

Preface

Among the few names that Capt. Bernard Elliot's Recruiting Journal records to have volunteered 1 July 1775, were William Jasper¹ and Thomas Trapp. Both enlisted as privates, but each in turn would be offered a commission.

Jasper declined his offer and apparently left no descendants, but he was destined for immortality, forever to be remembered as Sargent Jasper. It is suspected that his name is perpetuated in numerous towns and counties, and though all of the sons that were his namesakes have long-since joined him, at least two monuments exist to this day; one in Savannah and another at Ft. Moultrie in the section now called Jasper Battery in his honor.

I think it likely that Thomas Trapp also was a brave man, but though he accepted his promotion and has today numerous descendants, he seemed destined for oblivion.

No mention of him is to be found in such copious works as Sally's South Carolina Provincial Troops or John Maddox' South Carolina Revolutionary Soldiers, Sailors, Patriots & Descendants. The archives in Washington D.C. have no file on Lt. Thomas Trapp of South Carolina and no descendant is known who remembered him.

But several forgotten documents in the archives at Columbia, S.C. testify to his service that deserves recognition, by now more than two centuries over-due.



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¹. The Dictionary of American Biography gives Francis Marion credit for recruiting Jasper July 7, 1775. Perhaps Jasper was transferred that day to Marion's unit, but was again with Elliot 28 June 1776 at Sullivan's Island.

LT. THOMAS TRAPP
Regulator and Revolutionary of South Carolina

A.C. Trapp Jr.

Preface

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Thomas Trapp, the Regulator

Though the ancestors of Thomas and William Trapp are apparent for some centuries before their arrival in Fairfield County, South Carolina during the 1760's, little is ascertained of either man before their appearance there. They could have been among the last of the family to have been born on Martha's Vineyard, or in Connecticut where most of that family had settled before 1750, but the fact that many of the family were still sea-faring, introduces other possibilities.

Thomas seems to have immediately joined the side of law and order, such as it was, on Fairfield's frontier. Certainly every decent man counted. The impression of a contemporary devine, Mr. Woodmason, is summarized¹:

Rouges and robbers swarmed into the back country with honest pioneers and for years preyed almost at will on isolated settlers. As Woodmason tirelessly named their depradation; they stole cattle and horses, broke up cowpens, burned houses, turned families naked into the woods, plundered stores, "ravished married women", "deflowered virgins", and committed other cruelties unheard of. He reports they sometimes put irons in the fire and burned "the flesh of persons to make them confess where they concealed their money", and on one occasion "they carried off about twenty of the finest girls of the country into the woods with them-kept them for many months as their concubines in common among themselves til they grew past shame, and never could be brought back to a life of virtue.

Charleston was quite far away, and it is stated that requests for sheriffs and judges were heard there with indifference, and that Gov. Montagu was ever-ready to over-ride Lt. Gov. Bull's inclination to be more supportive of the regulators, who took on the responsibility for law and order along the frontier.²

By 1767 the regulators had joined together and taken such steps as to publicly whip serious offenders, and even to burn the houses of some persons who harbored thieves.

____The regulators enjoyed general approval, but made enimies as they dici-

1. Guess, Wm. Francis, South Carolina, Annals of Pride & Protest. Harper & Bro. 1957, reprint 1960, p.79
2. Op. Cit.

plined. Unfortunately the regulators standing in Charleston quickly deteriorated since they concluded that Charleston, providing no services, was owed no taxes. Probably this was the real cause that triggered warrents to be issued.

Lt. Gov. Bull may have deliberately taken advantage of Gov. Montagu's absence in allowing the regulators to survey parish lines, and in October 1768 in Guess' words, Fairfield's citizens were "marching peacefully to the polls."

Among the enemies the regulators made were John Musgrove and Jonathan Gilbert. With others they organized a "Moderator Movement" to oppose the Regulators. Not wishing to do their own fighting, they hired one Joseph Coffell as just the person to overwhelm the regulators, as he gained support from others who had suffered at the regulator's hands. Apparently Coffell's reputation was not enviable. A few of the words Guess found that contemporaries used to describe Coffell were "illiterate", "stupid" and "block-head".

The regulators were not easily intimidated, and intercepted officials from Charleston with warrents for their arrest. They refused to pay their taxes and continued to punish any serious wrong-doing within their respective areas.

Another source states that the man Gov. Montagu appointed to arrest the regulators was "a shady character with out-laws in his train". Whether or not this referred to Coffell, it would only intensify local support for the regulators.

The moderators eventually took into custody Rudolph Buzzard, a regulator named in the warrent. Five regulators then rushed to Buzzard's rescue; John Fulmore, Bartholomew Gartmen, John Frazier, Christopher Smith and Thomas Trapp. Instead of their anticipated success, they themselves were captured by Coffell and Musgrove.

