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## Southern Strategies Revisited: Expanding “Reasonably Exhaustive Research” to Find Solomon Harper’s Roots in the Carolina Backcountry

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By Rachal Mills Lennon, CG, FASG

*“Reasonably exhaustive research” goes beyond a “reasonably exhaustive search” to include document analysis and context—historical, legal, and geographic.*

Common obstacles to southern genealogy can stymie the most dogged efforts at reasonably exhaustive research.<sup>1</sup> Solomon Harper, who died in the record-anemic South Carolina Lowcountry in 1801, demonstrates the point. For decades descendants and professionals had been reduced to scraping the name from random sources, then forcing the findings into patchwork identity and lineage arguments.

How can researchers solve difficult problems when known records yield no proof? Success hinges not solely upon *sources*, but upon *methods* and *strategies* to explore place, time, and activities. A 2019 article in this journal established a baseline for the Harper lineage. The study considered twenty-two Solomon Harper appearances in coastal South Carolina from 1769 to 1801, focusing on location and associates. It showed that all activities pertained to one man: Solomon Harper. An overseer of modest circumstances, he lived in indigo and rice swamplands with close ties to the region’s leading men.<sup>2</sup> This article demonstrates how the first criterion of the Genealogical

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© Rachal Mills Lennon, CG, FASG; 2780 Hwy. 31 E; Bethpage, TN 37022; lennonrm@comcast.net. Lennon, a Fellow of the American Society of Genealogists, holds a master’s degree in architectural history and the Certified Genealogist credential. As a specialist in complex identity and kinship problems on the Southern frontier, she is a long-time contributor to the *NGS Quarterly*, where three of her past contributions have earned its annual Award of Excellence. She thanks Dr. Robert Eugene Harper of Ruston, Louisiana—a descendant of Solomon’s son Edward—whose commitment to methodical research and thorough analysis of evidence has made many breakthroughs possible. Cited websites were accessed 11 February 2023.

1. Board for Certification of Genealogists, *Genealogy Standards*, 2d ed. (Nashville: Ancestry Imprint, Turner Publishing, 2019), 1–2.

2. Rachal Mills Lennon, “Southern Strategies: Merging Identities by Mapping Activities and Linking Participants—Solomon Harper of South Carolina’s Lowcountry,” *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* 107 (September 2019): 165–84.

Proof Standard, “reasonably exhaustive *research*,” goes beyond “a reasonably exhaustive *search*” to include document analysis and context—historical, legal, and geographic.

Descendants have promoted three candidates for Solomon Harper before his 1769 emergence in Lowcountry Colleton District:

- A man in Cobrin’s North Carolina militia company, time and locale unknown
- A man in Gooch’s American Regiment in 1741, locale unknown
- A man who had land surveyed in Craven County, Upcountry South Carolina, in 1764

As often is the case, the “same name” argument has prevailed in all three proposals. A lack of understanding about what each record represents exacerbates this fallback proposition. However, the documents where each candidate appears provide context for proper analysis.

#### SOLOMON HARPER OF COBRIN’S COMPANY

This candidate for the Colleton District Solomon appears on a published, undated North Carolina militia roll.<sup>3</sup> See figure 1.

#### *Dating the List*

The year 1748 is commonly applied to this list, probably because it is in a document collection about the “Spanish Alarm,” a European conflict that threatened the North Carolina coast during the 1740s. Other authorities date the list to 1750.<sup>4</sup> The 1748 and 1750 dates are disproved because several men listed were not yet in North Carolina.

- William Rachford (a.k.a. Ratchford) was in Chester County, Pennsylvania, in 1751. Two years later, his church there noted he had “moved to Carolina.”<sup>5</sup>
- Edward Hogan was last recorded in Augusta County, Virginia, in 1752 selling land; a 1753–54 tax delinquent list notes he had “gone away.”<sup>6</sup>

3. Walter Clark et al., eds., *The State Records of North Carolina*, 26 vols. (Winston, Goldsboro, and Raleigh: Various publishers, 1886–1907), 22:281–82.

4. The 1748 date is echoed in Robert W. Ramsey, “Captain Samuel Cobrin’s Company of Militia: The First Settlers of Gaston and Lincoln Counties,” *Journal of North Carolina Genealogy* 12 (Winter 1966): 1773–79, and 13 (Fall 1967): 1926–33. The original list at the State Archives of North Carolina has “1750” penciled on it. Murtie June Clark dates it to the “1750s” in *Colonial Soldiers of the South, 1732–1774* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1983), 652.

5. James McClune, *History of the Presbyterian Church in the Forks of Brandywine, Chester County, Pa. . . from A.D. 1735 to A.D. 1885* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1885), 238.

6. Augusta Co., Va., Deed Book 4:496, Hogan to McBride, 20 August 1752. Lyman Chalkley, *Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia, Extracted from the Original Court Records of Augusta County, 1745–1800*, vol. 2 (Rosslyn, Va.: The Commonwealth Company, 1912), 415, 1753–4, “Edward Hogain.”

Figure 1  
List of troops, Samuel Cobrin's company, North Carolina Militia

Samel Cobrin, Captain		
Thomas Betty, Lieutenant		
John Kuykendall, Insin.		
Hendry Tonston, Sergen.		
George Heger, Sergen.		
Abraham Kuykendall, Corperl.		
Adam Dick, Corpillr.		
Robert Leeper	Frederick Hambright	Young Men:
Robert Patrick	Hendry Richards	John Tuftis
William Hendry	Peterer Hoyl	John Armstrong
Andrew McNab	Peter Bumgardnor	William Armstrong
Phillip Rudisill, Corpil	Peter Oyster	John Doughart
James Kuykendall	Peter Club	John Kilen
Peter Kuykendall	Michel Rudeseele	John Richman
William Hagirty	William Heger	Jacob Hoyl
Andrew Hemton	<b>Solomon Harper</b>	Joseph Seler
John Moore	Hendry Sides	William Little
William Moore	Jacob Forney	Archibald Little
William Aldeare	Boston Bett	William Patrick
Thomas Stone	Lenard Kilen	John Patrick
John Langham	John Rorite	Michael Oyster
George Rutlege	John Camp	William Froneberry
William Gleghorn	William Rachford	Peter Bumgarnor
Samel Willson	Felty Taliner	Thomas Warwick
John Nelson	John Limerman	James Moore
Thomas Ranils	Cristin Limerman	Isaac Cobren
Richard Ranils	Watson Ferol, Juner	Adam Dick
David Stanley	Watson Ferol, Senior	Jacob Limermon
John Watkins	Joseph Green	Cristel Eaker
Charles McFeeters	Peter Eaker	Michel Setor
Edward Hogin	Adam Sides	John Dick
Robert Brank		Hendry Ramsour
Married men 48	Young men 30	Guns wanting 18

