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REPORT TO: Dr. Robert Harper; 303 Arkansas Street; Ruston, LA, 71270

REPORT NO: 3

SUBJECT: Solomon Harper Thompson's Creek, old Craven County, South Carolina

BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY

Lennon Report No. 1 introduced the necessity of neighborhood reconstruction to Client's case. Three communities were targeted:

- Thompsons's Creek of old Craven District, modern Chesterfield County, where a Solomon Harper surveyed land in 1764.
- The Mary Dunn land on the Little Saltcatcher River in Colleton District that a Solomon Harper purchased in 1769.
- The Henry Hyrne land in Colleton that a Solomon Harper purchased in 1773.

Considerable time is required to reconstruct entire neighborhoods, identify the most important residents, and track them to their pre- and post Craven residences. Given the intensive research requirements, each of the three should be treated separately. This project reassembles the Thompson's Creek community during, before, and shortly after Solomon's documented activity there.

As Client is aware, most of the county-level records for the study area have been destroyed. This installment, therefore, focuses on original land surveys maintained at the colonial and state level, pre-1786 deeds that were filed in Charleston, newspapers, and published histories.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project accomplishes two primary goals:

- It isolates Solomon's nearest neighbors from the hundreds of individuals active along Thompson's Creek between 1749 and 1770.
- It uncovers *direct links* between members of that community and the Solomon Harper neighborhood in Colleton District.

Both are essential to Client's overall objective. The latter is particularly important because it provides the first reliable indications that *the Solomon Harpers of Thompson's Creek and Colleton District are the same man.*

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The intensive land study identified a large number of people living or owning land along Thompson's Creek before 1770. For the sake of study and discussion, they are grouped into residential zones defined by place names on the Chesterfield District map in Figure 1 (next page):

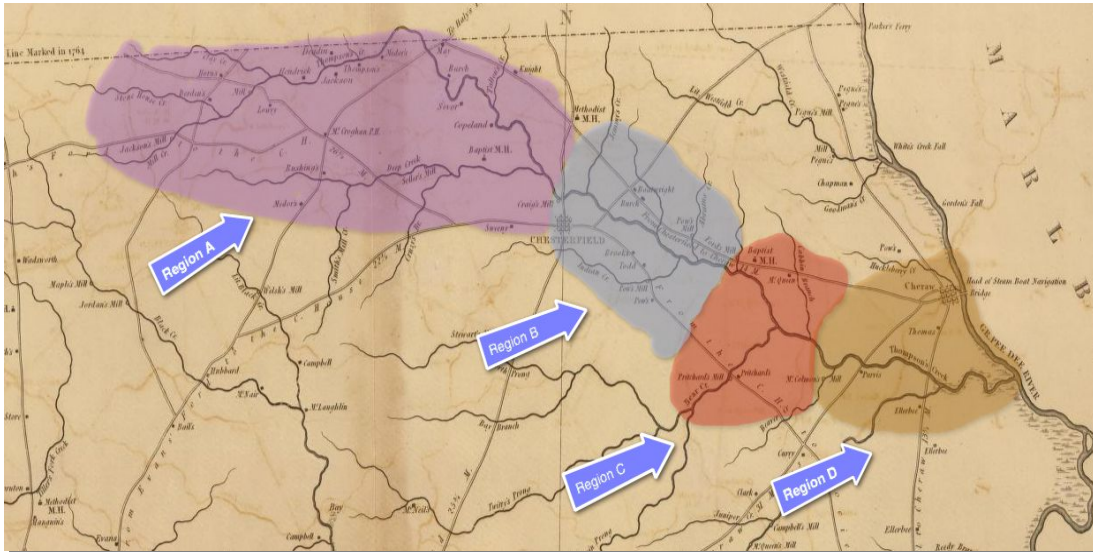
- Region A Between the headwaters of Thompsons Creek and Craig's Mill
- Region B Between Craig's Mill and Ford's Mill
- Region C Between Ford's Mill and Beaver Creek, with Bear Creek (Solomon Harper)**
- Region D Between Beaver Creek and the Great Pee Dee River, including Cheraw

The families currently known to have lived in these zones during the study period are as follows:¹

<u>Region A</u>	<u>Region B</u>	<u>Region C</u>	<u>Region D</u>
Baldwin	Abrams	Belton	Beddingfield
Bettes	Gainey	Bone	Brown
Blassinghame	Prestwood	Boatright	Davis
Gainey	Westfield	Branch	DeSaurency
Griffith	Wilson	Bryan	Ellerbee
Harries		Dobbs	Gadsden
Jackson		Harper	Godfrey
Shoemake		Huggins	Guin
		Johnston	Hainsworth
		King	Kershaw
		Linnard	Mitchell
		Lundy	Moultrie
		Matthews	Pledger
		Mitchell	Purvis
		Murphy	Rogers
		Pickens	Steward
		Richardson	Triplett
		Sharpton	Underwood
		Thompson	Walker
		Walker	
		Wishart	
		Wright	

¹ Drawn from a study of all Craven County land surveys, grants, and deeds. See attached Sources listing.

Figure 1:
Thompson's Creek Regions²



Region C holds the greatest potential for Solomon's kinsmen and intimate associates. They will be discussed within the body of this report. Information on residents of the other regions will be provided upon request.

