



ELIZABETH SHOWN MILLS

Certified GenealogistSM • Certified Genealogical LecturerSM
Fellow & Past President, American Society of Genealogists
Trustee & Past President, Board for Certification of Genealogists

1732 Ridgedale Drive, Tuscaloosa, AL 35406-1942 • eshown@comcast.net

- DATE:** 11 January 2005
- SUBJECT:** Millie (Breland) Odom Cook's First Husband: A Preliminary Analysis
- REPORT TO** File
- BACKGROUND:** Millie Breland
Born ca. 1765–70, South Carolina
Died 1820–30, Pike County, Mississippi
Wife of Shadrack [?] Odom & Matthew Cook
- Known children:*
William Odom born 1786–87 (1850 census)
or bef. June 1790 (1830 & 1840 censuses)
Shadrack Odom born 1792 (his Bible)
Richard Odom born 1794–1802 (1820 census)
or bef. 1795 (1816 census) (some say 1796)
- TRADITION (1928):** “Absolem Breland was born in Beaufort District, South Carolina, about the middle of the 18th century (1750). ... We know nothing definitely of his ancestry, perhaps Abraham Breland was his father. ... It is generally reported that he was in the Revolutionary War and fought under General Francis Marion. He had a number of brothers and at least one *sister Millie Breland, who married Shadrach Odom and later Mathew Cook.*” (p. 5)
- “Somewhere about the year 1808, the Breland and Odom families ... decided to locate in [Mississippi Territory]. ... according to tradition handed down and given to the writer by ... [his] mother, Mrs. Manerva Odom, and [his] uncle, James H. Odom, children of William Odom [Millie's son] who was one of the young men in the company [and was] then a young man of twenty.” (pp. 1–2)
- Robert Lee Breland (1870–1939), “The Breland and Odom Families: An Account of Their Migration from South Carolina to Mississippi” (MS, Philadelphia, Miss., 1928).
- CLARIFICATIONS:**
1. William Odom's move, in company with his uncle and aunt, the William Thornhills, occurred in March 1811, rather than 1808. (Thornhill-Odom passport, “Georgia Executive Proceedings ... January 1811–September 1812,” p. 2; Georgia Department of Archives & History, Atlanta.)
 2. No evidence has been found of Revolutionary service by Absolom Breland. The only Breland for whom known evidence exists is his probable brother Amos of Beaufort. (Account Audited File no. 729A, S.C. Department of Archives & History [SCDAH], Columbia.)

HANDICAP: Both Beaufort District and Pike County are “burned” counties. Courthouse records that would normally be used to piece together the family—marriages, probates, deeds, mortgages, and court cases—are mostly destroyed.

ANALYSIS OF PROBLEM

For decades, efforts to identify Millie Breland’s first husband have concentrated upon the name *Shadrack*, with the goal of identifying a South Carolina man of this name who might be her husband. Interest has particularly focused upon the one and only Shadrack Odom for whom there exists evidence of Revolutionary War service (Stub Indent, Book V, no. 230, SCDAH).

Several researchers (Dr. Charles Flandrin and Dr. Susan Slaymaker, particularly), have pointed out a major issue: the extant file for this Shadrack identifies his widow as one *Sarah* Odom, not *Millie*. Their concern is well grounded for two other major reasons: time frame and locale.

Time frame Sarah Odom applied for compensation on 6 August 1784, by which time her husband, Shadrack, was already dead. Therefore, he could not be the father of three children born between 1786 and *ca.* 1794–96.

Locale This Shadrack Odom is identified as a militiaman, meaning that *the company in which he served was likely based in the county of his residence*. That company was an Orangeburg unit. His widow applied from *Orangeburg* in 1784 and her application was attested by the first lieutenant of the militia company in which Shadrack served. That officer, John N. Fry, is easily identified as an *Orangeburg* resident (For example, see S.C. Mesne Conveyances, Book Z-5: 134–35, 1787, SCDAH.)

Meanwhile, the Breland residence in *Beaufort* County has long since been established via census research. Numerous “family trees” posted online further assert (with no evidence) that Millie and as many as 16 other children attributed to Absalom Breland Sr., were all born at “Boggy Gut, Beaufort County.”

Orangeburg and Beaufort adjoined at the time of the Revolution. However, the counties were so large that an Orangeburg resident and a Beaufort resident could have lived 150 miles or more apart. A cursory review of colonial and early federal atlases for South Carolina reveal the existence of *two* sites in Beaufort called Boggy Gut. Only one still carries the name today, a site on the Southern coast near Hilton Head. A second Boggy Gut also existed in upper Beaufort (present Hampton County), according to the classic *Mills’ Atlas of the State of South Carolina* and numerous land plats and memorials accessible through the SCDAH online database <www.archivesindex.sc.gov>. That waterway’s name appears to have been changed to *Boggy Creek* by the time of the Civil War; current topographical maps render it as Boggy Branch/Boggy Swamp.

APPROACH

Efforts to identify an unknown or unproved spouse should begin with one basic premise that is overlooked in genealogy with surprising frequency: *For a couple to marry, they have to be in proximity at the time of the marriage*. Toward that end, this project will proceed as follows:

1. Analyze the pre-1811 censuses of Beaufort to
 - confirm that Millie, her birth family and her second husband did indeed live in Beaufort throughout this period;
 - identify any and all Odoms who might also be enumerated in Beaufort.

2. If both Brelands and Odoms are found, then attempt to determine their proximity or distance from one another—specifically, to determine whether any Odom family residence would put a male offspring within “courting distance” of the Brelands.
3. Examine the surviving land, probate, and legislative petition records created by the colony- and state-level governments in an effort to (a) identify other Odoms who may have lived in Beaufort but were missed by censuses; and (b) determine precisely where in Beaufort the Brelands and (possibly) Odoms resided.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

Descent of land is the purest proof of relationship. That long-standing maxim of genealogical research is critical in the present case.

Colonial land and probate records created at the colony level enable us to identify the earliest settlers of the Breland community in Beaufort County (1750s–1770s). Surviving censuses enable us to follow those settler families through the era in which Millie Breland and her Odom offspring left Beaufort (1811).

Taken together, that evidence suggests (or, in some cases, proves) the following:

- that Millie’s husband was named **Isaac**, *if* the S.C. archives has correctly read his name from a 1797 Boggy Gut plat. I have ordered that document for verification.
- that Isaac died after the 17 September 1797 plat but before the 1800 census—a time frame compatible with the death of Millie’s husband, considering the birth period of their last child.
- Millie apparently lived in 1800 with Absalom Breland, whose land lay next door to Isaac in 1797.
- that Isaac’s (?) mother and Millie’s mother-in-law was the widow Mary Odom, who owned land amid the Brelands in the Boggy Gut/Pipe Creek corner of Beaufort County from at least 1784 to 1810.
- that Mary may have been the widow of Dempsey Odom, who inherited Boggy Gut land from his father, Abraham Odom, Sr., of Pipe Creek in 1770.
- that Dempsey died in Beaufort before the Revolution, after which Mary continued to live there—*adjacent to Dempsey’s sisters and their husbands*—through 1810.
- that Mary, in 1810, is subsumed into the household of her newly adult grandson—Millie’s eldest son, William Odom—with Millie and her new husband living next door.

RESEARCH NOTES

(Census Work, 1790–1810)

All censuses in this period name only heads-of-households. I have read each year’s returns *line by line*, rather than relying upon the accuracy of the various indexes to transcribed names.

The following notes include adjacent names—these being neighboring households in most cases—because the identity of neighbors are critical to the research process. Each set of notes handles the “adjacent names” somewhat differently in order to advance the analysis process:

- 1790** Little can be done with this year, aside from identifying households. The semi-alphabetical arrangement of the census prevents us from determining neighbors exactly. See general comments under that year.
- 1800** In editorial brackets, beside the names of neighbors, I have added notes from surviving S.C. land plats and memorials that identify the watercourse on which these neighbors lived. The watercourse data establishes the location of the community. The order of names typically reflects the order in which the enumerator visited the household.
- Given the primitive condition of S.C. backcountry roads, that order of visitation differs somewhat from 1800 to 1810. In 1800, enumerators were more likely to use water routes. By 1810, the developing road system provided short cuts from one creek to another or one farm to another. Generally speaking, *proximity of residence is more reliably reflected in 1810*.
- For example, in 1810, to get from a Pipe Creek farm to a Dry Gut farm that adjoined it on the rear, the enumerator would not have to descend Pipe Creek to its mouth on the Savannah, travel up the Savannah to Dry Gut, and then ascend that creek. By 1810, the road connecting the middle of Pipe Creek to the middle of Dry Gut (to the north) or to Boggy Gut (to the south) would have been serviceable except under heavy flooding.
- 1810** The “neighborhood” notes I supply for this year focus upon the proximity of households among key Breland-Odom families. The neighborhood enumeration that extended across four pages in 1800 is shortened to two in 1810, because of the improved roads that united neighborhoods.