Source: Walter Clark et al., eds., *The State Records of North Carolina*, 26 vols. (Winston, Goldsboro, and Raleigh: Various publishers, 1886–1907), 22:281–82.

Other documents in the “Spanish Alarm” collection provide additional evidence that Cobrin’s list does not belong there. Two companion lists belong to different periods: “Roster of Militia from Martin County” of 1780, and “List of troops in John Shearrard’s company of the North Carolina Militia” of 1767.<sup>7</sup> Cobrin’s list was apparently misfiled and misdated. Nevertheless, the details of married men, single men, and “guns wanting,” examined in broader context, allowed for properly dating the list.

### *Developing the Context*

At the start of the French and Indian War in 1754, North Carolina officials were concerned about the militias of frontier Anson and Rowan Counties. Governor Arthur Dobbs reported to the Lords Proprietor that “there is not half of the Militia armed” and worried about exposure to Indian attacks.<sup>8</sup> In March 1754, Council President Matthew Rowan asked for a list of the region’s available men and their arms so he could appropriate money to buy arms and ammunition for the poorest of them.<sup>9</sup> In response to persistent problems, a subsequent act of 13 October 1755 required captains throughout the colony to “give in a List of the Names of all single Men” in their districts.<sup>10</sup> Cobrin’s militia list arose from that act, likely dating it to early 1756.

### *Establishing a Location*

No landowning Solomon Harper appears on the Carolina frontier during the 1750s. Might one of the other men on Cobrin’s muster roll help pinpoint Harper’s locale? Absent censuses and tax rolls, muster rolls define the militia district where the named men lived. When not alphabetical, they usually reflect the order in which men presented themselves for counting. Typically, militiamen from miles around arrived at the muster ground accompanied by family, friends, or close neighbors. Thus, the men nearest Solomon on the militia roll are subjects of interest. Landowners among them should establish Solomon’s locale.

7. Clark et al., *State Records of North Carolina*, 22:270 and 283–84. For the 1780 date for the Martin list, see “Roster of militia from Martin County,” *Documenting the American South* (<https://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.php/document/csr22-0052>). For the 1767 date for Sherrard’s company, see “Dobbs County Militia Rolls, 1767–1781,” *Old Dobbers* (<https://www.olddobbers.net/military/malita.htm>).

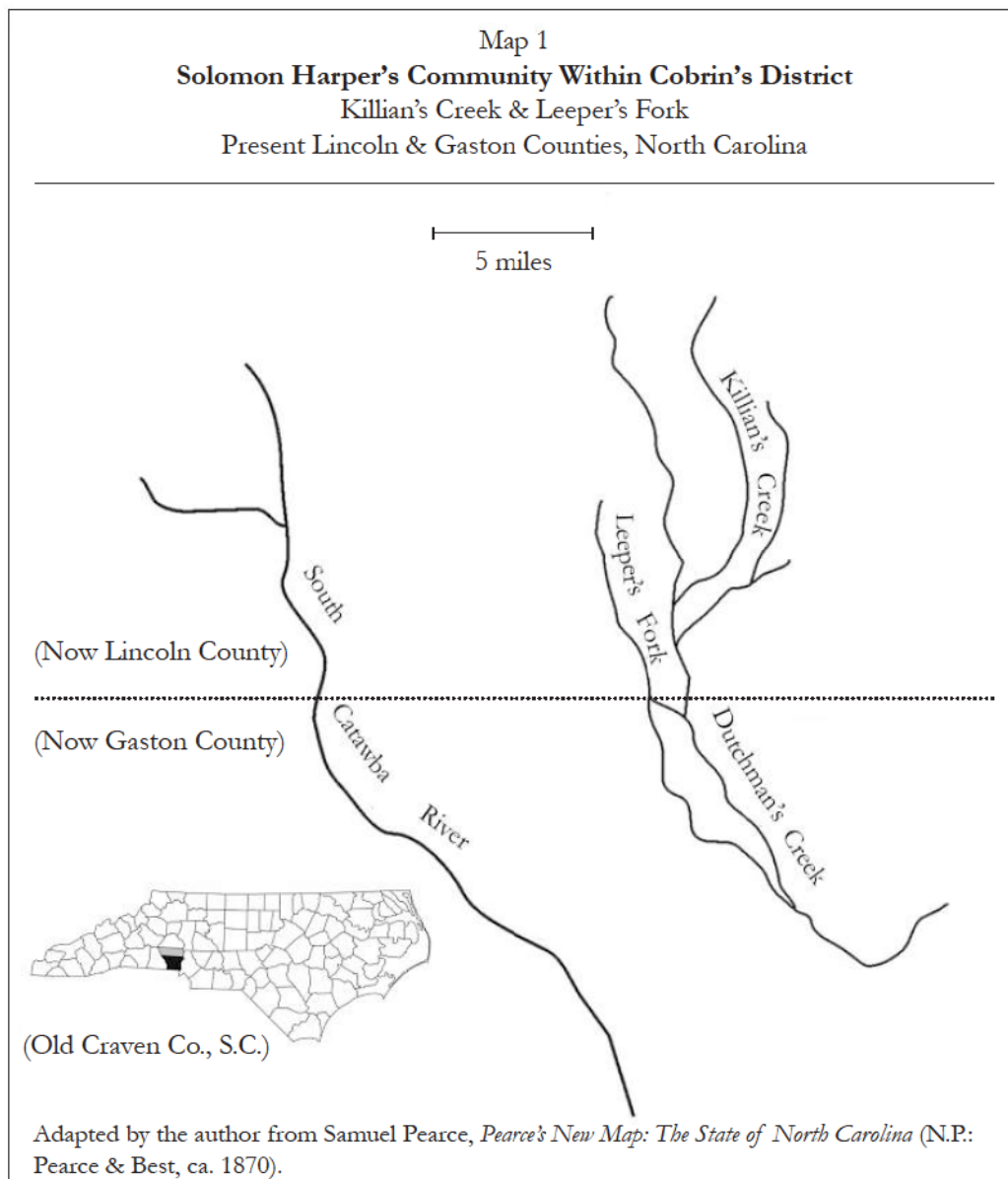
8. “Dobbs to Board of Trade, July 12, 1756,” in William L. Saunders, *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vol. 5, 1752–1759 (Raleigh: P. M. Hale, State Printer, 1887), 602–3.