The following discussions will

- Outline the history of the Thompson's Creek area to place Solomon into context.
- Discuss the central issues concerning his land and residence there.
- Highlight the evidence linking Solomon to other areas.
- Summarize each of the targeted landowners closest to him.

Part One:

History of Upper Craven County and Thompson's Creek

The North-South Carolina border region through which Thompson's Creek ran was still a frontier when Solomon Harper emerged in 1764. Intrepid efforts at settlement in the Middle Country (above the Santee River) began three decades before and they were slow to develop. Williamsburg Township was surveyed in 1732 and subsequently planted with imported Irish Protestants. Dropped into a wilderness, they "set up temporary huts of poles covered with earth while they made a beginning at clearing and planting the land."³ Their efforts paved the way for the future prosperity the

² Robert Mills, "Craven District, South Carolina; Surveyed by Thos. Anderson, D. S., 1818; Improved for Mills' Atlas, 1825," *David Rumsey Map Collection* (<http://www.davidrumsey.com>).

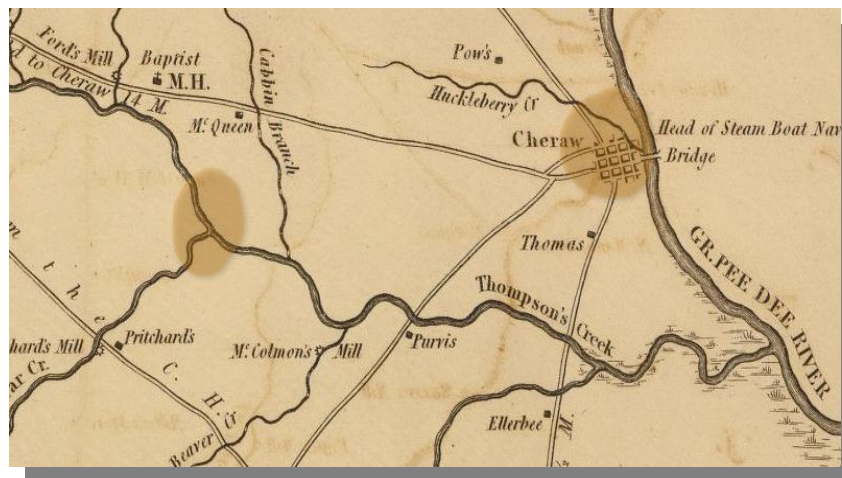
³ Robert L. Meriwether. *The Expansion of South Carolina, 1729–1765* (Kingsport, Tenn.: Southern Publishers, 1940), 79.

region would enjoy. Kingston Township on the Waccamaw River was opened for settlement in 1735. It did not fare as well as its predecessor due to poor soil, worse drainage, and monopolization of land by absentee owners; but the Scotch-Irish transplants established one of the few churches in the region before 1737. Meanwhile, Queensboro Township was surveyed at the mouth of Lynch's River on the Great Pee Dee. Georgetown resident James Gordon brought in several hundred settlers, primarily from Pennsylvania, in 1733 and 1734. Much like Kingston, the original town floundered and most of the initial settlers sought opportunity elsewhere.

These settlements were in the lower and middle regions of old Craven County. One of the earliest adventurers to push north up the Pee Dee was John Thompson of Black River (modern Georgetown County). He claimed 1000 acres between Jeffreys Creek and the Pee Dee in 1732 and began trading with the Cheraw Indians. He and Irishman Francis Young would proceed to survey thousands of acres in what would soon become the Welsh Tract. In 1736, the council authorized a colony of Welsh Baptists from lower Pennsylvania (modern Delaware) who gave their name to the new settlement. They intended to improve the wilderness through the production of hemp, flax, barley, and wheat on a vast stretch of land extending north from Queensboro into North Carolina. The tract included the mouth of Thompson's Creek and its tributary, Bear Creek, where Solomon would emerge.

The development of Solomon's community was closely tied to that of Cheraw, a tiny but important trading center two miles up the Pee Dee from the mouth of Thompson's Creek.

Figure 2:
Proximity of Solomon Harper's Land to Cheraw
(roughly four miles)



Following the lead of Thompson and Young, the Virginian Thomas Ellerbe and the Irishman James Gillespie established a vital water mill and trading center near the

future town of Cheraw in the early 1740s. These advances attracted the attention of wealthy coastal businessmen over the next two decades. Gillespie partnered with Georgetown resident Christopher Gadsden in a profitable shipping business between those two areas. Gadsden expanded that enterprise to open a store with John Crawford. More would follow, including Camden merchants Eli and Joseph Kershaw, who secured the land grant upon which they formally laid out the town and opened the firm of Eli Kershaw and Company. The efforts of these men advanced Cheraw's development into the primary center of commerce for upper Craven—and the prosperity that followed.⁴ By the time Solomon emerged, the Welch Tract was developing as well. Hundreds of thousands of acres had been surveyed and the population approached 4000. It was soon to be the most populace settlement in the Middle Country, rivaling only Williamsburg in influence and prosperity.