The moderators were aware of their general unpopularity, and that they could more likely expect further resistance than any assistance in carrying the regulators to trial in Charleston. In the dilemma of what to do next, John Musgrove sent a request for reinforcements to Charleston. The Virginia Gazette No. 96 (16 March 1769) suggest that it caused quite a stir and some posturing:

Several councils have been held and we have been amused with a variety of reports not unalarming in consequence of the arrival of the express last Friday from the western frontier representing affairs in those parts again in so critical a situation as to have rendered an application for assistance from hence necessary to bring to town some of the people styled regulators who have (been?)

taken up by virtue of warrents issued from courts here. Upon the supposition that these representations might be just, we hear his excellency, the Governor, by the advice of the council, was pleased to enquire what voluntary assistance might be expected from the Charleston Militia, when to the honor of the Artilary Company, commanded by Capt. Owen Roberts, who have distinguished themselves upon former occasions, that corp being assembled and ready, agreed to go upon this service. A considerable number of gentlemen of rank and property also offered themselves as volunteers and everything was preparing for setting out on Sunday morning next, but this evening a stop was out to their furthur proceeding by the arrival of the prisoners consisting of five men, viz Rudolf Boffard (Buzzard), John Fullman, Bartholomew Cogman, Christopher Smith and Thomas Trapp, who have been conducted about 180 miles under guard of only eight men without the least attempt having been made to rescue them. John Frazier, another of the prisoners was left behind on the road, having been dangerously wounded in the head in the taking of him.

One might consider the estimation of 180 miles on modern maps to be somewhat excessive, but with neccessary detours for crossing streams and various crooks of the road long-since forgotten, the exaggeration may have been less than might be supposed.

Temporarily abandoning the subject of the captured regulators, the Gazette continued with other news from Charleston; a complaint about the taxes England demanded, mention of General Gage having ordered a regiment to St. Augustine, and eventually returned to the regulators under the date of 20 March 1769:

On Thursday Evening a party of the militia arrived here with the people styled regulators, who have taken up as mentioned in our last. After examination they were committed to jail to take their trials at the next court of general sessions, which begins on Monday 16 April. Their arrival rendered the marching of a body of men from town unnecessary, for which service Capt. Owen Roberts and several other volunteers offered themselves. The regulating work as they term it is not however at an end. These people will not suffer any process, civil or criminal to be executed, and frequent accounts are received of their exercising their assumed authority by whipping such as they deem delinquents and of other disturbances.

Richard Maxwell Brown¹ indicates that as more and more evidence against their moderator accusers was introduced at the trial, the court, as well as the general population began to favor the regulators. The earliest pardon for any of the regulators was dated 29 June 1771, but though it mentioned a number of Thomas Trapp's Fairfield neighbors including Thomas Woodward and Joseph Kirkland, Trapp's name was not mentioned among the eight names.

1. Brown, R.M., South Carolina Regulators, Belnap Press of Harvard University, Cambridge, 1963.

Thomas name does appear among the 68 names pardoned 1 October 1771 "for any act prior to 1 August 1768". The name of a fellow prisoner, given as Peter Rapesome must have provided some moments of amusement, alias or not. One is inclined to imagine the effort that went into keeping a straight face among the regulators, when Peter was first asked, "And what is your family name?" The fact that apparently no regulator ever better informed any of their captors as to his true identity, suggests a high morale among the regulators, and more than one Charlestonian must have wondered afterward what they had to laugh about so heartily.

Brown stated that there were no known Tories among the Little River-Cedar Creek Regulators, and that of the 16 of them that served in the Revolution, ten were officers: John Cox, Jacob Frazier, William Kirkland, David Moore, Thomas Parrot, Barnaby Pope, Thomas Woodward and Thomas Trapp.

Thomas Trapp's First Enlistment

Capt. Bernard Elliot's Recruiting Journal records that both Thomas Trapp and William Jasper (later the celebrated Sargent Jasper) were among those who enlisted 1 July 1775. Likely then the two would have known each other, but beyond the fact that Thomas left home 5 August 1775 to begin serving, nothing more of his first enlistment is known for certain.

The early date suggests one eager for action. The first shots fired at Lexington and Concord the previous April 19th were relatively minor occurrences and even George Washington would not be appointed commander-in-chief until July 3rd. Fighting in South Carolina would not start until October that year, when Patrick Cunningham and 60 armed men seized ammunition that the "Council of Safety" were sending to the Cherokee Indians to lure them to the side of the colonist.

Not knowing the date of expiration of Thomas first enlistment, it is impossible to know what all he was involved in. Six-months seems to have been a normal term, although not infrequently troops were dismissed at the completion of a battle.

Assuming he enlisted for six months, presumably he would have been discharged 31 December 1775. This time-span would see a battle at nearby "96" Nov. 19-21, but the total of only 240 colonist reported to have fought there discourages any assumption that Thomas presence might have gone unnoticed.

The battle at the Canebrakes occurred 22 November 1775, and indeed it would please all of Thomas descendants today if they could know for sure that Thomas was there to see the opposition leader, Capt. Patrick Cunningham desert his loyalist followers, and riding bareback, lead his famous retreat to the Cherokee nation, advising all that he passed to fend for themselves.

The last possibility known where Thomas might have encountered action during a six-month enlistment with South Carolinians, would have been marching back with Richard Robertson's militia after successfully opposing the loyalist in the up-country. Before his march back to the Congaree River, Robertson dismissed the North Carolina soldiers. The fifteen inch snow that impeded the troops on their way home brought much suffering from exposure and frost-bite. The "snow campaign" ended within days of Thomas six-month term, assuming that the term lasted that long.