9. Ibid., “Matthew Rowan to the Board of Trade, 19 March 1754,” 108–9. See also ibid., “Matthew Rowan to the Board of Trade of Great Britain, 22 October 1754,” 144c–d.

10. “Foreign Archives, British Records, Colonial Office, America and West Indies, North Carolina: Acts,” microfilm CO 5/333, 141b–143; State Archives of North Carolina (SANC), Raleigh. It is not among the acts in Saunders, *Colonial Records of North Carolina*.



Figure 2 identifies landholdings of married militiamen in what are now Lincoln and Gaston Counties, North Carolina, and York County, South Carolina.<sup>11</sup> Hypothetically, the men listed closest to Harper might point to his neighborhood: Club, Rudeseele, and Heger (Heager) of Leeper's Fork, as well as Sides, Forney, Bett, and Kilen (Killian) of Killian's Creek. Map 1 shows the community.



11. Unmarried men are less likely to have owned property. For the study that determines the landholdings of men surrounding Solomon on this list, see Rachal Mills Lennon to Dr. Robert Harper, Report No. 9, dated 1 August 2013; archived online at Lennon, *Finding Southern Ancestors* (<https://www.findingsouthernancestors.com>), under the "Work Samples" tab. In the 1750s, the boundary between North and South Carolina had not been established; Cobrin's District included a number of men settled in what is present South Carolina.

Figure 2  
**Landholdings of Cobrin's Militiamen**  
 Married Men

Robert Leeper ‡ *	Frederick Hambright *
Robert Patrick ‡	Hendry Richards *
William Hendry ‡	Peterer Hoyl *
Andrew McNab ‡	Peter Bumgardnor *
Phillip Rudisill	Peter Oyster
James Kuykendall ‡ †	Peter Club *
Peter Kuykendall ‡ †	Michael Rudeseele *
William Hagirty ‡	William Heger *
Andrew Hemton ‡ †	<b>Solomon Harper</b>
John Moore	Hendry Sides *
William Moore	Jacob Forney *
William Aldeare §	Boston Bett *
Thomas Stone	Lenard Kilen *
John Langham	John Rorite
George Rutlege †	John Camp
William Gleghorn §	William Rachford
Samel Willson	Felty Taliner
John Nelson	John Limerman §
Thomas Ranils §	Cristin Limerman §
Richard Ranils §	Watson [William] Ferol, Jr.
David Stanley §	Watson Ferol, Sr.
John Watkins †	Joseph Green §
Charles McFeeters †	Peter Eaker §
Edward Hogin	Adam Sides *
Robert Brank *	

*Key:*

- \* Killian's, Leeper's, and Hoyle's Creeks, eastern Lincoln Co.
- † Kuykendall's and Dutchman's Creeks, northeast Gaston Co. into southeastern Lincoln Co., and west into Mecklenburg Co. (includes Cobrin)
- ‡ Fork of South Fork and the Catawba River, up to Dughart's Creek, southern and central Gaston Co.
- § Beaverdam, Indian, and Long Creeks, western Lincoln Co.
- || Southern Gaston Co. and across border into York Dist., S.C.

For documentation of these landholdings, see Harper Report No. 9 available at Rachal Mills Lennon, *Finding Southern Ancestors* (<https://www.findingsouthernancestors.com>), under the "Work Samples" tab.

The established time and location provide a baseline for determining whether this Solomon was the later Colleton man. No other surviving records for the area of Cobrin's militia district produced a Solomon Harper at any time. Perhaps he lived there only long enough to be called out for duty in 1755 or 1756. Another document

uncovered while researching others on Corbin's list and abstracted below, disproves that possibility, however. The Solomon of the militia roll was not actually a Harper but a Hover.<sup>12</sup>

13 October 1756

Survey for Solomon Hover, 135 acres, including his own improvement, on W side of Catawba River and on W side of the N branch of Killians Creek in William Heager's line, then S 80 degrees E 162 poles to his corner black oak, then N 25 degrees W 140 poles to two hickories, N 75 degrees W 90 poles to a white oak, S 55 degrees W 10 poles to John Jeu hearts's [*sic*] corner white oak and two pines, then S 70 degrees W 128 poles to a black oak and then S 52 degrees E 120 poles to the beginning.<sup>13</sup>

The location of Solomon Hover's land on Killian's Creek joining William Heager's strongly suggests this is the militiaman Solomon, listed next to William "Heger" on the published muster list. His surname was mis-transcribed as "Harper." Moreover, Heager and John Killian were chain carriers on Solomon Hover's survey.<sup>14</sup> (Chain carriers usually were men living on or near the surveyed property.) Finally, many of the men surrounding Solomon on the muster roll had lands surveyed the same day as Hover, or were mentioned in surveys, including Henry Sides, John Killian, and Peter Bumgardner.<sup>15</sup>

The accumulated evidence shows no Solomon Harper served in Cobrin's militia company. He was not the Colleton District man.

