

Dating an Early Map of Swansborough, North Carolina, with Matches to Initials of Lot Owners or Occupants

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In May 2017 I found on a website entitled *Swansboro, North Carolina History* a map of the Onslow County town (incorporated as Swansborough in 1783) showing the original 48-lot town grid (hereinafter referred to as the map). All but three of the lots were labeled, mostly with initials of owners or apparently in some cases, of occupants. It was apparently a 1917 hand copy from an 1840 hand copy of an original map dated 20 Oct 1772.¹ Being familiar with many of the lot owners in the later 1700s from my work with tax lists it appeared to me the initials must have been applied within that era but reflected a somewhat later time than 1772. As it showed initials of particular interest to me on a certain lot also of particular interest, I wanted to try to date the time to which the initials pertained. The main tools I had at the outset were Zae Hargett Gwynn's *Abstracts of the Records of Onslow County, North Carolina, 1734-1850*, and the extant tax lists of the county from 1774 well into the 1800s. The original Deed Books A-Y which Gwynn indexed are now held by the State Archives of North Carolina and have reportedly not been microfilmed. A relatively small selection of the deeds from Books A-Y were recopied into later books, images from most of which are available for research on FamilySearch, but the bulk of the deeds Gwynn abstracted were not practicably accessible to me in Oregon. The best I could generally do was to rely on Gwynn's abstracts,

citations to which will take the brief form of original Deed Book letter and page number. For example, [M19] would refer to page 19 of original Deed Book M, which reflects the simple arrangement followed in her work. Deeds from the later (numbered) books will be cited as in [Bk 1:64] for Book 1, p64 (in Gwynn's Vol. II). My sources for wills mentioned, unless otherwise noted, will be found in Gwynn's abstracts of the wills in her Vol. I, pages 703-738, arranged alphabetically (or almost so, there being minor exceptions) by testator.

The research proved challenging due to missing, unclear, contradictory, ambiguous and otherwise elusive information, including some cases where the lot labels themselves were unclear or might be suspected of having been miscopied. But initially comparing the tax lists and the map appeared to indicate the best fit for the initials at about 1787. Then early in 2021 I discovered on FamilySearch one highly relevant deed book that had somehow eluded Gwynn's attentions, identified as *Onslow County, North Carolina Record of Deeds, Book B, 1779-1785*, (hereinafter cited as Bk "B"). I spent many hours indexing and briefly abstracting the records in that book to supplement Gwynn, as it covered a critical period from late 1780 to about 1785 that was missing between Deed Books M and N that Gwynn had abstracted. Sure enough, it filled in quite a few missing links, though many questions remain.

1. The map is identified on the website as a "copy of the original 48-lot town grid...found in a [Jonathan] Green House scrapbook." As well as I can make it out, the text on the map reads:

NORTH CAROLINA/January 10th AD 1840

This plan represents a parcel of Ground Situated

at the mouth of White Oak River and on the westermost side

Of said River Beginning at a stone on the top of a bank on a point of the eastward Thence to the Front street 40 feet in width [and?] the

[lot number 1] begin[s] which was purchased by Capt Daniel Bates [a?]nd

[runs?] [?] [N 36°30W] 200 feet and on the front [street?] [60] feet and each and

every other whole lot in this plan being the same [course?] and distance containing

41 [full] lots and seven water lots and Six Streets. Platted for use of the

Citizens of Swansborough

Copy dated Oct 20th 1772

By D A Hargett January 10th 18[40?] Platted by a

scale 100 feet to the inch

Coppied by [R E Koonce?] and scale enlarged to

50 feet to the inch April 19th 1917

[Point shown on the map]

[same name at right bottom edge of the map]

[The bolder arrow seems to indicate [the original map's?] magnetic north, the lighter magnetic north in 1917?]

In this paper I will first present an analysis of the 1787 tax list as it relates to the map, then a lot-by-lot attempt to identify as well as possible to whom the initials on the map corresponded, and finally my analysis and conclusions as to the dating of the map's labeling. An appendix related to the lot of particular interest to me contains the story of a remarkable woman and some speculations relating to her story and its connection with the lot.

The map shows 48 numbered lots in three rows of 16, the first between what are now Front and Water Streets, the second between Water and Elm Streets, and the third between Elm and Walnut Streets. The lot numbering proceeds from right to left in the three rows; these streets run at an angle of about S 53°E30' W from right to left. On the original map Front Street was apparently identified as First Street, 40 feet wide. Water and Elm Streets in deeds of that era were called Second and Third Streets respectively, and were labeled on the plan only as 30 feet wide. All the original lots were oblong and measured 60 feet by 200 feet, the latter being the vertical direction.

The lot numbering began at the (north)east end of Front Street where the White Oak River wraps around into Pickett's Bay. Lots 1 to 3 go (south)west along the north(west) side of First/Front Street to what is now Moore Street ("30 feet Wide" on the map); Lots 4 to 6 continue to "Broad Street, 40 feet Wide" (with a Wharf shown at its base), now Main Street; Lots 7 to 10 continue to what is now Church Street (also "30 feet Wide" on the map); and Lots 11 to 16 continue (south)westerly, with the White Oak River shown angling across them. (Lots 10 through 16 and Lot 33 were sometimes referred to in deeds as "water lots.") Lots 17 through 32 run in the same manner from (north)east to (south)west along the north(west) side of Second/Water Street, and Lots 33 through 48 in the same way along the north(west) side of Third/Elm Street.

Sales of the lots by Theophilus Weeks began in 1771, the earliest I found on 7 May 1771 [J41], by which time the map grid must already have been laid out. Apparently his last lot sale before his death was dated 10 Aug 1771 [M28]. For these earliest sales the lots were not yet numbered from 1 to 48; instead they were identified by their position counting from the right in the first, second or third tier of lots, the first tier on the riverfront and the second and third moving north(west) inland from the River. There was a lapse of a little more than a year from his last lot sale until lot sales resumed in Oct 1772 by his estate. Presumably the executors had the original map made at this time; the labeling was added later. The lot numbers from 1 to 48 had been assigned by this time, though some later deeds still used the earlier form of description. Early

deeds referred to the location as Weeks Point, the Point, or Bogue before Swansborough was adopted as its name.

The primary 1787 tax list I used is entitled "A list of Taxable persons and their property—Taken from the Upper and lower White Oak Distric [*sic*] for the Year of Eighty Seven By Bazil Grant." It includes the names of fifteen owners of town lots in "Swbr" (Swansborough). Another list for the Upper Northeast District includes one taxpayer with two town lots, not further described; one of them is identifiable as being in Swansborough, but his other lot could be in Swansborough or any other town in the state. The particular lots in Swansborough owned by these 16 taxpayers can for the most part be identified with fair to strong confidence.

Only 29 of the 48 lots are accounted for in the 1787 tax list for the White Oak and Upper Northeast districts. The 1787 lists for other Onslow County districts, all of which appear to be extant, do not indicate any other owners of town lots. From the extant Onslow County tax lists at least up through 1790 it is apparent that the taxes being collected were primarily state taxes; it appears to have been the custom to collect the taxes for land held anywhere in the State of North Carolina in the taxpayer's county of residence. (Thus Eden Bell, for example, appears in the 1787 Onslow County Tax list with two lots in Beaufort (Carteret County) and one in Swansborough.) Consequently, owners of lots in Swansborough who resided outside Onslow County would not typically be included in Onslow County tax lists. (So, for example, Eli West of Carteret County owned Lot 25 from 3 Jan 1786 to 6 Apr 1790, and Lot 37 from 10 Oct 1780; it was apparently sold by his estate in 1797. He is not in the 1787 tax list, nor is Joseph Leech of Craven County, who apparently owned Lots 12 and 29 in 1787.) This factor presumably accounts for many if not all of the (18 or) 19 lots that are not otherwise accounted for in the 1787 Onslow County tax lists.

The fifteen 1787 taxpayers with Swansborough lots are, in the order in which they appear:

Isaac Gibson	1
Joel Bement	1
Benjn Fulcher	½
Emanuel Jones	1
Martha Nelms	10
Eden Bell	1
Andrew Jovanso	1
Cornealous Weeks	1
Elizabeth Hoalt	1
Ephram Swift	½
Reuben Grant Esq	2

Daniel Rogers	1
John McCullough	4
Mary Pitts	1
Edwd Mercy	<u>2</u>
	28

Wm Cray (NE Dist) 1 (or 2?) is the other Onslow County taxpayer in 1787 with an identifiable lot in Swansborough.

The two half lots are the halves of Lot 43: Benjamin Fulcher bought his half lot on 17 or 19 Apr 1787 from Kilby Jones [O54], who had purchased it from Ephraim Swift in Jan 1784 [Bk "B" 178]. Swift still owned the other half of the lot well past 1787.

Identifying the lots of some of the other 1787 lot owners was also straightforward. Reuben Grant's two lots were 23 and 40; both are shown with initials R.G. on the map. On 27 Aug 1784, as Sheriff of Onslow County, he had sold at a sheriff's sale these two lots which had belonged to Peter Ringuaire (AKA Ringwire) [N49]. Three days later, the buyer, Basil Grant, resold these lots to Reuben Grant for the price he had paid for them [N50]. Presumably Reuben had wished to buy the lots himself but perhaps could not legally have sold them directly to himself? He submitted a taxable property list for 1785 listing two lots in Swansborough, and his will, written 10 Feb 1791, also mentions lots in Swansborough.

