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## The Wives of Jonathan Turner: Identification of Women in Pre-Twentieth-Century South Carolina

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By Rachal Mills Lennon, CGRS

*The most common cause of stalemates in Southern research is a tendency to conduct look ups rather than investigations. Pressed for time, researchers seek shortcuts. They typically search for the specific name of the key individual and limit themselves to indexed records. When that basic look up fails to yield an answer, many are tempted to give up—blaming meager results on “poor record keeping” or “record destruction.”*

Let there be no illusions: Southern genealogy is difficult—especially in remote areas and among “plain folk” who resisted paper trails as fiercely as they did meddling governments. Add to this problem a legion of burned courthouses, as well as legal and social restrictions on females, and one could easily despair of identifying wives before the twentieth century. In truth, evidence often does exist; it just comes in forms one does not expect and is found through research methods one hopes to avoid.

The case of Jonathan Turner of Greenville District in the so-called “dark corner” of upcountry South Carolina provides an example of this problem as well as an effective workaround.<sup>1</sup> Insularity and privacy were prized commodities in the upcountry. There, in Greenville District (now Greenville County),<sup>2</sup>

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1. Among the numerous legends attached to the name “dark corner” is that of a Greenville County tax assessor ejected at gunpoint by a resident who resented government intrusion into her life. See Irene LaBorde Neuffer, “Place Names in South Carolina: Tracing Names in the Upstate,” online <<http://www.sandlapper.org/neuf1.htm>>; previously published in *Sandlapper: The Magazine of South Carolina* 1 (January/February 1990): 23.

2. Prior to 1868 (except 1785–99), South Carolina’s county-level jurisdictions were called districts. The state’s 1868 constitution designated its districts (of which there were thirty at that time) as counties. See GeLee Corley Hendrix, “Research in South Carolina,” *NGS Quarterly* 75 (December 1987): 254. Consequently, mentions of the residences of this article’s subjects in 1800–67 will refer to districts, not counties. The records of the former districts now are found in counties; therefore, regardless of the time period, citations to county-level records will refer to counties. The enumerators of the 1800–60 U.S. censuses inconsistently referred to South Carolina’s county-level jurisdictions as counties and districts. Similarly, the National Archives catalog of census microfilm refers to South Carolina’s county-level jurisdictions as “Counties” in 1810, 1820, 1830, and 1850, as “Districts” in 1840 and 1860, and as “Counties and Districts” in 1800. See *1790–1890 Federal Population Censuses: Catalog of NARA Microfilm*, online <[http://www.archives.gov/publications/microfilm\\_catalogs/census\\_schedules/1790\\_1890\\_federal\\_population\\_census.html](http://www.archives.gov/publications/microfilm_catalogs/census_schedules/1790_1890_federal_population_census.html)>. For consistency and accuracy, *Dist.* will be used in all of this article’s citations to 1800–60 U.S. censuses of South Carolina.

Jonathan Turner and his “known wife” (who turned into three of them) provide an instructive case study in identifying women of obscure families living in regions notoriously short on records.

#### BACKGROUND

Using conventional methods, prior researchers had agreed on a basic set of facts for Jonathan Turner, who was born in South Carolina about 1792–93.<sup>3</sup> Typically for the time and place, those facts came almost exclusively from censuses and an occasional published source. South Carolina did not require the recording of marriages until after 1900. Turner filed only two legal documents in the Greenville courthouse, and he apparently did not serve in either major war of his lifetime (the War of 1812 or the Mexican War). Moreover, his census coverage was incomplete; prior research accounted for him only on the 1840 and 1850 enumerations, although his widow had been tracked through 1880. In brief, the details known before the project began were as shown below.