1790 U.S. CENSUS, BEAUFORT

NARA microfilm T498, roll 3

The first census of the United States officially began on the 1st Monday of August 1790. In South Carolina, it was not completed until February 1792. Therefore, the census data that follows cannot be interpreted as a snapshot of any household composition as it existed in 1790. Births, deaths, and residential moves through the first month of 1792 might also be reflected. Surviving data does not indicate the exact date on which any household was visited.

The original census was taken in multiple parts or districts. Within each district, the names are crudely semi-alphabetized by first letter of surname. The districts are not named or numbered. They are separable only by following the alphabetical sequences. That alphabetization makes it impossible to determine proximity between individual households. Nonetheless, some clues can be gleaned, as when—say—all “Brelo” households cluster consecutively amid other B names that are, themselves, randomly organized.

Although the 1790 return does not identify the community, watercourse, or parish of residence for any household in Beaufort, all of the following families are identified as residents of **St. Peter’s Parish** by the 1800 and 1810 censuses.

p. 493, col. 2

Bing, Jn^o

Buzby, Mary

Brelo, Abra^h	2 free white male 16– 0 " –16	4 free white females	5 slaves
--------------------------------	--	----------------------	----------

Brelo, Absolem	1 free white male 16– 3 " –16	4 free white females	1 slave
-----------------------	--	----------------------	---------

Breelo, Abra^h	1 free white male 16– 1 " –16	5 free white females	1 slave
Breelo, Amos	1 free white male 16– 3 " –16	2 free white females	0 slave
Breelo, Samuel	1 free white male 16– 0 " –16	1 free white female	0 slave

Butler, Eliza
 Ball, Samson
 Bostick, Rich^d
 Box, Tho^s
 Brian, Tho^s
 Brown, Jn^o
 Bell, Zachery
 Browly, Job
 Blitchondon, Elusy
 Barns, Theofi^s
 [end of B's]

C Section

Cook, Matthew [No such head of household in Beaufort. Nor is a Matthew Cook indexed for the returns of any other county.]

p. 492, col. 3

[*apparent continuation of the above list*]

O Section

Oglesby, Seburn

Odam, Mary	0 free white male 16– 1 free white male –16	3 free white females	1 slave
-------------------	--	----------------------	---------

Oswell, Will^m
 Oswell, Robert
 Oury, Wentle
 [end of O's]

Analysis

Neither Millie Breland nor her Odom husband appear as a household head on the 1790 census. This situation would typically occur under one of three circumstances:

1. The couple was simply missed by the enumerator.
2. The couple is living in the home of another person in Beaufort County.
3. The couple is living somewhere other than Beaufort County.

Additionally, the 1790 returns for S.C. show

- No Shadrack Odom (or variant spellings) as a head-of-household anywhere else in S.C, insofar as current indexing projects show.
- No Brelands (or variant spellings) elsewhere in S.C.
- No Breland household in Beaufort that has both (*a*) extra adult male (who could be Millie's husband); and (*b*) a young male who could be the young William Odom, born 1786–87.

For Mary Odom, we may conclude or hypothesize the following:

- Her household does contain the correct number of individuals to include Millie’s family. The gender distribution would be compatible if one tick mark was meant for the adult male column rather than the adult female column. Whether such an error actually occurred is debatable.
- Mary is a widow. Single women from respectable families did not maintain their own separate dwellings, even if they had an inheritance to support that indulgence.
- The fact that Mary’s household is the only set of Odoms enumerated in Beaufort suggests the likelihood that the young Odom male who married Millie about five years earlier was her son.

1800 CENSUS, BEAUFORT

NARA microfilm M32, roll 48

The following notes identify “neighbors” but do not show the household composition. The household name is given here for the purpose of identifying those neighboring families. In square editorial brackets, to identify the location of the neighborhood, I have added

- plat or memorial data from the SCDAAH, citing series, volume, and page for each piece of data;
- annotations for households whose location is depicted on the attached photocopy of the 1825 Beaufort County map from *Mills Atlas*.

St. Peter’s Parish

pp. 116–17

- Dubies, James Junr. [Mills Atlas places “Dupies” Ferry ca. 5 miles below the point that Boggy Gut empties into the Savannah. The area is swampy, with few families]
- Volleton, James
 McKenzie, J^{no} [Mills Atlas places “McKenzie” east of Boggy Gut, between (a) the point that Boggy emerges from the swamp and (b) Bostick’s Branch of Cypress Creek]
- Smith, Elizabeth [1805 plat, John Smith adj. Eliz. Smith on Cypress Creek, S213190 v36:676]
- Gibbons, Thomas [1788 plat, James Peart adj. Thos. Gibbons, Black Swamp, v23:98]
 [Topo maps place Black Swamp above Cypress Creek and Robertsville, just east of Bostick’s Branch]
- Cammell, William
 Wilkinson, John
 Taylor, William
 “Ditto for J^{no} Rutledge”
 Webb, Elizabeth [See later comments for James Webb/Abraham Odom Sr.]

Comment: With the above cluster of names, the enumerator appears to have gone from Dupies Ferry (on the Savannah) up the Savannah to Palichucola Bluff (just below the mouth of Boggy Creek), then travelled eastward to pick up the families between there and Black Swamp. From here he appears to have returned to the Savannah and headed up Boggy Gut itself.

- Blount, Lewis
 Blount, John [1828 Stokes plat, John Blount n’bor, Boggy Gut, S213192 v48 p208]
 Stokes, David [*ditto*]
 Rushing, Matheu
- | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------|-------|----------|-------|----------|
| Thornhill, William Junr. | 1 male | 26–45 | 1 female | 26–45 | 0 slaves |
| | 2 males | 0–10 | 1 female | 0–10 | |

Edwards, Ann Beckett, Patty	[1786 J. Nicholson plats, adj. Beckett between <u>Boggy Gut</u> and <u>Beaver Dam Swamp</u> , S213190 v16:279, 344]				
Breler, Absalom	1 male	45—	1 female	26–45	3 slaves
	1 male	16–26	1 female	16–26	
	1 male	10–16	1 female	10–16	
	3 males	0–10	2 females	0–10	
	[1802 plat, 60.5a, <u>Boggy Gut</u> , adj. Abraham Breler and Seth Stafford, S213190 v36:178]				
Breler, Ab^m [Abraham]	1 male	45—	1 female	45—	6 slaves
	[1784 plat, 640a, “ <u>branches of Savannah</u> ,” adj. Amos Breland, David Loper, Job Rowley, & Seth Stafford, S213190 9:531]				
	[1789 plat, 34a, <u>Long Branch</u> , <u>Boggy Creek</u> , S213190 v24:96]				
Breler, Amos	1 male	26–45	1 female	26–45	0 slaves
	1 male	16–26	1 female	10–16	
			1 female	0–10	
Breler, David	1 male	16–26	1 female	16–26	1 slave
			2 females	0–10	
Breler, Samuel	1 male	26–45	1 female	16–26	1 slave
			1 female	10–16	
			3 females	0–10	

Comment: The above data place “Breler” farms on lower Boggy Gut (present Boggy Branch/Swamp), and probably on both banks. Abraham’s “Long Branch” of 1789 seems to be the watercourse marked Blue Run by *Mills Atlas* in 1826; it branches to the west of Boggy. Absalom’s neighbors are to the east of Boggy. Below, the enumerator moves up the branches of Boggy Gut to Pipe Creek.