If by chance the first enlistment was for a year, there is every reason to suppose Thomas was there 28 June 1776 with Capt. Bernard Elliot on Sullivan's Island near Charleston. Henry Lumpkin recently retold of a never-to-be-forgotten moment that day that Thomas could have witnessed:

Bernard Elliot reported that a round of shot carried away the flagstaff at the high of the fighting. Seeing this, the old grenadier, Sgt. William Jasper shouted to Col William Moultrie not to let them fight without a flag. Jasper then, on his own volition, mounted the parapet swept by the British broadsides, and fixing a blue flag on a gun sponger, placed it on the merlon of the bastion next to the enemy. The sergeant's courage was publicly recognized when the South Carolina president, John Rutledge, presented Jasper with his own sword.

One guess is as valid as another, but I suspect that in spite of being eager for action, Thomas Trapp may have missed out on all of these events. Jasper, who refused all offers of a commission in order to better identify with his comrades, would be killed in Savannah in 1779 under quite similar circumstances, his name well-remembered today in the south. Thomas Trapp, who enlisted the same day, apparently had no such hesitation when he came to be offered a commission, would in time become totally forgotten. It is worthwhile then to consider the time that elapsed between the end of his first enlistment in South Carolina and when he reappears in that state as a Lieutenant.

Thomas Trapp from 1776-1781

Nothing has been found to suggest that Thomas distinguished himself or had opportunity to do so during his first enlistment. Why then, would he be promoted to the rank of Lieutenant, unless he proved himself somewhere other than in South Carolina.

Of the scarcely more than half-a-dozen men of the surname Trapp known to have fought in the Revolutionary War, at least two, and possibly three were named Thomas. The record of Thomas Trapp of Virginia, who served from October 1777 as late as July 1779 in the Second Virginia Regiment proves that he could not possibly have been identical with Cpl. Thomas Trapp of Connecticut, whose service there is documented from Feb. 28, 1777 through Feb. 8, 1780.

The void of any information of Thomas of South Carolina, from January 1776 to April 1781 establishes beyond doubt that Thomas would not have continued his service there. Both Thomas of Virginia and Thomas of Connecticut would complete their separate enlistments during that period, and neither can be eliminated time-wise as a possible identity of Thomas of South Carolina.

Virginia, of course, is much closer to South Carolina, but there is nothing in the record to suggest that Pvt. Thomas Trapp of the Second Virginia Regiment ended his enlistment with any more distinction than did Pvt. Thomas Trapp of South Carolina. This is not to belittle the contribution of either man, for many a worthy soldier has been content to serve his country in that rank, but some mid-rank somewhere would more likely account for the promotion of Thomas Trapp of South Carolina to the rank of lieutenant than the void in the record that followed from December 1775 to April 1781.

This alone would make it more likely that Lt. Trapp of S.C. and Cpl. Trapp of Connecticut were one and the same, for some intermediate rank is almost certainly required before a private becomes a Lieutenant in an army where ranks were not bought and sold. Before Thomas of Connecticut finished his enlistment, events were again heating up in South Carolina, and most of the remaining fighting to be done was occurring in the southern colonies.

It seems highly unlikely that a soldier who had been inactive for more than five years, would suddenly become a Lieutenant near the end of the war. Of all the known possibilities, I find that the conclusion that Thomas Trapp between South Carolina enlistments, served for nearly three years in Connecticut, by far the most convincing.

Unlikely as an enlistment in distant Connecticut may first seem, there is enough circumstantial evidence of South Carolina connections to there to prove that such a thing might well have been. Sarah Kershaw of Camden married Benjamin Perkins (1763-184?) an attorney from Connecticut. Their son, Roger Griswold Perkins was almost certainly the namesake of Roger Griswold (1762-1812) a native of Norwich. At least one family connection of the Trappes and the Griswolds existed in earlier generations.

William Trapp, baptised at Norwich 2 April 1751 is not known to have visited South Carolina, but his tombstone in the old Methodist Cemetery just across the border at Elizabethtown, N.C. states that he died 5 August 1788 and that he was:

formerly of Norwich, Connecticut.

Due to the repetition of the names "Thomas" and "William" during this period, it is not always possible to sort out various sons of the Trapp family with confidence, but this William could have been the regulator's son, and the namesake of his brother William that settled in Fairfield County, S.C. His father's name on the baptismal record was given as "Thomas Trapp".

A soldier looking for action would have left the south and sought it in New England during the middle of the war, and returned to the south towards the end of the war as events cooled down in New England. If my assumption is correct that Thomas the regulator sprung from the New England family, Connecticut, where numerous family connections remained, would have been an entirely natural choice for Thomas Trapp, soldier from South Carolina.

To borrow a quotation from a song inspired by another Trapp family (entirely unrelated), "Nothing comes from nothing, nothing ever could", it is entirely apparent that of all known possibilities, the New England origin is by far the most likely to have been the true one of Thomas the regulator.

Thomas Trapp as a Lieutenant

After the British evacuated Camden 10 May 1781, Thomas Sumpter led a victorious army the following day to Orangeburg, where 80 British troops surrendered without fighting. The first entrie in Capt. William Robertson's account linking Thomas to that locality fails to state the year. He writes: that Thomas Trapp was owed salary for the following:

To duty done at Orangeburg as Lt. in Capt. Wm. Robertson's Company, Col. Taylors Regiment from April 1st on until the fifteenth. Foot at 175 for 15 days. 26-5

Had this been duty as a scout reporting movement of the British there, in April of 1781, it is probable that Capt. Robertson would have wanted more recent information than that Thomas might have offered, by then a month old.