Others whose initials match initials on the same lots on the plan are:

- Mary Pitts, Lot 11, which she bought 7 Apr 1783 [Bk "B" 180];
- Emanuel Jones, Lot 20, which he apparently bought 2 Oct 1773 [K44]; and
- Andrew Jovanso (Jovanceau), Lot 21, which he bought 29 Nov 1784 [N54; although the lot # is not given in the abstract, the lot is described as between 2d and 3d Streets and apparently adjoining Thomas Holt, whose lot (labeled TG on the plan) is #22. Thomas Graves Holt of Craven County bought Lot 22 on 2 Oct 1775 [L28]; he did not sell it until Jan 1799 [U46].
- John McCullough's lots were 4, 9, 38, 46, and perhaps also 42; all are labeled JM on the plan except 38, which has TM, I believe in error. Lot 38 was more certainly his than was Lot 42. He bought Lot 4 on 10 Feb 1786 [O13]; he owned Lot 9 from 15 May 1780 [M45] to 20 Jun 1789; [Q28]; Lot 38 he bought 28 Jan 1783 [Bk "B" 135]; and Lot 46 he bought 30 May 1780 [M41] and sold 21 Jun 1790 [T17]. I found no deed records clearly relating to Lot 42, but see the discussion in the lot-by-lot list below for that lot.

- Martha Nelms' lots included 14-16, 30-32, 47 and 48. She was the widow of William Nelms, who had purchased Lot 48 on 7 Apr 1775 [J74], Lots 15 and 31 on 25 Jan 1778 [L24], Lot 47 on 1 Aug 1778 [L21], and Lots 16 and 32 on 2 Oct 1779 [M18]. These six lots, comprising a block at the (south)west end of the town grid, are initialed WN on the map. William had presumably died by 6 Jan 1786 when Martha bought what was apparently Lot 30 "joining a lot belonging to her" from Archelus Chase [O17]; she also bought Lot 14 from Chase 7 Aug 1786 [P47]. Both these lots are labeled AC on the map. Martha Nelms also bought at least half of lot 17 (on the opposite side of the grid) 7 Feb 1786 from Harrison Adkins [P22]. His initials are on that lot along with WD for William Dyer, who had received his half of the lot from Judah Dyer as a gift 23 Nov 1784 [N40]. Not unlikely Martha Nelms also bought the other half from Dyer, but I found no record of him selling his half-lot. She bought the lot above it, Lot 33, as late as 1 Jul 1790 [R9], before or after which I found no record of the disposition of any of the Nelms lots.

- One of Edward Marcy's two lots in 1787 was #10, which he bought 21 Dec 1772 [J5] and sold 8 Nov 1797 [U12; see also X38]. Lot 10 is initialed CM on the map, the C being perhaps a misreading/mis-copying of an E from an earlier copy? I did not find any record accounting for his second lot.
- Isaac Gibson's lot was probably #41, first identified as such when sold 4 Jun 1792 by Dexter Gibson [R48]. Dexter was a son per Isaac's will proved Apr 1790. The lot is initialed JG on the map, the J presumably being a misread/miscopied I. Gibson had bought a lot or lots by the mid 1770s [K59, no lot #; see also J23].
- Eden Bell's lot may have been #36. Cornelius Weeks had bought it 16 Mar 1783 [Bk "B" 201-2] and Thomas Bell sold it 19 Jul 1800 [V38]; I did not find a record of what happened between the two transactions, but perhaps Eden Bell had acquired it by 1787 and it later passed to Thomas Bell. Eden Bell (the same, or another?) bought another lot Jan 1799 [U46]; that is the only transaction I found for him involving a lot in Swansborough. In any case, Cornelius Weeks was also listed in 1787 with one lot. As I found no other record indicating Weeks had acquired another lot, #36 was likely still his lot in 1787 unless it was in fact Eden Bell's. The map ini-

tials on Lot 36 are NW, for which I found no likely candidates, whether as owner or occupant.

- Joel Bement was named as an adjacent neighbor as of 12 Jan 1784 when Harrison Adkins bought half of lot 17 [Bk "B" 218-9] and again as of 23 Nov 1784 when William Dyer was given the other half of Lot 17 [N40]. Christian Free, whose initials are on Lot 18 on the map, had bought that lot about 1773 [I84]. He had died by Jan 1781 when his will was probated. Lots 1 and 33, the other possible candidates for adjacency to lot 17, are otherwise essentially accounted for through the relevant time span without apparent scope for involvement of Joel Bement, so Lot 18 must be the lot Bement had by 1784, and for some unknown period thereafter; I did not find a record shedding light on its later ownership. In the absence of a recorded deed of sale to Bement or anyone else, the lot was still attributed to Christian Free when the map was given the initials.
- Elizabeth "Hoalt" may have been the occupant of Thomas Graves Holt's Lot 22 and as such may have handled the taxes in 1787. (As a resident of Craven County Holt would not normally appear on Onslow tax lists.) Alternatively, Elizabeth Holt may be the EH the map shows on Lot 25. However, Lot 25 belonged to Eli West from 3 Jan 1786 [O4] to 6 Apr 1790 [Q37], so the H might likely be attributable to a misread/miscopied W. I note that on Lot 37, which is actually labeled E West on the map, the W could almost be mistaken for an H, which is also true for some of the other W's on the map. It is also entirely possible that Elizabeth Holt was the owner of some other lot for which I found no record.
- For Daniel Rogers I found no record involving a lot in Swansborough. His initials don't appear on the map. He had other Onslow County property not in town.
- One of William Cray's two lots would be Lot 45, which is initialed WC on the map. On 2 Oct 1773 William Cray [apparently Sr.] bought a block of 4 lots in Swansborough, 28, 29, 44, and 45 [J27; 20 mistakenly given for 28]. He had died by Jan 1779 when his will was proved. His son Joseph Scott Cray, one of the executors and an heir, sold Lot 29 on 27 Feb 1779 to Joseph Leech [M44]. Lots 28 and 44 must have been sold to Richard Jarrott (I found no record of the sale) as Jarrott sold them both 7 Jan 1784 to Joseph Ennett [Bk "B" 220-1]. These lots are initialed JE on the map.

The following chart summarizes which lots correspond to which taxpayers on the 1787 lists:

Isaac Gibson	1	probably 41
Joel Bement	1	probably 18
Benjn Fulcher	½	43 (one side)
Emanuel Jones	1	20
Martha Nelms	10	14-16, 30-32, 47-48; 17? & ?
Andrew Jovanso	1	21
Cornealious Weeks	1	likely 36 or ?
Eden Bell	1	possibly 36 or ?
Elizabeth Hoalt	1	22 or 25 or ?
Ephram Swift	½	43 (one side)
Reuben Grant Esq	2	23, 40
Daniel Rogers	1	?
John McCullough	4	4, 9, 38, 46; 42?
Mary Pitts	1	11
Edwd Mercy	2	10 & ?
Wm Cray (NE Dist)	1 (or 2?)	45 (& ?)

Next I will consider the map with initials on the lots which I hope to date. In order to do so it is necessary to identify as well as possible the persons corresponding to the initials on each lot and when they owned (or apparently in some cases occupied) the lot. Of the 48 lots on the map, 45 are labeled, mostly with two initials. The labeling on each lot will be considered in numerical order. The focus of this review of available data is on the mid to late 1780s, reflecting my preliminary research with the tax lists and deed records pointing to the best fit around 1787.

Lot 1 is labeled D.B. for Daniel Bates, who is identified in the map legend as the original purchaser of Lot 1. He bought the lot 12 Oct 1772 from the Theophilus Weeks estate [O26; no record found of the original deed]. He was identified at that time as "of New York, merchant" in a deed of the same date, by which he also purchased "lot No. 36½ on the Point," (AKA Weeks Point) [J8]. No such lot is shown on the map; later deeds lead me to guess it may be adjacent to lot 36 on the north(west) or top side. Doctor Isaac Guion bought a lot from Bates 18 Jun 1777 which was more likely Lot 1 than Lot 36½ [K31]. But on 6 Oct 1778 Bates sold "the NW part of Lot No. 1 on Second Street" to John Morse of Carteret County [L37]. Immediately above on the same page [L37] is recorded a "Surety Bond of Isaac Guion, doctor, to John Morse of Carteret who bought a part of the lot which Guion had sold to Daniel Bates and John Morse agrees to build a 13' boat for Dr. Guion." This seems to mean that before the sale to Morse, Bates had sold Lot 1 to Guion, who sold it back to him by Oct 1778, or maybe some kind

of a mortgage bond was in play? In any case, on 1 Aug 1782 Bates' estate deeded to Isaac Guion the part of Lot 1 not previously sold to Morse [O26]. This deed was not recorded until after 7 Oct 1786, the date of the previous entry on [O26], so the initials D.B. on the map may only reflect general knowledge rather than actual ownership at a specific date. This appears to be a general consideration with regard to the labeling on the lots.

Lot 2 is labeled L.H. for Libbeus Hunter (Sr. or Jr.?) One deed abstract shows Lot 2 had been purchased 13 Jun 1771 from Theophilus Weeks by Ezekiel Hunter (again, Sr. or Jr.?) [I36]. Ezekiel [Sr.] had died by 9 Jan 1775, leaving sons Ezekiel [Jr.] and Asa [K9]. So by the time of the map, Libbeus Hunter could have acquired it by inheritance from either Ezekiel Hunter Jr. or his brother Asa. Oddly, a second deed recorded on the same page as the first [I36], with the same witnesses and presumably filed at the same early date (though the abstract gives no date), appears to show Theophilus Weeks sold directly to "Libbus" Hunter what could well be the same lot as it was "joining John Starkey" [I36]. Lot 3 was bought by John Starkey, but also oddly, not until over two years later from the deceased Theophilus Weeks' estate [K38]. This may be another example of occupancy preceding legal ownership. In any case there is no indication that the lot left the Hunter family's hands until "Libbeus" Hunter [Jr.?] of Carteret County sold Lot 2 on 1 Jan 1805 [Bk 1:64].