Loper, William Pierse, William Rogers, John Godley, Benjamin Rogers, James Williams, Edward [Jr.] [<i>end of page</i>]	[1784 plat, “ <u>branches of Savannah</u> ,” Loper/Abraham Breler, above]				
	[1792 plat, <u>Boggy Gut</u> , adj. R. Stafford (below), S213190 v30:31]				
	[1801 plat, <u>Boggy Gut Branch</u> , adj. Rushing, Box, <u>Neuville</u> , S213190 v36:67]				

Comment: *Mills’ Atlas* places Neuville’s Pond about halfway between Boggy Gut and Pipe’s Creek.

pp. 118–19

Stone, Richard Loper, Jonathan Stafford, Wm. H. Stafford, Richard Senr.	[1784 Breler plat above, “ <u>branches of Savannah</u> ” adj. Loper and Stafford]				
	[1774 memorial, 200a, waters of <u>Savannah River</u> , S111001 v13:187]				
	[1784 plat, 200a, <u>Dry Gutt</u> , S213190, v8:53]				
	[1786 plat, 74a, <u>waters of Pipe Creek</u> , S213190 v11:272]				
	[1793 plat, 1000a, <u>Pipe Creek</u> , S213190 v30:279]				

Comment: Dry Gutt and Pipe Creek parallel each other, with both coming out of the

S213184, v14:308, item 1;
 [1771 S. Manon/Maine plat, adj. Jacob Kettles, Savannah River
 [1773 S. Maner plat, adj. Jacob Kettles & Thomas Daniel, Black Swamp,
 S213184, v17:556; and 16:242]

Comment: Elizabeth Kettles, widow of Jacob, is living next door to Mary Odom here in 1800. In 1769 (about the time that Mary Odom would have been a young wife of *Dempsey?* Odom), Elizabeth's husband patented land—and the Kettles plat placed the land next door to Abraham Breland. See subsequent Pervies/Purvis notes for additional connections.

Loper, David [1793 plat, 100a, Dry Gutt, adj. Deloach, S213190, v30:244]

Loper, Samuel

Loper, William

Deloach, David

[1784 Purvies plat, adj. David Deloach, Mary Odom, Dry Gutt, S213190 v8:129]

Henderson, Matheu R.

Williams, Allen

[1798 plat, Cane Creek, Beaufort District, S213192 v37:173]

[1800 Matthew Singleton plat, Savannah River, adj. Allen Williams, David Loper, S213190 v36:12]

Roberts, Reuben

Danniels, Josiah

[1773 plat, Long Cane Creek, S213184 v14:305]

Comment: At this point the enumerator has wound his way back to the Savannah and picks up the enumeration in the Dupies Ferry area where the list began. He leaves the Breland area and heads south down the Savannah.

Villard, Mary [1784 plat, no location, S213190 v22:324]

Cochman, Thomas

Villard, Wm. B.

Villard, David, Est.

[1787 plat, Savannah & Wright's River, Purrysburg, S213190 v34:515]

Analysis

Millie Odom:

Again, there is no Odom household for “Shadrack” and Millie. The records suggest

- Millie's husband is dead, given that their last Odom child was born 1794–96.
- Unless the census taker erred in omitting children from Mary's household, it would appear that Millie and her children were living elsewhere (likely with Absalom Breland, given the composition of his household).

Mary Odom:

A correlation of census to land plat data places her

- between Dry Gutt and Pipe Creek;
- owning land adjacent to Jesse Deloach, later treated in this paper as her proposed brother-in-law;
- three houses from Sarah Rooks, the sister of Deloach's wife, as seen later in this paper.

Also consider that

- Ezekiel Causey, who lives between Mary Odom and Jesse Deloach—even though Mary's grant adjoined Jesse's—may be renting or cropping Mary's land.
- this 1800 census is the last one on which Mary Odom appears as a head of household. However, she is almost certainly alive in 1810, as discussed under the notes for that year.

Brelands:

- 1 of the 1790 households is missing: Abraham Sr. or Jr. [not possible to tell which; odds suggest it is the elder Abraham who has died]
- 4 of the 1790 households remain: Abraham Sr. or Jr.
Absalom
Amos
Samuel
- 3 young males married 1790–1800: David
Elisha
William

Although these families cover 4 pages of the enumeration, the land work demonstrates that the Brelands and Odoms are all part of one small neighborhood. Briefly:

- Mary Odom, Jesse & Ann (Odom) Deloach and Sarah (Odom) Rooks span the small strip between Pipe Creek and Dry Gutt, close to the Savannah. As will be shown, Pipe Creek was the site of the original Odom settlement.
- The Brelands span the area between Pipe Creek and Boggy Gut, ranging from the Savannah on the west to Black Swamp on the east.

1810 CENSUS, BEAUFORT
NARA microfilm M252, roll 60

The following notes focus on the page that carries the households of Millie (Breland) Odom Cook and her newly adult son, William Odom. Mary Odom is not enumerated as a head-of-household on this census. However, a comparison of the neighborhood data with the 1800 notes—coupled with the details of William’s household—leaves no doubt but that William Odom was in 1810 treated as the male head of Mary Odom’s household.

The tightness of the census data, on which the four-page neighborhood of 1800 has been reduced to two pages in 1810—despite an expanding population—should be due to the improvement of the road network that permitted the census taker to complete a neighborhood before moving on, rather than having to follow a long creek for many miles, picking up more-distant families, before doubling back down the other side.

St. Peter’s Parish

p. 106

- Breland**
- Deloach**
- Thornhill**
- Cook**

p. 107

- Rushing, John [4 doors from Elisha Breland, 1800]
- Stafford, Hatton [Wm. H. Stafford, 2 doors from Elisha Breland, 1800]
- Kirkland, Mrs. D. [Diana Kirkland, 9 doors from Elisha Breland, 1800]
- Johnston, Joseph [“Jonas” Johnson was next door to Diana Kirkland, 1800]

Harrod, Joseph	[11 doors from Mary Odum, 1800]
Loper, Jesse	[12 doors from William Breland, 1800]
Elliott, Robert	[1788 plat, 1000a, <u>waters of Boggy Gut</u> , S213190 v22:170] [1793 plat, 500a, <u>Beaver Dam Branch</u> , S213190, v30:282]
Elliott, William	
Lewis, Josiah	[1793 Josiah Lewis plat, 483a, <u>Boggy Gut</u> , S213190, v30:335]
McKenzie, David	[with Mary McK, 1800; for McKenzies see <www.meocpa.com/mckenz.html>] [David McKenzie m. Mary Lewis (see above); moved to Pike Co., Miss.]
Elliott, Sarah	
McKenzie, Mary	[17 doors from Mary Odum, 1800]
Cook, Matthew	1 male 26–45 [married Millie 1800–10?] 1 female 26–45 [Millie Breland] 2 males 16–26 [Richard & Shadrack Odom, Millie's sons] 1 male 0–10 [child of Millie & Matthew?]
Odom, William	1 female 45— [Mary Odom] 1 male 16–26 [William, son of Millie; surely grandson of Mary]
Cook, William	1 male 16–26 [brother of Matthew?] 1 female 16–26 1 female 0–10
Stokes, David	[2 houses from Wm. Thornhill, 5 from Ab. Breland, 1800]
Stokes, John	[next door to William Breland, 1800]
Stokes, Burr ^l	[1828 plat, 285a <u>Boggy Gut</u> , S213192, v48:208, item 2]
Stokes, David	
Pelot[?], David	
Bryant, Rich ^d	
Deloach, Jesse	[wife Ann “Nancy” Odom; 2 houses from Mary Odum, 1800]
Cook, Anny	[Cordell Cook, 1800, next door to Elisha Breland]
Box, M.	[Boxes were between William Breland & Mary Odum, 1800]
Williams, Edw ^d	[1807 plat, 40a <u>Dry Gut</u> , adj. David Deloach, John Kettles, S213190 v37:73]
Kirkland, John	[next to Elizabeth Kettles, 1790, who was next to Mary Odum, 1800] [1793, John Kirkland plat, 127a <u>Pipe Creek</u> , S213190 v30:258]
Kirkland, William	
Deloach, J ^s	[Jesse Jr., 2 houses from Mary Odum, 1800]
Blake, Dan ^l	
Roberts, Ruben	[8 houses from Mary Odum, 1800]
Daniel, Jos ^a	
McKoy, M ^{rs.}	
Singleton, William	
Kettles, John	[Elizabeth Kettles was next door to Mary Odum, 1800]
Wood, John	
Ball, Sampson	[1784 plat, adj. <u>Mary Odom</u> , 288a <u>Dry Gutt</u> , S213190 v5:14] [8 houses from William Breland, 1800]

Analysis

This 1790–1810 census data strongly implies that

- Millie Breland’s elusive husband was the son of Mary Odom.
- William Odom, the known eldest son of Millie, was the grandson of Mary Odom—moving in with her to provide male assistance as he came to maturity between 1800–10.
- Mary Odom was widowed by 1790 (according to census; 1784 according to land plat), with probably two children:
 1. _____, born probably c.1760–65, who married Millie Breland.
 2. _____, a possible daughter, born 1774–84, living in her home in 1800.

William’s residence in Mary’s home on 1 June 1810, and his likely status as her eldest grandson and the eldest heir of her deceased son, also provides an explanation for the following document, created less than 9 months later.