**Jonathan Turner**, born in South Carolina about 1792–93; died sometime before December 1859 (when his probate file was opened in Greenville District),<sup>4</sup> probably at his farm in northern Greenville, near Tyger Baptist Church,<sup>5</sup> which he had joined in 1848.<sup>6</sup> His only known wife, Preshey Ann (née [—?—]), was born about 1814–16 and died after the 1880 census was taken.<sup>7</sup> Jonathan’s known children, presumed to be born in South Carolina, were the following:

- i. NANCY CAROLINE TURNER, born 1824–30,<sup>8</sup> married Hiram J. Mullinax before 1840,<sup>9</sup> and lived “out of state” in 1859.<sup>10</sup>

3. Johnathan [sic] Turner household, 1850 U.S. census, Greenville Dist., S.C., population schedule, stamped p. 470, dwelling and family 2224; National Archives (NA) microfilm publication M432, roll 853.

4. Jonathan Turner estate file, Greenville Co. intestate estates, apartment 18, package 63, Office of the Probate Judge, Greenville, S.C.

5. South Carolina Plat Book 56: 375, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia. South Carolina’s state plat books document grants and sales of state-owned land. See State Plat Books (Columbia Series), 1796–1868, online <[http://www.archivesindex.sc.gov/search/AuthorityTerms/s\\_descriptions/s213192.asp](http://www.archivesindex.sc.gov/search/AuthorityTerms/s_descriptions/s213192.asp)>.

6. Bill Storey and Anne K. McCuen, *Genealogical Abstracts from Greenville County, SC: The Earliest Minute Books of Ten Baptist Churches, 1794–1850* (Greenville, S.C.: privately printed, 1992), 280. Because these abstracts are complete and detailed and their evidence is tangential to the research problem, the originals were not consulted.

7. 1850 U.S. census, Greenville Dist., S.C., pop. sch., stamped p. 470, dwell./fam. 2224. Also, Prisha Turner household, 1860 U.S. census, Greenville Dist., S.C., pop. sch., Merrittsville Division, Merrittsville post office, p. 442, dwell. 493, fam. 431; NA microfilm M653, roll 1220. Also, Presha Turner household, 1870 U.S. census, Greenville Co., S.C., pop. sch., Saluda Twp., Lima post office, p. 737, dwell./fam. 158; NA microfilm M593, roll 1498. Also, Pressica Turner household, 1880 U.S. census, Greenville Co., S.C., pop. sch., Saluda Twp., ED 94, sheet 39, dwell. 363, fam. 378; NA microfilm T9, roll 1231.

8. Hiram J. Mullinax household, 1850 U.S. census, Gordon Co., Ga., pop. sch., 12th Division, p. 27, dwell. 233, fam. 234; NA microfilm M432, roll 71. Also, Henry J. Mullencox household, 1860 U.S. census, Tuscaloosa Co., Ala., pop. sch., North River post office, p. 675, dwell. 661, fam. 629; NA microfilm M653, roll 25. Also, H. J. Mullinax household, 1870 U.S. census, Sanford Co., Ala., pop. sch., Precinct 2, Big Pond post office, p. 282, dwell./fam. 12; NA microfilm M593, roll 39.

9. Nancy Caroline’s marriage date is inferred from her apparent children’s ages in the 1850 census and the fact that a female of her age was not enumerated in her father’s household in 1840. For the latter, see 1840 U.S. census, Greenville Dist., S.C., p. 276 verso, line 2.

10. Jonathan Turner estate file, apartment 18, package 63, Greenville Co.

- ii. JOHN TURNER, born 1824–30,<sup>11</sup> lived “out of state” in 1859.<sup>12</sup>
- iii. ELENDR TURNER, born 1828–29,<sup>13</sup> married Neal Howard, and died before 1859. Her children were (a) Fanny Howard and (b) Julia Ann Howard.<sup>14</sup> Both were born apparently between the 1850 census, when Elender was enumerated in her parental household with no apparent children, and the 1859 probate of Jonathan Turner’s estate.
- iv. EMELINE TURNER, born about 1830–31,<sup>15</sup> married George Anders (or Andrews) about 1852.<sup>16</sup>
- v. JONATHAN RETURN TURNER, born about 1832–35, married Amanda (née [Raney?]) before 1857.<sup>17</sup>
- vi. FRANKLIN TURNER, born about 1837–38, married Sarah C. (née [—?—]) before 1870.<sup>18</sup>
- vii. SARAH ANN “SALLY” TURNER, born about 1840–41,<sup>19</sup> married Joseph Lammons before 1859.<sup>20</sup>
- viii. ELIZABETH “BETSEY” TURNER, born about 1842–45, unmarried and living with her mother in 1880.<sup>21</sup>
- ix. RHODES TURNER, born about 1842–45, married Caroline (née [Neely?]) before 1870.<sup>22</sup>
- x. SIMON TURNER, born about 1844–47, married Eliza (née [—?—]) before 1870.<sup>23</sup>
- xi. MARY ANN “POLLY” TURNER, born 1847–48.<sup>24</sup>