It seems more likely that Thomas presence at Orangeburg followed the time that the Colonist recaptured it. Supplies would have to be guarded, and more scouting would need to be done.

Capt. William Robert's next entrie in explaining Thomas salary yet owed to him is dated:

To duty done at Orangeburg as Lieut. in Capt. Wm Robertson's Company, Col. Taylor's Regiment from Sept.1st until the 15th, 1782.

Capt. James Craig, also of Col. Taylor's Regt. provides the following details:

State of South Carolina to Thomas Trapp, Lt. so serving as Lieutenant under Capt. Craig in Col. Taylor's Regiment at (? Amerums or Anorums??) Congarees from May 1st on until May 24th, both inclusive as horseman for 24 days.

Apparently Craig was not with General Green's troops 12 May 1781 at "Ninety-Six", but he and his unit were a part of the repeated movements around the Congaree River, to be joined by an increasingly larger force in the days that followed. Craig states of Thomas Trapp:

In June on and July
Duty done under Capt. Craig on the expedition against Monk's Corner. A Lieutenant in the horsemand 15 days at 2/3/

Monk's Corner seems to come into better focus. It had been captured 14 April 1780 by the British as a means of controlling escape routes and after Camden 10 May 1781, Lord Rawdon evacuated to there.

In July Thomas Sumpter seems to have been assigned command of several special forces operation in the area of Monck's Corner, and Lumpkin lists additional outposts as including Dorchester and the Quarter House as his major objectives.

It is not known precisely where Thomas Trapp fit into this group. On 17 July 1781 it apparently became obvious to the British that Sumpter was on his way to retake Monck's Corner. They removed their valuable supplies to Biggin Church, where the patriots attempted to follow. Long after most patriots had suspended their attempts for the day, it is reported that an unidentified group (Lumpkin thought to have been one of Sumpter's units) tried to force Biggin Bridge that prevented the patriots from gaining the church, but they were driven back by Coates' pickets.

Craig's next mention of Thomas Trapp was:

In June on
At McCords Ferry having command of a party of said company a Lieutenant
in the horse at 2/3

100-00

I regret having been unable to identify McCord's Ferry, but there is plenty to be read about the next location Craig mentions:

In August and September on
At Eutaw having command of a party of mounted Militia of said Col.
15 days at 2/5

33-15

The battle of Eutaw Springs was fought 8 Sept. 1781 with both sides claiming victory. Losses were great. Lumpkin reports that of the total British, 85 were killed, 350 were wounded and 257 missing, more than a third of the total. Green reported casualties of 251 killed, 367 wounded and 74 missing, the exact same number of 392 suffered by the British.

Lumpkin ends his account of the battle with "Wade Hampton was unquestionably the outstanding American officer of that bloody and crucial occasion" Hampton was in charge of the S.C. state calvary, and since Craig establishes that Thomas Trapp was in command of a party of that large body, he would certainly have had some first-hand knowledge of Hampton. This may well account for a grandson later being given the name Hampton Lee Trapp.

Craig's conclusion of Thomas Trapp's service was not intended to provide a climatic ending, but with the details that may be added, it nearly does. He states:

In December on

To duty ordered against Cunningham as far as Broad River, having command of a party of Mounted Militia of said company.

4 days at 2/5

148 pounds-10 shillings

I do certify the above duty to be done by Lt. Trapp in my command.
(signed) James Craig, Capt.

Oh boy! Cunningham is about to get what is coming to him, or at least Thomas must have hoped so. Though I believe this surname is also to be found among the South Carolina patriots, it was perhaps one of the most despised surnames among the colonist of South Carolina. M. Victor Alper¹ in his account of Walnut Grove, home of Charles & Mary Moore near Spartenburg, shares details that give some insight:

In the upstairs bedroom, a friend of the Moore's, Capt. Steadman, an officer in the Colonial forces recuperated from a serious illness. Two fellows were visiting when word arrived that "Bloody Bill" Cunningham- a Tory notorious for his terrorism of the local community- was on his way to wreak vengeance on Steadman for the execution of one of his friends. As Cunningham and a gang approached the Moore house, their racous shouts unintentionally served as a warning. Steadman's two visitors fled through the back in an attempt to seek aid, but were cut down before they could make their escape. "Bloody Bill" bounded up the stairs and bayoneted the bedridden Capt. Steadman.

In Thomas Trapp's file is another sheet, apparently dated 2nd or 3rd January possibly 1787. He was still owed 28 pounds-14 shillings -3½pence for the period 1 May 1781 through 15 Sept.1782 which was to be paid "if demanded (by Thomas) his executors, administrators or assigns. No record exists to indicate that Thomas or any of his heirs ever did so.

Two claims signed by Lt. Thomas Trapp are preserved at the Columbia archives, in both he acknowledges having received supplies for the army that were not paid for. The first is dated 12 July 1781: (AA #3391)

This is to certify that John Affender for the use of the army has issued four head of cattle for which he received no pay.