“Executive Department
 Saturday 2d March 1811
 On application, Ordered, That Passports be prepared for the following persons to travel through the Creek Nation of Indians, to wit,
 One for Messrs William Thornhill, and William Odum, the former with his wife and five children, and his wife’s mother, and One for Messrs Joseph, William, and Robert Thornhill, the former with his wife and six negroes, all from Beaufort District South Carolina. Which were presented and signed.”
 —“Georgia Executive Proceedings ... January 1811—September 1812,” p. 2;
 Georgia Department of Archives & History, Atlanta

The timing invokes two life-situation patterns that genealogists frequently encounter:

- It took money to move; something most young men did not have without an inheritance.
- Uprooting frequently occurred in the wake of a parental death or grandparental death, not only when (or because) that death provided an inheritance but also because of the emotional and symbolic severance of the ties that had held the man to the place of his birth.

(PRE-1790 LAND RECORDS)

The following records, presented in chronological sequence, are principally drawn from colonial and state records held at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History. Where notes are drawn from published sources, those publications are cited. Where drawn from original documents or SCDAH’s old Com Index entries or its current online-database abstracts, the citations will specify those versions.

Methodology:

To glean these records as fully as possible, the research covered the following:

- all conceivable variant spellings were searched for Breland and Odom;
- all individuals identified as neighbors (and their variant spellings);
- all watercourses identified on the documents for any of these individuals;
- all watercourses otherwise identified by *Mills’ Atlas* for the Northwest quadrant of Beaufort.

Craven County Connections:

Both the Brelands and the Odoms are found in earlier colonial records of Craven County. Those records are not covered in this report, unless they are needed to clarify an identity in a Beaufort record. The records also reveal *many* neighbor families that migrated to the region from Craven,

including most of those associated with the Brelands and the Odoms.

Gap in Records

South Carolina's colonial land office closed in 1775, when the British government was first ousted. No land petitions, grants, surveys, or other land actions occurred then at the state level until 1784.

The circumstances represented by the 1784 plats are not clear from the online abstracts SCDAAH provide. Typically, they represent one of the following four situations:

- land claimed by an individual, prior to the Revolution, for which the patent process could not be completed due to the closing of the land office in 1775;
- previously granted land that is being resurveyed;
- an expansion of land that a colonial patentee made during the Revolution;
- new land requested by someone who had, since 1775, come of age or moved into the area.

(For more background on these records, see the “South Carolina Archives Series Description” posted online for each series at <[www.archivesindex.sc.gov/search/AuthorityTerms/s_descriptions/\[series number\].asp](http://www.archivesindex.sc.gov/search/AuthorityTerms/s_descriptions/[series number].asp)>.)

Some of the plats in the several SCDAAH series cited in this report offer details relative to one of these situations. Most do not. **All Odom-Breland plats cited from this database have, this day, been ordered from SCDAAH to determine whether the original documents offer additional data.**

In the Breland case, specifics of the 1784 plat will likely be of minor significance. In the Odom case, however, the circumstances of the 1784 plat drawn for Mary Odom could be critically important to our identification of her husband and that of her probable son who married Millie Breland.

BRELAND RECORDS

Abraham Breland Sr. was in Granville County (the precursor of Beaufort District) by 1775, but was likely there by 1772 or 1773. The earliest surviving record, a November 1775 plat, indicates that he was already in possession of another piece for which no record of acquisition is known. In that era, two to three years typically elapsed between the time a man appeared before the council at Charleston to make his oral petition and the time the land was actually surveyed—hence, my supposition that he was there by 1772–73.

Jesse Hogan Motes III and Margaret Peckham Motes, *South Carolina Memorials: Abstracts of Land Titles*, vol. 1, 1774–1776 (Greenville, S.C.: Southern Historical Press, 1996), 70.

“**ABRAHAM BRELAR**, 13 Nov. 1775: 100 acres in Granville County, St. Peters Parish. Bounded SW and SE on **Joshua Staffords** and vacant land; NW on said Brelar. Survey certified 1 June 1775; granted 28 July 1775. Quit rent in 2 years. Elias Robert, DS [Deputy Surveyor] (2-447:5).”

Although Abraham's grant does not state the location of the land, the watercourse can be determined from the corresponding record of the neighbor cited on his plat, Joshua Stafford:

Clara A. Langley, *South Carolina Deed Abstracts, 1719–1772*; vol. 4, 1767–1773, *Books I-3—E-4* (Easley, S.C.: Southern Historical Press, 1984), 58.

“James & Mary (her mark) McClelland, executor & executrix of will of David Chaney, to **Joshua Stafford**, for £43:11:6 sterling of Ga., 35 a. on **Black Swamp**, near Savannah River, granted David Chaney on 1 Feb. 1759; beginning on John Smith's

land, N 57 ft. E 59, then S 33 E 59:17 S 57 W 59:17, N 33 W 59:17. Witnesses: Edward Stafford, Thomas Kesee, Joachim Hartson. Before John Troup, J.P. on 5 Apr. 1768. Recorded 14 Feb. 1759 by Rowland Rugeley, Registrar.” (citing Book M3: 167)

Stafford settled on his land in 1768, acquiring it by lease and release from Chaney’s estate. [S372001 v3M0:167, SCDAH]

One further deed created by Breland’s neighbor, Stafford, helps to fix the Breland-Odom community of *ca.* 1770–1810.

Brent H. Holcomb, *South Carolina Deed Abstracts, 1783–1788, Books I-5 through Z-5* (Columbia, S.C.: SCMAR, 1996), 428.

“S-5, 297-300: Lease and release. 6 Apr 1778, **Joshua Stafford** of St. Peters Parish, Granville County, SC, planter, and Martha Stafford his wife to Jehu Wilson of St. Pauls Parish, Colleton County, for £7050 SC money, 980 acres in **St. Peters Parish, Granville County adj.** land of George Roberts, **Reuben Kirkland**, on **Savannah River**, land of **John Chisholme**. Proved in **Beaufort District, St. Peters Parish** 7 Apr 1778 by the oath of Thomas Cater, Gent., before Wm. Ross, J.P. Recorded 28 July 1786.”

Regarding the adjacent landowners cited for Stafford:

Chisolm: In 1800, the Chisholms lived 12 houses from Mary Odom.

Kirkland: As developed later in this paper, they were Odom kinsmen who figure prominently in their records from Craven County to the Savannah River counties of Beaufort, Barnwell, Orangeburg, and Edgefield. Most Kirklands were fierce Loyalists. Most left the region during the Revolutionary War. Moses Kirkland, who operated mostly out of the family’s Cloud Creek settlement in Edgefield, was one of the most prominent loyalists in the colony.

The spate of land records created after the S.C. legislature’s Land Act of 1784 produced one additional tract of land for Abraham Breland: 640 acres surveyed that fall. Under the Land Act of 1784 (repealed in 1785), 640 acres was the maximum any landowner could receive. Considering that Abraham Sr. had a number of sons coming to adulthood, for him to purchase the maximum number of acres available, from the lands still unsettled around him, was to be expected.

ABRAHAM BRELAND, Plat
 29 September 1784
 640 acres on Branches of Savannah River, Beaufort District, surveyed by Elias Robert. Other names on plat [usually adjacent landowners]: Seth **Stafford**, David Loper, **Amos Breland**, Job Rowley [Rawley]. **S213190 v9:531.**

Note: **An order has been placed for a copy of the original document.**

Job Rowley: In 1800, Rowley lived one house from Sarah (**Odom**) Rooks and two from Jesse and Ann (**Odom**) Deloach, and 3 farms from Mary **Odom**.

Amos Breland: This man, cited on Abraham’s plat of 1784, was apparently his eldest son who applied for land simultaneously with Abraham. Consider the following

- Amos was the only Beaufort Breland for whom Revolutionary Service (either side) is found

[Account Audited File No. 729A, n.d., S108092, reel 13, frame 147; and Petition to Committee on Pensions, 10 Dec. 1827, S108092, Reel 13, Frame 151, SCDAH]

- Despite his service, neither Amos nor the other younger Brelands appear on the extant 1777–78 juror lists, implying that none had reached the age of 21 by that time. [GeLee Corley Hendrix and Morn Lindsey, *South Carolina Jury Lists, 1777–1778* (Greenville, S.C.: privately printed, 1976).
- Amos is the only one of the younger Brelands to apply for land in his own name until 1802. The census clusters imply that the others, upon reaching adulthood, farmed parts of Abraham Sr.'s tract.