11. Jonathan Turner household, 1840 U.S. census, Greenville Dist., S.C., p. 276 verso, line 2; NA microfilm 704, roll 512.

12. Jonathan Turner estate file, apartment 18, package 63, Greenville Co.

13. 1850 U.S. census, Greenville Dist., S.C., pop. sch., stamped p. 470, dwell./fam. 2224.

14. Jonathan Turner estate file, apartment 18, package 63, Greenville Co.

15. 1850 U.S. census, Greenville Dist., S.C., pop. sch., stamped p. 470, dwell./fam. 2224.

16. Emeline’s marriage date is approximated from her apparent children’s ages in the 1860 census. See George Andrews household, 1860 U.S. census, Greenville Dist., S.C., pop. sch., Paris Mountain Division, Greenville Courthouse post office, p. 416 (stamped as p. 471), dwell. 1216, fam. 1095; NA microfilm M653, roll 1220.

17. The 1860 census identifies Jonathan’s wife as Amanda and his apparent oldest child as age three. See Jonathan Turner household, 1860 U.S. census, Greenville Dist., S.C., pop. sch., Merrittsville Division, Merrittsville post office, p. 348 (stamped as p. 437), dwell. 413, fam. 461; NA microfilm M653, roll 1220. No concrete documentation has been found for Amanda’s maiden name or birth family. The Raney possibility is suggested in a census analysis by the noted South Carolina genealogist the late GeLee Corley Hendrix, CG, FASG. See Hendrix to Turner, report 5, “Summary” (no page number), dated June 1994; copy in possession of the present author.

18. F. Turner household, 1870 U.S. census, Greenville Co., S.C., pop. sch., Saluda Twp., Lima post office, p. 573 (stamped as p. 740), dwell./fam. 189; NA microfilm M593, roll 1498.

19. 1850 U.S. census, Greenville Dist., S.C., pop. sch., stamped p. 470, dwell./fam. 2224.

20. Jonathan Turner estate file, apartment 18, package 63, Greenville Co.

21. 1850 U.S. census, Greenville Dist., S.C., pop. sch., stamped p. 470, dwell./fam. 2224; 1860 U.S. census, Greenville Dist., S.C., pop. sch., Merrittsville Division, p. 442, dwell. 493, fam. 431; and 1880 U.S. census, Greenville Co., S.C., pop. sch., Saluda Twp., ED 94, sheet 39, dwell. 363, fam. 378.

22. Mary Neely household, 1880 U.S. census, pop. sch., Greenville Co., S.C., Paris Mountain Twp., ED 97, sheet 18, dwell. 164, fam. 169; NA microfilm T9, roll 1231. The enumerator designated “Rodes” Turner as Mary’s son-in-law.

23. Simon Turner household, 1870 U.S. census, Greenville Co., S.C., pop. sch., Hayland Twp., Musk Creek post office, p. “21/436” (stamped p. 671 verso) dwell./fam. 21; NA microfilm M593, roll 1498. Also, Simon Turner household, 1880 U.S. census, Greenville Co., S.C., pop. sch., Highland Twp., ED 92, sheet 8, dwell. 69, fam. 72; NA microfilm M593, roll 1498.