An important factor in merging Solomon with the man of Colleton District—in the absence of direct evidence—concerns his reason for making that move. It might be considered a “backward” migration, from the frontier to the more populated coast. The overall topography is likewise different. Individuals during this period rarely made drastic changes to their environment, tending to move between areas that supported their modes of living. Without knowing Solomon's occupation or family background, finding a link that would draw him from one area to the other is difficult to isolate.

However, in addition to the links established above between Cheraw and the coast, one important geo-agricultural similarity existed between the two regions. Although sandy soil dominated the Thompson's Creek region, swamps were plentiful. Rice was easily grown in this environment—as it was in the Saltcatcher swamps of Colleton. Additionally, indigo was one of the earliest crops grown profitably in upper Craven, highly prized in the Charleston markets. It likewise flourished in Colleton during this period. Perhaps, experience with one of those crops provided the commonality Solomon would have needed to sustainably move from one locale to the other.

Another possible conduit is occupational. Report No. 1 introduced the possibility that one of the early Solomons of Colleton worked as an overseer on James Stobo's Saltcatcher plantation in 1774. As will be shown later in this report, a large number of absentee landowners held tracts along Thompson's Creek in the 1760s. They would have needed overseers or managers. Indeed, one of Solomon's neighbors, Christopher Gadsden, employed an overseer while Solomon owned land there. The possibility must therefore be entertained that this occupation drew Solomon to Colleton.

Part Two:

Solomon's Land and Residence on Thompson's Creek

A major obstacle to Client's objectives is the loss of records that would reveal when and

⁴ Alexander Gregg, *History of Old Cheras, Containing an Account of the Aborigines of the Pedee, the First White Settlements . . . with Notices of Families and Sketches of Individuals* (New York: Richardson and Co., 1867), 63.

to whom Solomon sold his land. Only six pertinent documents have yet been found:

4 December 1764

Charleston

Council meeting. "Read the following Petitions Praying for Warrants of Survey, ... Solomon Harper, 50 [acres] on Thomsons Creek Joining Thomas Richardsons and Edward Bryans Lines."⁵

4 December 1764

Craven County

Survey plat for Solomon Harper for 250 acres on "Thomsons Creek in Craven County bounding Southerly on the said Creek and Easterly on Thomas Richardson's land and Westerly on Edward Bryants and vacant Land and Northerly on vacant Land." Survey certified 12 December 1764.⁶

7 February 1770

Charleston

Council meeting. Reading of petition to certify plat of Solomon Harper, 250 acres in Craven County.⁷

2 October 1770

Charleston

Council meeting. Reading of petition to certify plat for Solomon Harper, 250 acres, Craven County.⁸

3 November 1770

Craven County

Grant to Solomon Harper for 250 acres in Craven County.⁹

4 January 1771

Craven County

Memorial (registration of grant) of Solomon Harper for 250 acres on Thompsons Creek.¹⁰

As Client is aware, all colonial legal transactions had to be recorded in Charleston during this period regardless of the property's location. Because of the difficulties this imposed upon people living distant from the city, a large percentage of their sales were never recorded. Those that were recorded have been published, and Solomon does not appear in them. Possibly, it was recorded much later, after Chesterfield County was created. If so, any such document would have been destroyed during the Civil War.

⁵ Brent H. Holcomb, *Petitions for Land from the South Carolina Council Journals*, volume 5, 1757-1765 (Columbia, South Carolina: SCMAR, 1998), 203.

⁶ South Carolina, Colonial Plat Book (Copy Series); Series S213184, Book 11: 451; South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH), Columbia.

⁷ Brent H. Holcomb, *Petitions for Land from the South Carolina Council Journals*, volume 6, 1766-1770 (Columbia, South Carolina: SCMAR, 1999), 268.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 305.

⁹ S. C., Surveyor General, Colonial Land Grants (copy Series); Series S213190, Book 21: 271; SCDAH.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 10: 301.

One note must be made about the timing of Solomon's grant. Some individuals navigated the lengthy process of warrants, surveys, grants, and registrations quickly, while others needed more time to secure finances and meet all the requirements. In Solomon's case, six years elapsed from the time he was issued the survey warrant and when he registered his grant. (How long he was in the area before submitting his petition for the survey is unknown.) The Solomon of Colleton was already active there when all the Thompson's Creek activities occurred, except the original survey. Therefore, either the two men are different, or Solomon left Craven before he had secured title to and sold the land.

This begs several questions:

- Why did Solomon move before obtaining legal title to the Thompson's Creek land?
- Where did he get enough money to purchase the Colleton land before selling the first tract?
- Does the simultaneous ownership of land in opposite ends of the state suggest the two were different men?

Answering these questions is difficult in the face of missing records. A common "work around" is to trace the chains of title of neighboring tracts to determine when the name of his land's owner changed.

Only two neighbors are identified in Solomon's 1764 survey: Edward Bryan and Thomas Richardson. However, problems exist with their titles. As shown in Report No. 1, Bryan sold his land in 1772. Solomon is not mentioned in the abstracted deed:

22 February 1772

Craven County

Edward Bryan and wife **Catherine** to John Mitchell, merchant, £200: 250 acres in Craven County on both sides of Thompson's Creek and Bare Creek, adjoining William Johnston on the upper side, as described in a plat for Edward Sharpton, granted John Dickins 17 April 1764 and sold by him to Bryan on 10 May 1765.