I have so far been unable to locate John Affender on the census of 1790. The other is dated 21 April in the late 1780's:

1. Alper, James Victor America's Heritage Trail, S.C., N.C. & Virg., McMillan N.Y. 1976.

I have this day recd from John Swilla the full value of my acct. against the publick now lying at the auditors office for auditing and afterwards to get an Indent for the same from the treasury- and I do request the Commissioners of the treasury of the state of South Carolina to make out an indent for the same with interest pursuant to the resolve of the legislature - in this case to the said John Swilla and to accept this as receipt in full against the public for the said account.

John Swilla is so far not identified but all of this family appear to have been from the Fairfield-Camden area. One John Swilla Jr. was listed in 1790 in Camden-Claremont area.

Capt. William Robertson certified Thomas Trapp's service up to April 15, 1781 and Capt. James Craig swore 2 January 1784 in regard to the previously quoted account:

Appeared Lieut. Thomas Trapp and on oath sayd the above pay bill is just and true for the right same above mentioned.

Thomas Trapp's Signature

I have the impression that in recent years the science of hand-writing analysis has gained more respect than it had in 1956 when I bought Dorothy Sara's Handwriting Analysis new for 36¢ including 1¢ sales tax. She was stated to have been president of the American Graphological Society at the time her book was published by Pyramid Books.

I am unable to conclude that Thomas did anything more than sign the various documents, which diminishes to some extent the scope for analysis and some characteristics that I suspected in the signature were not definite enough to fit them with confidence within Sara's categories.

It might be pointed out that the categories that did correspond told of characteristics that we had already suspected of Thomas. For what it is worth (and 36¢ may be too much even in these inflated times by the time that I supply a second-hand interpretation) the following statements do seem to correspond:

(slant- p.37) *Thomas Trapp*
 . . . friendly, affectionate nature, demonstrative in display of the feelings. But not too impulsive and able to keep emotions under control.

1811. 10th I have this day recd from
John Swilla the full value of my debt against
the publick now lying in the auditors office
for auditing and afterwards to get an Indent
for the same from the Treasury and I do
Request the Commissioners of the Treasury of
the State of South Carolina to make out
the Indent for the same with the Interest
thereon to be before of the Legislature
in that case to him the said John Swilla
and to accept this as a Receipt in full
against the publick for the said debt
I went.

3d
James Craig Thomas Trapp 1811

(base line, p.47) *Thomas Trapp*
 Handwriting that does not vary, which always goes across the sheet in a straight line belongs to a person who is not quickly upset, is not swayed by every little event or the expressed thoughts of others. The mind functions carefully and the moods are usually held on an even keel. (Note that Thomas Trapp's signature remains remarkably straight, in spite of the entire page having been written with an obvious downward slant. A.C.T.)

(wide spaces, p.54) *Thomas Trapp, L*
 . . . wide spaces between words and the lines reveal generosity.

(Pressure, p. 69) *T L*
 He is generally more easily understood and more predictable than the introvert or extrovert. (Notice how Thomas pressed the pin on capital letters "T" and "L".)

(size, p.76) *somewhat large*
 . . . a mind that does not want to be tied down to one line of thought, although he may be capable of doing so.

(simplified letters, p. 134) *s p*
 . . . a creative mind, an intellectual curiosity, plus the ability to think clearly.

I have the impression that Thomas Trapp only signed a document that had been written by another hand. It would be interesting to know what Sarah might have made of the ornamental loops found in the capital "T", but my own guess is that these might indicate some appreciation for ornamentation, though it does not appear to be the signature of one who often writes. Less writing would have been necessary in that day. Though it is an over-simplification to suggest that after signing one's marriage license and the deed to the homestead and filling out the page in the family bible, one's paper work was done for life; this may actually be closer to their case than the multitude of forms the average citizen now signs annually.

Locating Thomas Trapp's Residence

Richard Maxwell Brown states that Thomas lived in the "Little River-Cedar Creek section" which he called "a Regulator hotbed east of the Broad River". This would include most of the southern half of Fairfield County.

None of the deeds found in Fairfield County show that Thomas owned land there as early as we know him to have resided there, and it may prove that no stricter definition of place will be improved over Brown's wide-sweeping one, though it is suspected that he lived in different locations within Fairfield County at different times.

William Trapp, assumed to have been the brother of Lt. Trapp, received his first royal land grant in Fairfield County in 1763 of land "lying on Cedar Creek". His subsequent grants of connecting land all listed one of the surrounding borders as "vacant land". Considering how the frontier's population was rapidly growing, absorbing in addition to native colonist large immigrations of Irish and Germans, all eagerly seeking land, this is somewhat surprising.

It is hardly credible that this "vacant land" remained unclaimed until it was eventually granted to Thomas Trapp in 1800, unless someone was already residing on it that no newcomer wished to compete with. Such a man Thomas Trapp must have been, and the image we have of him would be compatible with one who did not feel that he needed the blessing of Charleston to settle the frontier.

The eventual grant of this property June 16, 1800 does not state that it was a reward for Thomas war-time service, but that it resulted from

. . "an act of the legislature entitled "an act for establishing the mode of granting the lands now vacant in this state, and for allowing a commutation to be received for some lands that have been granted" passed this 19th day of February 1791.

It may well be that Thomas military service could have been considered, for there is no mention that he paid anything for it. The written discription mentions that it was bordered on the north-east by the lands of William Trapp, which increases our suspicion that Thomas had "squatted" on this same property for decades before he received the grant.