24. 1850 U.S. census, Greenville Dist., S.C., pop. sch., stamped p. 470, dwell./fam. 2224; and 1860 U.S. census, Greenville Dist., S.C., pop. sch., Merrittsville Division, p. 442, dwell. 493, fam. 431.

xii. GREENBERRY TURNER, born 1850–52, unmarried and living with his mother in 1880.<sup>25</sup>

xiii. PRESHEY ANN TURNER, born 1851–52.<sup>26</sup>

Beyond the above facts, researchers had found little evidence of Jonathan's existence, even though they explored many theories and extended the search into North Carolina and Virginia.

Once this project began, research partially revealed Jonathan's Greenville picture. His entry on the 1850 census agricultural schedule indicates a farming enterprise barely sufficient to support so large a family. It credits him with 250 acres, but only 50 were cleared for cultivation. Primarily, he grew "Indian corn" and sweet potatoes, both in small quantities.<sup>27</sup> Indexed courthouse records document no land acquisition by Jonathan, but state-level plat books reveal an 1854 state grant to him for 331 acres on Neal's Creek near the head of Tyger River.<sup>28</sup> A subsequent page-by-page reading of Greenville's courthouse records uncovered mentions of him in the 1840s and 1850s as an adjoining landowner to Charles Southerland, William Robinson, Robert Pitman, and others.<sup>29</sup> It also revealed his endorsement, together with Jeremiah Trammell, of a promissory note for Moses G. Goodlett shortly before Jonathan's death.<sup>30</sup>

#### THE PROBLEM

All of this research failed to answer two critical questions: *From where did Jonathan Turner hail?* and *Whom did he marry?* Moreover, one prior researcher pointed to another likely problem: if the 1850–80 age data indicating that Jonathan's wife was born in 1814–16 is correct, then Preshey might not have been the mother of the older children.<sup>31</sup> While marriage in the early teens was not rare among antebellum Southern girls, bearing two children before age fifteen would have been highly uncommon unless the two were twins.

Answering those two crucial questions requires a task many researchers fail to undertake: investigating the widow to find out if *she* can supply additional information about her husband. After the death of the male head of family and the settlement of his estate, if a propertyless widow "disappears" from the census or if evidence suggests she was not the mother of the child on whom a researcher is

25. 1860 U.S. census, Greenville Dist., S.C., pop. sch., Merrittsville Division, p. 442, dwell. 493, fam. 431; 1870 U.S. census, Greenville Co., S.C., pop. sch., Saluda Twp., p. 737, dwell./fam. 158; and 1880 U.S. census, Greenville Co., S.C., pop. sch., Saluda Twp., ED 94, sheet 39, dwell. 363, fam. 378.

26. 1860 U.S. census, Greenville Dist., S.C., pop. sch., Merrittsville Division, p. 442, dwell. 493, fam. 431; and 1870 U.S. census, Greenville Co., S.C., pop. sch., Saluda Twp., p. 737, dwell./fam. 158.

27. Jonathan Turner entry, 1850 U.S. census, Greenville Dist., S.C., agricultural sch., pp. 735–36, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia.

28. South Carolina Plat Book 56: 375.

29. Amy "Southerlin" grant, South Carolina Plat Book 56: 411. Also, James McKinney to Fleming H. Fuller, 19 March 1855, Greenville Co. Deeds Y: 299–300, Register of Mesne Conveyance, Greenville, S.C.

30. Mortgage of M. G. Goodlett to Jonathan Turner Sr. and Jeremiah Trammell, 25 Mar 1856, Greenville Co. Deeds X: 584–5, Register of Mesne Conveyance, Greenville, S.C.

31. GeLee Corley Hendrix was the researcher who spotted this problem.

working, the genealogist may be tempted to drop that widow from the research plan. In this case, Preshey's records demonstrate why an ancestor's "widow and relict" should be followed to her deathbed.

