Spring 2021

# Joshua Gordon's *Witchcraft Book* and The Transformation of the Upcountry of South Carolina

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# JOSHUA GORDON'S *WITCHCRAFT BOOK* AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE UPCOUNTRY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

by

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Bachelor of Arts
University of South Carolina, 2018

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts in

Public History

College of Arts ad Sciences

University of South Carolina

2021

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Alex Feltman and Buoy—I love you both infinitely and thank you for making life such a fun adventure. Alex, I am certain you could recite the topics of this paper in your sleep. To my family—I love you and thank you for making feel like anything is possible. Yes, I'm still working on "that witchcraft book." No, I'm not finished with school yet.

To my generous thesis committee, Dr. Mark Smith and Dr. Woody Holton—Thank you for your encouragement and attention to this project. In addition, I would like to thank the Atlantic Reading Group under the direction of Dr. Matt Childs for their comments and support.

To amazing archivists--I would like to extend gratitude to the herculean efforts made by Winthrop University archivist, Andrew Johnston, among others in fielding my requests and generously scanning over three hundred documents from the Louise Pettus Collection. Given COVID-19 restrictions, you made this thesis possible. I also am thankful to South Caroliniana archivists for all the extra boxes and kindness, particularly Edward Blessing and McKenzie Lemhouse.

To Joshua Eargle—Joshua passed away in an accident in July of 2019 and was posthumously awarded an MA in Religious Studies from Hartford Seminary. Thank you for living our childhood dreams with me—this one's for you, buddy.

# ABSTRACT

The life of Joshua Gordon and his intellectual product, *Witchcraft Book* (1784) gives access to the backcountry of South Carolina. *Witchcraft Book* is exemplary of syncretism in the Atlantic world, influenced by multiple European traditions, understandings of science in the early modern world, indigenous knowledge, and life in North America. After serving in the American Revolution, Gordon transitioned from a small farmer to a slaveholder. He was a part of political and economic processes that unified the backcountry with low country elites in defense of slavery. As a prominent figure in his community and church, he solidified his legacy for local historians and genealogists to study through national narratives for a public audience. His experience was normative and privileged, but when paired with an analysis of his manual, they prompt a more central discussion about the upcountry of South Carolina. When contextualized, *Witchcraft Book* provides possibilities for historical interpretation, especially his use of indigenous knowledge.

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# INTRODUCTION

Joshua Gordon's (1765-1845) *Witchcraft Book* (1784), is a hand-written, twenty-two-page manuscript of spells.[1] Joshua Gordon has been cited by scholars such as Jon Butler as an example of occult manuals in the early United States. These scholars pointed to this activity as "idiosyncratic" and consign Joshua Gordon's life to the status of a "mystery."[2] Mainstream historians have accepted this characterization without question; genealogists and local historians, such as Louise Pettus have not. I build on the hard work of local historians in an effort to write a contextualized microhistory of Joshua Gordon and his most famous artifact, *Witchcraft Book*.[3] Fragmentary documents about him and regional contexts place him culturally, politically, and economically.[4] The moment surrounding *Witchcraft Book* is more than some enigmatic curiosity. When properly contextualized, the manual is a product of an Atlantic World that features cultural exchanges between multiple European traditions and indigenous people. The backcountry

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[1] Joshua Gordon, *Witchcraft Book*. South Caroliniana Library (SCL), 1784.

[2] Jon Butler, "Magic, Astrology, and the Early American Religious Heritage, 1600-1760," *The American Historical Review* 84, no. 2 (1979), 337.

[3] Sources concerning the use of micro-histories: James, H. Sweet, *Domingos Alavres: African Healing, and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011). Lawrence T. McDonnell, *Performing Disunion: The Coming of the Civil War in Charleston, South Carolina* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

[4] Lara Putnam, "To Study the Fragments/Whole: Microhistory and the Atlantic World," *Journal of Social History*, vol. 39, no. 3 (Spring 2006): 615-630.

as a colonial frontier was connected to a larger world intellectually. This relationship was codified through nationhood as the region unified with the rest of South Carolina politically and economically through shared interests in slavery.

