

The Bennett Families of Warren County, North Carolina, York and Lancaster Counties, South Carolina

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The authors have been researching the York District/County, South Carolina Bennett families for over twenty-five years. Mr. Siple is a 3rd great-grandson of James Littleton Bennett. This paper will prove Reuben Bennett who died in 1791 in Warren County, North Carolina had a son named James who most probably the James who died in York District, South Carolina about 1793. There is mounting evidence supporting the relationship between Reuben Bennett of Lancaster District, South Carolina, proven son of the older Reuben, and John a James Littleton Bennett of York District, South Carolina.

Background:

James Littleton Bennett was born about 1790 in North Carolina, according to census records, and died in York District, South Carolina about August 1865. His probate records in that county are detailed and his family can be reconstructed.¹ Original records were consulted which verified Littleton Bennett and James L. Bennett were the same man.

James Littleton, alternately called Littleton, married in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina on 1 January 1808 to Sarah Auton/Auten.² (Discussion follows on this subject.) They had three sons: Collin P. (probably Person,) Josiah A. (probably Auton,) and James R. After Sarah's death sometime between 1814 and 1824 he married a Lucinda R. and had two more sons, Andrew J. and Doctor Green. Josiah A., James R. and Andrew J. died before James Littleton and their children were named in his probate records.

John, James "Littleton" Bennett and Fanny Bennett are the only Bennett's listed in the US censuses of York District, South Carolina in 1810, 1820, and 1830. A John Bennett is enumerated in the 1800 census of the same district and appears to be the same John with one female which fits the probable marriage year of John. In 1840 only John and James Littleton Bennett and their families are listed. According to a letter published in *The Quarterly*, the

¹York County, South Carolina, James L. Bennett, Probate Files, Case 64, File 3007, Family History Library Microfilm (hereinafter FHL) #0229672. Records extend over a period of years (1866-1877) paying to heirs and then to deceased heirs children.

² William M. Clemens, comp. & Ed., *North and South Carolina Marriage Records*. (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1988), p27.

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journal of the York County Genealogical and Historical Journal, Fanny died before January 1831.

Hypothesis: James Bennett of 1790 York District, South Carolina is the son of Reuben Bennett of Warren County, North Carolina

The following records link James Bennett, deceased by 1793, in South Carolina to Reuben Bennett of Bute/Warren County, North Carolina. Reuben Bennett Sr. left a will in Warren County, North Carolina written in 1792 naming sons: Reuben, Charles and William. However the following records provide proof Reuben did have a son named James and from other records it is indicated he was probably the oldest of four sons.

- The Tax List of 1771 Bute County, North Carolina taken by Philemon Hawkins listed Reuben Bennett with taxable of one son, James and one slave. The age of taxation was sixteen implying a birth year for James of at least 1755.³ Note: Bute County was abolished in 1779 to form the counties of Warren and Franklin.
- Reuben Bennett purchased land from Robert Williams in Bute County, North Carolina in 1771 and the witnesses were James Bennitt (sic) and George Williams, the land bounded by Wm Johnson, Esq. The deed was proved by oath of James Bennett in August Court, 1772.⁴
- A James Bennett is listed in the 1779 List of Taxable Property assessed by Benjamin and Richard Ward and Daniel Barrow Warren County, North Carolina.⁵ In the same list is Reuben Bennitt (sic), Colonel Philamon Hawkins, William Darnall, Simon, Phillip, William, John and Stephen Beckham, James and Joseph Merritt. [These are families who intermarried with the Bennett's and some moved to York and Lancaster District South Carolina.]
- A James Bennett is on the 1784 Warren County Tax List of Captain White's District.⁶ In the list is Wm. Johnson Esq., known neighbor of Reuben Bennett by deed. Several member

³ The Journal of North Carolina Genealogy, Vol. XI, No. 3, Fall 1965, *Franklin-Warren-Vance Cos. Area, Father-Son Relationships*, p.1507. Original located in Archives in the Thomas M. Pittman Collection, (File No. 123.15)

⁴ Warren County, North Carolina Deed Book 3:333-4: microfilm FHL # 0020065

⁵ David B. Gammon, comp, *Tax Lists Warren County, North Carolina, 1779-1790*, Vol. I, pp Raleigh, NC:1994), 2

⁶ Alaretta K. Register, transcriber. *State Census of North Carolina 1784-1787*, 2^d edition (Baltimore: Genealogic Publishing Company, 1973), 161.