#### SOLOMON HARPER OF COLTRAIN'S COMPANY

The second candidate also comes from a published military list extracted in figure 3. Unlike local militia musters such as Cobrin's, the Coltrain roll of Gooch's Regiment may not reflect a single community. Colonials in the Royal Navy could have come from anywhere in America. Coltrain's roll provides a time frame to help identify Solomon and place him in a home community. Its reference to "Carthagena Harb[or]" in 1741 is a starting point.

12. Subsequent to Harper Report No. 9, it has been determined that Solomon of the militia roll was not Hoover as stated in the report, but Hover.

13. Solomon Hover's grant, no. 1348; North Carolina Secretary of State, North Carolina Land Grants, 1693–1960, vol. 13:137; SANC; imaged on North Carolina Historical Images Online, *North Carolina Land Grant Images and Data* (N.C. Land Grants) (<https://www.nclandgrants.com>). All subsequently referenced North Carolina grants may be found at this site.

14. For the survey, see "North Carolina Land Grant Files, 1693–1960," *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/60621>) > Anson > 910–1778 > images 589–90, Solomon Hover survey.

15. Henry Sights's land grant no. 1344, vol. 13:136; Henry Sides's land grant no. 1854, vol. 15:196; Peter Baumgardner's land grant no. 1344, vol. 13:136–37; N.C. Land Grants.

Figure 3

**Gooch's American Regiment, 1739–1741**

His Majesty's Ship Norfolk Muster Book: A List of Soldiers belonging to the American Regiment borne by order of Sir Chaloner Ogle, dated 14 March 1740 through October 1741

[Captain Coltrain's Company]

NR	RANK	NAME	REMARKS
1	Ensign	Jenkins, Mart:n	D, 16 Jun 1742, Dunkirk
2	Corporal	Bolt, Hen:y	DD, 1 May 1741, Carthagen
3	Drummer	Gallaher, Neal	D, 22 May 1741
4	Soldier	Connelly, Matt:w	"
5	"	Duke, W:m	D, 6 Apr 1741
6	"	Jordan, Jn:o	"

[Captain Coltrain]

49	Serjeant	Pearcy, Petr:	D, 16 Jun 1741, Dunkirk
50	Soldier	Kennedy, Mich:l	DD, 6 May 1741, Carthagen Harb.
51	"	Crouson, Rob:t	D, 22 May 1741
52	"	<b>Harper, Solom:</b>	"
53	"	Moor, James	"
54	"	Watson, Tho:s	"
55	"	Jackson, Edw:d	D, 6 Apr 1741
56	Corporal	Foy, Tho:s	D, 22 May 1741
57	Soldier	Fitzpatrick, Ja:s	D, 6 Apr 1741
58	"	Marman, W:m	"
59	"	Norton, W:m	D, 16 Jun 1741, Dunkirk
60	"	McDonough, And:w	"
61	"	Matthews, Jn:o	D, 22 May 1741
62	"	Armstrong, Jn:o	DD, 25 Apr 1741, Carthagen Harb.
63	Drummer	Hall, Jn:o	D, 16 Jun 1741, Dunkirk
64	Soldier	Paul, Matt:w	D, 6 Apr 1741
65	"	Weaber, Cha:s	D, 16 Jun 1741, Dunkirk
66	"	McNeal, Geo:	"
67	Serjeant	Rice, Dav:d	D, 18 Jun 1741, Pr of Orange
68	"	Winslow, James	"
69	"	Coffin, Jn:o	D, 22 May 1741
70	Soldier	Taylor, Geo:	D, 6 Apr 1741
71	"	Kelley, W:m	DD, 11 May 1741, at sea
72	Drummer	Dunning, Jn:o	D, 22 May 1741
73	Soldier	Curtis, Jn:o	D, 6 Apr 1741

Key: "D" is discharged; "DD" is died.

Source: Murtie June Clark, *Colonial Soldiers of the South, 1732–1774* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1983), 180–81.



*Developing the Context*

In 1739, hostilities between Britain and Spain erupted in the War of Jenkins' Ear, a combined Royal-Colonial campaign against Spanish holdings in South America. More than three thousand men from across America (save New Hampshire, Georgia, and South Carolina) volunteered to supplement His Majesty's Navy, forming "Gooch's American Regiment." David Coltrain commanded one of four North Carolina companies that sailed from Wilmington in November 1740 for rendezvous in Jamaica. There, they languished three months, losing hundreds of men to disease and desertion, before sailing with the Royal fleet for Cartagena (in present-day Colombia) in mid-February 1741. After two disastrous months, the fleet limped back to Jamaica and Colonel Gooch returned home. Gooch's departure from Jamaica ensured that Solomon Harper would not be lost to history.<sup>16</sup>

The Royal Navy had lost some six thousand regulars by the time it left Cartagena for Jamaica. To replenish ranks, it pressured Gooch's colonial command for replacements, an effort he partially thwarted. After he left Jamaica, those demands turned to impressment. Colonials were kidnapped and put aboard Royal warships. One document lists men impressed from 14 March 1740 through October 1741. Solomon's name appears on that list. History, however, contradicts that bit of evidence. He would *not* have served throughout that period because the North Carolina companies did not leave for Jamaica until November 1740. He was discharged in May 1741. The only time he could have appeared on this list was between April 1741 (when the fleet arrived back in Jamaica) and May 22 (when he was discharged).<sup>17</sup>

This second document and its history reveal several clues for further research about Solomon. It shows that Solomon of Coltrain's company

1. likely lived in North Carolina;
2. enlisted between spring and early fall of 1740;
3. was in a company raised locally and specifically for the Cartagena campaign;
4. and returned home mid-to-late June 1742, at the earliest.<sup>18</sup>

16. For a comprehensive study of the expedition, see Lee G. Offen, *America's First Marines* (N.P.: CreateSpace, 2011). Also, Craig S. Chapman, *Disaster on the Spanish Main: The Tragic British-American Expedition to the West Indies during the War of Jenkins' Ear* (Lincoln, Neb.: Potomac Books, 2021). John Tate Lanning, "American Participation in the War of Jenkins' Ear," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 11 (September 1927): 191–215; and Albert Harkness Jr., "Americanism and Jenkins' Ear," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 37 (June 1950): 61–90, provide additional insight.