#### JONATHAN TURNER'S LAST WIFE: PRESHEY ANN RHODES

One tradition among Jonathan's descendants relates indirectly to his wife—a story previously assumed to involve Preshey. Supposedly Jonathan went off to war and returned home safely—and nine months later his wife bore the son they gratefully named Jonathan *Return*. Jonathan was indeed of prime age to see service in the War of 1812 (at which time, perhaps coincidentally, a key military figure of the Southeastern frontier was Colonel *Return Jonathan* Meigs).<sup>32</sup> However, no evidence could be found of Turner's participation in that war—or in the Mexican War, for which his age suggests little likelihood of service. Nor was evidence found of his having applied for the land bounties or pensions given to veterans of those wars.

Typically forgotten among those "big wars," however, are the various Indian disturbances that plagued the nineteenth-century frontier. Conflicts and skirmishes with and among the Cherokee, Creek, and Seminole in particular had significant cultural and political impact, drawing in thousands of volunteer militiamen from the middle and deep South. Jonathan was one of those volunteers, a fact that eluded discovery until the spotlight shifted to his much younger widow, Preshey Ann.

In 1894, fourteen years after her last census appearance, the seventy-seven-year-old Preshey applied for a widow's pension, identifying her late husband, Jonathan, as a veteran of the "Florida War." This catchall label is one the government has used for a series of uprisings that occurred in the periods 1817–18, 1835–42, and 1855–58.<sup>33</sup> Jonathan's service was in 1836, and Preshey would spend two years filing documents to support her claim. In the process of verifying that she was the soldier's only living spouse, she filed an affidavit dated 27 February 1896, which partially identified her husband's previous wife, the one who bore Jonathan *Return*:

Preshey Turner aged 78, resident of Glassey Township [South Carolina] declares that the soldier's previous wife was dead before her marriage to him, that she was present

32. Col. Return Jonathan Meigs (1740–1823) served as a U.S. agent to the Cherokee from 1801 until his death. See "Return Jonathan Meigs," *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, online <<http://160.36.208.47/FMPro?-db=tnencyc&-format=t detail.htm&-lay=web&-entryid=M067&-find=>>>.

33. Pension files for these wars are part of the National Archives series called "Indian Wars Pension Files, 1892–1926." The dates refer to the period in which the applications were filed, not the dates of the campaigns in which the veteran served. Confusion over these dates may have been the reason why Preshey's file was not found previously. Several indexes to these files exist. See Virgil D. White, *Index to Indian Wars Pension Files, 1892–1926*, 2 vols. (Waynesboro, Tenn.: National Historical Pub. Co., 1987); Virgil D. White, *Index to Volunteer Soldiers in Indian Wars and Disturbances, 1815–1858*, 2 vols. (Waynesboro, Tenn.: National Historical Pub. Co., 1987); and NA microfilm publication T318 (twelve rolls). For the latter, see Anne Bruner Eales and Robert M. Kvasnicka, eds., *Genealogical Research in the National Archives of the United States* (Washington: National Archives and Records Administration, 2000), 136, 174.

when she died, and that *the previous wife was her own sister* [emphasis added]. She [Preshey] married the soldier on 10 June 1837 before Zedoc Westmoreland, Esq., who afterwards moved to the West and died.<sup>34</sup>

Because the witnesses to the wedding were dead and the state had no license law, Preshey pointed out that she had no way of proving her marriage except for a Bible record that read: “Jonathan Turner was married to Preshey Rhodes the 10th day of June 1837.”<sup>35</sup>

#### JONATHAN TURNER'S PREVIOUS WIFE: FANNY RHODES

When a bride's surname is known but her parents are not, researchers often glean clues to her birth family by identifying neighbors with the same surname, particularly on the first census taken after her marriage. Unfortunately the 1840 enumerator of Greenville County grouped the names alphabetically—thereby destroying all clues to proximity among households. The 1850 return is equally uninformative. While that year's census taker seems to have preserved the original order of visitation, no Rhodes (under any spelling variant) appears in the neighborhood of Jonathan and Preshey Turner. Subsequent returns through 1880 place various Rhodes families somewhat near Preshey and her married children, but no Rhodes neighbor was of appropriate age to be her parent and no household detail otherwise suggests a relationship.