Lot 3 is labeled J.S., apparently for John Starkey, who bought it 2 Oct 1773 from the Weeks estate [K38]. I found no further record of its disposition.

Lot 4 is labeled J M for John McCullough, who bought it 10 Feb 1786 [O13] after a string of six other owners since it was sold by the Weeks estate. McCullough lived in Swansborough and died between the writing of his will 9 Dec 1799 and Jan 1800 when it was proved. I found no record of the disposition of this lot before McCullough's death.

Lot 5 is labeled J H, which I believe was an error. The initials are probably for Josiah Holt, who had purchased a lot from Ezekiel Hunter 7 My 1780 [M40]. Hunter had apparently bought the lot in question 13 Jun 1771 [I36], but though that lot is referred to in Gwynn's abstract as "Lot N. 5," the description continues as "joining Thomas Britton's fronting Third Street." Thomas "Bretten" of Carteret Co. bought his lot, "the fifth lot in the third tier joining Ezekiel Hunter," 10 Aug 1771 [M28]. That description designates what would later be Lot 37 in the 1-48 numbering, and on 10 Oct 1780 John "Brittain" of [D]uplin Co. in fact sold Lot 37 to Eli West of Carteret Co. [M39]. Lot 37 is labeled E West on the map. Therefore it seems most likely

that the lot Josiah Holt bought from Ezekiel Hunter was not Lot 5 but Lot 38, which Holt sold 28 Jan 1783 to John McCullough [Bk "B" 135-6]. If Holt had bought Lot 5 as well, I found no record of that, nor of his selling it. I suspect here that the labeler was aware of not only the 1780 deed but also the 1771 deed, and mistakenly thought it referred to Lot 5, especially as there actually appears to have been no other record concerning Lot 5 during the early period up to the time the map was labeled.

Lot 6 is unlabeled, and I found no record respecting Lot 6 in Swansborough. Deeds of 13 Apr 1789 and 12 Apr 1791 mention "lots 6, 7 and 8" and "60 acres in lots 3, 4, and 5" respectively as land sold by George Mitchell, executor of Christian Free, but it is clear these lots are not the corresponding lots in the original plan of Swansborough, but apparently larger lots into which a patent of Free's was divided and sold 12 May 1781 by public sale [P52, Q62].

Lot 7 was the lot with the house where Theophilus Weeks had lived. It was sold 24 May 1774 by his son Archelaus Weeks to "Isaac Guion, merchant, of the Island of Santa Croixin [*sic*], the West Indies" [J54]. A deed of 13 Oct 1777 indicates that Lot 23 on Main Street was between Dr. Isaac Guion's (Lot 7) and Isaac Hill's, (Lot 39), "being one of the [three] lots lent him [Archelus Weeks] by his father [Theophilus Weeks] and confirmed by a deed from Benjamin Weeks, the older brother of Archelus Weeks" [K44]. Isaac Guion later sold "a half lot, No. 7, in Swansborough, bought of Archelus Weeks;" Gwynn reported the deed's date as illegible, but it was registered Jan 1792 [R7]. The map initials on Lot 7 are J.G., which I thought must mean Isaac Guion based on the above, with the J being a misread/miscopied I. But then I found in Book "B" that on 14 Jul 1783, Sheriff Reuben Grant sold by Sheriff's sale Lot 7 [*sic*], at Front and Broad Streets, adjoining McCullough, which had been property of Jonathan Green, to Samuel Green [Bk "B" 110]. After much consideration, I concluded the 1783 deed mistakenly combined Lots 7 and 8 as if they were one lot, I suspect because both had been part of Theophilus Weeks' home place, so that Lots 7 and 8 were thought of as a unit. But the dimensions are those of a single lot, and the descriptive history in the deed matches only Lot 8, not Lot 7. The map labeler may also have been confused by this deed. The bottom line seems to be that whereas Isaac Guion probably owned Lot 7 all along, the initials J. G. on Lot 7 might well have been meant for Jonathan Green, but if so, probably do not reflect the actual ownership of Lot 7 at any time.

Lot 8 is labeled S G for Samuel Green, whose father, Jonathan Green was deeded Lots 8, 24, and 40 (a vertical block), adjoining Archelus Weeks' lots, on 20 Dec 1774

from Benjamin Weeks (representing the Weeks estate), along with privileges on certain other land [J53]. Gwynn's abstract does not say so, but I suspect this was only a grant of lifetime privileges in accordance with Theophilus Weeks' will (which I did not see); this is suggested by a deed of 7 Feb 1777, for which Gwynn's abstract reads "Isaac Guion, merchant, from Benjamin Weeks, both of Onslow Co., for 130 pounds 3 lots adjoining Archelus Weeks, at a lot now belonging to Isaac Guion and the lots being all the land left by Theophilus Weeks deceased, to Jonathan Green deceased." [K32]. Jonathan Green having died by Feb 1777, this must mean his lots reverted to the Weeks estate. His Lot 8 did adjoin Lot 7 which Archelus Weeks had sold to Guion in Dec 1774, and his Lots 24 and 40 did adjoin Lots 23 and 39 which Archelus Weeks still owned in Feb 1777. Perhaps this sale to Guion was provisional as I found no record of Isaac Guion disposing of any of Lots 8, 24 or 40. But there is the sheriff's sale deed of 14 Jul 1783, which I argue above under Lot 7 actually applied to Lot 8, whereby that lot was sold to Samuel Green [Bk "B" 110]. Samuel was named as a son of Jonathan Green in an unrelated deed of 29 Mar 1776 [J74], and was apparently also the administrator of Jonathan's estate [N49; I'm assuming Gwynn likely read Jonas for an abbreviation of Jonathan with an unclear final superscript]. Samuel Green of Carteret Co. sold Lot 8 in Swansborough 20 Apr 1797 [U50].

Lot 9 is labeled J M for John McCullough, who bought it 15 May 1780 from Edward Marcy, who had an adjacent lot (#10) on Front Street on the other side from "Dr. Isaac Guion's lot and the one formerly belonging to Theophilus Weeks' house, deceased" (Lot 7) [M45]. This appears to omit Lot 8, which as argued above under Lots 7 and 8, I suspect was originally part of Theophilus Weeks' home property, and not unlikely still had no new house or building on it to distinguish it as a separate lot. McCullough sold his house and lot "at Samuel Green's and Edward Marcy's lots in Swansborough" 20 Jun 1789 [Q28].

Lot 10 is initialed C M, which may be another example of a misreading or miscopying from an earlier copy, as the C should be an E. Edward Marcy bought Lot 10 from the Weeks estate 21 Dec 1772 [J5]. He sold "a lot" which was almost certainly this one 8 Nov 1797 to William Fisher Jr. [U12; see also X38, Y37]. In any case Edward Marcy was identified as the owner as of 20 Jun 1789 [Q28].

Lot 11 has initials M P for Mary Pitts, who purchased it from the Weeks estate 7 Apr 1783 [Bk "B" 180]. She was taxed for a lot in Swansborough at least as late as 1796. On 1 May 1804 "lot No. 11 in Swansborough, formerly occupied by Mary Pitts joining lot No. 10, belonging to

William Fisher" was sold by David Wade [X38]. I found no record indicating how or when Wade acquired it.

Lot 12 is labeled J L for Joseph Leach or Leech of Craven Co., who bought it 28 Dec 1778 [L27]. I found no record of its disposition, but Joseph Leech began to be listed on Swansborough tax lists by 1795, which may indicate he sometimes resided there, although his two lots that year were unimproved (his other would be Lot 29). In 1800 he had 1½ unimproved lots, and in 1801 only the half lot.

Lot 13 is unlabeled, and I found no record respecting it.

Lot 14 is initialed A C for Archelus Chase. Chase bought it from Eli West, Esq. of Carteret Co. 15 Jan 1782 [Bk "B" 72], and sold it 7 Aug 1786 to Martha Nelms [P47].

Lot 15 is initialed W N for Capt. William Nelms, who purchased it 25 Jun 1778 along with Lot 31 directly above it from John Lovet(t), who had acquired both lots 3 Oct 1772 or 2 Oct 1773 from the Weeks estate [L24, I85]. Nelms wrote his will 28 Nov 1778, but Gwynn found no probate date. He was listed on the tax lists through 1785; in 1786 and thereafter his widow Martha replaced him as the taxpayer on multiple lots. For Lot 15, as with other Nelms lots, I found no record of any later disposition.

Lot 16 and lot 32 directly above it are also labeled W N for William Nelms. These he acquired 2 Oct 1779 from the estate of Joseph French, apparently after an earlier arrangement for Nelms to purchase whereby French retained lifetime use of the property [M18]. Again I found no record of their later disposition.