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of the Maddrey/Madray family who intermarry with the Autor family of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina and name a son James Littleton Bennett Auton are on the list. The Madray family intermarried with the Saintsing/Sensing family who lived near Bennett's in York District. The last listing for Jas. Bennet (sic) was in the Tax List of 1787, with no property list.

- Reuben, Reuben Jr. and a James Bennett are listed in the 17 US census of Warren County, North Carolina. The census of Warren County was alphabetized so neighbors cannot be determined.

Conflicting Information: A Jas Bennett is located in South Carolina U.S. Census of 1790.

- A James is listed as Jas Benit (sic) in Camden District, York County, South Carolina in 1790 US Census. A dispute in South Carolina led to an extension for the collection of data from 2 August 1790 to 5 February 1792. It is possible the same James could have been enumerated in North Carolina in 1790 and in South Carolina in 1791 or 1792. Jas. Benit (sic) census information in South Carolina does not fit the probable family James and Frances Bennett; there are no marks for any younger males, he had two females and six slaves. It is possible he had not moved all of his family to the area yet. The neighbors of this James appear to be from Warren County, North Carolina, for example: Nathaniel Harris. The Harris family originated in Isle of Wight County, Virginia.
- A James Bennett, son of Richard, approximately the same age as the son of Reuben, is believed to have left Warren County before he came of age with his guardian Solomon Langston and lived in Spartanburg District, South Carolina where his will was probated in 1825. He can be excluded as the James who remained in Warren County, North Carolina.

There is no explanation for James Bennett not being named in Reuben Bennett's will in 1792. But in reading various wills in the time period it was noted that not all of the known children of testators were mentioned or accounted for in the wills with a possible explanation they had been given their portion by some means previously or been purposely excluded.

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Hypothesis: Reuben Bennett of Lancaster County, South Carolina is related to James Littleton Bennett and John Bennett

An article published in "The Cauthen Family History" stated: after the Revolutionary War ended in 1783 a large number of families from Warren County, North Carolina acquired land in the Cedar Creek area of Lancaster and Kershaw counties of South Carolina. They had settled by 1800 and formed a social group and became more related through the intermarriage: between the families of William Cauthen, Reuben Bennett, William Fleming Bailey, Raleigh Hammond and William Vanlandingham.⁷

Reuben Bennett, is a proven son of Reuben Bennett by will in Warren Cour North Carolina, 1792.⁸ He was a Revolutionary War Soldier with Pension Records filed while living in Lancaster District, South Carolina.⁹ The record name his wife Elizabeth "Betsy" Beckham who he married in 26 May 1786 : Warren County, North Carolina.

Known Children:

William, Mary, Elizabeth, Reuben, James, Simon, Philemon, ar Nancy, married Thomas Merritt.

Reuben apparently moved from Warren County in the early 1790's. Numerous families from that county settled in Lancaster District, South Carolina along Cedar Creek. Reuben died in 1847 and his son Simon filed for his Revolutionary War Pension. Reuben's sons can be connected to James Littleton's sons Collin P. and James R. Bennett through at least one deed as they lived in Lancaster District, South Carolina among the sons and relatives of Reuben Bennett in 1850. In 1844 Collin P. Bennett witnessed the deed between James Bennett (son of Reuben) and James R. Bennett (son of James L.) both of Lancaster District, South Carolina.¹⁰ James R. Bennett died in 1870 and his estate was administered by Benjamin Patterson in York District. Collin moved back to York County by 1870.

William, son of Reuben of Lancaster District, South Carolina moved to Franklin County, Georgia by 1850 and is enumerated with his wife Susannah (Johns

⁷ Mary Cauthen Westerhaver, *The Cauthen Family History*, Auburn, AL: Craftmaster Printers, 1980).p48.

⁸ Ancestry.com. North Carolina, Wills and Probate Records 1665-1998 [database on-line.] Will of Reuben Bennett dated 10 October 1792, Warren County, North Carolina.