17. For a narrative timeline of events, see Offen, *America's First Marines*. See also Walter Clark, "A Recovered Chapter in American History," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (1896): 753–57.

18. This context is more fully developed in Lennon's Harper Report No. 10, posted under the "Work Samples" tab at *FindingSouthernAncestors.com*.

*Establishing a Location*

Details of time, place, and activity help place this Solomon within a particular community. The nature of Solomon's company adds context. Captain David Coltrain lived briefly in Chowan County, North Carolina, during the 1730s and 1740s. However, his established home base was an old Bertie–Edgecombe community that straddled the Roanoke River, radiating from the modern town of Halifax. Because another North Carolina captain, Robert Halton, lived in Chowan County, Coltrain probably would not have recruited there.<sup>19</sup>

Eliminating Chowan narrows Coltrain's likely recruitment area to his Bertie–Edgecombe sphere of influence. (See map 2.) In the 1730s, he had lived on Colonel James Millikin's plantation, between Halifax and Conconary Creek (a.k.a. Swamp), in the part of upper Edgecombe now in Halifax County. He was the executor of Millikin's estate before and after his Cartagena service.<sup>20</sup> Millikin was well-placed in society, partner in a mercantile firm headquartered in Cashy, a once-prosperous town on the Kashia River headwaters in Bertie.<sup>21</sup> Coltrain's only land, purchased in 1739, lay at Fishing Creek and Conway Creek (modern Little Fishing), Edgecombe.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, Coltrain's 1740 recruiting field likely extended from Fishing Creek on the west, eastward past Millikin's Halifax plantation, and across the Roanoke to the Cashie (Kashia) River headwaters in Bertie—including settlements southward in Edgecombe to the Tar River.

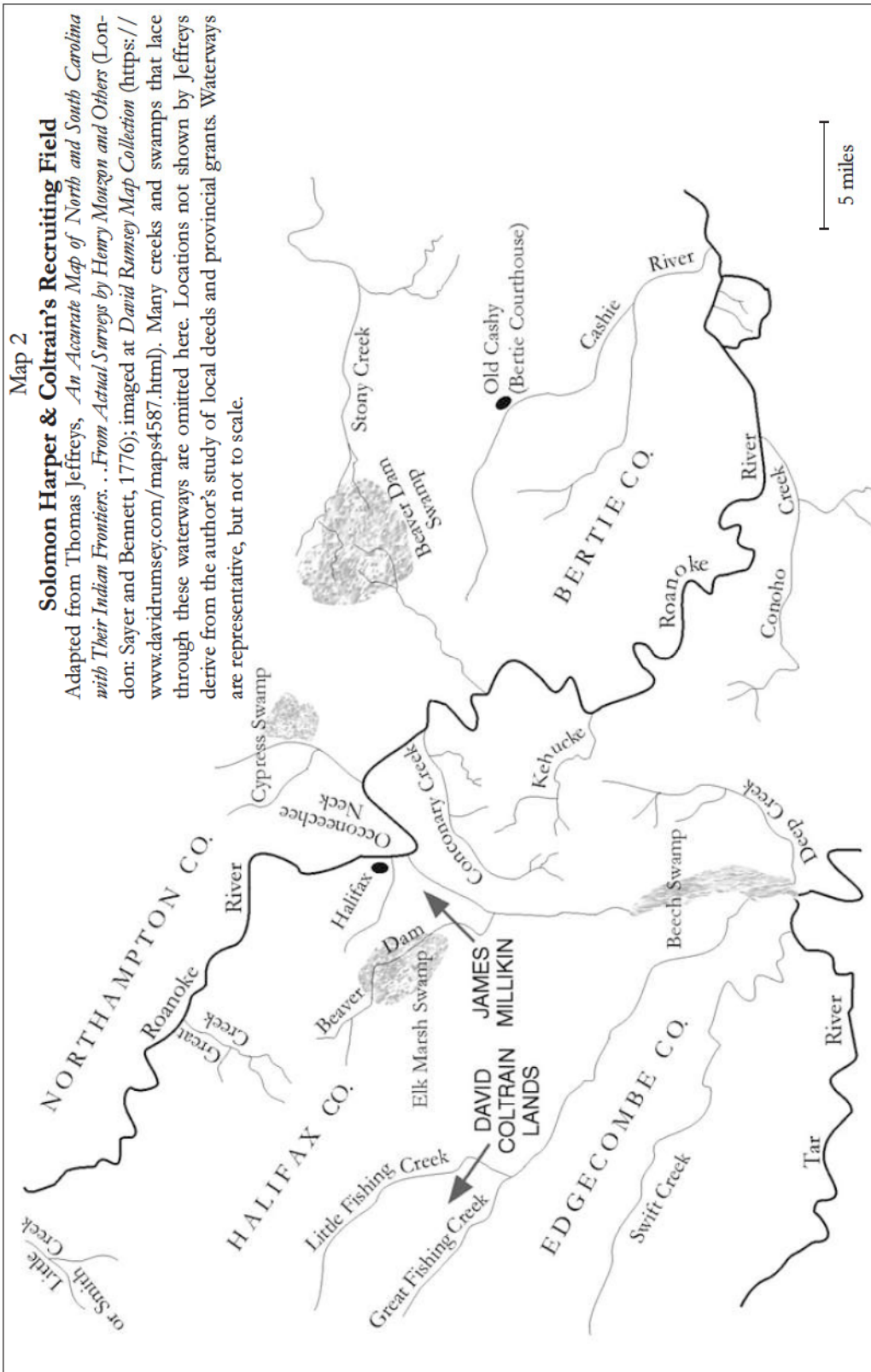
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19. For Halton, see Offen, *America's First Marines*, 8 and 62. Also, R. D. W. Conner, *History of North Carolina*, vol. 1 (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1919), 262. Alfred Jones, "The American Regiment in the Cartagena Expedition," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 30 (January 1922): 1–18, specifically 17–18. The other captain from the Albemarle Sound region was a Jonathan Pratt, whose residence has not been located. He makes but few appearances in the historical record. James Innes of New Hanover County commanded the Cape Fear company; see Claiborne T. Smith Jr., "Innes, James," *NCPedia* (<https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/innes-james>).