Lot 17, the first lot in the second tier, bears initials W D & H A for William Dyer and Harrison Adkins, who both owned half. Judah Dyer first sold one half to Adkins 12 Jan 1784 [Bk "B" 218-9]. Then on 23 Nov 1784 he gave the other half to William Dyer [N40]. In both deeds the lot is described as No. 1 in Second Street, the earlier form of designation for Lot 17. Adkins, a shipwright, and wife Miriam sold his house and half lot to Martha Nelms 7 Feb 1786 [P22]. The deed for that sale was not produced to Court until at least late 1788, as several deeds from August through mid-October of 1788 were recorded before it. So the map labeler may not have known of the sale when the map was labeled. I found no record of the later history of William Dyer's half of the lot.

Lot 18 is labeled C F for Christian Free, who bought it from the Weeks estate. Gwynn gives no date for the deed, but from the context it must have been no later than early 1774 [I84]. Free had died by Jan 1781 when his will was probated. As argued above in the discussion of 1787 taxpayers, it appears this was Joel Bement's lot by 1787, but I found no record of sale to or by him or any other indication of its history after Christian Free acquired it.

Lot 19 appears to be labeled T.D.Jr, presumably Junior. I found no record relating to this lot after Henry Smith (of Newbern?) bought it in 1775 [K2]. At a guess, the initials might be for Thomas Dudley, Jr., a Thomas Dudley having some presence in Swansborough by the late 1780s [see Q28], but I found no record to further support that possibility.

Lot 20 is initialed E.J. for Emanuel Jones, who bought "lots" from the Weeks estate 2 Oct 1773 [K44]. Apparently one of these was Lot 20. (Gwynn's abstract for another deed of the same date to William Cray of a block of four lots from the estate [J27] appears to mistakenly include Lot 20, but other evidence shows the 20 must have been a misreading of 28.) Emanuel Jones owned Lot 20 as of 16 Mar 1783 when Lot 36, described as fronting Emanuel Jones' Lot 20 "on the Eastmost Street" (Moore Street), was sold [Bk "B" 201-2]. I found no record of the later history of Lot 20; Jones had died by Jan 1789 when his will was proved.

Lot 21 is labeled A.J for Andrew Jovanceau, who purchased it 29 Nov 1784 [N54], following a string of at least six previous owners (one link in the chain I did not find.) He was taxed on one improved lot in Swansborough at least as late as 1789. As to the later history of the lot, I only found that on 17 Feb 1801, William Ferrand sold half the lot [V7]; he was taxed on a half lot as early as 1795.

Lot 22 is initialed T G, presumably for Thomas Graves Holt. As noted in the discussion above regarding 1787 taxpayer Elizabeth "Hoalt," Thomas Graves Holt of Craven County bought Lot 22 on 2 Oct 1775 [L28]; he did not sell it until Jan 1799 [U46; seller's name transcribed as Thomas G. Hall].

Lot 23 on the map bears initials R.G. for Reuben Grant. As described above regarding him as an 1787 taxpayer, he acquired this and Lot 40 on 30 Aug 1784 [N50]; as Sheriff of Onslow County, he had sold these two lots at a sheriff's sale three days earlier and then bought them from the buyer, Basil Grant, presumably a relative [N49]. His will, written 10 Feb 1791, leaves lots in Swansborough to his wife and son Solomon E. [Gwynn Vol. II, p.1368]. Solomon Grant sold Lot 23 on 2 Feb 1810 [Bk 2:171].

Lot 24 is labeled Green, which would be for Samuel Green and/or his father Jonathan Green. See Lot 8 for its purchase by the latter 20 Dec 1774 [J53] and other information. I did not find a record of the later sale or disposition of this lot.

Lot 25 is initialed E H. This would appear to be another example of a misread/miscopied H for W from an earlier copy, as the owner of this lot was Eli West from his purchase 3 Jun 1786 from Richard and Fanny Ward [O4]

to his sale of the lot 6 Apr 1790 [Q37]. No earlier or later owner through at least 1791 had initials remotely resembling E H. West was described as of Carteret Co. in the 1786 deed, and as Eli West, Esq. of Jones Co. in the 1790 sale deed.

Lot 26 is initialed L W. Ezekiel Wise, a blacksmith, bought it 24 Jul 1779 from Ephraim and Sarah Swift [Bk "B" 13]; Swift had bought Lots 25 and 26 from the Weeks estate 12 Oct 1773 [I84]. I found no other record relating to this lot. I can only suggest that L W may have been an heir or relative of Ezekiel Wise.

Lot 27 is unlabeled. Joseph French bought it from the Weeks estate in 1775 along with lots 16 and 32 [M1; buyer's surname transcribed as Franck]. He had died by Jul 1775 when his will was proved. William French, named therein as a grandson, sold it 6 Apr 1800 [V16-7]. His father was presumably Joseph French Jr., the only son named in the same will, who had apparently died by 1779, when Joseph [Sr.]'s widow Abigail named in her will grandsons William and Joseph French but no son. So I would conclude William French was likely the owner of Lot 27 at the time the map was labeled.

Lot 28 is initialed J E for Joseph Ennett who bought it (along with Lot 44 directly above it) on 7 Jan 1784 from Richard Jarrott [Bk "B" 220-1]. Beginning in 1784, Joseph Ennett appears in the extant Onslow Co. Stump Sound tax lists with two town lots, although this detail was missed in the 1785 through 1787 Stump Sound lists (that district's lists didn't usually even include a column for town lots as there were generally none to report.) At least as late as 1797 Ennett was listed with two lots in Swansborough. Other than Ennett's showing two lots on these tax lists, I found no other record of the later history of Lots 28 or 44.

Lot 29 is labeled J L for Joseph Leech of Craven Co., who bought it 27 Feb 1779 from Joseph Scott Cray [M44]. As with Leech's Lot 12, apart from the tax list information given there, which appears to show Leech owned both lots at least through 1795, I found no record of the lot's later history.

Lot 30, like Lot 14, is labeled A C for Archelus Chase. He bought both lots from Eli West on the same day, 15 Jan 1782, but with separate deeds [Bk "B" 69 (Lot 30) and 72 (Lot 14)]. Lot 30, which included a house, he also sold to Martha Nelms 6 Jan 1786 [O17], seven months before his sale to her of Lot 14. The lot is not identified by number in the abstract of this deed; it is only described as adjoining a lot of hers, which would be Lot 31.

Lot 31, labeled W N for Capt. William Nelms, was purchased by him along with Lot 15 directly below it from John Lovet(t) 25 Jun 1778 [L24]. See Lot 15 for other

details. As with Lot 15, I did not find a record of Lot 31's later history, but there is little doubt it was one of Martha Nelms' 10 lots on the 1787 tax lists.

Lot 32 is also labeled W N for William Nelms. He got the deed for Lots 32 and 16, directly below it, on 2 Oct 1779 [M18]. See Lot 16 for other details. Again I found no record of the later disposition of Lot 32.

Lot 33 is initialed BJ for Bridger Jones. James Jones had bought it 26 Mar 1779 following three other owners [L41]. Bridger Jones of Carteret County, his son, sold it 9 Apr 1785 to Jehu Mumford [O55]. This deed was not recorded until at least May 1787, so the map label may not reflect the actual ownership at the time of the labeling. For some earlier history of Lot 33, see at Lot 43. I found no information relating to Lot 33 after Mumford's purchase.

Lot 34 is initialed J M, presumably for Joseph Marshal, who bought "Lot No. 2 in the third tier...on the third street" from Theophilus and Grace Weeks 7 May 1771 [J41]. I found no record of the later history of this lot.

Lot 35's label is unclear but perhaps is Smith? I found no record relating to this lot.

Lot 36's initials are N W. Cornelius Weeks bought it 16 Mar 1783 [Bk "B" 201-2]. I found no further record for this lot, nor could I identify a likely candidate for the initials N W, unless they would be for some unknown member of the Weeks family (a Nathaniel Weeks had died by Jan 1770). Another conceivable possibility is that the initials should have been W N, as at least one or two of the William/Martha Nelms lots have not been identified.

A Lot 36½ "on the Point" appears in other deeds as early as 12 Oct 1772, when it was sold by the Weeks estate to Daniel Bates [J8]. This appears not to refer to a half of Lot 36, but to some other piece of land, perhaps adjacent to the top side of Lot 36. Since it is not shown on the map, it is not relevant to this study and will not be discussed further.

Lot 37 is labeled E West for Eli West of Carteret Co. He bought Lot 37 on 10 Oct 1780 from John Brittain of Duplin Co. [M39]. On 17 Jul 1797 Eli West's executors sold a lot in Swansborough, the deed record of which is incomplete [U28]. Presumably that was Lot 37 as I found no indication of West owning another lot that late.

Lot 38 is initialed T M, but the owner from 1783 to at least 1790 was John McCullough, so again I suspect a misreading/miscopying error from an earlier copy, especially as the labeler's J's are just like his T's but with an added curve at bottom left. John McCullough bought Lot 38 with a windmill 28 Jan 1783 from Josiah Holt [Bk "B" 135-6]. A deed of 1 Jul 1790 (as abstracted) describes Lot 39 as "on Main Street joining Col. Reuben Grant's opposite [i.e. across Main Street from] John McCullough's wind

mill lot" [Q65]. McCullough, who lived in Swansborough, wrote his will 9 Dec 1799 and had died by Jan 1800. I found no record of Lot 38's sale or disposition by him or his estate, but it was sold in two parts on 12 and 16 Sep 1806 by Owen and Mary Rigby [Y59 (2 deeds)]. It's clear enough from the 1790 deed that John McCullough owned the lot over the period of the later 1780s during which the map must have been labeled.