⁹ Reuben Bennett, Revolutionary War Pension Files, S18714, National Archives, Washington, DC.

¹⁰ James Bennett to James R. Bennett, York District, South Carolina Deed BK O p488. (Involved 138 acres of land James Bennett purchase of Burrell Beckham in 1836.)

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and their children including a son named James L age 16. This James moved to Volusia County, Florida with his parents by 1860 and in the 1870 US census of Volusia County, Florida he is listed as **Littleton Bennett**, wife Harriet and son Simon L., age 5. Obviously, a child named for James Littleton Bennett. It is possible the father of the James L., born about 1787, was also named James Littleton Bennett. In one record James L. was called Jr although that could also imply he was the younger.

Reuben's son James can be ruled out as the James Littleton Bennett of York District, South Carolina as he is mentioned in the pension records of Reuben as living in another state.

Hypothesis: John and James Littleton Bennett are brothers; John is proven son of James and Frances Bennett therefore they are also the parents of James Littleton Bennett.

John was born after 1775, making him considerably older than James Littleton Bennett. John Bennett reportedly married Mary/Polly Fuller about 1800 who was probably related to the Alsey Fuller of York District, South Carolina as they named a son Alsey Fuller Bennett. Mary died a few months before John, [she is not mentioned in his will] and both are buried in Flint Hill Baptist Cemetery according to Flint Hill Baptist Church Records.

John Bennett's children are proven by his will in York District, South Carolina 1846.¹¹ They are as follows:

Joseph P., Rebekah Kimbrell, Lucretia Merritt, Margaret Glover, Mary Fields, Alsey F. Bennett, Turza M. Bennett. All of the girls married into families who were originally from Warren County, North Carolina.

Son Joseph P. Bennett had children: John Joseph, Jessie N., **James Littleton**, Thomas R., Sarah Josephine, William M., Richard Elmore, Margaret P., and Mary Caroline. They moved by 1840 to Benton County, Alabama and Joseph died in Caldwell Parish, Louisiana.

- John is found in the estate sell records of William and Sarah Dillard along with Littleton and Fanny Bennett in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina in 1808.¹²

¹¹ York County, South Carolina, John Bennett Probate Files, Case 3-File 137, FHL# 0229625. Also accessed "Will of John Bennett, (1846); York County Wills, Vol 3, p 181, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia.

¹² Transcription of list of purchasers at estate sell of William and Sarah Dillard, deceased. Estate of William and Sarah Dillard, Mecklenburg County Records, North Carolina State Archives. Catalogued; under CR065, Box 70, Transcribed by Milford K. Kirby, 18 February 2005. Link to William and Sarah Dillard Estate Sell, 1808, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. <http://files.usgwarchives.net/nc/mecklenburg/wills;dillrd01.txt>

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- Court records provide proof that James Bennett had a wife Frances/Fanny, who was called a widow by February 1794. Frances' maiden name is unknown.
- Testimony from Joseph Jackson in lawsuit Sutton v John Jackson reads: "Samuel Knox claimed the land from 1783, cultivated the land and rented it to different persons." He stated "the first year Candlish went off he rented it himself John Polk, now dead & he rented it to **Jas. Bennett**. Knox received the rent after the first two years."
- John Bennett's testimony stated his father leased the land one year, that he and his mother lived on the land another 8 years. He stated his father was dead by about 1793.¹⁴

The lawsuit mentioned above was very involved and in summary the origin lease by Samuel Knox from the Catawba Indians was paid twenty-five year advance. Samuel Knox lived and died in Mecklenburg County, North Carol and most of his lands legal descriptions mention Steele Creek in that coun. He willed several large parcels of land to his granddaughter Mary Candlish daughter of Alexander Candlish, with a provision if Candlish moved back t South Carolina he could have use of any tract of her land, etc. for twenty-f years. He had no rights to sell anything and Knox also stated how her inheritance would be divided in the event of Mary's death before she had is Mary Candlish married Alexander Sutton and they filed suit in York Distric 26 March 1830.