Witnesses: James Wishart and Carney Wright.¹¹

Solomon's adjoining tract (on the east side) is not mentioned – perhaps understandably if Solomon had left for Colleton years before. Unfortunately, critical documents concerning the chain of title after this point could not be found, specifically:

- No deed or will through which neighbor William Johnston disposed of his land that might mention Solomon or a subsequent owner of his land.

¹¹ Clara A. Langley, *South Carolina Deed Abstracts*, volume 4, 1767–1773 (Easley, South Carolina: Southern Historical Press, 1984), 239; cites Deeds Z3: 58–9.

- No deed or will through which John Mitchell disposed of the Bryan land that might mention Solomon or subsequent owner of his land.
- No land document of Edward Sharpton or John Dickins that might mention Solomon or a subsequent owner of his land.

With the most convenient means of documenting the fate of Solomon's land eliminated, attention turned to the more time-consuming task of seeking clues in his community. One issue that emerged during this task must be introduced here: whether Solomon actually lived on the land.

Logic points to the assumption that Solomon lived on his 250 acres between the time he surveyed it and, theoretically, left for Colleton. However, no document has ever been found to support this assumption. The possibility that he may not have lived on it, or did not do so for long, emerged during the analysis of landholdings in his community. *A significant number of landowners did not live on their Thompson's Creek holdings, but rather acquired it for speculation purposes or for absentee farming.* If Solomon also bought his land on speculation, he may not have ever been there.

Absenteeism

The South Carolina government intended the upper townships for permanent settlement and crafted the land grant system accordingly. However, speculation quickly infected the system. By 1737, only a quarter of the lands granted was held by identifiable residents—slightly more than three hundred souls. Angry settlers, who had been promised the best lands, complained a decade later that “all the good Lands . . . [were] taken up by Gentlemen residing in other parts of the Province,” forcing the most recent settlers to look elsewhere.¹² It was not uncommon for these “gentlemen” to secure grants for land upon which permanent settlers were already living and improving, using their influence to obliterate the settlers' claims. The problems extended throughout Craven County. The flailing Queensboro Township was quickly overtaken by large planters who secured grants for thousands of acres. By 1745, sixty-five plats of almost 30,000 acres had been taken out there; John Hammerton, Secretary of the Province, held four thousand of it alone. In Kingston, almost one third of the 22,000 acres claimed before 1737 belonged to coastal residents.¹³

The same problem emerged in upper Craven. The entrepreneurs of old Cheraw did not restrict themselves to their enterprises along the river. Many acquired large tracts extending out into the countryside—including tracts along Thompson's Creek. In 1757, for example, Christopher Gadsden had 1300 acres surveyed at the head of the creek (including the original claim of John Thompson Jr.) on which a building already stood.¹⁴

¹² Robert L. Meriwether, *The Expansion of South Carolina, 1729–1765* (Kingsport, Tenn.: Southern Publishers, 1940), 81.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 86–7.

¹⁴ Gadsden sold this land to Charles Augustus Steward in 1770. See Langley, *South Carolina Deeds*, 4: 159; citing

Ten years later, he was advertising in Charleston newspapers for an overseer for that plantation, presumably to live in that structure. This lay just a few miles from Solomon.

Of the four men whose tracts joined Solomon (Belton, Bryan, Pickens, and Richardson), Edward Bryan was the only one who actually lived on his land. The possibility therefore emerges that Solomon may not have lived on his land either. Pursuing that possibility, however, must be postponed for future work on this important family.

Part Three:

Links Between Craven and Colleton

The intensive work to reconstruct the Thompson's Creek community and track its residents produced no direct evidence that its Solomon Harper moved to Colleton District. However, emerging evidence illuminates a migration from upper Craven to the coast. Consider the arguments for Britton Branch, William Boatright, Thomas Langford, and Thomas Walker:

Britton Branch

Two documents placed Britton Branch at Thompson's Creek near Solomon Harper:

4 January 1770

Craven County

John (his mark) Huggins, planter, and wife Mary (her mark) to James Mathews, planter, both parties of St. David's Parish, for £100: 200 acres on south side of Thompson's Creek granted September 1769 to John Huggins. Witnesses: Jacob Johnson and **Britten Branch**.¹⁵

6 December 1770

Craven County

John Murphy of Craven and wife Willemouth (her mark) to Simon Lunday: 150 acres in Craven County on north side "Tomsons" Creek, granted 24 August 1770 to John Murphy, bounded SW on James Matthews and other sides vacant. Witnesses: Jacob Johnson and **Bretten Branch**. Proved before Thomas Wade, JP.¹⁶

No evidence has been found that Britten owned land; and his fleeting appearance suggests he was not long in Craven County. Interestingly, a man of the same unusual name emerged in Colleton District two decades later:

1 December 1794

Colleton

Survey for **Britain Branch** for 412 acres on Willow Swamp joining Paul Hamilton, Hamilton, Mr. McGauley, and William Pond.¹⁷

Deeds S3: 139-42. For the advertisement, see *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, 5 January 1768, transcribed at *Accessible Archives* (<http://www.accessible-archives.com>).