Lot 39 is labeled R I with a rather H-like R. The owner during the relevant period, however, was unambiguously Col. George Mitchell, who bought Lot 39 from Isaac Hill of Carteret Co. 4 Jun 1777 [K28], and sold it 1 Jul 1790 to Kilby Jones [Q65]. Isaac Hill had bought the lot in 1775 from Archelus Weeks [K2; the date was 7 Aug 1775 according to K28]. Hill's ownership of the lot was clearly too early for the map, but on the theory that the initials may correspond to the occupant rather than the owner in this case, I can only suggest that perhaps Isaac Hill moved to Swansborough and stayed on as a renter after selling, or was otherwise so strongly associated with the premises that the initials were meant for him, I H, but both transposed and with the H misread/miscopied as an R. An alternative to this questionable idea is that someone else with initials R I was associated with the lot, but if so, I can offer no candidates.

Lot 40's initials are R G for Reuben Grant, who acquired it 17 Aug 1784 [N50]. See lot 29 for further details of this somewhat unusual transaction. I did not find a record of the later disposition of this lot.

Lot 41 appears to be labeled J G, which I again suspect is a misreading/miscopying error for I G, the owner apparently having been Isaac Gibson from 1778 or earlier when he bought "lots" in Bogue, AKA Swansborough [K59; deed undated but filed from the context in the first half of 1778] to at least 1788 (when he was still paying tax on an unimproved lot). He had died by Apr 1790 when his will was proved, which mentioned a son Dexter. Dexter Gibson sold Lot 41 on 4 June 1792 to Edward Hussey [R48].

Lot 42 bears the initials J.M., probably for John McCullough. He was taxed for five lots in 1786, four in 1787; four were reasonably well documented as Lots 4, 9, 38, and 46. Though I found no records at all specifically relating to Lot 42, the initials are a fairly strong indication that it was or had been a lot of John McCullough's. There is a deed dated 13 Dec 1783 which states Isaac Gibson sold lot 48 [*sic*] to John McCullough [Bk "B" 141], but that seems unlikely as it was part of the block William Nelms had acquired with apparent determination and to which his widow Martha added. Isaac Gibson had purchased "lots" in Bogue from Ezekiel Clifton [K59], whose original

purchase in Swansborough from the Weeks estate was recorded in a deed Gwynn described as partly missing [J23]. Clifton probably bought Lot 42 along with Lot 41 and sold Lot 42 to Isaac Gibson, who in turn likely sold Lot 42, not lot 48, to John McCullough. I would note that the way 2's and 8's were typically formed in the records of those days, the lot number might easily have been misread/miscopied in the process of copying from the original deed into the deed book. So in view of the initials I am fairly confident Lot 42 probably belonged to John McCullough in 1785 if not later.

Lot 43 is initialed J S, which is what motivated this entire investigation for me. These initials are part of a mystery in which I am personally interested. Thereby hangs a tale which makes an interesting case study, which I will include as an appendix to this report. Meanwhile, the lot's history through well past the time of the map dating is clear enough. Samuel Sanders of Carteret Co., its original buyer from the Weeks estate in 1773 [see the appendix], sold Lot 43 on 16 Dec 1783 to Ephraim Swift [Bk "B" 190-1]. In Jan 1784 Swift sold half the lot (200' x 30' but with no indication in the deed which half!) to Kilby Jones for £8 [Bk "B" 178]. Jones sold his half, with a house he must have added, on 17 or 19 Apr 1787 for £250 to Benjamin Fulcher [054]. Fulcher, presumably without a wife or children and in failing health, gave all his goods, including furniture, slaves, and livestock, as well as an inheritance coming from his mother Sarah Draper, to his friend Pitts Oldfield 13 Aug 1791 [Q75], followed a week later on the 20th with a gift to Oldfield of his lot and house in Swansborough where he then lived [Q71]. These two deeds, of which I obtained copies from the North Carolina State Archives, did not reserve lifetime use for Fulcher, yet he must have failed more slowly than he perhaps anticipated, as he was still assessed the tax on ½ improved lot at least as late as 1796. Ephraim Swift was also still paying tax in 1796 on the other half, also improved. Except for a fragment for 1797, there are no more extant tax lists for Swansborough until 1800, when neither Swift nor Fulcher was listed. I found no record of the later disposition of either half lot from Swift, Fulcher, or Oldfield. While J S could stand for an unknown relative of Swift or anyone else, for that matter, there is a candidate who might fit the initials and help make sense of the sale of one of the half lots by a remarkable woman in 1807. For that, see the appendix.

Lot 44 is labeled J E for Joseph Ennett. He bought it (along with Lot 28 directly below it) on 7 Jan 1784 from Richard Jarrott [Bk "B" 220-1], and probably still owned it at least as late as 1797. See at Lot 28 for further discussion

on these two lots, for whose disposition after Ennett I found no later record.

Lot 45 bears initials which I judge must be W C, though the W is cramped and looks more like an N. The Ws on lots 47 and 48 (see there) are clearly discernible as Ws though they also are cramped and resemble N's. The owner of Lot 45 was William Cray, who bought it as part of a block of four lots 2 Oct 1773 from the Weeks estate (see also at Lots 28, 29, and 44) [J27]. Unlike his other three lots, I did not find a record of the later disposition of Lot 45.

Lot 46 is initialed J M for John McCullough, who bought it 30 May 1780 from the estate of Brice Williams [M41] and sold it 21 Jun 1790 to Alexander Stuart of Carteret Co. [T17]. The lot number is not given in the sale abstract but "William Nelms's back house and lott" is referenced as adjacent, which would sensibly match Lot 47.

Lot 47 is accordingly labeled W N for William Nelms. He bought it from Thomas Jones 1 Aug 1778 per Gwynn's abstract [L21], but she also gives the date of 19 Aug 1778 for the deed of Thomas Jones' purchase of Lot 47 from the previous owners, Thomas and Mary Wise [L28]. Presumably there is an error on the date or in Gwynn's transcription thereof on one or both of these deeds, but this is a minor discrepancy compared to some of the difficulties encountered in trying to follow the succession of ownership of many of these Swansborough lots. Clearly Nelms owned this one by August 1778. As with the other Nelms lots, I found no record relating to its later disposition.

Lot 48, also with initials W N, was another William Nelms lot. Silus Weeks and his wife Zilla, who bought it from the Weeks estate in Oct 1773, sold it to Nelms 7 Apr 1775 [J74]. There is a deed dated 13 Dec 1783 which states Isaac Gibson sold lot 48 [*sic*] to John McCullough [Bk "B" 141], but as detailed under Lot 42, I believe it was a sale of Lot 42, not Lot 48. By 2 Oct 1779, Nelms had acquired all 6 of the westernmost lots in the town, to which Martha Nelms added two more in 1786, and there is no indication they had any short term interest in selling the lots they had taken pains to assemble. At least I never found any record of them selling a lot.

Having matched the labels on the 48 Swansborough lots to identifiable owners or occupants as well as I could, it remains to zero in on the date of the map labeling as closely as possible. Working with the available deed and tax data, I've become aware of a few considerations that make it problematic to put too fine a point on the dating. The map labeler inevitably was working, like me, with incomplete and/or faulty data. Assuming he had access to deed

records, deeds that were never recorded or recorded with significant delays will have limited the accuracy and timeliness of his information. It is even likely that the dates on deeds sometimes trail after de facto changes in ownership. In a few cases it also appears that names popularly associated with certain lots might have outlasted their actual ownership; Lot 1 gives a good example of this as Daniel Bates was apparently known as its owner and the deed for its sale was not recorded for over four years after he sold it. So recognizing such difficulties, what can be concluded about the dating of the map's labeling of the lots?

Widow Martha Nelms replaced her husband William as a purchaser as early as 6 Jan 1786, so presumably he had died by that date, but his initials might well have been applied to the lots well after his death. Mar. Nelms was listed for the taxes in 1786 with just five lots, half her 1787 count. Six are labeled WN on the map, so apparently the transition from 1786 to 1787 was underway when the initials were applied, although the labeler stuck with WN for his purposes.

Archelus Chase, whose initials are on Lots 14 and 30, sold Lot 30 on 6 Jan 1786 and Lot 14 on 7 Aug 1786, both to Martha Nelms, so the latter date would theoretically define a latest possible date for the labeling, but only assuming the labeler was immediately aware of the transaction. In fact the Lot 14 deed was not filed until mid-1789 from the context of other deeds filed close in time to it; the Lot 30 deed was actually filed much sooner, some time probably not long after 12 Jul 1786 from the context. It appears Martha Nelms was probably taxed for both lots as part of her count of 10 lots in 1787, so if the labeler's information was as good as the tax assessor's, the word of her latest purchases should have been out by 30 Apr 1787, the effective tax date, or not long after (typically it took a few months, into the fall, for the tax lists to be compiled). The same applies to Lot 17, at least half of which Mrs. Nelms had purchased 7 Feb 1786 from Harrison Adkins, whose initials are shown for half the lot, though the deed was not filed until late 1788. In view of these examples, it would seem the tax lists would perhaps provide a better sense of what was known or readily knowable about ownership at a given time than the specific dates of deeds, and as stated at the outset the 1787 list gives the closest fit to the initials of any of the extant Swansborough District tax lists.