The statements taken from several witnesses are abbreviated in these cour papers and it is clear from the court case in 1794 in York District, South Carolina that Frances Bennett was a widow. In the response from John Jackson in the case in 1830 it reads: "As far as I understood the land in dispute was regarded as the land of Alexander Candlish before his [Jackson] purchase from him, that he understood that Samuel Knox in his lifetime pretended to set up some claim to this land and went so far as to rent it to **Frances Bennett**, that Alexander returned to this state and sued the said Frances for the rent of the same and recovered it and William Pettus, execu of the said Samuel Knox paid her back the rent she was by judgment of the Court of Common Pleas compelled to pay Alexander Candlish. And he was informed by William Pettus, executor of said Samuel Knox deceased when l was about to purchase the land of said Alexander Candlish the title was go against the will of the said Samuel Knox deceased on the title of any other person....he purchased the land on which he now resides from Alexander

¹³Lawrence K. Wells, *Minutes of York County, South Carolina, 1786-1797*, Columbia SC: Brent Holcombe, 1981 p.133. February 8th Court 1794, p.60

¹⁴ Alexander Sutton vs. John Jackson, York County, Equity Bills, 1830, No. 60; Roll C, 2113, no frame numbers, Carolina Department of Archives and History.

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Candlish for a fair and full price...in 1811. That he took his title to the Catawba Indians and at that time received an old lease dated 1787 from Catawba Indians which is a considerable time before the date of the will of said Samuel Knox deceased."

Connections of Associates to James Littleton Bennett

The relevance of the following store lists is to show that Sally/Sarah Bennett, wife of James Littleton Bennett, had a close relationship with Fanny Bennett and her neighbors have connections to John and James L. Bennett. Matthew Marable was married to Jemima Glover and lived next to Fanny for many years, his daughter Elizabeth married Samuel Knox Pettus and his daughter Mary married S. H. Tilghman. Matthew was also partner with Richard Auton on land leases. The neighbors can be verified by reading the censuses of York District, South Carolina through the years. They also include many surnames of the families associated with Reuben Bennett in Warren County, North Carolina.

Craftsmen Named in John Springs Store Account Book 1806-1833¹⁵

Sally Bennett	Spinner	1809
[Sally was the wife of James L. Bennett]		
Fanny Bennett	Spinner and Seamstress	1809-1817
[Proposed mother of James L. Bennett]		

Store Account Book of J & E Springs¹⁶

1808	John Merret (sic) to rent of Mrs. Bennett's field
	Richard Auton (Jan thru April) [proposed father of wife of J.L.]
	John Bennett
	Fannie Bennett
1809	Sally Bennett on Sept 9 read: for cash paid to John Jackson for Fanny Bennett
	Fanny Bennett (Jan thru December)
	Thomas Cole [Bondsman for Littleton and Sarah Bennett]
	John Nivens [related to Joseph P. Bennett's wife]

¹⁵ Store Account Books, *The Quarterly*, The York County Genealogical and Historical Society, Volume June 1998 p29.

¹⁶ Ibid, Volumes published 1990 continuing through 1992.

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- Alsey Fuller [Proposed in-law relation of John Bennett]
- Matt Marable *Note: reads to cash let Revd [probably should read Ricd] Auton have for you*
- [Matt was a partner of R. Auton and neighbor of Fanny Bennett]
- 1810 Benjamin Person [Associated in Warren County, North Carolina and York District, South Carolina and a relative of Collin Person]
- 1811 Fannie Bennett
- 1813 Fanny Bennett
- Matt Marable
- 1813 John Bennett
- Joshua Darnall [Relative of wife of Benjamin Person]
- 1814 Fanny Bennett
- Alsey Fuller
- Matt Marable
- 1815 Matt Marable
- Alsey Fuller
- 1816 Mrs. Fanny Bennett
- 1817 Tabitha Cole [wife of Thomas].
- Mrs. Bennett

Land Information

John Bennett's land plat made on 8 May 1841 reads: Laid out to John Bennett a tract of land containing eighty seven acres 1 R. 31 P. in York District in the Indian Boundary on the Steel Creek and Spratt's Branch bounded by S. Johnston E. by Wm Clawsons SE by Wm. Parks L. leg of Jacksons, N by Geo Pettus.¹⁷

James L. Bennett's land plat was made on 2 September 1841 and reads: Laid out to James L. Bennett a tract of land containing two hundred and twenty acres 3R 19P lying in York District in the Catawba Indian Boundary on 4 Mi

¹⁷ "Land Plats of John Bennett," State Plats, Vol. 53, p 211, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, SC.