The fall-back strategy in such cases is a general search of the county's civil records for all individuals with the bridal surname—beginning with probate files. Researchers typically expect a wife's parents to have given names that she passed on to her offspring, but the county yielded no relevant probate files for any male or female Rhodes who bore a given name carried by the Turner children. Looking at all Rhodes files, however, proved productive. One Christopher Rhodes died in Greenville District in November 1860 in possession of 150 acres in Greenville on the branches of the Tyger River adjoining William Tilley, Benjamin Holley, and W. Trammell. On 4 March 1861, Christopher's widow Sarah, saying that “Said land cannot be rented and is going to waste,” petitioned the court for permission to sell it to obtain her legal share of the estate. Her petition named Christopher's heirs, including both daughters who married Jonathan Turner, as well as the three children borne by the older daughter who was Jonathan's earlier wife.<sup>36</sup> The heirs at law of Christopher Rhodes were identified as follows:

1. [illegible] Huckaby and Martin Huckaby [of] Laurens County

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34. Jonathan Turner pension application file, widow's certificate WC4562; Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Widows and Other Dependents of Veterans of Indian Wars (“Indian Wars Widows' Certificates”); Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Record Group 15; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

35. Ibid.

36. Christopher Rhodes estate file, Greenville Co. probates, apartment 20, package 8, Office of the Probate Judge, Greenville, S.C.

2. Heirs of Fanny Turner, deceased—  
Jonathan Turner, Greenville  
Ellender Howard and [husband] Neal Howard, deceased, and her two minors in N.C.  
Emaline Anders and [husband] George Anders, Greenville
3. Polly Turner and [husband] Simon Turner, Greenville
4. Benjamin Rhodes, Anderson
5. Preshey Turner, Greenville
6. Elizabeth Turner and [husband] William Turner, Greenville
7. John Rhodes, Greenville
8. William Rhodes, Greenville
9. Nathaniel Rhodes, Greenville
10. Sarah Pitman and [husband] Robert Pitman, Greenville
11. Pinkney Rhodes, Greenville<sup>37</sup>

Greenville County offers no other known record of Fanny's existence. As with Preshey Ann, her marriage to Jonathan went unrecorded under South Carolina law. As a wife who could not own property in her own name, she left no estate record. As "plain folk" in the county, her death went unheralded by any newspaper obituary. Presumably her family placed a marker—one that has not withstood the ravages of time. If any Greenville County residents ever mentioned her in their private papers, those papers still elude Turner researchers. In short, the existence of this earlier wife of Jonathan Turner Sr.—and the identity of the mother of his children, Ellender, Emeline, and Jonathan Return Turner—would have gone unknown had it not been for the pension file created by the children's stepmother, more than three decades after his death.

Still, Fanny's identification creates another problem. Her father's estate file names only three of the five children fathered by Jonathan before his marriage to Preshey. If the older Nancy Caroline and John were Fanny's children, they also should appear as Christopher Rhodes's heirs. Only one conclusion can be drawn from their omission: *Jonathan had yet another wife*. Again, Preshey's application provided a beginning point for that search by naming the county of Jonathan's enlistment, thereby laying groundwork for discovering the first of his three wives.

#### JONATHAN TURNER'S FIRST WIFE: LUCINDA POOR

Preshey Turner's widow's pension application identified Jonathan as a private in Captain John Pickens's company of South Carolina militia in 1836. This unit was formed in Anderson District,<sup>38</sup> which was adjacent to Greenville District, where Jonathan's estate was later probated. Anderson District had been created in 1826 when the state divided the old Pendleton District into the new districts

37. Ibid.

38. Jonathan Turner pension application file, widow's certificate WC4562, National Archives. For a roll of Capt. Pickens's Company, see *Anderson County SCGenWeb Project: Seminole Wars*, online <<http://www.rootsweb.com/~scander2/military/seminole.html>>; originally published in "Fifty Years Ago," *Anderson Intelligencer*, Anderson, S.C., 4 February 1886.

of Pickens and Anderson.<sup>39</sup> One Jonathan Turner, in fact, had been found on the 1830 census of Anderson by earlier researchers, who concluded that his household data were incompatible with known facts about the Greenville District Jonathan.<sup>40</sup> Preshey's pension application, placing Jonathan in Anderson in 1836, made it imperative that exhaustive research be done in Pendleton, Anderson, and Pickens districts.

