberry County; this family moved to Greenwood County in the 1820s, and purchased White Hall in the 1870s. (Watson, op. cit., pp. 395-7).

<sup>120</sup> Jim Morrill, “Promised Lands,” *American Legacy*, Fall 2004, pp. 21-26. Also email exchange and phone interview with Richard Tolbert by Llewellyn Toulmin, March-April 2011.

## **Archaeological Reconnaissance of 1978**

The White Hall area was briefly surveyed on 30 June 1978 by Michael J. Rodeffer of Lander College.<sup>121</sup> The site was situated on a ridge top, and the area was in pasture, over Cecil clay loam. The site elevation was stated as 485 feet above mean sea level, and the distance to the nearest permanent water was 80 meters.

Items found on the surface at the site included a large quartz hammer-stone, bifacial tools made of slate and quartz, chert and quartz flakes, white ware (some with blue glaze), bone, milk glass, clear glass, and a quartz side scraper. Most of the items appeared to be of pre-contact Indian manufacture, and the post-contact items were not from the Revolutionary or pre-Revolutionary period.

No excavations, shovel tests, metal detecting, mapping, photography or sketches or were undertaken, due to the quick survey nature of the examination. The site was assigned an SCIAA number, and was described as the “tentative identification of Whitehall, site of plantation residence of Andrew Williamson, based on correlation of plats and Mill’s Atlas of Abbeville District.”

## **Archaeological Survey of March 2011**

On 19 March 2011 an archaeological “walkover” survey of the 1978 survey site and the surrounding area was undertaken, led by archaeologists from the South Carolina Department of Transportation and the US Forest Service. Other participants included the author and his wife Susan Toulmin, and members of the family of the landowners. Fieldwork was undertaken using visual inspection and metal detection. Some objects were found, but these proved to be not from the Revolutionary or pre-Revolutionary period. No shovel testing was done.

## **Archaeological Expedition of 2011-12**

In December 2011 and May 2012 a team led by the State Archaeologist of South Carolina, and including an archaeologist from the US Forest Service, members of The Explorers Club, the author and his wife, and members of the family of the landowners, conducted archaeological fieldwork in the area. This expedition carried flag number 132 of The Explorers Club, which had previously been carried on an expedition to the Hindu Kush, to the *Warwick* 1619 wreck in Bermuda, and on three expeditions to the RMS *Titanic*, among other efforts. The expedition was also sanctioned by the Royal Geographical Society.

This effort involved six days in the field, and utilized visual surveys, metal detecting, magnetic gradiometer detection, analysis of LIDAR data, and the excavation of test pits, generally one by one meter, down to subsoil. Although various objects were found, a few of which might be of the right period, it became clear that the expected dense scatter of items which should remain from White Hall was not present. Hence the exact location of White Hall, its plantation, outbuildings, slave quarters, battlefield, POW camp and arms depot, is yet to be determined.

---

<sup>121</sup> Michael J. Rodeffer and Stephanie H. Holschlag, *Greenwood County: An Archaeological Reconnaissance* (Greenwood, SC: Lander College, 1979).



## **Conclusions**

Andrew Williamson was a crucial figure in South Carolina Revolutionary history, and his plantation was historic in terms of the Ninety Six District's pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary history. Yet both Williamson and his plantation have been largely neglected by historians and archaeologists. This paper has attempted to fill in some of these gaps. However, the location of White Hall is still not identified, and the related fort/prison/military headquarters has yet to be located. Additional archaeological work on this matter is warranted. Turning to his biography, it would not be surprising if other historical items related to Williamson, who was active in so many aspects of the Revolution in the south, come to light in the future, to supplement this first attempt to capture his fascinating and controversial life.

## **Biographical Note**

Llewellyn "Lew" Toulmin is the immediate past Governor-General of the Hereditary Order of the Descendants of the Loyalists and Patriots of the American Revolution and a member of many other lineage societies. He is the fifth great-grandson of Brigadier General Andrew Williamson. He holds a Ph.D. in public administration and economics from American University, has worked for the World Bank and US Agency for International Development in 30 foreign countries and has traveled to 138 countries, and is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and member of the Cosmos Club and The Explorers Club. Working with university archaeologists, he previously found the lost ghost town of Washington Court House in Washington County, Alabama. For more information, see [www.themosttraveled.com](http://www.themosttraveled.com).