In this thesis, I make a three-part argument. The first is that Gordon's life and intellectual product, *Witchcraft Book* grants us access to the "backcountry." The content of the manual allows us to understand religious and magic traditions. Despite his inland location, he was tied to an Atlantic World. While he was born in the colonies, colonization shaped the diverse traditions he called upon. Second, he was a part of an important transition in the upcountry. Lowcountry slaveholders politically aligned with upcountry elite. Their allegiance defending slavery and their landholdings unified the state politically. And third, this project highlights the importance of local history and the careful construction of genealogies to create histories that connect to national narratives. The Nancy Louise Crockett Collection at the South Caroliniana Library features genealogies of York and Lancaster Counties in South Carolina from the eighteenth century onward. Crockett (1913-2004) was an elementary school history teacher, who in her spare time created genealogies, church histories, and a collection of grave inscriptions.[5] She was generous in her correspondence, fielding inquiries from historians, organizations like Daughters of the American Revolution, and people seeking information about their family. The Gordon file is one among a myriad of family histories in the collection. Crockett linked her source work to Louise Pettus (1926-), who earned a master's in history at the University of South Carolina and taught at Winthrop

[5] Nancy Louise Crockett Collection, 1752-1999, South Caroliniana Library (SCL).

University. Much of Pettus's work was gifted to Winthrop University from 2013-2018.[6] Her research spanned work on local churches, the Catawbas, the Revolutionary War, monuments, and geologies. She often engaged with a public audience through local newspaper articles. The intricate primary source work about Gordon's life by Crockett and Pettus elevate *Witchcraft Book* from an oddity to a human experience. In the same manner he collected materials from the world around him and abroad for his cures, his story is intimately local while a part of national and international trends. His early life, the insights from *Witchcraft Book*, his transition from farmer to slaveholder, and the historical possibilities of his manual provide the elements to understanding not only enthusiastic syncretism, but political processes into nationhood. With a dash of historical imagination, the possibilities to read against the grain of *Witchcraft Book*, illuminate details about relationships between colonizer and indigenous peoples.[7] The memory of Gordon was a vanishing act that alluded mainstream historians for so long, but local practitioners knew the methodologies to coax out the details of his life and preserve them into the present day.

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[6] Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections, Winthrop University, "Louise Pettus Papers—Accession 1237."

[7] Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Beacon Press, 1996).

# CHAPTER 1

## JOSHUA GORDON'S EARLY LIFE

His early life connected him to international influences and national histories. As a child, Gordon travelled with his family on the Great Wagon Road to South Carolina. This road connected the British colonies through the interior. His family migrated from Lancaster, Pennsylvania to York, South Carolina, a town outside a major intersection of the road at Charlotte.[8] Much of this area was populated by a diverse group of migrants.[9] Gordon's parents themselves emigrated from Belfast, Ireland.[10] His father, Jonathan Gordon, who was a stable boy of Lord Dunbar, ran off with Dunbar's daughter, Hannah, eloping to the colonies.[11] Despite her family's offers of money to return to Ireland, Hannah remained in colonies.[12]

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[8] Walter Edgar, ed. "[Y]." In *The South Carolina Encyclopedia Guide to the Counties of South Carolina* (University of South Carolina Press, 2012), 109-112.

[9] Charles Reagan Wilson, *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture: Volume 6: Ethnicity* Ed. by Ray Celeste. (University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

[10] Letter from Charles Gordon to Louise Pettus, 5 June 1957, Louise Pettus Collection, Winthrop University.

[11] Joe Howard Griffin, Sr. "Jonathan's Great Journey," *QMGS Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No.2: 16-18, 17. In this interest piece by a Gordon descendant, Griffin cites Joshua Gordon had upwards of forty slaves, which I could not confirm per census recordings. Family claims also point to Gordon owning thousands of acres, but again, cannot be confirmed. However, his sons also held nearby land leases at the same time. He corresponded with Pettus.

[12] Joe Howard Griffin, Sr. "Jonathan's Great Journey," 18. Gordon married the daughter of his uncle, his first cousin, also named Hannah.