The basic search of these jurisdictions for all legal records indexed under the name *Jonathan Turner* yielded eight documents. One of those linked him to the Greenville husband of Fanny Rhodes; two others implied a connection:

- 1829 Jonathan purchased land on Toney's Creek in Anderson, a waterway of Big Creek of Saluda River, near the Greenville border.<sup>41</sup>
- 1830 Jonathan purchased another tract on Toney's Creek.<sup>42</sup>
- 1831 Jonathan and wife Fanny sold both tracts on Toney's Creek.<sup>43</sup>
- 1835 Jonathan was assessed on the district tax list.<sup>44</sup>
- [1836 Jonathan was absent from the tax list from February to June, presumably while serving in the Second Seminole War in Florida.]<sup>45</sup>
- 1836 Jonathan purchased land on Watermelon Creek.<sup>46</sup>
- 1836 Jonathan was assessed on the district tax list.<sup>47</sup>
- 1837–39 Jonathan continued to be assessed district taxes.<sup>48</sup>
- 1839 Jonathan sold his Watermelon Creek land. (No wife was named in the deed and no dower release was recorded.)<sup>49</sup>
- [1840 Jonathan made his first appearance in Greenville District among that summer's census enumerations.]<sup>50</sup>

A subsequent, more exhaustive search, page by page, of all records of this period in Anderson, Pendleton, and Pickens counties also yielded two other instances (both in 1833) in which Jonathan was named as an adjacent landowner

39. South Carolina Department of Archives and History, "Maps Tracing the Formation of Counties in South Carolina," online <<http://www.state.sc.us/scdah/guide/countymap2.htm>>.

40. Jonathan Turner household, 1830 U.S. census, Anderson Dist., S.C., p. 146, line 18; NA microfilm M19, roll 173. Jonathan's household consisted of one male age 5–10, two males age 20–30, and one female age 20–30. The incompatibility comes from (1) a conflict between the 1800–10 birth year of the household head in 1830 and Jonathan's 1792–93 birth implied by the 1850 Greenville District census and (2) the apparent absence in the 1830 household of Nancy Caroline, the eldest known daughter of Jonathan of Greenville District.

41. John Poor to Jonathan Turner, Anderson Co. Conveyances T: 400, Office of the Probate Judge, Anderson, S.C.

42. Henry Cobb to Jonathan Turner, Anderson Co. Conveyances T: 397.

43. *Ibid.*

44. Anderson Co. tax returns, 1835–1861, Treasurer's Office, Anderson, S.C. A single bound volume covers twenty-six years.

45. Jonathan Turner pension application file, widow's certificate WC4562, National Archives.

46. John Elliott to Jonathan Turner, Anderson Co. Conveyances V: 607.

47. Anderson Co. tax returns, 1835–1861.

48. *Ibid.*

49. Jonathan Turner to Howard Duckworth, Anderson Co. Conveyances W: 468.

50. 1840 U.S. census, Greenville Dist., S.C., p. 276 verso, line 2.

in deeds executed by one John Poor.<sup>51</sup> The fact that Jonathan seems to have sold all his Anderson District land by that time underscores the importance of continuing land research even when an individual is known to have no landholdings. None of these documents, however, directly identifies the woman who had borne Jonathan's first two children. Two scenarios seem possible: (1) Jonathan married in Anderson District, prior to Fanny, but did not leave an obvious record of that union; or (2) he lived and wed in yet another place prior to his settlement in Anderson or Pendleton District.

The first possibility introduces another genealogical axiom followed by successful researchers: *study neighbors and associates as if they were also family members, because they often are!* In fact, no search of Anderson or Pendleton County records would have been complete without that level of investigation. The Anderson documents outlined above generated a list of thirty-nine individuals who bought from Jonathan, sold to Jonathan, witnessed his transactions, or appear enumerated in immediate proximity to him on the 1830 census. The laborious process of consulting every record—many hundreds of them—that these individuals created proved well worth the effort.