Another case for the latest possible date might be Lot 33 which was sold 9 Apr 1785 by Bridger Jones of Carteret County to Jehu Mumford [O55]. This deed was apparently recorded about mid-1787, but Mumford, who lived in the Swansborough District, was not assessed for a lot even in 1787. With Jones out-of-county the lot's change of ownership apparently was missed by the tax assessor; Mumford, who did not sell it until 1 Jul 1790 (to Martha Nelms) [R9] appears to have avoided being assessed for a lot for at least the first four years that he owned it. So it is not surprising that the map labeler also missed the change, which theoretically at least should have become clear by the middle of 1787.

Oddly, despite diligent searching well into the 1790s and beyond, I found only one deed record regarding lots in Swansborough in 1787 [O54, dated in Apr], and no more until 20 Jun 1789 when John McCullough sold Lot 9 to Thomas Dudley [Q28]. A lot of transactions seem to have gone unrecorded, so that for many lots I did not find when they changed hands after 1786. This made defining the latest possible date an elusive goal. The best I can say is that possibly as early as mid-1786, probably by mid-1787, and certainly by 1788 the several Nelms and other transactions of 1785 and 1786 should probably have been reflected in the labeling.

The latest filed deed for a change in ownership that matches the initials is for John Starkey's 10 Feb 1786 sale of Lot 4 to John McCullough [O13]. That deed was apparently filed not too long after 8 Apr 1786, and he was presumably taxed for the lot that year. He was taxed for 5 lots in 1786 (one unimproved), only 4 in 1787. Four lots are labeled J M on the map, but for Lot 42 evidence besides the initials is somewhat speculative; a fifth, Lot 38, which is more firmly identifiable as McCullough's, is labeled T M, which I suspect reflects a copying error. There is thus enough doubt with respect to Lots 38 and 42 to muddy the picture, but the J M on Lot 4 does appear to show that the labeling was very probably no earlier than Feb 1786, and fairly likely after that deed was filed in Apr 1786, after the 11 Apr 1786 sale date of a deed filed a little earlier [O11].

In conclusion, I would date the map's labeling with a fair degree of confidence to 1786 or 1787, most likely within a span from April 1786 to the fall of 1787.

Appendix: A Case Study of Half of Lot 43 in Swansborough and a Remarkable Owner Thereof

My Turner ancestor Elias first appeared in Orange County, NC, in Nov 1777. The only indication of his origins was that two long-lived sons gave their father's birthplace as Maryland on the 1880 census. I've never found any evidence to confirm that my Elias Turner was born or ever lived in Maryland, but the long path to his family's origins (in Maryland) began with research in Onslow County. I found probably close to 50 years ago that an Elias Turner had been on the remarkably lovely (and so published) tax lists of Onslow County for 1769-1771, not as a landowner, only as a poll. For years I had nothing to indicate that that was the same person as my Elias. After yDNA testing, it became apparent that there were other Turners related to me whose origins, where known as far back as the early 1700s, centered on Somerset and Worcester Counties in Maryland and the nearby counties of the "Delmarva Peninsula" (for Delaware, Eastern Maryland and Virginia's two Eastern Shore counties). The coordinator of the Turner DNA Project, who had researched Turners widely, brought to my attention an Onslow Co. will and a related deed that appeared to connect to Delaware Turners with names likely to be of my group, and recommended that I investigate further in both places. I found my Elias's family in Kent Co., DE, where his father had moved from Somerset Co. MD well before Elias was born. His father's and grandfather's excellent wills, combined with tax and deed records from both Kent and Somerset counties, added a solid two generations to my Turner line. Hurrah for DNA!

Looking into Onslow Co. tax and land records I soon found that along with Elias, last seen in Kent Co.'s 1767 tax list, several other Turners with names common in my DNA group had also been in Onslow Co. by 1769 or 1770 and then quickly moved on (although my Elias was still in Onslow Co. on the 1774 tax list, the last one extant before he appeared in Orange Co.) Eventually it became clear that many of the other Turners had gone on to Tryon Co., NC, spreading from there mostly into South Carolina before 1800 and subsequently across the lower South and on to Texas. The earliest known ancestors of most of the men in my Turner DNA group tied in at one point or another in this migration pattern. It also became apparent to me eventually that a fair number of other Onslow County families had origins in the Delmarva area.

But what galvanized my attention early on is where Lot 43 in Swansborough comes in. Looking for Turners

in the General Indexes for Real Estate Conveyances of Onslow Co., I found that these cover almost none of the early deeds before the early 1800s, so the Turner listings virtually started off with what for me was a bombshell:

Grantors: Turner, Asa [recorded 4 Oct 1813], WD [warranty deed] to Jehu Montford, Bk 5, p.52

Grantees: Turner, Asa [recorded 2 Oct 1813, WD from Starling Sanders, Bk 5, p.49.

Asa Turner was my Elias' youngest son, and Starling Sanders (a woman) was connected with the family in Henderson Co., KY after they moved there, though I'd had no idea where she had come from or what relationship, if any, she had to my Elias Turner family. This was my first evidence for some definite connection between them and Onslow County. Deed Book 5, available on microfilm, revealed that on 5 Feb 1807, Asa had bought from Starling half of Lot 43 in Swansborough, and on 3 Jul 1813, Asa Turner of Henderson Co., KY had sold the lot to Jehu Mumford, who with his wife Sally had witnessed the earlier sale to Asa. (I eventually learned that the Mumfords, like my bunch of Turners, had roots in Delmarva.) My Turners moved from Orange Co, NC to Henderson Co., KY, about 1808, and it became apparent that Asa had gone to Swansborough in preparation for that move. Presumably not to burn all bridges in NC, the Turners did not sell all their land in Orange Co., and Asa's purchase of Starling's home was apparently made so as to keep options open for her as well if she would move with the Turners to Kentucky. Asa returned to Orange Co. in 1813 to sell the remaining family property there and continued on to Swansborough for the same evident purpose.

So who was Starling Sanders? Was she a Turner? She became more and more a mystery woman the more I learned about her. Gwynn's indexed abstracts readily led me to a sale by Starling of a tract of land up the River from Swansborough [X30]: "Starling Saunders to John Farr for 50 pounds 100 acres on west side of Whiteoak River at Pitts Oldfield and John Lovitt, on Ashes Creek, being a tract conveyed from Pitts Oldfield to Benjamin Fulcher and sold by Sheriff to Starling Saunders." Gwynn gave the date as 24 Mar 1805, which looked wrong from the context of the surrounding deeds; the year, I thought most likely 1803 as a 3 can easily be mistaken for a 5. I eventually found that the deed had been recopied in 1905 into one of the books which had been microfilmed. Here the deed date was 24 Mar 1804 and it had been recorded 8 Oct

1804. In fact I also found 1803 was the last year Starling was taxed for 100 acres, and considering the effective date for taxation was apparently April 30 (which I've surmised from long work with the tax records), a March 1804 sale would have excused her from an 1804 tax liability. In any case, here was a woman who was the highest bidder on 100 acres at a sheriff's sale!

Starling Sanders was in the 1800 census in Swansborough, with two slaves and an older woman. From that and later census records through 1840, if accurate, I calculated she must have been born around 1775/6, or perhaps a little earlier if she tended to understate her age. I found no record of a marriage for Starling, but in Onslow estate papers I found she was the widow of a John Sanders who had died intestate by 9 Jan 1798. There were 83 images of material in his file, but only couple of the items actually applied to him. One was an administrator's bond for Starling Sanders to handle John's estate. The other was a single page "Account of Sale of John Sanders Property," totaling £18 12 6, almost all sold to "the widow," including the usual household items, books, a scale, a compass, and a cow. (Jehu Mumford had bought 3 vaters(?) for 16 shillings, and Alexander Carmalt had paid what I suspect was a generous £6 1 0 for a "guardron.") On the back, Starling wrote "The Within Inventory and Acct of Sales Is A Just and True Acct and amount of My Deceased Husband John Sanders has [?] That has Cum to my Knowlidge 10th April - 1798 Starling Sanders" The rest of the items in the file were misplaced from a far more substantial John Sanders' estate of 1796, along with a few regarding claims on the 1818 estate of that John's son John. Starling, who was probably not much over 21 by Jan 1798, was literate and served as the administratrix for her deceased husband's small estate. There was no mention of land or a town lot in his estate file, and I have never found documentation to show how she came into possession of the half lot, but there were many more remarkable circumstances and intriguing clues I found thanks in part to Gwynn's abstracts.

The first one was perhaps Gwynn's shortest deed abstract of any: "Same to Samuel Sanders: a lot" [I85]. The preceding entry was for the sale 2 Oct 1773 of lots 15 and 31 from the Weeks estate to John Lovitt. So presumably Sanders had bought a lot in Swansborough from the Weeks estate on the same date. Samuel Sanders of Carteret Co. also had bought another lot 2 Apr 1773 from Anthony Charlescraft [J1]. He sold that one, "known as the Water Lot," 20 Jul 1774 [J47]. Later deeds make it clear this was Lot 33 [O55; see also J47 and L41], which was called a Water Lot because the White Oak River wraps around

to Pickett's Bay particularly close to if not into Lot 33's (north)east side. The other lot I was not able to identify until my recent discovery of Book "B," though the Sanders name made me suspect it was Lot 43. Yes, Samuel Sanders of Carteret Co., the original buyer from the Weeks estate in 1773, sold Lot 43 on 16 Dec 1783 to Ephraim Swift [Bk "B" 190-1].