AMOS BRELAND, Plat

“Ca. 1785” [according to SCDAH, but probably September 1784]

200 acres on waters of Savannah River, Beaufort District, surveyed by Elias Robert.

Other names on plat Job Rawley, **Abraham Breland**, David “Socper” [Looper—i.e., Loper]. S213190 v9:376, item 3.

Note: This document has been ordered from SCDAH.

The second son to obtain a grant from the state—this one in 1802—was Absolom, whose 1800 census household appears to include his sister Millie and her Odom children:

ABSOLOM BRELER, Plat

10 August 1802

60.5 acres on **Boggy Gut** of Savannah River, Beaufort District, surveyed by Robert Stafford on 1 February 1790. Other names on plat: Robert Stafford, Hezekiah Davis, Edmund Wiggins, “Middleton,” **Abraham Breler Sr.**, Seth Stafford. S213190 v36:178.

Note: This document has been ordered from SCDAH.

The original document may shed additional light on three points that are ambiguous in the abstract of the document provided by SCDAH:

- whether Abraham Breler Sr. is listed as a neighbor in 1790 or 1802, or whether his name is there in some other capacity. The issue matters because only one Abraham Breler appears on the 1800 census, implying that the older Abraham may have died by then.
- why the plat is dated 1802 when the land was surveyed in 1790, according to the SCDAH abstract.
- whether the 1790 survey was done for Absalom, himself (meaning that he had moved off his father's land onto his own by 1790) or whether Absalom had recently acquired the land from the person for whom it had originally been surveyed.

Between the 1790–1810 censuses, the Breland land would be mentioned three times more on surveys for their adjacent neighbors:

THOMAS BOX, Plat

29 September 1794

325 acres on Savannah River, Beaufort District, surveyed by Robert Tanner. Other names on plat: **Abraham Breland**, Joseph Garnet, Robert Elliott, and “Peek.” S213190 v30:296, SCDAH.

WILLIAM WILLIAMS, Plat
13 September 1797
500 acres on **Boggy Gut**, St. Peters Parish, Beaufort District, surveyed by Robert Tanner. Other names on plat: **Absolam Breeler**, **Isaac Odom**, “Garden.” S213190 v35:69.

Note: This document has been ordered from SCDAH.

JOHN DAILEY, Plat
27 April 1810
730 acres on Roberts Bay of Savannah River, St. Peters Parish, Beaufort District, surveyed by Philip Lamar. Other names on plat: **Abraham Breeland**, Allen Box, Mrs. Thomas Markley. S213190 v37:246, SCDAH.

The 1797 document is extremely critical to this research, for four reasons:

- This Isaac Odom is the only male Odom who has been placed in Beaufort prior to Millie’s removal to Mississippi—i.e., the only “available candidate” for her Odom husband.
- The abstract implies that Isaac Odom and Absolam Breeler are adjacent landholders.
- For Absolam Breeler, the one whose 1800 household seems to contain the widow Millie and her children, to be an adjacent landowner to Isaac Odom in 1797, about the time that Millie’s husband died, also strongly suggests that Isaac was her husband.
- If this Isaac Odom was indeed a landowner, subsequent records to be abstracted in this report supply a means by which he could have inherited the land for which no grant is on record.

Finally, one grand jury petition closes out the known surviving records for the Beaufort Brelands during the period of Millie’s residence there.

ABSALOM BRELAND, Signee

16 November 1802

“We the Grand Jurors convened at Coosawhatchie the 16th November 1802 for the District of Beaufort.

“We present as a grievance that as there is two boards of Commissioners for roads in St. Peter’s Parish, that they are not compelled to form one board in conjunction for the purpose of dividing the hands so as to do equal Justice to the inhabitants.

“We present as a grievance that there is but one commissioner appointed from the Sister Ferry to the Great Swamp—fourteen miles—and that fourteen miles is now impassable.

“We present as a great grievance the ruinous situation of the goal [gaol] in Coosawhatchee as not being safe in securing Prisoner[s].

John Grimball, foreman	Allen Williams
Jas Bowman	Stephen McDonald
Geo. Edwards	John Tison
James McCullough	Abraham Haguinin
Jacob Cowan	John Hogg
John Talbird	Absalom Breland

“Beaufort District Office, Gen: Sessions. I certify the above to be a true copy.”

—Records of the General Assembly, Grand Jury Presentments, 1783–1877 (1802), item 2, SCDAH; image copy at <www.archivesindex.sc.gov/LegislativePapers>

ODOM RECORDS

Abraham Odom

The first Odom record for Beaufort County is the one that provides the “roots” for Mary Odom’s community. It is a will, rather than a deed, but it cites a land location critical to our research problem:

Caroline T. Moore, *Abstracts of the Wills of the State of South Carolina, 1760–1784* (N.P.: Privately Printed, 1969), 151.

“ABRAHAM ODAM, SR., his mark, Granville County. Sons: **Abraham; Jacob**, land that was Mr. Lolote’s [Deloach’s] purchase of Dennis McClendon; **David**, 1/2 land where I now live on **upper side Pipe Creek; Dempsey, other part said land**. Daus: **Mary Carradine; Sarah Rooke; Nancy Deloth [Deloach]**. Exors: sons Jacob, Demsey and David. Wit: Parker Carradine; Elijah Ogelsby, his mark; James Weeb [Webb], his mark. D[rawn] 6 Jan. 1770. P[roved] 6 Apr 1771. R[ecorded] n.d., p. 594 [Will Book RR].”

Note: This document has been ordered from SCDAH.

The individuals and the landmarks in this document are crucial to identifying the widow Mary Odom.

- Pipe Creek* See attached map. Pipe Creek comes out of the Savannah River just above Boggy Gut in upper Beaufort. It is the creek just below Dry Gutt. As shown by the 1800 census notes, two of the Breland neighbors owned land that closed the gap between Pipe Creek and Dry Gutt: Richard Stafford and Nathan Johnson. William Breland and Elisha Breland were their neighbors on Pipe Creek. Mary Odom was their neighbor on Dry Gutt.
- James Webb* In 1810, the widow Elizabeth Webb was 5 houses from William and Liddy (Breland) Thornhill, and 7 from Absalom Breland.
- Dennis McClendon* McClendon was a landowner in both Craven County (from which Abraham Odom came) and Granville/Beaufort. It appears that he came out to Beaufort, got a grant (as per the 1763 list to be presented shortly), decided not to stay, and sold the land to the Odom in-law, Deloach. By 1775, McClendon was back in Craven. [S.C. Mesne Conveyances R-R: 159–66, and S.C. Memorials, 13-291:1, SCDAH].
- Elijah Oglesby* On 27 June 1765, Elijah Oglesby memorialized 350 acres on Pipe Creek, citing “Dennis McClellan” as his neighbor. [S111001 v6:466, item 4, SCDAH]. As shown by the 1790 census, which listed Mary Odom immediately after Seburn Oglesby, his family remained.
- Sarah Rooke/Rooks* On the 1800 census, Sarah is a widow. Only one house separates her from her sister and brother-in-law, Nancy and Jesse Deloach—*with the Widow Mary Odom living on the other side of the Deloaches, just one house removed*. Sarah’s husband has not been identified; he may be the John Rooks who witnessed a deed for Abraham Odom Sr. in 1757, before the Odoms left Craven Co. [S.C. Mesne Conveyances, Book Z-Z: 687, SCDAH. Either Mr. Rook(s) was dead by 1776 or else he (like the rest of Abraham Sr.’s family) did not support the revolutionary government and is thereby omitted from the jury lists for St. Peters Parish.
- Ann “Nancy” Odom*
 & *Jesse Deloach* Most Deloach researchers report that Jesse Deloach (b. 1742, Edgecombe Co., N.C.; d. 1817, Beaufort), was married to one Ann “Nancy” —?—. Those re-

searchers account for some of the children born in Beaufort to Jesse and his brothers Michael and Hardy, who also settled in St. Peters Parish, but none appear to have yet made the connection between Ann “Nancy” Deloach and this Odom will. Jesse Deloach and his wife Ann in 1800 are living one house from Ann’s sister Sarah Rooks — and one house from Mary Odom. However, *Mary Odom and Jesse Deloach owned adjacent tracts*, as shown by the plats.

Jesse’s first appearance in Beaufort records, aside from his father-in-law’s will, is on a list of grants confirmed by the Governor’s Council on 1 October 1771. That grant for 200 acres is listed consecutively with a grant to Arthur Watson, the brother-in-law of Jesse’s brother-in-law, Jacob Odom (Council Journal 1771, list on pp. 194–200).