By 1790 Scots-Irish immigrants from Pennsylvania comprised the majority of the population of York County, South Carolina.[13] Proprietary colonies like Pennsylvania and South Carolina attracted immigrants seeking religious tolerance.[14] Both had founding documents written by William Penn and John Locke respectively, establishing religious toleration.[15] Although the humanistic language of these documents was often associated with the rhetoric of the wealthy, they shaped the reality of many.[16] The work of historians who focused on the backcountry like Grady McWhiney and David Fischer created arguments that historical development in the backcountry should be seen in continuity between "Old World culture and New World contexts" that was particularly focused on culture.[17] While these cultural components are important, they have precise political meaning as well. The study of the upcountry given migratory routes like the Great Wagon Road holds promise in an extended understanding of the Atlantic World. Jack Greene argued the promise of the Southeast, particularly its interior, in an expanded

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[13] Edgar, Walter, ed. "[Y]."

[14] A king would grant a proprietor colony to a proprietor to profit from and create governance for often as a form of political favor.

[15] William Penn, *Charter of Privileges*, 1701. and John Locke, *The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina*, London, 1669 and Patrick Griffin, *The People with No Name: Ireland's Ulster Scots, America's Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World, 1689-1764* (Princeton University Press, 2001), 157-74.

[16] David Armitage, "John Locke, Carolina, and the "Two Treatises of Government," *Political Theory* 32:5 (2004): 602-27.

[17] Warren R. Hofstra, "The Virginia Backcountry in the Eighteenth Century: The Question of Origins and the Issue of Outcomes," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 101, no. 4 (1993): 485-508, 490.

Atlantic World, citing heterogeneity of the region.[18] While Gordon's experiences can be viewed through an Atlantic lens, establishing a study rooted in a sense of place within upcountry regions labeled "piedmont" and the "Waxhaws," in York and Lancaster counties, creates a focused, geographic scope.

Gordon grew up in an area referred to as the "Waxhaws", which despite stereotyping as a degenerative place, played into national narratives. Accounts indicated Gordon was a boyhood friend to future president, Andrew Jackson. At a speaking event, Jackson later presented Gordon's family with a pin as a memento.[19] This story was popularly featured in newspapers in York, intersecting York's place in a national narrative attached to presidential history. The pin supposedly given to the Gordons was on display at the March 15, 1962 celebration of Jackson's birthday. It is described to have "the name 'Jackson' inscribed on the semi-circle" of the pin set in diamonds with the number "eight" marking the years Jackson was president.[20] Although the upcountry was the childhood home of a future president, travel sources of the upcountry painted a picture of brutality and lawlessness prior to the Revolution. People there regularly faced unprosecuted theft due to the distance from courts, but travel accounts only perpetuated these burglaries as evidence of immorality.[21]

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[18] Jack Greene, "Early Southeastern North America and the Broader Atlantic and American Worlds," *Journal of Southern History* 73 (Aug. 2007): 1-14, 14.

[19] *Lancaster News* (SC), 1 March 1962.

[20] Louise Pettus, "Joshua Gordon," Gordon File, Louise Pettus Papers.

[21] Andrew D. Johnson, "The Regulation Reconsidered: Shared Grievances in the Colonial Carolinas," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 114: 2 (2013): 132-54.

The Regulator Movement aimed to incorporate the backcountry into the colony but was met with resistance throughout the Southeast, including Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina.[22] The Regulator Movement hoped to appeal to yeomen and aspiring planters, like Gordon, that by making the backcountry "safe," they could achieve a social order that would benefit planters.[23] The political alliance of proponents of the Regulator Movement combatted social and cultural resistance in creating more defined racial boundaries in the backcountry.[24] Despite sectional interpretations of loyalists in the backcountry, Rachel Klein argued that revolutionary messaging was appealing to the backcountry given colonial grievances.[25] Political status and wealth was dictated through slaveholding, so people in the upcountry aspired to cement their place politically through slaveholding.