Eventually I also discovered in Gwynn's abstracts a deed for the sheriff's sale to Starling which had long eluded me: "Lemuel Doty, Oct. 10, 1797, sheriff in suit brought in Wilmington by Starling Adams vrs. Benjamin Fulcher and wife Sarah. The land of Fulcher was sold by sheriff Doty to Adams" [U3]. Everything about this was remarkable, especially the timing: if Starling Adams made this purchase before she married John Sanders, there were only three months during which she must have married and quickly lost her husband. And this young and then still single woman had successfully brought suit against the Fulchers, who owned half of Lot 43 at the time. Did the "land of Fulcher" include not only the 100 acres on Ashes Creek she later sold, but also his half lot and house? I recently got a copy of the deed from the State Archives of North Carolina, which eliminated that possibility—it only concerned the 100 acres. The deed also showed Starling had received a judgment against the Fulchers of £250 in the [April?] 1795 session of the Superior Court of Law and Equity in Wilmington in an "action of trespass." Ironically, she only paid £8 and eleven shillings for the hundred acres, presumably all the satisfaction she ever got for the £250 judgment besides the £50 for which she later sold the tract. At the time of the lawsuit, she may not even have been out of her teens. In the face of this dynamo, I'm almost inclined to feel sorry for the Fulchers, whatever their offense may have been. Did she live with them, or were they next door neighbors? None of the half lot deeds contain any clue distinguishing the two side-by-side halves of the lot.

Back to Gwynn, once I knew to look for Adams, I learned that Starling was a daughter of Ezekiel and "Eliner Addams," who sold a 100 tract 4 Mar 1775 [J58]; it may have been a grant Ezekiel Adams had received 11 Dec 1770, his earliest appearance I've found in Onslow Co. [Gwynn v.I p765]. Starling was tied to them by another deed dated 30 Nov 1787, whereby "Ellender" Addams gave furniture, stock, etc. to her son Reuben and her daughter Starling. Perhaps Starling's mother was the older woman still with her in the 1800 census. I've never found any further trace of Reuben. It did not take long to determine that the Adamses had come from Dorchester Co. MD, another eastern shore county next to Kent Co. DE. In

fact, my Elias Turner's older brother Jehu had married a daughter of Roger Adams, whose 1759 Dorchester Co. will made bequests to his cousins Ezeke Adams, B[oa]z Adams, and "my dear beloved Cousin Mary Adams ye daughter of Wm Adams," to whom he left two Cow[s] and Calves. William Adams' Mar 1745 will, proved in June, named his oldest son Ezekiel and his second son Boaz, both still minors; Mary, who would have been quite small, was not mentioned, but William's wife was named Mary. Ezekiel Adams may have moved to Onslow County with Elias Turner, or certainly soon after. It's my hypothesis in light of the connection with Starling Adams Sanders, plus the fact that Ezekiel's cousin married Elias's brother, that Ezekiel's sister Mary Adams was in fact Elias's wife, otherwise known from just a single source only as Mary. I may never be able to prove this, but the evidence seems very compelling.

With my best guess that Samuel Sanders's second lot in Swansborough was likely Lot 43, I had another hypothesis about Starling and her husband. Samuel Sanders of Carteret County left a will which was proved Feb 1796, naming a son John whose fate researchers on that family seem not to know. Was Starling's husband who died within two years, by Jan 1798, the apparently unaccounted-for son of Samuel Sanders, who had owned what might have been Lot 43 from 1773? Had Samuel's son John gone there to live, and the lot eventually got passed on to Starling? In his will, Samuel left his son John two parcels of land in Carteret County (no lot is mentioned, and in fact before his will was written he had sold both his Swansborough lots). I've found no evidence Starling's John ever actually got that or any land, much less that she had any claim to it as his widow. On the other hand, it doesn't appear that any other John Sanders got it either. Samuel's home property was divided among three of his sons, Daniel, William, and David, by a commission on 7 and 8 Mar 1798, even while these sons as well as a daughter Sarah, were all still minors; guardian bonds for each of them were executed on 20 Aug 1798. His will made other generous provisions for John and two other sons, which three were apparently adults when the will was written. At Samuel's first estate sale 1 Mar 1796, a John Sanders bought one ax, the only direct evidence I found of a John Sanders connected with the disposition of Samuel's estate. Starling's inventory for her John contained no ax. I recently found there was a John Sanders with a 1799 Carteret Co. estate who could have been Samuel's son, but not Starling's husband who died a year or so earlier. This John's estate file does not show an explicit connection with Samuel's family, but the available evidence does strongly point to him as Samuel's son. The

buyers at his estate sale included Samuel [Jr] and James, presumably the deceased Samuel's other two adult sons so named, and a Daniel Sanders, either Samuel's executor or his probably teenaged son. And the 1799 inventory of this John Sanders did include an "axx." More tellingly, his inventory also included half of a negro girl Sook and cooper's tools. A female slave named Suck and a "Seat of Coopers tools" were also on Samuel's 1796 inventory, so there is pretty strong circumstantial evidence that the John Sanders who died in Carteret Co. in 1799 was the son John named in the will of Samuel. The land John was to inherit would presumably have reverted to Samuel's other heirs if he died unmarried without issue, which from his simple estate file would seem to be the case, though I could find no records relating to the land John was to have received. So I have to conclude Starling's John was probably not Samuel's son.

There is also a Carteret Co. deed of 4 Nov 1796 whereby a John Sanders sold cattle, a mare, hogs, furniture and "all [his] other "movable property," to someone who does not appear to be a relative or intended caregiver. This relatively uncommon type of deed disposing of all one's personal property is characteristic of persons preparing to die, become dependent for care by their child or other relative or friend, or else to move a significant distance away. Except in the latter case, the deed is usually for a gift or sometimes a token payment. If this was a deed of Samuel's son John, it is odd that he lived a couple of years more and died in Carteret County with a not untypical lot of personal property in his inventory, including an ax. If the John Sanders who was probably Samuel's son bought an ax at Samuel's estate sale in March 1796 and died owning an ax in 1799, there's a good chance he was not the same John Sanders who sold all his movable property in November 1796, especially when there was also a John Sanders who died nearby, a year or more sooner, and apparently without an ax. So there would seem to be a fair possibility that this might not have been Samuel's son. Was he perhaps instead Starling's John, who died within little more than a year? He could easily have been a nephew of Samuel, who had at least one brother James and probably others. So this John, of unknown age, could also have had some connection with the lot in Swansborough, and if so, some acquaintance or friendship with Starling, who no doubt had some significant connection with the Fulchers at Lot 43. If Starling actually did not marry until after the sheriff's sale of 10 Oct 1797 when she was identified as Starling Adams, and if John was needing a caregiver, the timing would appear to leave a failing John in limbo for almost a year unless perhaps there was some proper

arrangement for her to give him care in Swansborough, and marriage not contemplated until perhaps offered as an option intended for her benefit when he was clearly nearing his end. This scenario would offer a pleasing explanation reasonably consistent with the known facts, but must be considered quite speculative.

There are, however, no other obvious candidates for Starling's John Sanders. By the time of their marriage, there was a significant Sanders family presence in the Swansborough District, if not in the town, including a John Sanders who was the son of the John Sanders who died in 1796, but estate records clearly indicate that that John [Jr] outlived Starling's John, and apparently did not die until 1818. The 1794, 1795 and 1796 Swansborough District tax lists included Sanders listings as follows [w=white polls, b=black polls, p=polls, ac=acres]:

1794

Jno Sanders 0w 4b 700ac

Jno ditto Ju r 1w

Jefse Sanders 1w 2b 400ac

1795

John Sanders Jur 1p

John Sanders Senr 4p 172ac

Jefse Sanders 3p 400ac

1796

Jno Sanders 4p 700ac

Jefse Sanders 3p 100ac

The senior John Sanders (well known in Swansborough history) was the one who died leaving a will dated 4 Apr 1796 and proved in July 1796, naming wife Rebeckah and sons Jesse, John and Isaac, also naming the three sons his executors. John Sanders [Sr, identifiable by his significant acreage and slave count] had begun appearing in White Oak District tax lists as early as 1778, Jesse beginning in 1782 as a single man, and John [Jr] in 1794. In the 1794 list the two Johns are listed consecutively, which strengthens the likelihood they are father and son. That the father was assessed for no white polls would be because he was over 60 (reportedly born in 1725). In 1795 and 1796 polls were not distinguished by race, so all John Senr's 1795 polls would be his 4 slaves. Jesse is no doubt the oldest son, with his own acreage. John [Sr] must have died before 30 April 1796, as there is an inventory dated 1 May 1796 signed by the three sons among his estate papers. His estate's tax liability for 1796 would either be shown on the list identified as his estate or an heir or party responsible for paying the tax would replace him. The latter appears to be the case here: John [Jr] being an executor and probably still residing at the home premises, he

was simply listed as his father's replacement (apparently with one fewer taxable slave). There are no subsequent tax lists extant for the District until 1800, when John, Isaac and Jesse all appear, each with 400 acres, Jesse with 6 polls and the others with 3 each. Earlier deeds in Carteret Co. revealed that John and Rebeckah had come from there, and that he was probably a brother, cousin or other close relation to Samuel. John Sanders, cooper, sold 144 acres on Bogue Sound, where he lived (just across from Swansborough), to Samuel Sanders, planter, for only £2 in 1774. By a Carteret Co. deed of 5 Apr 1800 John Sr's widow sold her rights in an inheritance from the estate of Absolem Sheppard, who had been a witness to the 1774 deed. (Her maiden name was reportedly Shepherd.) Jesse, John and Isaac also signed the 1800 deed. There are also other documents among John Sr's estate papers showing that his son John outlived Starling's husband. The conclusion is clear that Starling's John was neither of the John Sanderses on the 1794-1796 Swansborough tax lists, neither the father who died testate in 1796, nor the son John he named in his will, who outlived Starling's John and continued to appear on tax lists and in deeds into the 1800s.

