

WITTECAW / WITECAW
HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL NOTES
ON A WACCAMAW RIVER BLUFF

By Deryl Young

Located approximately three and three-quarter miles north of present day Conway is a bluff on the west side of the Waccamaw that was known by the name of Wittecaw when the original grantee, William Waties, received a proprietary grant to 500 acres on this bluff on 23 April 1717.¹ This is the oldest known grant in Kingston Township.

The Waties family is believed to have come from Wales in the late seventeenth century and both father and son, William Sr. and Jr., were known to have been Indian traders and very active in the colonial government. On July 10, 1716, William Waties, Sr. was appointed factor to trade with the Indians north of the Santee and was instrumental in building the trading post at Yauhannah the same year. Due to health reasons, he resigned the following year and was succeeded by his assistant, Meredith Hughes. It is uncertain which William Waties (Sr. or Jr.) received the land grant to Wittecaw but most probably William Jr. was granted the land since it was the original grantee that registered the memorial to the property in 1732/3 and William Sr. was in poor health in 1717. The date of death for William Waties Sr. is unknown and no estate documents have been found.²

During the 1730's, William Waties Jr. received numerous grants and purchased the warrants of others along the Pee Dee and Waccamaw Rivers (several of these being in Kingston Township) and became one of the largest landowners in the area. His lands totaled in the thousands of acres and many of the tracts were strategically important bluffs along the Pee Dee and Waccamaw. On December 4, 1735, he was granted 250 acres across from the new town of Kingston and lot number 8 in the town.

Records indicate that sometime prior to Jan. 1735 William Waties sold Witecaw to William Simson (Simpson). We know this because Simson on January 24, 1735 mortgaged the property called Witecaw (sic) to Waties for the sum of 1039:13:4 pounds. The mortgage was witnessed by neighbors Ebenezer Shingleton (who lived just upriver from Simson on the east side of the Waccamaw and is the progenitor of many of the

¹ Memorial of William Waties dated 29 Jan. 1732, S.C. Dept. of Archives and History, Memorial Book 1, page 422 – the memorial of Wm. Waties to be registered in the office of his Majesty's Auditor pursuant to the act of the General Assembly in that case made and provided of a tract of land containing five hundred acres in the possession of the said William Waties situate in Craven County in the parish of Prince George and bounding on the Waccamaw River commonly called and known by the name of Wittecaw which said land is granted to the said William Waties under the common seal of this province at the yearly rent of twelve pence per hundred acres as by the said grant bearing date 23rd day of April 1717 doth appear. Given under my hand the 29th day of January An. Dom. 1732 William Waties

² The Waties Family of South Carolina compiled by H.D. Bull, S.C. Hist. & Gen. Mag.

Singletons in Horry County today) and Dr. William Cripps who obtained a land grant adjacent to Shingleton.³

On June 9/10 1738, William Simson again mortgaged the 500 acre tract to Daniel & Thomas Laroche, merchants of Georgetown, stating that he lived on the property that was then bounded on the northeast by Thomas Blythe and southwest by William Pinckney, both of whom had received land grants adjacent to Simson's Wittecau. William Pinckney received a grant to 1700 acres and a town lot in Kingston on Sept. 17, 1736 and Thomas Blythe received a grant of 250 acres (including a portion of the bluff at Wittecau – see accompanying map) on September 17, 1736.⁴ Thomas Blythe called himself a cabinet maker of Craven County when he mortgaged his 250 acres in 1738 and probably lived on the tract.⁵ He later became a deputy surveyor and a justice of the peace for Prince George Parish.

William Simson sold Wittecau to Paul Trapier who sold to brothers Joseph and Samuel Grier on March 26/27 1749.⁶ Shortly after purchasing the 500 acres, the two Grier brothers divided the tract into two parcels of two hundred fifty acres each. Joseph Grier wrote his will on September 2, 1749 naming his wife Barbara and children Andrew, Joseph, Jean and Mary. He left the Wittecau tract to his son Andrew.⁷ Andrew Grier married Margaret (last name unknown) and had children Jean, Joseph and Samuel. He wrote his will on April 8th 1765 leaving the Wittecau tract to his two sons Joseph and Samuel.