20. Numerous documents in James Millikin's estate file reference David Coltrain living on Millikin's plantation and confirm him to be an Edgecombe resident. For representative documents see "North Carolina, U. S., Wills and Probate Records, 1665–1998," *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/9061>) > Not Stated > Colonial Estate Papers, Linsay, Robert-Sanderson, Richard, 1699–1759 > images 454–525, James Millikin, specifically images 455, 472, 478, 505, and 514.

21. Henry Lewis Thompson, "The lost town of "Cashy," 1739–1770, Bertie County, North Carolina" (paper, presented to the Bertie County Historical Association, 18 October 1967), p. 17; *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/viewer/319870>).

22. Halifax Co., N.C., Deed Book, 1:273, Foster to Coltraine. The area is now part of Halifax, near its borders with Warren, Nash, and Franklin counties.





Records in this region reveal several candidates for same-name Coltrain soldiers:

- Thomas Watson owned land during the 1740s south of the Roanoke River on Conoho Creek, which runs through modern Halifax and Martin Counties. He appears on a 1750s-era militia list of Capt. Elisha Williams's company with men owning land on Kehukee and Deep Creeks, Jumping Run, and Cypress Swamp.<sup>23</sup>
- John Jordan owned land during the 1750s on Beaverdam Swamp, a branch of Stony Creek, on the north side of the Roanoke and north of the Cashie headwaters.<sup>24</sup> He possibly lived in the area before purchasing his own land.
- Edward Jackson bought land, shortly after the expedition, on Little and Great Creeks.<sup>25</sup> The former is now known as Smith Creek in western Warren County, just above the Fishing Creek headwaters.

These locations help define Coltrain's recruiting field. No evidence in the region shows a Solomon Harper there during the 1730s and 1740s. Considering the youth and modest financial characteristics of Coltrain's men as a whole, that is unsurprising. If Solomon was young, single, and landless, coming from an economically modest family, the odds of his appearing in local records are slim. A decade later, a Solomon Harper does appear in the recruiting region:

3 December 1754

Northampton County

John Webb to William Leake, both of Northampton, for £45 Virginia money: 150 acres on the north side of "Roanoake" River, on the lower side of Little Cypress Swamp and joining James Turner, part of 400 acres patent 1 December 1724 to William Baldwin. Witnesses: Anthony Moore, Solomon Harper, and Josiah Leake.<sup>26</sup>

Map 2 shows the lower side of Little Cypress was at Occoneechee Neck in Coltrain's recruiting region.

The rarity of documented Solomon Harper appearances in this part of North Carolina suggests the man of 1754 could be the 1740-41 sailor—or a slightly younger relative. However, only one other Harper appears in the recruiting region. In 1750,

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23. Thomas Watson's land grant no. 94, vol. 11:299; N.C. Land Grants, Halifax Co., N.C., Deed Book 3:477-78, Drake to Wiggins. For the militia list, see Clark, *Colonial Soldiers of the South, 1732-1774*, 674. For Capt. Elisha Williams at Kehukee Creek, on the south side of Roanoke River between the town of Halifax and Conoho Creek, see Halifax Co., N.C., Deed Book 5:159, Williams to Uvale, and Deed Book 3:129, Strickland to Wills.

24. Halifax Co., N.C., Deed Book 6:133-34, Pope to Jordan, and 6:242, Jordan to Davis.

25. Halifax Co., N.C., Deed Book 5:470, Laws to Jackson.

26. Northampton Co., N.C., Deed Book 2:200, Webb to Leake.



1752, and 1753 a landless George Harper was involved in transactions in the Occoneechee Neck.<sup>27</sup> George and Solomon were in the same community about the same time, and they shared a close relationship with John Maldessly. In 1752 and 1753 Maldessly was involved in George's activities.<sup>28</sup> Maldessly subsequently moved with Solomon into Granville County, North Carolina. In 1757, 1758, and 1759, the landless Solomon lived with, and likely worked for, Maldessly.<sup>29</sup> Solomon then disappeared from Granville records.

Old Edgecombe, Bertie, Halifax, and Northampton County records reveal no evidence of Solomon between 1742 and 1754. The 1750 emergence of George Harper still leaves an eight-year gap that genealogical and historical records have not filled. Several details suggest that the Northampton man and sailor was the Colleton man.

- The sailor was undoubtedly young and landless, allowing time to mature during the eight-year gap.
- He lived in the same type of swampy environment that Solomon occupied in Upcountry and Lowcountry South Carolina.
- The North Carolina Solomon associated with prosperous men, like Maldessly, although he himself was landless—typical of the Colleton Solomon.
- The North Carolina Solomon apparently worked for Maldessly, just as the Colleton Solomon worked for the Lowcountry planter James Stobo.
- Some Coltrain recruits, especially from Occonechee Neck, link directly to South Carolina, where the third candidate emerged just five years after Solomon disappeared from Granville.