No other John Sanders appeared on any extant Onslow County tax list from 1774 through 1800. Nor did I find any record of a John Sanders in Gwynn's abstracts for the same period that was not either provably or highly probably John Sr or his son John. So Starling's husband appears to have been an import, and the John of Carteret County who sold all his movable property in Nov 1796 would seem to be the only obvious candidate, assuming he was not in fact the John Sanders who was most likely the son of Samuel of Carteret Co, and who died there in 1799 with a good deal of movable property. Though I expect I'll never be able to prove it, I quite favor the hypothesis that Starling's John Sanders was the one who sold his belongings in 1796, that he did so because he was in failing health, that he went to her for needed care just across the White Oak River in Swansborough, perhaps on Lot 43, and ended up marrying her not long before he died. Starling's mother, who had given all her worldly goods to Starling and her disappearing brother Reuben Adams in 1787, might well have been still living with Starling and under her care, even possibly was the older woman with Starling in the 1800 census. Starling and her mother could have been part of the Ephraim Swift household in the 1790 census, which included 3 white males over 16 (none younger) and 4 white females of any age. They could not both have been part of the Benjamin Fulcher household in 1790, which included only one white female, and surprisingly, 3 white

males under 16 besides Fulcher himself as the one white male over 16.

The question remains unanswered, how did Starling end up owning the house and half of Lot 43 which she sold to Asa in Feb 1807? From 1800 through 1805 she was taxed for an improved half lot in Swansborough, so she owned it by 1800 if not by 1797 (no Swansborough tax lists for 1797 through 1799 are extant.) Benjamin Fulcher lived on half the lot in 1791, when he gave it and all his worldly goods to his “Beloved Friend Pitsey Oldfield” [Q71, Q75 (from images of the original entries in the deed books)]. Presumably at that time he had no wife, but his gift to Oldfield also included not only five slaves, but, remarkably, “the Hold Right and Title of my Legise that,s Coming to me from my mother Sarah Draper.” The Oct 1797 deed whereby Starling Adams acquired 100 acres that had belonged to Fulcher (but not his half of Lot 43) refers to the judgment in a 1795 suit she brought in Wilmington for trespass “against Benjamin Fulch[er and] Sarah his wife” [U3 (from images of the original entry in the deed book)]. Perhaps he had acquired a wife Sarah between 1791 and 1795, or perhaps the 1795 suit involved Fulcher’s inheritance from his mother Sarah (was Draper perhaps her maiden name?) and the 1797 deed reflected a mistaken assumption by Sheriff Grant that the Sarah named in the lawsuit was Fulcher’s wife? Whatever the case, there had no doubt been some significant connection between Starling Adams and Benjamin Fulcher by 1795, and as she ended up on Lot 43 it seems quite likely she was either his neighbor or perhaps even acted as his caregiver in his own household on Lot 43. Two of Fulcher’s slaves as of 1791 were women, and another a “Gairl,” who could perhaps have given him what care he might have needed, but as they were given to Oldfield in 1791 they may not have stayed with him. Oldfield apparently let him stay in the Swansborough premises and continue to pay the taxes thereon. I’ve tried, so far without success, to find the records of the 1795 lawsuit in Wilmington; a large portion of the civil action papers seem to be missing. I have no idea what sort of “trespass” would have justified a £250 judgment, but I can imagine that perhaps up to four or possibly even more years of caregiving under some arrangement that he reneged on could have given her a claim on him and/or his mother’s estate though he had officially given everything but his other land (and probably his money) away. I found no record of the disposition of another 50 acres he had owned as of 1790 at Ashes Creek or another 90 acres below Ashes Creek, but by 1796 Fulcher was not taxed on any other land but his half lot. For Fulcher there was no will or estate file. Oldfield left

a will in 1809 with various bequests to his wife and sons and a nephew Reuben Fulsher, but it shed no light on the lot. Did Oldfield give or sell the house and lot to Starling between 1796 and 1800? Or did Ephraim Swift sell or give his half lot to her? Did the Wilmington judgment leading to the Sheriff’s sale of 100 acres of Fulcher’s land on Ashes Creek also involve the lot in some way? These would be the likely possibilities, but I’ve found no relevant record, so the question remains open.

There remains also the question of the initials J S on Lot 43 on the map I’ve dated to 1786-1787. E S for Ephraim Swift wouldn’t have been surprising from what is known from deed and tax records—at least he bought the full lot in Dec 1783 (though he sold half the following month to Kilby Jones, who in turn sold that half to Benjamin Fulcher in Apr 1787); Swift apparently retained his half until at least 1796. But J S? I found no J Swift in records of the period for the Swansborough area. J S does appear to correspond to John Starkey on Lot 3, but there is no evidence of any connection between him and Lot 43; the one lot he was taxed on in 1786 was unimproved, and he had 1750 acres and 15 polls, presumably mostly slaves, so his residence was probably not in the town. There was a Jesey Stephens on the 1786 Swansborough District list only as a poll (though he had 100 acres in 1784), and a John Scott on the 1787 list with 250 acres, but nothing to tie either one specifically to the town, much less Lot 43. It does seem to me not unlikely that the S does stand for Sanders in view of Samuel Sanders’ ownership of the lot from 1773 to 1783, the John Sr and Jesse Sanders presence in the district from at least 1784 to 1800, and the Starling Sanders connection to the lot. I had at first focused on Starling’s John thinking he was the son of Samuel. Though I’ve since concluded that’s unlikely, Starling’s John Sanders, as well as John Sanders Sr and his sons John Jr. and Jesse were likely all fairly closely related to Samuel, such that any of them could have had some history of residence or other association with Lot 43. John Sr and his sons had significant acreage, though, and never town lots, so I suspect they lived near but not in the town. Starling’s John never appears on an Onslow Co. tax list as far as I can tell, and if he did in fact sell his personal property in 1796 in Carteret Co., there’s nothing to substantiate the idea that he might have lived in Swansborough significantly before that. Perhaps he could have been one of the two extra white males over 16 in the 1790 Ephraim Swift household. In any case, somehow he got to know Starling Adams well enough to marry her by the end of 1797, and it’s rather easier to argue that she may have lived on Lot 43 before that. Her apparent significant connection with Benjamin

Fulcher by 1795, and the mysterious fact that she ended up owning half the lot by some time between 1797 and 1800 suggests that she at least may well have lived there for some time previous. If J S did stand for Starling's John Sanders, admittedly a long shot, she provides what little link of evidence there may be that he was ever there. On the other hand, evidence for any other J S candidate is also virtually nil.

To review and wrap up Starling's remarkable story, she likely took care of her widowed mother from an early age, probably at most barely a teenager in 1787 when her mother divided her apparently modest personal property by gift to Starling and a brother of whom I could find no further record. How long she may have taken care of her mother is unclear, whether just a short time or even past 1800. It is clear that as a still very young single woman, she brought successful suit against Benjamin Fulcher for some significant civil injury, bought 100 acres of his land at a resulting sheriff's sale, almost immediately thereafter married, lost her husband, and handled his very modest estate, buying most of it herself. All this was very unusual for a young woman. She appears to have had some means of support all along, which could well have been by caregiving or nursing, possibly for Fulcher, for John Sanders, for Ephraim Swift and/or for others. It may not be just a coincidence that not only her mother, but also Fulcher disposed of their personal property with death or dependency likely in view, as did the only apparent candidate for the John Sanders she married within about a year of his doing so. My speculative hypothesis that he came to her for care at least makes good sense of the facts I've been able to find so far.

While no master of prose, Starling was literate, and apparently both capable and respected, as there are hints that she had good support in the community. She sold Fulcher's 100 acres for about six times what she had paid

for it; or perhaps other bidders at the auction chose to let her get it cheap? In contrast, the buyer of her husband's "guardron" paid what seems likely a very generous price for it. Two men with no other known connection to her were the sureties on her administrator's bond. The Mumfords, who witnessed the sale of her home to Asa, probably took care of it for the six years until Asa sold it to them. The Turners, probably her aunt Mary and her uncle by marriage, Elias, cared enough about her to have their son Asa fetch her some 30 years after they left Onslow County and make it possible for her to move with them to Kentucky without giving up the option of returning to her home in Swansborough. In Kentucky she married again, but apparently never had children, either by John Sanders or her second husband. After he and Asa Turner and Asa's wife all died in the 1820s, she took over the care of Asa's two surviving children, not yet in their teens; Asa's widow had remarried, but died within a very few years, so Starling took the children off the hands of their stepfather. Dying in 1845, she left her modest estate to them by will, written in 1838: "all my estate real and personal to be equally divided between the two at my death that is not otherwise exposed of." After all her just debts being paid, her first and only other provision had been to otherwise "expose" of her slave: "First I will and bequeath my negro woman free and to live where she may think proper and *if she should become infirm and not able to maintain herself that she shall be maintained out of my estate...*" (italics mine). Much better to think of her as a woman who had a heart to care for others in their infirmity than to wonder what dispatched her first husband so quickly within a couple of months of their marriage. There are many questions I haven't been able to answer, but it's clear she was a woman with a remarkable story, and I am grateful to have been able to find as many pieces of this intricate puzzle as I have so far.