Samuel Grier, brother to the original Joseph Grier and the owner of the other 250 acres at Wittecau, purchased other lands in Kingston (750 acres on Hunting Swamp and 350 acres adjacent) and on the Pee Dee in Yauhannah (1,950 acres at Conns Creek). At the time of the writing of his will on June 11, 1769, he lived on his plantation in Yauhannah. He left the 250 acre Wittecau tract to his son John Grier.⁸

³ Charleston Deed Book T, page 130, Mortgage, 24 Jan. 1735. William Simson, of Prince George Parish, Craven Co., to secure payment of 3 bonds given by Simson to William Waties this date in the total sum of 1039:13:4 lbs. SC money, conveys to William Waties 500 ac. in Prince George Parish, commonly called Wittecau, fronting on Waccamaw River. Witnesses: Ebenezer (his mark) Shingleton, William Cripps, Paul Trapier. Before Thomas Laroche, J.P.

⁴ Royal grants, S.C. Dept. of Archives and History

⁵ Charleston Deed Book S, page 311, 13/14 June 1738, L & R by mortgage. Thomas Blythe, cabinet maker, to Daniel Laroche & Thomas Laroche, merchants, all of Craven Co., as security on bond of even date in penal sum of 1184:13 lbs. for payment of 592:6:9 currency on 16 Dec. 1738; 250 ac. in Craven Co., bounding E on Simon David Stead & James Akin; NW on vacant land; SW on William Simson; SE on Waccamaw River///

⁶ Memorial of Samuel Grier, 15 Jan. 1765, S.C. Dept. of Archives and History. A memorial exhibited by Samuel Grier to be registered in the office of his majesty's Aud. General, pursuant to the acts of assembly in that case made & provided...//of a plantation or tract of land containing 250 acres situate in Craven Co. Prince George's Parish butting & bounding on the Waccamaw River and is part and parcel of 500 acres of land originally granted to William Waties and sold by him to William Simpson to Paul Trapier and by Paul Trapier to Joseph Grier and Samuel Grier the memorialist by lease and release bearing date respectively the 26th and 27th days of March 1749.

⁷ Will of Joseph Gear of Kingston dated 2 Sept. 1749, Charleston Wills

⁸ Will of Samuel Grier dated June 11, 1769, Charleston Wills

Seven Grier brothers and sisters came from Northern Ireland and settled in old Kingston starting in the early 1730's. They were Samuel, Joseph, John, Patrick, Jannett Willson (wife of John Willson), Agnus Baxter (wife of Arthur Baxter) and Mary Ridgell (wife of William Ridgell). One brother, Thomas Grier, remained in Northern Ireland.⁹ They came to the new world as weavers, planters and ship owners and were some of the first inhabitants of Kingston. John and Joseph Grier appear to have been in Kingston when the lands were being laid out as a township. Several references are shown of them being adjacent land owners on some of the original grantees' plats but no plats or grants have been found for either John or Joseph Grier. Although the surname for that particular family line no longer exists in Horry County, the name Grier shows even today in some of the old families of Horry – probably from one or more of the numerous Grier girls (children of the original 7 brothers and sisters) who married into the old Horry County families and whose genealogies have been lost over the last 250 years. Many of the descendants of these Grier brothers and sisters moved down to the Pee Dee in the Yauhannah/Petersfield area during the 1750's and 60's. Family lore says that there was a fever in Kingston during the 1750's that wiped out much of the population and the Griers moved to the Pee Dee in hopes of finding a healthier climate.