#### SOLOMON HARPER OF CRAVEN COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

The remaining candidate for Solomon of Colleton surfaced on Thompson's Creek of Craven County in 1764. The land he had surveyed that year, however, was not patented until 2 November 1770, when Craven had been dissolved and the region assigned to the new Camden District. Six documents concerning this land, nutshellled below, are the only references to him there. They suggest a seven-year residence:

27. For George Harper witnessing land transactions in 1750 and 1752, see Northampton Co., N.C., Deed Book 1:452, Johnson to Chapman, and Deed Book 2:94–5, Carlile to Moore. For him witnessing the 1753 will of John Moore, see "Secretary of State Wills," *North Carolina Digital Collections* (<https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/collection/p16062coll41/id/8758/rec/2>).

28. Maldessly also witnessed the 1752 Carlile to Moore deed and Moore's 1753 will.

29. Timothy Wiley Rackley, *Granville County, North Carolina, Tax Lists* (Kernersville, N.C.: T. W. Rackley, 2003), 6, 80, and 95.

4 December 1764

Charleston

The Council read petition for warrants of surveys, including Solomon Harper, for 50 [*sic*] acres “on Thomsons Creek joining Thomas Richardsons and Edward Bryans lines.”<sup>30</sup>

4 December 1764

Craven County

Survey warrant issued for Solomon Harper, Craven County. Undated survey for 250 acres bounding on “Thomson” Creek joining Thomas Richardson and Edward Bryan.<sup>31</sup>

7 February 1770

Charleston

The Council read petitions for certification of plats, including Solomon Harper for 250 acres in Craven County.<sup>32</sup>

2 October 1770

Charleston

The Council read petitions for certification of plats, including Solomon Harper for 250 acres, Craven County.<sup>33</sup>

3 November 1770

Charleston

Grant issued to Solomon Harper for 250 acres in Craven County.<sup>34</sup>

4 January 1771

Charleston

A Memorial exhibited by Solomon Harper, to be registered in the Auditor’s Office of a tract of land containing 250 acres in Craven County; “Bounding Southwardly on said Creek, E’rdly on Thomas Richardson’s land, W’rdly on Edward Bryant’s and vacant land, and N’rdly on vacant land; survey certified the 2d of Oct<sup>r</sup> 1770 and granted the 3d day of Nov<sup>r</sup>

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30. Brent H. Holcomb, *Petitions for Land from the South Carolina Council Journals*, vol. 5, 1757–1765 (Columbia, S.C.: SCMAR, 1998), 203.

31. Solomon Harper’s plat, 12 December 1764; South Carolina Surveyor General’s Office, Colonial Plat Books (Copy Series), 1731–1785, vol. 11:451; series S213184, South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH), Columbia.

32. Holcomb, *Petitions for Land from the South Carolina Council Journals*, vol. 6, 1766–1770, 268. Although Craven had been abolished two years earlier, the council sitting at Charleston approved the grants under the county name used in the order of survey and settlement.

33. *Ibid.*, 305.

34. Solomon Harper’s land grant, 3 November 1770; South Carolina Secretary of State, Colonial Land Grants (Copy Series), vol. 21:271; series S213019, SCDAH.

1770 to the Memorialist; at the quit rent of 3/ster or 4/ Proc Money pr 100 acres, to commence two years from the date.”<sup>35</sup>

Although the 1770 grant gave the Craven County Solomon full possession of this land, no record of its disposal is known. No discovered document reports when he relinquished possession or where he was at the time. The land documents, therefore, do *not* prove he was in Craven (or Camden) through those seven years. People often moved away from a piece of land during the lengthy process of “perfecting the title.”

Given the time and money required to navigate the land process, relocation was common when settlers had not yet established roots in the community. Solomon’s absence in his neighbors’ subsequent land transactions strongly indicates he was no longer there. Might evidence of the origin, fate, and candidacy for the Colleton man emerge from seemingly unrelated local records, given the scant information about him in Craven / Camden? The Thompson’s Creek region is now in Chesterfield County. Records of the fifty-five identifiable landowners along Thompson’s Creek between 1740 and 1765 provide clues to track Solomon.<sup>36</sup> Evidence shows that Solomon of Craven hailed from Coltrain’s recruiting region, and that he had moved from Craven to Colleton.

#### *Context: Migration and Associations*

The pre-Revolution decades saw a migration out of the old Edgecombe region of North Carolina into upper South Carolina. In that wave were several families from Coltrain’s Oconeechee Neck region (see map 2) who settled at Thompson’s Creek:

#### *Paul*

In 1736, when Captain Coltrain lived on Millikin’s plantation, William Paul incurred a debt to Millikin.<sup>37</sup> Before William died in 1744, he gave his son Abraham land at Little Cypress Creek adjoining the same William Baldwin grant to which Solomon of Oconeechee was connected, and next to Rowland Williams, who witnessed Paul’s will and was closely associated with Millikin.<sup>38</sup>

35. Solomon Harper’s memorial, 4 January 1771; South Carolina Auditor General, Memorial Books (Copy Series), vol. 10:301; series S111011, SCDH.

36. Lennon, Harper Report No. 10, posted under the “Work Samples” tab at *FindingSouthernAncestors*.

37. “North Carolina, U. S., Wills and Probate Records, 1665–1998,” *Ancestry*, James Millikin estate, images 464–65.

38. In March 1742, William Paul was issued a grant for 550 acres joining Baldwin’s line, Rowland Williams’s land on the Mill Swamp, and Wheeler’s Mill Swamp; see William Paul’s land grant no. 488, vol. 4:189; N.C. Land Grants. When Abraham Paul sold it in 1744, it was said to be on Little Cypress Swamp and the Broad Branch; see Northampton Co., N.C., Deed Book 1:143–44, Paul to Hinchey. Also, “North Carolina, U. S., Wills and Probate Records, 1665–1998,” *Ancestry*, James Millikin estate, images 482–84.



