

## Chapter 3 Early Tuscarora Area Wetheringtons

Several versions of the origins of early Tuscarora Wetheringtons exist.

One of the more popular published accounts reports four Wetherington brothers came to North Carolina from Northumberland, England in 1732. The four brothers, Solomon, William, Thomas, and James, all bachelors, started homesteads along a small creek in Craven County in the area now known as Tuscarora. The creek allegedly owns its name to the marital status of the brothers, becoming Bachelor Creek. Alas, this charming, folksy tale is unfortunately a family myth.<sup>1</sup>

More recently, other researchers have located Solomon's father, Robert Wetherington (1682 – 1722) recording a will in Calvert County, Maryland.<sup>2</sup> The will names children: Solomon, John, Mary, Elizabeth, and Dorcas and stepbrother, Benjamin Rice. The migration of John and Solomon from Maryland to the Bay River area of North Carolina occurred between 1722 and 1730. About 1745 John and Solomon Wetherington appear in recorded deeds in the Stoney Town Creek area of Craven County (now Lenoir County). Researchers name this Solomon (b. 1703 or 1704) as the father of Thomas Wetherington (1730 – 1774).<sup>3</sup> Thomas Wetherington resided in Dobbs County, reportedly married a daughter of Abraham Taylor and had 7 children. These children were: <sup>4</sup>

1. William Wetherington 1759 – 1844 m. Susannah Coward
2. Solomon Wetherington 1761 – 1840 m. Mary Moore
3. James Wetherington (1763-) m. dau of Peter Yates
4. Thomas Wetherington (1765-) m. Elizabeth Taylor
5. Joseph Wetherington (1767-) m. Nancy Pritchard
6. Sarah Wetherington (1769 -) m. Abraham Taylor
7. Frederick Wetherington

The only fact in the family tale is the group of brothers. The family legend has the brothers arriving about 1732 and the Wetherington brothers were actually born in Dobbs County in about 1759-1770.

A colonial land grant for Solomon Wetherington (b. 1703) exists, but the property is listed on the Neuse River, near Stoney Town Creek in present day Lenoir County, not Bachelor Creek in Tuscarora. The Wetherington brothers purchased land on Bachelor Creek about 1790-1800, and a large patent for 640 acres was granted in the Bachelor Creek area to Abraham Taylor, Solomon's brother-in-law.<sup>5</sup>

Another family tale of land grants from the king also proves untrue; the record reveals the elder Wetherington brothers purchased grants from the Crown near Kinston and later the State of North Carolina, but the bulk of their recorded transactions were lands purchased from private landowners. There are no colonial

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land grants to Wetheringtons for property in the Bachelor Creek area. The only proven significant grants are to Abraham Taylor, brother-in-law to Solomon Wetherington.

The names of Solomon, William, Thomas, and James Wetherington are also listed in the 1790 Craven and Lenoir county census as heads of families.<sup>6</sup> This listing supports the brothers being born about 1759 – 1767. In the 1800 Craven county census, these four names appear again, all men being listed as less than 45 years of age.<sup>7</sup> Also a brother, Joseph Wetherington, is listed in Craven County between 1800 and 1840.<sup>8,9,10</sup>

The 1790 census lists James Wetherington, Andrew Richardson, and Alexander Bogey. Andrew Richardson and Alexander Bogey are well-documented landowners in the Tuscarora area, so it appears James was established in the Bachelor Creek area by 1790. Also in 1793 James sold land in the area to Andrew Richardson.

Colonial North Carolina land grants mention Bachelor Creek by name in a 1754 grant to Richard Graves.<sup>11</sup> The name Bachelor Creek also appears on the Moseley map of 1733. Another spelling, Batchelder's Creek, likely derives from the Swiss Palatine settlers prior to 1733 and is the most widely accepted source of the creek's name and not the brother's marital status. The name Tuscarora does not appear in early Crown land grants (1639 – 1775). The North Carolina Gazetteer lists Tuscarora as being settled about 1825, but the Bachelor Creek area was apparently well settled by the 1790s. The name Tuscarora does not appear to be in common usage until the advent of the North Carolina and Atlantic railroad in the late 1850s. The creek in Tuscarora currently called Rollover Creek joins Bachelor Creek to the southeast of the Gethsemane Free Will Baptist Church. This watercourse was called Limbo Branch in the early 1800s and the name Rollover does not appear in county records until 1858.<sup>12</sup> The name Rollver comes from a curve in the stream where the creek "rolls over" onto itself. Early Wetherington deeds (circa 1800) also mention a Tomahawk Branch<sup>13</sup>, Deep Branch, Ash Branch, Moore's Branch, Beaver Dam Branch, and a Limbo Bridge.<sup>14</sup>

Other Wetherington deed transactions in Craven County prior to 1775 also include Robert in 1768, and Thomas in 1770.<sup>15</sup>

Land transactions in Dobbs County (Lenoir) name Solomon, Robert, John, and Nathan Wetherington prior to 1775.<sup>16</sup>