One of Jonathan's associates and neighbors, John Poor Sr., died in Anderson District in 1841. His lengthy probate file included two records that were not indexed under the Turner name anywhere in the courthouse. The first of these was a petition by John Turner dated 28 March 1842, which made the following points:

- John Turner was the minor son of Jonathan and Lucinda Turner.
- John's mother died when he was an infant.
- In right of his deceased mother, who was a daughter of John Poor, John Turner was entitled to a share of John Poor's estate.
- Because John Turner was over age fourteen but was not legally old enough to take charge of and manage his share of the estate, he asked that his uncle William Poor be appointed his guardian.
- Witnesses to the petition were Hiram Mullinax and Jonathan Turner, both of whom signed it with Xs.<sup>52</sup>

The second relevant document in the John Poor probate file was the final settlement of Poor's estate. Dated 5 February 1846, it identified the following heirs:

- Lucinda Poor, widow
- William Avery and wife
- John Conoway and wife
- Wm. Poor, administrator
- George W. Poor

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51. John Poor Sr. to John Poor Jr., Anderson Co. Conveyances T: 399; and John Poor Sr. to Hugh Poor, Anderson Co. Conveyances T: 457.

52. John Poor estate, Anderson Co. Probate File no. 5448, Probate Court, Anderson, S.C.

- Stephen Poor
- Hiram Mullinax and wife
- Hiram R. Prewitt and wife
- Wm. Poor, guardian of John Turner
- Wm. Shearman and wife
- John Poor
- David R. Whitt and wife
- Ezekial Vincent and wife
- Saml. Poor Jr. and wife
- John Poor, guardian of minors of Hugh Poor<sup>53</sup>

The name *Hiram Mullinax* does not surprise, because Jonathan Turner's Greenville County probate file had already identified Mullinax as the husband of Jonathan's eldest daughter, Nancy Caroline. The Poor estate records leave little doubt that both of Jonathan's eldest children, Nancy Caroline and John, were born of Lucinda Poor and that she was Jonathan's first wife. As with Fanny Rhodes, probate records of Lucinda's father provide the only means of documenting her existence and her marriage to Turner. As with Fanny, too, *those probate records were found only through a broad-ranging search of potentially related names*—not through a basic “look up” for the one known ancestor, Jonathan Turner.

Although South Carolina law required no marriage record for the couple and no birth records for their children, one can indirectly date marriages from details provided on other issues. In this case, another document in the Poor file points to the time when John Turner, the son of Jonathan Turner and Lucinda (née Poor) Turner, reached the age of majority. The final accounting of William Poor, John Turner's guardian, includes the following, dated 12 February 1848:

P[ai]d. John Turner, my ward, he coming of age     [\$]29.27<sup>54</sup>

This final settlement marks the date the uncle relinquished guardianship and settled the estate. Because John had come of age shortly before that accounting, one may date his birth on or shortly before February 1827, significantly narrowing the 1824–30 birth-date bracket known from census enumerations. A typical two-year lapse between births suggests that John's older sister was born no later than early 1825, which places the parental marriage probably no later than early 1824.

## CONCLUSION

The most common cause of stalemates in Southern research is a tendency to conduct *look ups* rather than *investigations*. Pressed for time, researchers seek shortcuts. They typically search for the specific name of the key individual and limit themselves to indexed records. When that basic *look up* fails to yield an answer, many are tempted to *give up*—blaming meager results on “poor record

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.

keeping” or “record destruction.” Jonathan Turner and his three wives suggest another cause for those stalemates. Indeed, Jonathan, Preshey, Fanny, and Lucinda demonstrate that records *do* exist to document marriages even in societies in which marriage records *per se* were not created. To find those records, however, researchers must broaden the scope of their research. They need to identify localized military conflicts as well as major wars, pursue widows even after they drop off the censuses and, above all, treat neighbors and associates as potential family members on whom full research should be conducted until they resolve all problems and identify all kin.