¹⁵ Langley, *South Carolina Deeds*, 4: 306; cites Deeds D4: 68-70.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 301; cites Deeds C4: 353-8.

¹⁷ S. C. Land Plats 34: 162.

7 February 1801

Colleton

Survey for James Morgan for 227 acres on a branch of Willow Swamp of Little Saltcatcher Swamp. Names mentioned in plat: **Britain Branch**, John Johns, James Morgan, and James Stobo.¹⁸

8 January 1813

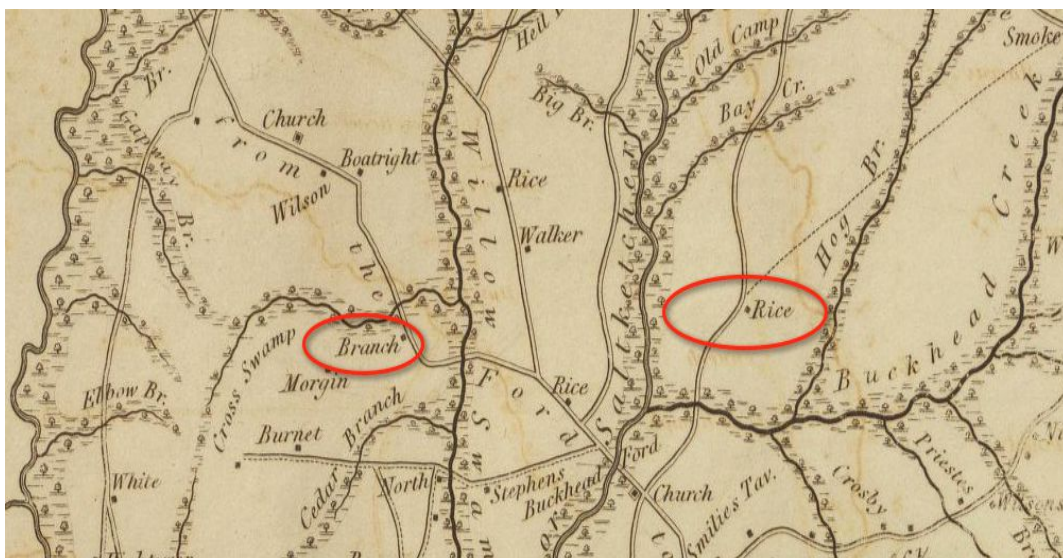
Colleton

Survey for **Britton Branch** for 1000 acres on Rice Patch Creek of Big Saltcatcher River, adjoining C. Cruise, Edward Cruise, Samuel Cruise.¹⁹

These tracts were near the Solomon Harper family. As shown below, Britten's land lay at "Branch" on west side of Willow Swamp:

Figure 4

Britton Branch & Solomon Harper Landholdings (Colleton)



This is likely the man who descendants believe was born ca.1758 in Bladen County, North Carolina, to John and Anne (Britten) Branch. The father was from Edgecombe County, from whence a significant number of Thompson's Creek residents hailed. Britten died 1815 or 1825 in Colleton District.²⁰ Time limitations herein did not permit investigation of Britten in Colleton. But the presence of such a unique name in both

¹⁸ Ibid., 6: 119.

¹⁹ Ibid., 37: 387.

²⁰ Yvonne Crapse Deloach, "Ancestors of Yvonne Carrol Crapse," *South Carolina and Beyond* (<http://familytree maker.genealogy.com/users/d/e/1/Yvonne-Carrol-Deloach/PDFBOOK1.pdf>). Mary Casper, "RE: Pictures-John Branch Family" *Genforum* (<http://genforum.genealogy.com/sc/colleton/messages/334.html>). Mary Casper, "Branch Roll Call," *Branch-L Archives* (<http://listsearches.rootsweb.com/th/read/BRANCH/2011-08/1312496492>). Jeanette Essen, "Re: Britton Branch," *Ancestry Message Boards* ([http://boards.ancestry.com/surnames.branch/725.1/mb. ashx](http://boards.ancestry.com/surnames.branch/725.1/mb.ashx)).

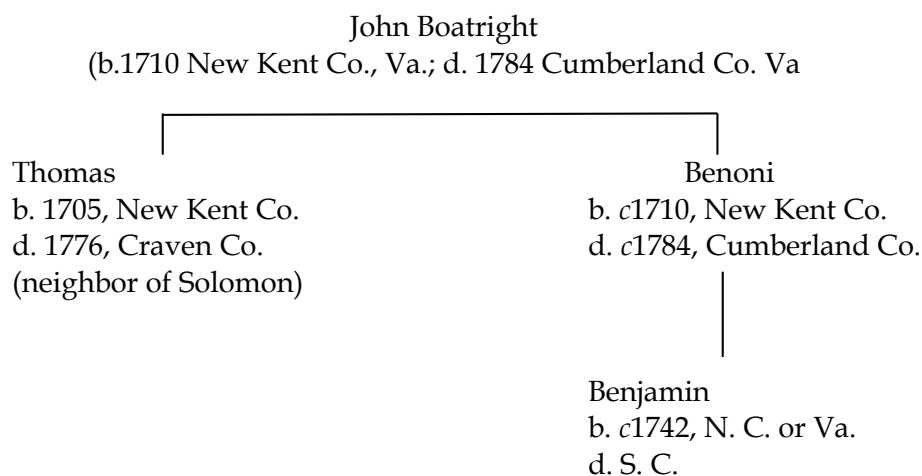
Solomon Harper communities cannot be ignored. As it stands, current research has not identified another individual of this name anywhere else in South Carolina.