It would be somewhat unconvincing that Thomas would make no effort to own land until after the Revolutionary War.

The grant of June 16, 1800 states:

. . . We have granted and by these presents do grant unto Thomas Trapp his heirs and assigns a plantation or tract of land containing four hundred and eighty-two acres surveyed for him the 16th of December 1799 situate in the district of Camden-Fairfield on the drains of Cedar Creek waters of Broad River, bounded by a line running north by John Smith's land, south by Roling Williamson, southeast unknown and on the north-east by William Trapp . . .

(signed) John Drayton, Lieut. Gov.
at Columbia.

One Thomas Trapp of South Carolina purchased 26 January 1802 from Benjamin Simms of Green County, Georgia, a "negro boy named Bob", of which no further trace has been found.

Thomas sold the property granted April 26, 1808, "the residue of of the tract of 4,082 acres" that was "situate lying on Trapp's Branch of Cedar Creek waters of Broad River". The same bordering land owners named in the grant remained.

In the meantime Thomas had acquired through two separate deeds from Robert McCants a plantation "located on the branch of Thorntree waters" in 1798. Though it is not known if he moved immediately on to this property, it is believed that his last years were spent there.

On the one occasion when Thomas household was recorded by a census-taker, (in 1800), the surnames of his presumed nearest neighbors add somewhat to the confusion, listing surnames that earlier had been identified with other sections of Fairfield County.

Listed before Thomas in 1800 were the households of: Antony Seal (one Antony Seal from S.C. was also an early settler of Neshoba Co. Ms.) Enoch Seal, James Seal, Samuel Lochridge, John Bryand and Allen Stripling. Listed after Thomas were the households of: Thoman Hinoes, John Kelly, Joel Kelly, Vinney Kelly, Mores (Morris?) Outwen (Owen?) and Robert McCants. The number of families of Seal suggest a location somewhere along the center of Fairfield County's western border. Possibly Kelly was too common a name to lend much support to any conclusion, and Robert McCants likely moved after selling the plantation on Thorntree Creek, but Fairfield's south-east border comes to mind.

As to better defining the spot where Thomas Trapp's house stood, lacking actual proof, I can only estimate that he lived south-east of Winnsboro from the 1760's to the 1790's and eventually moved to the plantation on Thorntree Creek, closer to the eastern border of Fairfield County.

Thomas Trapp's Family & Descendants

In 1800, the household of Lt. Thomas Trapp included:

one male and one female over age 45, two males and one female between the ages of 16 and 26, one female between 10 and 16, and one male and one female under age 10.

We are only certain that the male over age 45 was Thomas himself, and that some degree of conjecture will be present in any further conclusions in regard to that census. Thomas real age is estimated to have been more like age 55, and could have been 71 if he were the Thomas baptised on Martha's Vineyard in 1729. It is probable that one of his own married children remained in his household with children of their own.

In all probability other of his children had left home to establish their own families by 1800, and there is no hope of gaining any focused conclusion from this census alone, but it is nevertheless of infinite value as being the one source that imply's that Thomas probably had a good-sized family.

Though it may generally be an unreliable practice to assume that children of a given surname that are proven not to belong to one family of a given locality, must certainly belong to the other family of the same surname, in the case of Lt. Thomas Trapp I find it at least partially convincing.

The two men in Fairfield County, Thomas and William, were the only sources of the surname "Trapp" known in the entire state of South Carolina throughout the 18th century. To a large extent, William's descendants are established. To assume that the others of that century were not the issue of Lt. Thomas Trapp, requires us to believe that a third man of this same surname lived and left there without leaving a single trace.

Even so, the task of proving the descendants of Lt. Thomas is severely handicapped by:

- (1) Thomas having disposed of most, if not all of his property within his lifetime.
- (2) Deeds made to his apparent sons fail to state family relationships.
- (3) Though census returns were recorded during the last three decades of Thomas life, apparently the census takers missed him and his household two times out of three.
- (4) No descendant appears to have ever made a claim in regard to Thomas Revolutionary War Service.

Mrs. Jean Loflin of Baton Rouge in a letter 11 December 1971 mentioned that one William Trapp was the administrator of one Thomas Trapp's estate in Fairfield County, S.C. April 10, 1813.

Nothing is actually known of Thomas Trapp's spouse in South Carolina. Among the "bits left over" that are not fitted into any pedigree that could, as far as known, possibly fit here is the following announcement in a Columbia newspaper 17 August 1819:

Married on Wednesday evening last by Rev. Dr. Walsh, Mr. Samuel Taylor to Mrs. Sarah Trap, widow, both of this district.

On the following page are listed individuals that seem to have been Thomas Trapp's children or grand-children.

Descendants of Lt. Thomas Trapp

Each of the following is believed for the reasons indicated, to have been Thomas descendant, though his children and his grand-children are not always distinguishable.