The location of Jesse Deloach’s land in “Granville County, Dry Branch, waters of Savannah River,” is cited in the 1775 memorial of his neighbor John Lynch (Memorials, 13-441:4). Other documents treating Jesse, to be cited later in this paper, establish that Dry Branch is variously called Dry Gutt and Dry Gutt Branch. (It is also rendered on modern topo maps and in the SCDAH land database as Dry Gall and Dry Gaul). It is the next stream above Pipe Creek, the site of Abraham Odom Sr.’s residence.*

Mary (Odom) Collins

↻

Parker Carradine The Parker Carradine who witnessed Abraham Odom’s will was his son-in-law. On 31 October 1769, Carradine received a grant of 350 acres on Little Pipe Creek, which he memorialized on 8 December 1769. (S213019 v19:14 and S111001 v10:14, SCDAH). In 1772 he was sued by Dennis McClendon (referenced in Abraham’s will), for a cause not stated in the online abstract (S136002, Box 092A, item 0090A, SCDAH); and on 8 July 1774, he received a nearby grant for 150 acres (S213019 v31:223). He would not remain there long.

When the Revolution erupted in 1775–76, civil war tore families apart in the Savannah River area. Many residents fled to regions that were still British strongholds. Parker and Mary Carradine moved to British West Florida, settling in the Natchez District near the Mississippi River. When the area was subsequently captured by Spanish forces out of Louisiana (acting as American allies), Carradine led a rebellion that tried to return the area to British control. Spanish documents from Natchez also reveal that Mary had been previously wed to one John Collins, by whom she had three children. (See May Wilson McBee, *The Natchez Court Records, 1767–1805* [1953; reprinted, Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1979], particularly 8, 128.)

As for the four sons named by Abraham Sr. in his 1770 will, all but one can be tracked out of Beaufort with offspring identified:

- A Deloach Bible that begins with the 8 September 1742 birth of Jesse Deloach, currently owned by the Rev. Earl Deloach of Varnville, S.C., is posted at <<http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~javan/desloges/records/bibles/jessebbl.htm>>. It states that Jesse and Ann both died 26 September 1817; however, it sheds no light on her Odom family. Cemetery data for his apparent brother David, who also patented land next door to the widow Mary Odom and died in 1815 at the age of 63, is posted online at <<http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~javan/desloges/records/cemeteries/grenwood.htm>>.

David Odom

David did not patent any land in Granville/Beaufort. His inherited half of the Pipe Creek land appears to have been his home until the mid 1770s, when he migrated to Natchez on the Mississippi with his sister Mary and Parker Carradine. David left numerous offspring in the Natchez District for whom an introductory overview can be gleaned from the Spanish records abstracted by McBee.

No known record states what happened to David's land on Pipe Creek when he left Beaufort. Presumably he sold it—possibly to his brother Dempsey, who had inherited the other half, or to one of his brothers-in-law (Rooks or Deloach).

*Abraham Odom
"Jr." (later "Sr.")*

Abraham Jr.'s "treatment" in his father's will was noticeably different from that received by his brothers, for reasons the published abstract does not state. (A copy of the original document has now been ordered for closer study.) Under the terms of that will, as abstracted, Abraham did not get land and Abraham was not named with his three brothers as a coexecutor.

Fourteen days after that will was drafted—perhaps with cash provided by his father—Abraham purchased a nearby tract of land:

Langley, *South Carolina Deed Abstracts*, 4:108
 24 Jan. 1770
 L[ease] & R[elease]
 "SNODIN (his mark) **KIRKLAND**, planter, to **ABRAHAM ODOM, JR.**, planter, both of **Granville Co.**, for £ 25 currency, 300 a. in **St. Peters Parish** granted **ANDREW MICHEL**; **bounding NW on SNODIN KIRKLAND & vacant land; SW on Savannah River**; other sides on vacant land. Witnesses: **JAMES PURVES, JOHN KIRKLAND, MARY** (her mark) **COLE. SIBBELL** (her mark) his wife, (ISABELLE?) [*i.e., Sibell or Isabelle Kirkland*] willingly joins him & renounces her claim. Before **PARKER CARRADINE, J.P.**, 27 Jan. 1770; who assigns all his claim, if any to **ODOM**. Witnesses: **JAMES PURVES, NICHOLAS BAKER**. Recorded 26 February 1770 by **HENRY RUGELEY**, Dep. Register." [Langley cites Book P-3, pp. 103–108.]

The original patentee of this land, Andrew Mi[t]chell, the seller Snowden Kirkland, and Dennis McClendon (from the will of Abraham Odom Sr.) all personally appeared before the governor's council in Charleston on 4 October 1763 to petition for their land on the Savannah River in Granville:

Brent H. Holcolmb, *Petitions for Land from the South Carolina Council Journals*, vol. 5, 1757–1765 (Columbia: SCMR, 1998), 129.

"Meeting of [the Council at Charleston] Tuesday A.M. 4 October 1763
 Pages 97–99: The following Petitions for Warrants of Survey of Land, prolonging Warrants, Certifying of Plats &c addressed to his Excellency the Governor were presented & read, Viz't

Thomas Screven	500	on Savannah River or the waters thereof
James Simpson	550	Ditto
William Griffin	300	Ditto
Andrew Mitchell	205	ditto
Josias Dickson	600	ditto

Robert Eady	200	ditto
James Kirkland	200	ditto
Snowden Kirkland	350	ditto
William Moore	200	Savannah River
Aberhard Ehny	300	ditto
Joseph Hamilton	150	ditto
William Sealy Sen'r	1000	ditto
Richard Oglesby	300	on Savannah River where the Petitioner now lives
Dennis McClenan	250	Ditto"

Abraham Jr. can be tracked to Edgefield through Snowden Kirkland, with whom he executed various other documents in the Edgefield/Ninety-Six District. Abraham Jr.'s wife, whom he married while still in Craven County (before 1760), was named *Sibby*. (S.C. Mesne Conveyances, Book W-W: 255, SCDAH). Some Kirkland researchers note that Abraham's wife and Snowden's wife carried the same name—Sibby or Sybil—and propose that Snowden's wife may have been the daughter of Abraham Jr. (See for example, Richard Snowden Kirkland, *Snowden Kirkland Family* <www.next1000.com/family/EC/kirkland.snow.html>). Theoretically, it is more probable that young Abraham was buying land from his *father-in-law* rather than buying from a *son-in-law*.

With several of his Kirkland relatives, Snowden settled in Edgefield by 1768, at which time he appears in records of Cloud Creek Baptist Church. Abraham Odom Jr. followed them there at least by the mid-1780s. The late Ge Lee Corley Hendrix, CG, FASG, privately sent me the following abstracted record in 1994:

Abraham Markley [patentee]
 SC State Plat Book 11:201
 640 acres in Ninety Six District on Shaws Creek
 Surveyed for **Abraham Odom** 17 October 1786 by Robert Lang D.S.

By 1788, Abraham "Jr." had become Abraham "Sr." Under that appellation, he donated his personal property to "Jr." in 1788—an act implying that he, as a father of the new "Jr." had reached the point of retirement or bad health.

Ge Lee Corley Hendrix, *Edgefield County, South Carolina, Abstracts of Deed Books 1-12, 1786-1796*, vol. 1 (Easley, S.C.: Southern Historical Press, 1985), p. 28.

10 Jul 1788

"**ABRAHAM ODOM, Sr.** to **ABRAHAM ODOM, Jr.**, both of Edgefield Co., SC, sold horse branded with IB; bay mare branded IB with a young colt; 1 feather bed including all household furniture; heifer; white stear; red stear; 9 sheep. S/ABRAHAM (x) ODOM. Wit: HENRY SWEARINGEN who swore by oath 14 Oct 1788 before AQUILA MILES, J.P." (citing DB 3:261).

Jacob Odom

Jacob also left Beaufort, migrating upstate to Edgefield/Ninety-Six District during the war, after Beaufort became a stronghold for Rebel forces. He appears to be the Jacob Odom who served with Col. Daniel Clary's Loyalist Regiment of Dutch Fork Militia, Ninety-Six District, between 14 June and 13 December 1780. (Murtie June Clark, *Loyalists in the Southern Campaign of the Revolutionary War*, vol. 1 [Baltimore: Clearfield Co., 1999], 220, 233.) He is

also cited in numerous Edgefield records of the 1780s onward, with his father-in-law John Watson and the Kirklands of Cloud Creek. The offspring of Jacob by his wife Martha Watson are outlined in a complicated equity court case of the 18-teens that involved many offspring of Jacob and his brother Abraham. (See Edgefield Equity Court Records, film JR 4068.)*

Dempsey Odom

No further record has been found. The last known record is his inheritance of half the Pipe Creek land. Like the other sons and sons-in-law of Abraham Odom, he does not appear on the jury lists of those who swore allegiance to the Revolutionary cause. Nor has he been found in surviving Loyalist records or in the Loyalist regions to which his brothers and one brother-in-law removed. By implication, Dempsey died between his 1770 inheritance and the 1776 outbreak of the war.