At this stage of research, Britten Branch is a solid link between Solomon of Colleton and Solomon of Craven, showing that at least one other individual made the same move as did Solomon and at about the same time, starting in the same Craven locale and ending in the same Colleton locale.

Benjamin Boatright

The above Colleton map excerpt shows the home place of a “Boatright” just above “Branch.” It is important to identify the family to which “Boatright” refers, given the presence of a Boatright family in Solomon’s immediate Thompson’s Creek neighborhood. One Benjamin Boatwright surveyed land on Cross Swamp in Colleton in 1768 adjoining Henry Wilson.²¹ This certainly is the “Boatright” listed across the road from “Wilson,” just above Solomon Harper at “Rice,” on the above map.

New research suggests Benjamin was related to the Thompson’s Creek Boatrights who lived very near Solomon Harper. Consider the proposed lineage:²²



Evidence provided for this lineage by descendants is largely documented and appears sound. If so, Benjamin Boatright, neighbor of the Harpers in Colleton, should be a close kinsman of the Boatrights of Thompson’s Creek. Benjamin of Colleton’s first appearance there in 1768 meshes with Solomon’s appearance a few months later in the same neighborhood. This suggests that the two men moved from Thompson’s Creek together—or at least knew each other before arriving in Colleton. Britten Branch might have come at the same time or followed shortly afterwards. This hypothesis must be pursued during the upcoming neighborhood reconstructions in Colleton District.

²¹ SC Land Plats, Book 9: 234.

²² George Boatright, “William Boatwright,” *Boat(w)wright Family Genealogy in America* (http://boatwrightgenealogy.com/john_boatwright5.html#5-60).

Thomas Walker

Thomas Walker was a North Carolina transplant who had land surveyed on Thompson's Creek in 1749 and 1756.²³ He and his wife Ann were part of a 1759 church migration from "the Peedee and Lynches Creek" led by the Rev. James Smart to Prince William Parish of Beaufort District. They established the Coosawatchie Baptist Church at the headwaters of that river.²⁴ This early migration is particularly important given the fact that *Solomon Harper's first known residence on the coast was actually Prince William Parish and not Colleton District* (see Report 1, p. 25). Did he follow his old Thompson Creek neighbor there?

The question is even more relevant when one considers the 1788 tax list of Colleton District, discussed in the previous report:

9 August 1788

Tax list of upper St. Bartholomew district taken by Adam Ulmer, Esquire:²⁵

[top of list]

Isham Walker	Jacob Hire
Berry Walker	Philip Hern
William Patchett	Thomas Walker
Solomon Harper	Adam Ruth
Anthony Pouncy	Jacob Lermeny
Charity Cothrin	David Colling
Thomas Dobbins	Jacob Platts
Joseph Dobbins	Cunrod Laugan
Jeremiah Chaney	John Crews Junr.
Frederick Pope	Michael Hire
Jacob Crosby	Owen Bunton
Joel Patchett	John Bunton
Barthw. Gartman	David Walker
Mark Nettles	Christian Sheperd
William Pouncy	George Warren
Anthony Canady	William Mills
Jessy Floyd	Levi Colton
John Smiley	Charles Ferguson
Moses Bailey	[34 to end of list]
Jacob Carter	

Future research must determine if these are the same Walkers of Solomon Harper's Thompson's Creek neighborhood.

Thomas Langford

Langford appears in a single document linking him to Thompson's Creek and Colleton:

²³ S. C. Plat Books (Copy Series), Book 5: 58 and Book 6: 226; SCDAH.

²⁴ Holcomb, *Land Petitions*, 5: 223.

²⁵ Photocopy provided by client, citing "Comptroller General, Tax Lists, 1787 St. Bartholomew Upper District, ST689."

24 August 1784

St. Bartholomew's Parish

Thomas Langford of St. Bartholomew's Parish, planter, by bond dated 24 August 1784 to Benjamin Postell and Hawkins Martin, mortgages: slaves Ben, Doll and Flora, **and a tract of land on "Thompsons" Creek, being 200 acres adjoining Lewis Bishop, "Eli Kirkson[?]"**. Witnesses: Martha Warham and David Warham. Proved by David Warham in Charleston District 21 February 1786 before Dl. Mazyck, J. P.²⁶

The "Eli Kirkson" rendered in the published abstract is actually "Eli Kershaw," merchant of Cheraw who owned land in the portion of Thompson Creek that ran from Bear Creek and the Pee Dee River. Nothing further was found on Thomas Langford; and his place of residence in St. Bartholomew's Parish could not be identified. Witness David Warham was a Charleston merchant.²⁷ Witness Hawkins Martin did have ties to Colleton County. In 1786, he sold land (likely inherited by his wife) at the Round O in St. Bartholomew's Parish and took up a stray horse in the Willtown vicinity a decade earlier.²⁸

Although few, these individuals provide proof of a direct migration from Thompson's Creek to Solomon Harper's coastal community. Moreover, that migration occurred during the period in which Solomon appears to have made the same move.