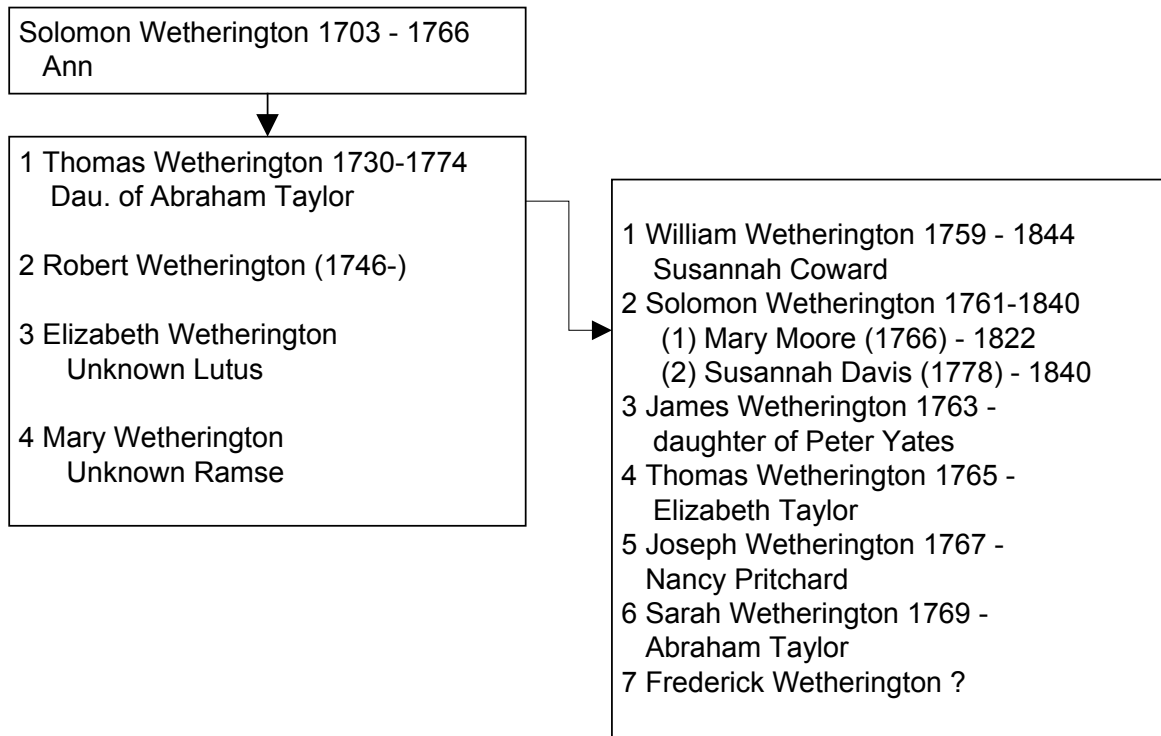
Solomon Wetherington 1761- 1840 appears to have been raised in Dobbs County. In 1795 Solomon purchased land from John West on the south side of the Neuse River and east side of Moseley Creek (Land now in Craven County and north of Dover, NC).<sup>17</sup> Solomon subsequently sold land to Levi West in 1796 in the same area, east of Moseley's Creek and west of the Snake Hole Branch, lands also in Craven Township No. 3, near Dover, NC.<sup>18</sup>

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The first record of Solomon Wetherington in Bachelor Creek was recorded a deed to Solomon from Abraham Taylor in 1796 and listed as 98 acres of land on both sides of Bachelor Creek, beginning at Benjamin Fordham's 1<sup>st</sup> line where it crosses Bryery Branch. The land was purchased for £98 and deed witnessed by Lewis Fonville and David Hudler. By 1800-1810, there were numerous deeds for Bachelor Creek land naming Solomon Wetherington.

Solomon's sister, Sarah, married Abraham Taylor in 1787 in Craven County. These Taylors also resided in Tuscarora in 1790 along with several other Taylor relations.

The current best fit of information yields the following proposed family tree:



**Figure 9 Elder Solomon Wetherington Family Tree**

The elder Solomon Wetherington was born in Maryland about 1703, moved to the Bay River area about 1730 and later to the Contentnea Neck area about 1745. He was the father of 4 known children and the grandfather of Solomon Wetherington 1761-1840.

Thomas Wetherington appears to have raised his family in the area of Stoney Town (Stoneyton) Creek, land now in Lenoir County on the west side of the Neuse.

Deed transactions by Thomas' son, Solomon, in the 1780's were for land on both sides of the Neuse River, including the Moseley Creek and Snake Hole Branch area.

Solomon's siblings, James, Sarah, and Thomas migrated to the Tuscarora area about 1780-1790. About 1796 Solomon and family migrated to the Tuscarora area. Solomon's brothers, William and Joseph, joined the other siblings and established homes in the Tuscarora area.

Some Internet family trees also name a sixth son, Frederick Wetherington, but this name does not appear in any known early Craven records.

About 1800 the Wetherington brothers, Solomon, Joseph, James, William, Thomas and sister, Sarah Wetherington Taylor are living in the area of Tuscarora. From this point there is a wealth of data in Craven County records on these Wetherington families and their relations.

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