As the last son named in his father's will, he was likely the youngest. An early demise would have left his widow with, at most, a small family. This point parallels an observation to be made about Widow Mary Odom. Most young widows in her time and place, when left with several children to support, remarried fairly soon. Male support was a necessity. (Dempsey's sister Mary Odom Collins Carradine is a case at point. When John Collins's death left her with three small children, she married again almost immediately.) But Mary Odom of the 1790–1810 Beaufort censuses remained unwed. By implication, her family was small enough—and her husband left her with adequate means—that she did not have to remarry for financial support.

The Pipe Creek land that Abraham Odom Sr. left to his sons Dempsey and David was not patented in the Odom name, insofar as extant records show. Perhaps Abraham bought it from another patentee. If so, no colonial deed (which had to be filed in Charleston) and no memorial (which was supposed to be made when the quit-rent was paid) has survived either. Whether or not a legal title existed is a point that bears upon the descent-of-land issue by which our William Odom's father and grandfather might be identified.

If Abraham intended to apply for a grant, his health and colonial law may have thwarted his intentions. The land patent process was a lengthy one for those who lived in South Carolina's backcountry during the colonial years. To petition for land, one had to personally go to Charleston and appear before the Governor's Council to orally request the land. A warrant would be issued; then the petitioner had to find a surveyor—a prized commodity that was not always available, even if one had the cash to pay him. Obtaining the survey and then the patent frequently took two, three, or more years after the journey to Charleston to appear before the council. Accomplishing that prior to the Revolution does not seem to have happened for the Odom land on Pipe Creek.

-
- From the 1760s, there lived another Jacob Odom on the Georgia side of the Savannah River (Burke County, Georgia). That man appears to have come directly there from North Carolina as part of a family migration that included another Abraham Sr. and Jr., Ephraim, Frederick, Isaac, Joshua, and William Odom—all of whom remained in Georgia while the Craven County Abraham settled in Beaufort with sons of different names. All of the Georgia men received Georgia land grants in the 1766–71 period. (For abstracts of the grant data, see Robert Scott Davis Jr. and Silas Emmett Lucas Jr. *The Families of Burke County, 1755–1855* [Easley, S.C.: Southern Historical Press, 1987], 127.)

The date of Abraham Sr.'s death is not known; the record shows only that he made his will in January 1770 and that it was proved in Charleston in April 1771. The published abstract does not state which of the witnesses made the trip to Charleston to prove the will. Perhaps it was the son-in-law Parker Carradine who was a justice of the peace for St. Peter's Parish, at the time of the January 1770 Kirkland-Odom deed. In any case, neither Carradine nor the three sons who served as co-executors could petition for a grant to be issued to a deceased man who—for whatever reason—had not petitioned the council for the land he had settled on Pipe Creek.

David and Dempsey Odom, as the younger sons (a point implied by the will that named them as the last of the four sons) may have still been minors. If so, by the time they reached the legal age to apply for a grant in their own names, the land office may have already closed. Or they may have actually applied at some point after March 1771, but the process was not completed before the land office closed in 1775. In that case, their title would have remained in limbo, pending the reopening of the land office. And in the meanwhile, David Odom had left behind his half of the land when he migrated to Natchez.

Mary Odom

The reopening of the land office occurred in 1784. Branches were set up in the rural areas, so that backcountry settlers would no longer have to travel to Charleston to complete pending grant processes or request new lands. Predictably, a spate of claims and petitions erupted.

Among the surveys made that fall was one for **Mary Odom of St. Peters Parish**, claiming the maximum amount allowed under South Carolina's new Land Act of 1784: 640 acres. There were, in fact, three such grants surveyed the same week that are significant to our research problem:

ABRAHAM BRELAND, Plat

29 September 1784

640 acres on Branches of Savannah River, Beaufort District, surveyed by Elias Robert. Other names on plat [usually adjacent landowners]: Seth **Stafford**, David Loper, **Amos Breland**, Job Rowley [Rawley]. S213190 v9:531, SCDAH.

MARY ODOM, Plat

1 October 1784

640 acres on Dry Gall [Gutt] Branch, Beaufort District, surveyed by Elias Robert. Other names on plat: David Delotche [**Deloach**], Betty **Purvies**, Sampson Ball, Henry Joyce, Isaac Cuthbert. S213190 v9:42, SCDAH.

BETTY PURVIES, Plat

2 October 1784

98 acres on waters of Savannah River, Beaufort District, surveyed by Elias Robert. Other names on plat: David Delotche [**Deloach**], Sampson Ball, **Mary Odom**. S213190 v8:129, SCDAH.

Four points are especially significant about this trio of documents:

Purvies/Purvis:

In 1770, James Purvis, along with Parker Carradine, witnessed the Kirkland-Odom deed executed by Abraham Odom, brother of Dempsey. Now, fourteen years later, the widow Purvis and the widow Mary Odom are adjacent landowners. Other evidence, discussed at the end of this report, suggests that Mary Odom may have been a Purvis.

Acres: Abraham Breland requested 640 acres. That is logical. He had sons about to come of age. Betty Purvies requested 98 acres. “About 100 acres” was a common size for widows.

By comparison, *Why 640 acres for the widow Mary Odom?* As shown by the census of 1790, she had neither the slaves nor the male family members to warrant the purchase of (or the payment of tax on) this much land—especially if it were raw, uncleared “new” land. Could her application for the maximum number of acres be based upon the pre-Revolutionary settlement of Abraham Odom—bequeathed to his two sons and continually “improved” by the family for the intervening 14 years?

Timing: Within a year, Mary’s probable son married Millie Breland and began a family. What was his means of support, if not family land?

Inheritance laws: Until 1791, South Carolina retained the law of primogeniture. If a father died intestate (for example, Dempsey), his land would pass automatically to his eldest son. If, however, he did not have title to that land at the time of his death, primogeniture would not apply.

Mary, as Dempsey’s widow, would have automatically inherited one-third of his “personal” property—i.e., slaves, tools, clothing, household furnishings, etc. However, she would not have been Dempsey’s legal heir to land that Dempsey did not legally hold.

However, South Carolina had a strong heritage of *equity* in legal matters—equity being a separate concept from statute law, one that was invoked when statute law inflicted hardships the community did not consider “fair and equitable.” Allowing Mary to claim the full 640 acres allowed by the new law of 1784, in recognition of the “just rights” that her son—now on the cusp of adulthood—should have in the homestead and plantation settled by his grandfather and bequeathed to his long-deceased father would have been a matter of equity.

Whether the land lay in the exact spot staked out by Abraham prior to January 1770 is a point for which there is likely no answer. If Dempsey died soon after his father, leaving Mary a young widow with one or more small children, she obviously did not personally clear and farm the land that her late husband had inherited from his father. It is just as obvious that she had financial support, given that she did not remarry. That land—leased out—would have provided support for her, her son, and possibly a daughter.

One additional land plat underscores the proximity of Mary Odom to the Ann (Odom) Deloach and her husband Jesse Deloach

ISAAC SEBLY, Plat
12 March 1787

44 acres on “Dry Gaul” [Dry Gutt] Branch, Beaufort District, surveyed by Robert **Stafford**. Other names on plat: **Jesse Deloach**, **Mary Odam**, Joseph Korland [**Kirkland**], James Thompson. S213190 v22:123, SCDAH.

Note: An order has been placed for a copy of the original document.

Other Odoms

Surviving records prior to 1810, when William Odom appears to have assumed control of Mary's household, have not yielded any trace of any other Odom in the region who might have been Mary's son. If she had a son, other than Millie's deceased husband, then one might question why her dead son's offspring, rather than her living son, was listed as head of her household in 1810.

With these issues in mind, we should consider one other land survey for an Odom in old Beaufort:

JESSE ODOM, Plat

18 January 1814

55 acres on **Great Swamp, New River**, Beaufort District, Surveyed by Philip Lamar.

Other names in document [usually adjacent landholders]: James Floyd, John Strobhan.

Note: An order has been placed for a copy of the original document.