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Creek having such boundaries. [Not called out but plat lists surrounding land owners, Jno. Springs, Zimri Young, Estate of T. Shurley, Jas. Sturges, Jas. Barnes.¹⁸ The original rental from the Catawba Indians in 1825 was in the name of Littleton Bennett, but the land description in both is identical making it clear that James Littleton and Littleton Bennett are the same man.

Discussion of Maiden Name of James Littleton Bennett's wife Sarah

Littleton Bennett married Sarah (probably Auton) in 1808 in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. She apparently died between 1814 and 1824 when James L married a Lucinda R., last name unknown, and had two more sons. It is currently believed that the maiden name of James Littleton Bennett's first wife Sarah was Auton. The original marriage bond is online and can be viewed and it is quite visible that the last name is garbled. It has been transcribed as Arrington, Aranton and Craton in indices. Recent research indicates Richard and Sarah Auton/Orton bought land with Matthew Marable in York District in 1808 and they both appear in store records and censuses. (See above lists.) The evidence indicates to a high degree of probability that Josiah Auton of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina was a son of Richard and Sarah Auton. Josiah named a son born in 1818 James Littleton Bennett Auton and James Littleton named a son Josiah A. Bennett.

DNA Results that Confirm the Hypothesis

There are two prime types of DNA testing available with today's technology to help confirm the hypothesis presented in this paper:

1. **Y-DNA** testing is used to test the male line only. Since the Y-chromosome passes from father to son relatively unchanged, it is a good indication of shared direct male ancestry. Candidates for Y-DNA testing must be males and have the targeted surname.
2. **atDNA** or autosomal DNA is inherited equally from both parents. Testing atDNA has the potential to test for all ancestors' DNA. However, the further back an ancestor is that one is trying to verify with someone, the weaker the atDNA.

Y-DNA Test Results

In 2017 a male descendant of James Littleton Bennett took the Family Tree DNA Y-37 test. The test taker is a 3rd great-grandson and has the surname Bennett. The Y-DNA test results revealed a haplogroup of R-M269, the most common haplogroup of Western Europe.

¹⁸ "Land Plats of James L. Bennett," York District, South Carolina, State Plats, Volume 53, p 171, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, SC.

¹⁹ Abstracts of Deed Books 11-14 of Rowan County, North Carolina 1786-1797, published by James W. Klantz, 19 p.92, Deed Book 13, Entry 1920, p 208 dated 16 May 1792.

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The test taker's results were included in the Family Tree DNA Bennett Surname Project and are in Group 08c. That group indicates a strong relationship to the Isle of Wight County, Virginia, Bennett ancestry of w. Reuben Bennett, who died 1793, is a member.

atDNA Test Results

Several descendants of James Littleton Bennett have taken the Family Tree DNA atDNA test. The test results have been combined in the Bennett-Le atDNA Project managed by Mr. Barton Lewis. The purpose of the project is to evaluate participants' DNA results to determine if they descend from the Isle of Wight County, Virginia, Bennett families. Evaluation is still in progress ; results are not yet available.

Conclusion

The authors have used tax records, census records, court records, land information, probate records, store account details, and Y-DNA test results to support their hypotheses on the Bennett families of Warren County, North Carolina, York and Lancaster Counties, South Carolina.

The will of Reuben Bennett, who died in 1793 in Warren County, North Carolina, named three sons: Reuben, Charles, and William and his wife Elizabeth. The tax List of 1771 of Bute County, North Carolina includes the same Reuben Bennett with a son James, born by at least 1755. This paper has shown that James Bennett is, to a high degree of probability, the previously undocumented son of Reuben Bennett, who was in York District, South Carolina by 1793 and died there about 1793. The above evidence supports this conclusion based on documents and inference from the known associates.

The Bennett families of York and Lancaster Districts, South Carolina use similar naming patterns for generations; sons of James Littleton Bennett were near and interacted with sons of Reuben and they shared community involvement. It stretches the idea of coincidence to assume these Bennett families did not share a common ancestor.

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