Part Four: **The Families**

Unlike the other Middle Country settlements—significantly so for Client's case—the upper part of the Welch Tract was settled by as many transplants from *coastal South Carolina* as from other colonies.²⁹ When working Solomon's neighbors for links, the possibility that he actually hailed from the coast rather than North Carolina or Virginia must be considered.

The number of early land grants in upper Craven County is somewhat misleading. Permanent settlement of Thompson's Creek did not begin until the late 1740s—a mere fifteen years before Solomon emerged. (This is a mere sliver of time in the process of societal development.) Two points are clear:

- Solomon should not have been born in the area because white settlement there had not yet begun.
- Given the frontier environment at the time, he likely did not venture into it alone. If he planned to settle on his land, he likely came with kinsmen or associates.
- If he did not intend to improve his land but acquired it for speculation, he likely

²⁶ Holcomb, *South Carolina Deeds, 1783–1788*, 182; cites Deeds Q5: 197–8.

²⁷ Holcomb, *South Carolina Deeds, 1776–1763*, 197; cites Deeds F5: 209–11.

²⁸ Holcomb, *South Carolina Deeds, 1768–1788*, 366; cites Deeds W5: 693–97. The *South Carolina Gazette*, 11 July 1774, imaged on *Accessible Archives* (<http://www.accessible-archives.com>).

²⁹ Merriwether, *Expansion of South Carolina*, 92. Gregg, *History of Old Cheraws*, 44–46.

lived elsewhere—undoubtedly in the same area as other Thompson’s Creek speculators.

Researching the landowners nearest to Solomon is critical to determining his origins, his fate, and whether he ever lived on Thompson’s Creek. Among those individuals, the most important are those who lived nearest to him, on the theory that he would claim lands close to people to whom he was related or aligned. The attached research notes provide additional detail and citations for the following Zone C residents who have emerged as important research targets.

BOATRIGHT

The Boatright progenitor Thomas and his son William were settled at Thompson’s Creek by the late 1740s.³⁰ They were close associate of the Pauls and nearby Edward Bryan (one of Solomon Harper’s adjoining neighbors).³¹ They moved directly from Edgecombe County, North Carolina.³²

BRANCH

Britten Branch does not appear to have owned land on Thompson’s Creek, but he witnessed a sale there early in 1770.³³ As discussed above, he would soon move to Solomon Harper’s neighborhood in Colleton. He may belong to the John Branch family of Edgecombe County.

BRYAN

Edward first appears in the area in 1759 when he witnessed a Thompson’s Creek land sale of an immediate neighbor, William Johnson.³⁴ He is identified as an adjoining landowner to Solomon’s land there, and he sold his tract in 1772.³⁵ The Bryan connection is critical because the surname is connected to the Harpers in both the Thompson’s Creek and Saltcatcher communities. Indeed, the parentage of Solomon’s son-in-law Richard Bryan of Colleton has not been established.

MITCHELL

The merchant John Mitchell owned several tracts immediate to and near Solomon Harper, including one purchased from Edward Bryan in 1772. He appears to be the appears to have been alleged Scottish immigrant who actually

³⁰ William moved to Thompson’s Creek before Thomas. On 1 March 1749, William’s land was referenced in a survey of 300 acres for Edmund Kite “near Thompson’s Creek” that also joined Abraham Paul and John Rushing,” see Colonial Plat Books (Copy Series), Patent Book 4:244, SCDAH.

³¹ Thomas was a witness to Abraham Paul’s 1750 will. See Charleston Co., S. C. Wills & Miscellaneous Records Book 81: 52–53, microfilmed, SCDAH. He and Edward Bryan witnessed a sale of Thompson’s Creek land in 1759. See Sarah Langley, *South Carolina Deed Abstracts, 1719–1772*, vol. 3, 1755–1768 (Easley, S. C.: Southern Historical Press, 1983), 123–4; citing Charleston Deed Book WW: 267.

³² Thomas emerges in Edgecombe records witnessing a deed in 1742; he bought land there two years later. See Edgecombe Co, Deed Book 5: 47 and 345.

³³ Langley, *South Carolina Deed Abstracts, 1767–1773*, 301; citing Charleston Deed Book C4: 354.

³⁴ Langley, *South Carolina Deed Abstracts, 1755–1768*, 124; citing Charleston Deed Book WW: 267.