This Jesse Odom was no longer in Beaufort in 1820. No evidence connects him in any way to the Odom-Breland cluster in the Pipe Creek/Boggy Gut/Dry Gutt area.

The Great Swamp/New River region lay in Southern Beaufort. A study of the land grants taken out by the named neighbors, James Floyd and John Strobhan (aka Strobhar and Strobhart), reveals that both of them were large-scale landowners who came into the Purrysburg area about the time that the Abraham Odom family settled the northern reaches of the county. All of their plat records were examined for adjacent neighbors, but none overlapped the Breland-Odom families in any way.

For Jesse Odom to take out a small tract (just 55 acres) of raw land in a swampy region in which the best lands had been taken more than a half-century before implies that he was a man of limited means—significantly less than the means enjoyed by the Odoms of Northern Beaufort. Considering that Purrysburg was the principal Savannah River crossing on the old King's Highway from Charleston to Savannah, Georgia, circumstances suggest that he may have been a transient who was attracted to the area, perhaps met a girl and tried farming, but then moved on. In any event the extant records have yielded nothing to connect him to the Breland-Odom family.

Potential Family for Mary Odom

One seemingly legitimate but undocumented account suggests that Mary may have been a Purvis. This account, found along the Savannah in both Beaufort and Barnwell/Orangeburg, asserts:

“BENEJAH B. (BROWN) BEST ...

“He was born around 1775 . . . On January 6, 1808 he was appointed an appraiser with JOHN BEST, MICHAEL BROWN, BARTLET BROWN and **JACOB KETTLES** [Jr.?] for LEODICA CAMPBELL the administrator of her husbands, ISRAEL CAMPBELL, estate. . . . **He paid MARY ODOM \$500 in 1814 for her interest in the estate of ANN PURVIS together with any interest in the estate of WILLIAM PURVIS.** In the case on MARY ROWLAND vs BENAJAH BEST filed July 23, 1822, he claimed that **ELIZABETH PURVIS** [aka Betty Purvis] left him her estate in 1807. He took care of her husband **WILLIAM PURVIS** for a year until he died and then cared for her until she died. ... In a “Bill of Revivor” filed March 16, 1824 in the MARY ROWLAND vs BENAJAH BEST case, it appears that BENEJAH BEST had died and that his widow, ELIZABETH BEST, was the administrator of his estate. ... He was around 57 years old when he died. Along with his wife that received one third of the estate, the children mentioned in his estate settlement filed June 4, 1832 in Barnwell District, South Carolina are: ABSALOM BLANCHARD BEST, MARY BEST, and SARAH MIXON. (Thomas W. Mitchener, *Best Family* <<http://rbst2u.tripod.com/SCBestTripod/BestWeb4.html>>)

SUMMARY

Millie Breland is said to have grown up in the Boggy Gut area of Beaufort. That stream lies just below Pipe Creek and Dry Gutt. Millie lived there among her birth family until she was at least 45 years old. The elusive Odom whom she married as her first husband, odds are, was a man from that same neighborhood.

Beaufort records have yielded only one male Odom who might be Millie's husband—*Isaac*—and the one record that names him places him in the company of Millie's brother. Consider this pair of circumstances:

- 1797 Absalom Breland, Millie's brother, patented a tract of land and Isaac Odom is named on his survey, apparently as an adjacent landowner.
- 1800 Millie's husband is dead. Millie is not a head-of-household. The only family household that contains sufficient individuals of appropriate genders to include her is that of this same brother, Absalom—he who was next door, if the 1797 plat abstract implies correctly.

Beaufort records yield only one family of Odoms with whom Millie might have intermarried—a family represented between 1784 and 1810 by the Widow Mary Odom, who is of age to be Millie's mother-in-law. Consider the following:

- 1800 Census and plat records place Mary Odom on Dry Gutt, amid a specific set of neighbors who had owned their farms for decades.
- 1810 Amid that same set of neighbors in 1810 is the county's one and only Odom household. Its family head is said to be William Odom (Millie's son); and he is sharing the home with an older woman of Mary's age, while Millie and her new husband lived next door.

The proximity of Mary Odom's land to Millie's family is evident from many documents. For example:

- 1769 Jacob Kettles patented land next door to Millie's father Abraham Breland.
- 1800 Widow Elizabeth Kettles lived next door to Mary Odom, Millie's proposed mother-in-law.
- 1784 Mary Odom is cited as the adjacent landowner on the plat of Sampson Ball.
- 1800 William Breland, Mary's brother, occupied the farm adjacent to Sampson Ball.
- 1772 – 93, Nathan Johnson & R. Stafford each bought land that reached from Pipe Creek to Dry Gutt.
- 1800 W & E Breland were their neighbors on Pipe Creek; Mary Odom their neighbor on Dry Gutt.

Mary Odom was likely the widow of Dempsey Odom, who in 1770 inherited land (apparently unpatented) on Pipe's Creek from his father, Abraham Sr. As the widow of Dempsey Odom, Mary continued to live adjacent to his sisters and their husbands across four decades. Consider:

- 1770 Abraham Odom Sr. drafted a will naming four sons, three of whom can be tracked out of Beaufort. The fourth son—Dempsey, who inherited half his father's Pipe Creek land—cannot be found thereafter. He appears to have died in Beaufort, intestate, before the Revolution, without gaining title to the land his father left him.
- 1784 At the close of the Revolution, as soon as the land office reopened, the widow Mary Odom applied for a survey of 640 acres in the region between Pipe Creek and Dry Gutt.
- 1770 Abraham Sr.'s will named his daughters as Sarah Rooks and Ann "Nancy" Deloach (wife of Jesse Deloach).
- 1787 Mary Odom and Jesse Deloach are cited as adjoining landowners in the survey of Isaac Sebley on Dry Gutt.

- 1800 Mary Odom is listed one house from Jesse and Ann “Nancy” Deloach; one house removed, on the other side of the Deloaches, is Sarah (Odom) Rooks.
- 1810 Mary Odom and her proposed grandson William Odom are still enumerated as Jesse Deloach’s neighbors—as is Millie (Breland) Odom and her new husband, Matthew Cook.

Conclusion

The evidence found to date weighs heavily in favor of a conclusion that

- Millie Breland married Isaac Odom, son of Mary Odom, who requested a survey of 640 acres in the stretch of land between Pipe Creek and Dry Gutt, Beaufort County.
- Mary Odom was the widow of Dempsey Odom, who inherited half of his father’s Pipe Creek land in 1770.
- Dempsey was the son of Abraham Odom Sr., formerly of Craven County, who settled the Pipe Creek area of Beaufort near Millie’s father, Abraham Breland, about 1769.

NEXT STEPS

1. Analyze original documents, flagged in this report, when they arrive from the State Archives.
2. Locate the Mary Rowland *vs.* Benajah Best case discussed by Mitchener, *Best Family*. It appears to be a Barnwell County suit.
3. Locate the following for Pipe Creek Baptist Church, which is said to have begun in 1775 as Lawtonville Baptist Church: (see <<http://sciway3.net/clark/hampton/lawtonvillebap.html>>)
 - Original minutes, if they still exist; and
 - Johnston, Coy K. *Lawtonville Baptist, 1775–1975*. N.P.: State Printing Co., 1974.
4. Locate the records of Beach Branch Baptist Church (founded 1759), attended by the Brelands, Chisholms, Deloaches, and neighboring families. (For an overview mentioning all three families, taken from Alexania E. Lawton, *Allendale on the Savannah* [Bamberg: Bamberg Herald Printers, 1970], see <<http://sciway3.net/clark/allendale/beebranch.html>>.)
5. Comb all known manuscript catalogs to identify additional records on Beaufort District that have not yet been examined, starting with the list below, then obtain any potentially pertinent records.
Côté, Richard N. *Local and Family History in South Carolina: A Bibliography*. Easley, S.C. Southern Historical Press, 1981.
Moltke-Hansen, David and Sallie Doscher. *South Carolina Historical Society: Manuscript Guide*. Charleston: SCHS, 1979.
National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections <<http://www.loc.gov/coll/nucmc/>>
Stokes, Allen H. *A Guide to the Manuscript Collection of the South Caroliniana Library*. Columbia: South Caroliniana Library, 1982.
6. Examine Leonardo Andrea Collection, Folder 673 (Odom-Odam-Oden-Odeon-Odum), microfilm 954558, Family History Library, whose originals are at South Caroliniana Library.
7. Reevaluate current conclusions in light of any new evidence yielded by the above.

—Elizabeth Shown Mills, CG, CGL, FASG