Abraham Paul moved to Craven County in 1743 and obtained Thompson's Creek land joining William Boatright, another Occoneechee Neck migrant.<sup>39</sup>

### *Boatright*

During the 1740s, Thomas Boatright owned land along Elk Marsh Swamp (a.k.a. Elk Marsh) and witnessed transactions on nearby Little Quanque and Rocky Creeks—all across the Roanoke River from Occoneechee Neck.<sup>40</sup> James Millikin, on whose plantation David Coltrain lived, owned land on the same swamp and creeks.<sup>41</sup>

Thomas sold his land in 1749 and resurfaced the next year at Thompson's Creek in Craven County, witnessing the will of his neighbor Abraham Paul.<sup>42</sup> Thomas's son William preceded him there, apparently moving with the Pauls and another migrant family, the Rushings.<sup>43</sup>

### *Rushing*

The Rushings had lived on both sides of the Roanoke in North Carolina decades before Coltrain began recruiting: William Sr. bought part of his father's land on the north side in the Occoneechee Neck region in 1731, while his son Matthew crossed the river nine years later.<sup>44</sup> In 1739 William Jr. and Robert Crosson—a comrade of the 1740–41 Cartagena Solomon Harper—witnessed Rowland Williams's land purchase in the Occoneechee Neck.<sup>45</sup> In 1748, one of the Williamses witnessed the sale of a tract at Little Cypress Creek, part of which was sold in 1754, with Solomon Harper witnessing.<sup>46</sup>

39. For Abraham's petition for Thompson's Creek land, see Brent H. Holcomb, *Petitions for Land from the South Carolina Council Journals*, vol. 1, 1734/35–1748 (Columbia, S.C.: SCMAR, 1996), 310, citing S.C. Council Journal 1747–1748, South Carolina Copy No. 15, p. 162. See also Edmund Kite's plat, 1 March 1749: South Carolina Colonial Plat Books (Copy Series) vol. 4:244 for a survey for Kite referencing land of Paul, Boatwright and Rushing.

40. Halifax Co., N.C., Deed Book 5:47–49, Hubard to McKinnie, and 5:345, Philips to Boatright.

41. Halifax Co., N.C., Deed Book 1:8, Millikin to Dawson. For the location of Millikin's plantation, see "A New and Correct Map of the Province of North Carolina by Edward Moseley, Late Surveyor General of the Said Province [London], 1733," *East Carolina University Digital Collections* (<http://digital.lib.ecu.edu/1028>).

42. "South Carolina Probate Records, Bound Volumes, 1671-1977," *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1919417>) > Charleston > Wills, 1752–1763, vol. 007 > images 64-5, Abraham Paul; Charleston County Wills, Columbia.

43. On 1 March 1749, William Boatright's land was referenced in a survey for Edmund Kite, see Edmund Kite's plat, 1 March 1749.

44. For the sale of land on which Matthew Rushing had formerly lived, see Bertie Co. N.C., Deed Book C:269, Mackinne to Rushin. For John and Mary Watson to Matthew Rushing (William's son) in 1740, see Halifax Co., N.C., Deed Book 1:374–75.

45. Bertie Co., N.C., Deed Book F:7–8, Wheeler to Williams.

46. For the 1748 deed William Rushing witnessed, see Northampton Co., N.C., Deed Book 1:378–79, Moore to Wade. For the 1754 deed see *ibid.*, 2:200, Webb to Leake. Details in the deeds describe the same parcel, suggesting John Wade and John Webb are the same person, and that there may be error(s) in the names in the deed(s).



The Rushings moved to South Carolina's Thompson's Creek at different times. William Sr.'s son John emerged there first, being issued a 1748 survey warrant for land adjoining William Boatwright and Abraham Paul.<sup>47</sup> William emerged in 1751 witnessing Paul's sale of Thompson's Creek land.<sup>48</sup>

### *Jackson*

In 1744, Stephen Jackson witnessed Thomas Boatright's land purchase on Elk Marsh Swamp in Coltrain's recruiting region.<sup>49</sup> That year, he and Benjamin Jackson bought land downstream on Beech Swamp and Miry Branch, which they sold four years later.<sup>50</sup>

The Jacksons then moved to Craven County's Thompson's Creek, where they were appointed executors in Abraham Paul's 1751 will (with Thomas Boatright witnessing).<sup>51</sup> Stephen Jackson had just purchased land from Paul, with William Rushing witnessing. Benjamin Jackson sold land on the north side of the creek a few years later.<sup>52</sup>

These families demonstrate a migration from Capatain Coltrain's recruiting region (map 2) to South Carolina's Thompson's Creek. The Craven County community study also demonstrated a migration from Thompson's Creek south to Colleton:

### *Boatright*

In 1768, a few months before Solomon emerged in Colleton records, Benjamin Boatright had land surveyed on Cross Swamp of the Little Salkehatchie, close to Solomon Harper.<sup>53</sup> Other information on Benjamin in Colleton is scarce, given the county's extensive record destruction. However, the Boatright family was extremely small at this time in this region and available evidence suggests he was a son of the Thomas Sr. who had owned land close to Solomon at Thompson's Creek.

### *Langford*

In 1784, Thomas Langford, resident of the Round O community of Colleton where Lowcountry Solomon Harper owned land, mortgaged a tract that he still

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47. John Rushing's plat, 28 March 1748; South Carolina Colonial Plat Books (Copy Series), vol. 5:30.

48. Anson Co., N.C., Deed Book B:189–90, Paul to Jackson.

49. Halifax Co., N.C., Deed Book 5:345–46, Philips to Boatright.

50. For purchase see Halifax Co., N.C., Deed Book 5:288–89, Lane to Jackson. For sale see *ibid.*, 3:334–35, Jackson to Goodwin.

51. "South Carolina Probate Records, Bound Volumes, 1671-1977," *FamilySearch*, Abraham Paul.

52. Anson Co., N.C., Deed Book B:189, Paul to Jackson, and Book C:338–39, Jackson to Street.

53. Benjamin Boottritt's plat, 12 March 1768; South Carolina Colonial Plat Books (Copy Series), vol. 9:234.