At fifteen years old, Gordon fought in the Revolutionary War as a Patriot. When Gordon served under Sumter, he also served alongside Catawbas who allied with the colonists.[26] In 1801, he was granted a $36 annual stipend for an injury on about 18 August 1780 from the Battle of Fishing Creek. This battle took place in tandem with the

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[22] Marjoleine Kars, *Breaking Loose Together: The Regulator Rebellion in Pre-Revolutionary North Carolina* (University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

[23] Rachel N. Klein, *Unification of a Slave State: The Rise of the Planter Class in the South Carolina Back Country* (University of North Carolina, 1990), 51.

[24] Rachel N. Klein, *Unification of a Slave State: The Rise of the Planter Class in the South Carolina Back Country,* 71.

[25] Rachel N. Klein, 80.

[26] James H. Merrell, *The Indians' New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 218

Battle of Camden two days prior. These losses effectively ended Major General Horatio Gate's command.[27] The Battle of Fishing Creek, labeled "Sumter's Defeat," wounded one hundred people in present day Chester County, not far from Gordon's home.[28] Despite his injuries after the defeat, he would return home and continue farming after the war.

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[27] Robert Scott Davis, Thomas Pinckney, and William Johnson. "Thomas Pinckney and the Last Campaign of Horatio Gates," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 86, no. 2 (1985): 75-99

[28] Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1775-1780* (New York: The MacMillian Company, 1902), 682-83.

## CHAPTER 2

## PRACTICAL MAGIC IN THE EARLY MODERN WORLD

His adult life engaged in agriculture acted as a proving ground for his cures and spells, many of which reflect intellectual trends in the early modern world. He wrote *Witchcraft Book,* probably over time, but began it in 1782. After the American Revolution, he was a slaveless farmer in York County.[29] By this time he had married his wife, Hannah, who migrated from England to the colonies as a child.[30] Much of the content in the manual centers around treating sick cows, hogs, and horses. Gordon was involved in herding and farming, like many of Scots-Irish descent. Land ownership for white males in the region was rising to as high as ninety percent. Such a large portion of land ownership indicates economic autonomy and agricultural know-how, as well as consolidation of wealth.[31] Over time, these landholdings would grow and create a slaveholding, yeoman class in the upcountry. The spells in *Witchcraft Book* demonstrated his desire to protect wealth and productivity on his farm, protect himself, and to continue to prosper.

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[29] Year: *1790*; Census Place: *York, South Carolina*; Series: *M637*; Roll: *11*; Page: *193*; Image: *125*; Family History Library Film: *0568151*

[30] Nancy Louise Crockett Collection, "Gordon," South Carolinana, (SCL).

[31] Richard R. Beeman, *Varieties of Political Experience in Eighteenth-Century America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 160.

Gordon's treatment of animals aligns with the emerging practice of veterinary "lay-healers," whose animal cures often appear alongside human medicine.[32] Almanacs also provided preventative measures to be taken for animals dependent on astrological conditions, for example specific almanacs such as *Veterinarium Meteorologist Astrology* or the Farriers Almanack by Robert Gardner in 1697 England. They distinguished different treatments for humans and animals, selecting herbs with corresponding astrological elements in mind.[33] The upcountry also accessed healing traditions through almanacs with content rooted in traditional Anglo-Saxon magic. These intellectual traditions are important in studying the British Atlantic, and then United States.[34] Almanacs with astrological information remained popular after the American Revolution, as half the almanacs continued to print anatomy and the signs of the zodiac.[35] Textual evidence such as *Witchcraft Book* demonstrated traditions in healing not epistemically rooted in post-Enlightenment ideals about Western medicine, but with practices certainly included in early modern medicine.

Beyond an intellectual connection, magic was used as a means of survival. In the early modern context, the fluidity between definitions of magic, science, and religion created an intellectual tradition of syncretism. However, the codification of these

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[32] Louise Hill Curth, *English Almanacs, Astrology, and Popular Medicine, 1550-1700* (Manchester University Press, 2007), 206-28.

[33]Louise Hill Curth, *English Almanacs, Astrology, and Popular Medicine, 1550-1700,* 128.

[34] Catherine L. Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit a Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 65.