³⁵ Langley, *South Carolina Deed Abstracts, 1767–1773*, 279; citing Charleston Deed Book Z3: 58–59. This deed identifies his wife as Catherine.

lived “near the Charaws” during that period. He also owned land in Anson County, North Carolina.³⁶

JACKSON

The Jacksons were at Thompson’s Creek by the late 1740s, where they were involved in Abraham Paul’s 1750 will (with Thomas Boatright witnessing).³⁷ Stephen Jackson had just purchased land from Paul, with William Rushing witnessing; Benjamin Jackson sold land on the north side of the creek just a few years later.³⁸ They also came from the same Edgecombe–Northampton community as the other Thompson’s Creek transplants. In 1744, Stephen Jackson witnessed Thomas Boatright’s purchase of land on Elk Marsh Swamp. The same year, he and Benjamin Jackson bought land downstream on Beech Swamp and Miry Branch, which they sold four years later.³⁹

PAUL

Members of the Paul family, headed by Abraham and his son John, appeared along Thompson’s Creek in the mid-1740s and acquired tracts near the Rushings, Kites, and Johnsons.⁴⁰ Abraham was the son of William Paul of old Bertie and Edgecombe Counties, North Carolina, which Abraham left after William died.⁴¹

RICHARDSON

Very little was found on Thomas Richardson and whether he lived on his Thompson’s Creek land is not certain. He may be the man who previously lived in the Edgecombe–Northampton community of Solomon’s other North Carolina neighbors.⁴²

RUSHING

The Rushings were at Thompson’s Creek in the mid-1740s, but they arrived at different times. John emerged first, being issued a 1748 survey warrant for land joining William Boatwright and Abraham Paul.⁴³ His father William Sr. was there by 1751, witnessing Abraham Paul’s sale of land.⁴⁴ Like the Boatrights and Pauls, the Rushings came from Edgecombe County. William Sr. bought part of

³⁶ Gregg, *History of Old Cheraws*, 106, 177, 238–39, 415–16.

³⁷ Charleston Co., S. C., Wills & Miscellaneous Records Book 81:52–53, microfilmed, SCDAH.

³⁸ Anson Co., N. C., Deed Book B: 189 and Book C: 338–39.

³⁹ Halifax Co., N.C., Deed Book 5: 345–46, 288, and 345.

⁴⁰ In March 1748, the S. C. Council read Abraham Paul’s petition for Thompson’s Creek land, in which he said he had been in S. C. for five years; see Memorial Book 13:443, SCDAH Series 111011. His land was referenced in a March 1748 survey for Edmund Kite joining William Boatwright and John Rushing; see Colonial Plat Books (Copy Series), Book 4:244, SCDAH Series S213184. In 1769, John sold part of Abraham’s Thompsons’s Creek grant. See Langley, *South Carolina Deed Abstracts, 1767–1773*, 204, citing Charleston Deed Book W3: 437–39.

⁴¹ William Paul was issued a N. C. grant in March 1742 for 550 acres joining the Mill Swamp and Wheeler’s Mill Swamp in Bertie (later Edgecombe); see Bertie Co., N.C., land grant file no. 488, Patent Book 4:189. Abraham sold that land in 1744; see Northampton Co., N.C., Deed Book 1: 143–44.

⁴² Northampton Co., Deed Book 6: 5–6.

⁴³ S. C. Colonial Plat Books (Copy Series), Book 4: 315 and 244, and Book 5: 30, SCDAH.

⁴⁴ Anson Co., N. C., Deed Book B: 189–90.

his father's land in the Occoneechee Neck region in 1731; his son Matthew bought land in the region nine years later.⁴⁵

WALKER

Thomas Walker, a North Carolina transplant, had land surveyed on Thompson's Creek in 1749 and 1756 and witnessed Abraham Paul's 1751 will there.⁴⁶ He was part of a 1759 migration under Rev. James Smart to the Lowcountry Coosawatchie River region in Prince William and St. Bartholomew's Parishes, establishing the Coosawatchie Baptist Church at the river's headwaters. This is a particularly important location because the Solomon Harper of Colleton bought nearby land during his first years in the region.⁴⁷

These families and potential kinsmen are potential bridges to Solomon Harper's origin.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings of this report provide sorely needed evidence that the Solomon Harper of Thompson's Creek and Colleton District are likely the same man. However, to cement these indications, a similar project must be conducted for the neighborhood of the Mary Dunn Tract—i.e., Solomon's first purchase in Colleton. A similar look at Prince William Parish could be made to better understand why Solomon identified that locale as his residence in 1773. Because much of the groundwork was done in Report No. 1, the two neighborhoods could be treated together in a project of roughly seventy to eighty hours.

Many of the early Thompson's Creek surveys were actually in North Carolina because of the fluctuating boundary. A search of records there should be conducted.

Finally, this project highlights a migration from Edgecombe County, North Carolina. (The number of families involved is not adequately reflected in this report because the cluster members who lived in residential zones A and B are not discussed herein.) We should pursue the possibility that Solomon Harper was also from Edgecombe.

Rachal Mills Lennon, CG

⁴⁵ Bertie Co., N. C., Deed Book 7: 375. Halifax Co., Deed Book 1: 374–75.

⁴⁶ Charleston Co., S. C., Wills & Miscellaneous Records Book 81: 52–53.

⁴⁷ Plat Books (Copy Series), Book 5:58 and 6:226; SCDAH, Series S213184: Colonial Charleston Co., S. C., Wills & Miscellaneous Records, Book 81:42–53. Leah Townsend, *South Carolina Baptists, 1670–1805* (1935; reprint, Baltimore, Md.: Clearfield Co., 1999), 47–48. Charleston Co., S.C. Deed Book F-4:433–8.

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