- I WILLIAM TRAPP, b.btw.1775-1796. Apparently acquired the plantation on Thorntree Creek. Was a buisnessman of Camden from 1813. Apparently married but is not believed to have had issue. He d. 1822 north of Camden.
- II THOMAS TRAPP JR. b.btw. 1794-1802, pos. grandson. One Thomas Jr. was deeded land in 1909. Thomas of Camden m. Christmas 1818 Elizabeth McKenzie of Camden and in 1820 their household included one male. THEY ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE DESCENDANTS YET LIVING in Kershaw Co., S.C.
- III PHOEBE TRAPP b. late 1780's on '90's. m. as his second wife ca 1815, Wm. Henry Harrison (1786-1825). The Harrisons on the Wateree River, were near Thorntree Creek. a Current Harrison genealogist believes that W.H.H. had no issue by his second marriage.
- IV LITTLETON TRAPP b.btw. 1790-1800. Listed in 1830 with some neighboring household listed as Lt. Thomas neighbors in 1800. Littleton's household in 1830 included two males and two females under age 5. No further information.
- V BENJAMIN TRAPP, b. 1787 in S.C. d. 185? (Reason more fully discussed in the following pages). m. Eliza Billings 2 May 1820 Jones Co. Ga. His surviving issue included:
1. ELODIA b. 1830 m. 13 May 1847 Bibb Co. Ga CHESTER RUSSELL of Connecticut, and had issue:
 - N.WILLIAM RUSSELL b. Ga ca 1856. living in 1870
 2. LUCIA N. b. 1837 m. 21 Dec 1854 W.T.BROWN in Bibb Co. Ga.
 3. SYDENHAM BENJAMIN TRAPP b. Jan.1841 m. 1871 MARY E. GEORGE. he d.190?. Stated to have had six children (Owen's Hist. of Ala. pub. ca 1899)
 - JAMES McFERRIN TRAPP d. 19 Dec 1898 in ManiLa.
 - SYDENHAM BENJAMIN TRAPP 1871-1921 m. NANNIE ELEANOR McDANIEL. Were of Forest City Ark. in 1910. He listed alone as a boarder in San Antonio in 1920 (possibly a T.B.patient)
 - SID B. TRAPP b. ca 1899 in Ark. a boarder in Forest City in 1920.
 - ELODIA TRAPP b. 1881 Ga. fl. 1900
 - MARY B. b. Dec. 1888 Ala. fl. 1900
- VI OSMAN TOPEL TRAPP (1803-1880) m. 1st ca 1825 and had issue. Wife died in early 1830's. Listed in Fairfield County in 1830 apparently near Thorntree Creek. m.2nd MARY ANN LEARD in 1838 and lingered some short time in Ga. before arriving in Miss. by 1840. Named 1st son by second marriage, BENJAMIN and his first dau. ELIZA (see V). HAS SEVERAL LIVING DESCENDANTS.

Reconciling the account in Owen's "History of Alabama" with facts.

On first reading the account of Sydenham Benjamin Trapp's ancestor in the History of Alabama, I found enough inaccuracies to suspect that the entire account was largely fabricated. I have since reversed my opinion, though the inaccuracies remain. I had not considered that some 120 years had by then elapsed since the time of the Revolutionary War. The author had little opportunity to double check the information that had been handed down orally.

Though confusion and possibly embellishment occurred, both were rooted in fact. Inevitably other researchers will discover that my own conclusion is contradicted by a historian who was an entire century closer to the event. For this reason it seems important to air all of the facts to clear the matter for any descendants in this line.

Only one sentence in the entire account is challenged, in which it was claimed that Sydenham was descended from Major William Benjamin Trapp of South Carolina, who served under General Washington. There was no such person anywhere in the Revolution, but the only officer of the surname "Trapp" was indeed from South Carolina. Though a letter from Andrew Huntingdon of Norwich Connecticut dated 19 August 1776 presumably still exists in which he mentions to Joshua Huntington that "Capt. Trapp" was to deliver supplies the next day to George Washington (and presumably this occurred), this is the only direct contact known of any person of the surname "Trapp" with General Washington, though a good half-dozen men of the surname served in that war. As to Capt. Trapp possibly having been later promoted to "Major William Benjamin Trapp," this did not happen. Capt. Trapp was Samuel Trapp, whom the local citizens seem to have awarded the title "captain" out of respect for his earlier sea-faring days.

In Sydenham's very own household when he grew up were the Russell family, the father a native of Connecticut. As all of these facts were handed down (assuming that they were) it would be an easy matter for a lieutenant to become a major, and service "to" George Washington (which may well have occurred more than the one time that surviving documents suggest) could easily become "served under" George Washington. When any history waits for more than 120 years to be written down, confusion is to be expected as to who did what when.

Sydenham was certainly the son of Benjamin Trapp, which the 1850 census of Bibb Co. Ga. confirms to have been born in S.C. ca 1797. Of the two households of the surname "Trapp" known in the entire state that year, we are limited to that of William (an early settler of Fairfield) and Lt. Thomas Trapp of Fairfield County.

But William, though not a Torie as far as is known, had received more than one royal grant of land, and very likely supposed that these were his legal basis for ownership. He seems to have remained entirely neutral, and is not known to have supported the Revolution in any way, and certainly not as a major with the continental army. In addition, no evidence has ever been found that he used the middle name of "Benjamin" for himself or any of his own sons, and on the whole his descendants are quite well documented. In total, all evidence discourages any assumption that William Trapp of Fairfield County could have been the ancestor of Sydenham Trapp.