On April 2, 1782, John Grier and Martha, his wife, sold the 250 acres inherited from his father Samuel to Robert Reynolds. Reynolds died before 1788 and his administrator Bryan Gause sold the property in that year to James Cochran who held the property until 1797 when he sold the tract to Benjamin Gause¹⁰. No descent of title has been found to date for the other 250 acres (of the original 500 acre Witecaw grant) that Andrew Grier left to his sons John and Samuel in his will of 1765.

It was only my intent to trace the Waccamaw lands from the original grant up to circa 1800 and I do not have the descent of title beyond Benjamin Gause. Perhaps someone in the Horry County Historical Society has already done this and can contribute that work up to the present in a later issue of The Independent Republic Quarterly.

The name Witecaw / Wittecaw is almost assuredly an Indian term and most probably Waccamaw Indian. The earliness of its grant in relation to the surrounding lands in Kingston Township coupled with the fact that William Waties, the Indian trader, received the original land grant, suggests that the bluff was a significant tract. Was it one of the four Waccamaw villages surveyed in 1715 whose names and locations have never been discovered? The Indian census of 1715 states that the Wacomassus (Waccamaw) tribe,

⁹ Will of Patrick Grier dated July 22, 1767, Charleston Wills. In his will, Patrick names his brothers and sisters, his wife Judith (Marion), his sons James and Samuel Grier, and daughter Mary Ann Mitchell, wife of Capt. Anthony Mitchell of Winyah. He also names his sons-in-law (step-sons) Richard, Ebenezer and William Singleton, sons of his wife Judith by an earlier marriage to Ebenezer Shingleton (Singleton)

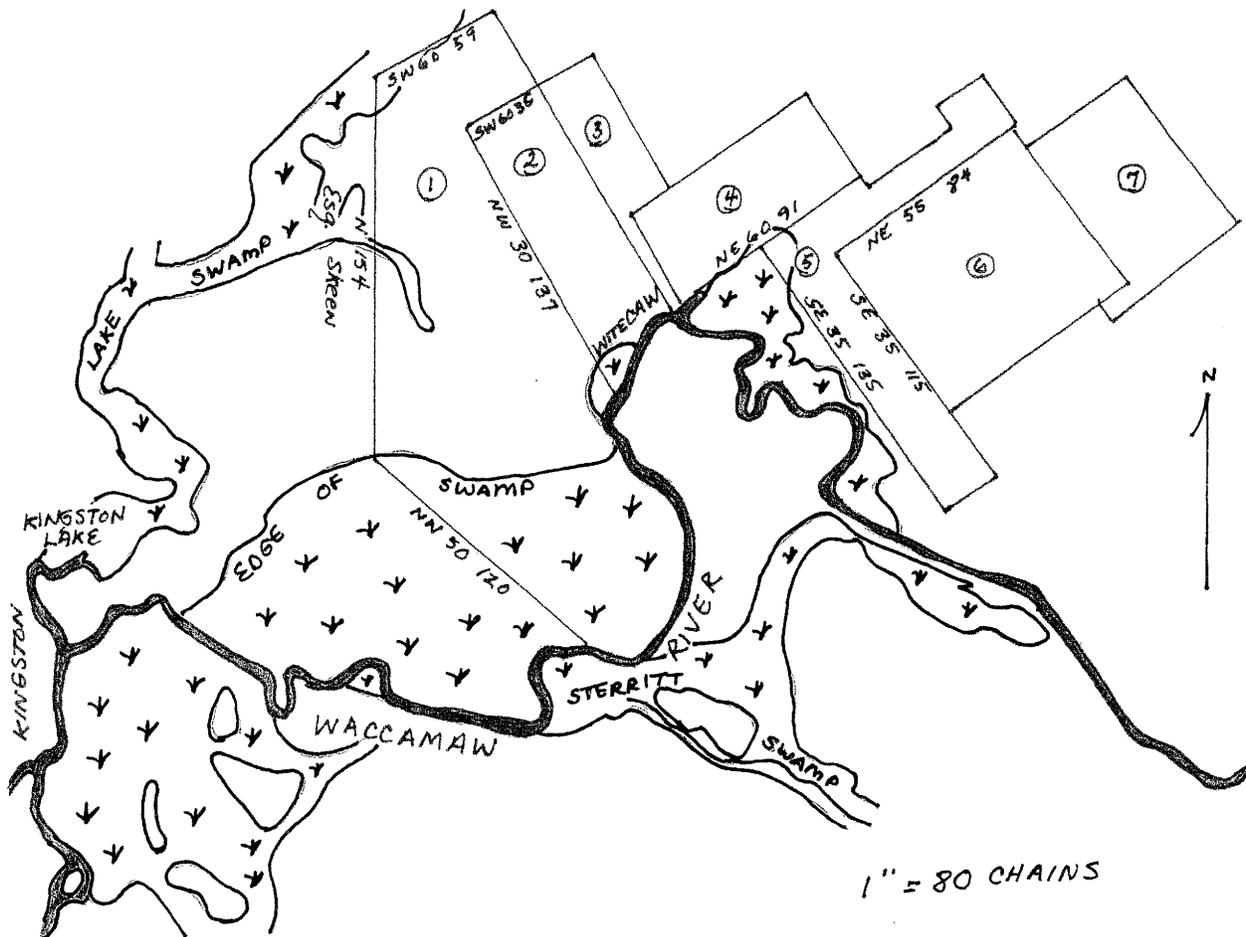
¹⁰ Horry County Deed Book A-1, page 205 recorded Oct. 2 1804. ...Abstracted by Deryl Young. Indenture made 12 Apr. 1797 between James Cochran of the State of N.C. Brunswick Co. & Benjamin Gause – consideration 220 lbs. sterling – 250 ac. (being ½ of a 500 ac. tract sold by Paul Trapier of Georgetown to Samuel Grier & Joseph Grier & by Bryan Gause, executor of the estate of Robert Reynolds to James Cochran) lying in Kingston Co. butting & bounding to the southeast on Waccamaw River, to the northeast on lands granted to Thomas Blythe and to the southwest & northwest on vacant lands. Witnesses: John Gause Jr., Thomas Hemingway Signed: James Cochran