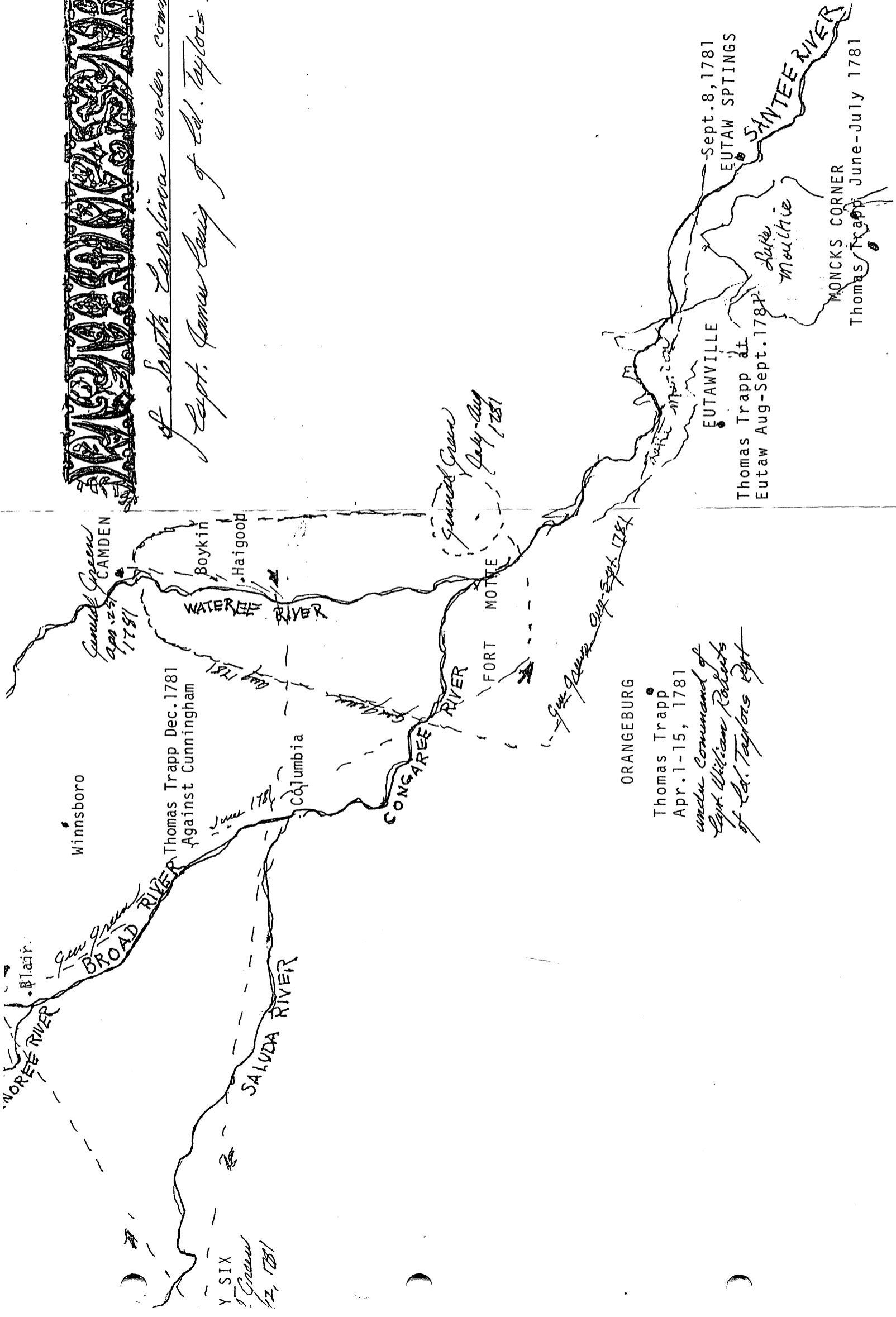
But all evidence is that Benjamin Trapp's birthplace was South Carolina, and though counties would not be indicated normally on census returns, the fact that households of the surname Trapp apparently existed only in the county of Fairfield, limits considerably the possibilities. Of the two possibilities, all evidence seeming to discourage Sydenham being descended from William, the only other possibility known was that Benjamin was either the son, or grandson of Lt. Thomas Trapp. No facts are known that would in any way discourage this assumption.

Mention has already been made that Osman Topel Trapp, later of Neshoba County, Ms. named his first son by his second marriage "Benjamin" and his first daughter "Eliza". The fact that sometime after he was recorded on the 1830 census of Fairfield Co. and within the next year or so following the death of his first wife, he spent some time in Georgia, before arriving with his second wife in Mississippi by 1840, greatly increases the possibility these children were the namesakes of Sydenham's parents. Though no direct proof has been found to place Benjamin (1787-185?) within the immediate vicinity where Lt. Thomas Trapp lived in 1800, all indication is that Osman Topel Trapp remained in that general area until after 1830.

Lt. Thomas Trapp's household in 1800 does record one male under age ten. Might this not have been Benjamin?



*of South Carolina under command of
Capt. James Craig of Ed. Taylor's Regt.*



ORANGEBURG

Thomas Trapp
Apr. 1-15, 1781
*under Command of
Capt. William Roberts
of Ed. Taylor's Regt.*

Sept. 8, 1781
EUTAW SPRINGS

EUTAWVILLE
Thomas Trapp at
Eutaw Aug-Sept. 1781

MONCK'S CORNER
Thomas Trapp June-July 1781

Y SIX
1781

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