located 100 miles northeast of Charleston, had four villages with 210 men and 400 women for a total of 610 villagers.¹¹ Perhaps one day someone will come up with some yet undiscovered document or diary that will name these villages and explain the meaning of these old Waccamaw terms (and those of the Pedee and Cape Fear Indians - tribes that were contiguous to the Waccamaws).

¹¹ Red Carolinians by Chapman Milling, page 222

**KINGS GRANT PLACEMENT FOR
WITECAW AND VICINITY
KINGSTON TOWNSHIP CRAVEN COUNTY**

- 1-WILLIAM PINCKNEY 1700 ACRES GRANTED 9-16-1736
- 2-WILLIAM WATIES 500 ACRES GRANTED 4-23-1717
- 3-THOMAS BLYTHE 250 ACRES GRANTED 9-17-1736
- 4-THOMAS & JANE BLYTHE FOR SIMON DAVID STEAD 400 ACRES GRANTED 9-17-1736
- 5-MARTHA MCGREGOR 550 ACRES GRANTED 4-12-1739
- 6-EDWARD SHREWSBURY 650 ACRES GRANTED 12-16-1736
- 7-BENJAMIN JONES 550 ACRES GRANTED 9-30-1736



SUCCESSION OF TITLE

- 2-WATIES - WM. SIMPSON - PAUL TRAPIER - SAMUEL & JOSEPH GRIER
- 5-McGREGOR - PATRICK GRIER - RICHARD SINGLETON
- 6-SHREWSBURY - JEREMIAH VEREEN - PATRICK GRIER - SAMUEL GRIER

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