[35] Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992), 86.

boundaries in an increasingly secular, objective world during the Enlightenment did not impact practitioners like Gordon. Gordon relied upon religious deference in the same instance he relied on scientific techniques like timing. Intellectual traditions of the centuries prior normalized religion and magic as a part of trustworthy scholarship.[36] Gordon's magic embraced Christian religious symbols.[37] Gordon made Christian references through verbalizing "blessed trinity" in his spells.[38] His message evoked religious protection and devotion, but also a desire to fulfill best practices. The book stated, "your savior sweeting blood wch is yours" repeated down the entire second page nine times, and then again at the end of the manual.[39] Jon Butler interpreted this to reflect the syncretism of Christianity and popular magic, which reflected the worst fears of the clergymen who had sought to convert the individuals of the area the decade prior.[40] However, this relationship between magic, science, and religion was more nuanced, as these elements are married intellectually to Gordon, such as this remedy to ensure a cow produces milk:

> But Should all your Cows Lose their Milk as Some times in the Case then take a heater belonging to a box Iron put it in the fire and make it Red hot

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[36] Catherine L. Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit a Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion*, 65.

[37] Jon Butler, "Magic, Astrology, and the Early American Religious Heritage, 1600-1760." *The American Historical Review* 84, no. 2 (1979): 337.

[38] Joshua Gordon, 10. The trinity refers to the religious trinity honored by the Christian religion, compromising of a relationship between God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

[39] Gordon, 2.

[40] Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People,* 231-232.

> take the milk of the cows thats hurt power on the hot iron repeating the names of the Blesssed trinity to whome Recommend you & yours Keep the following a presfon Secret[41]

Gordon embraced what translates as more modern ideas of medicine as a preventative measure to protect his livestock from future ailments. While this spell does not feature overt Christian references, it has ancient roots in understandings of maintaining good health.

> In a great measure preserve
> Cattle from many Disorders
> Take Rue Wormwood and
> Yarrow of Each an equall
> Quantity Drie them there
> With salt and give to Either
> Crows of Horses to Lick It if
> Cow is sick boil a hand full of each of the Above add a
> Pound of Hogs Lard Pour it
> In to her[42]

Wormwood, also known for its use at the main ingredient in absinthe, is native to parts of Asia, Northern Africa, and Europe. It was later naturalized in the Northeast and Western United States. Gordon obtained the herb from Atlantic trade or by carefully cultivating it on his land in South Carolina. Doctors trained in Europe used wormwood as part of a professional medicinal treatment. In a medical essay Dr. De Sequeyra of Williamsburg, Virginia wrote: "The saline mixture made sometimes with the salt of Wormwood & sometimes with salt of Harts'-horn as we either want to promote a Diuresis or a sweat, is

[41] Gordon, 10-11.

[42] Gordon, 5.

useful."[43] Wormwood had been used as a medicinal herb since ancient times, cited by the Royal Medico-Botanical Society in 1843 as a "medicinal plant from the earliest period of medico-botanical history." It cited its effectiveness as an "antiseptic, anthelmintic, deobstruent, tonic, and stomachic."[44] John Gerard, a sixteenth century naturalist, suggested rue and wormwood in combination to treat animals—like Joshua Gordon—and cited ancient traditions in doing so.[45]

Rue like wormwood is known for its bitterness. It is native to the Middle East and popularly grown throughout Europe.[46] It was an antidote for poison and other ailments since ancient times. It is an element to many cures, the Roman naturalist, Pedanius Dioscorides, in *De Materia Medica,* described its various uses including, "Applied with rosaceum, rue, and vinegar it is good for dislocations, viper bites, and inflammation of the spleen."[47] His work was popular in medical practice through the medieval period. Traditions surrounding rue medicinally in the medieval period demonstrated a magical function: "It was an herbal remedy taken internally, which—when a piece of the plant was used as an amulet—could ward off evil and sickening influences." There is a tradition of magical protection around rue, which Gordon found effective as a part of

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[43] Harold B. Gill, "Dr. De Sequeyra's "Diseases of Virginia," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 86, no. 3 (1978): 295-98.

[44] Houlton, and William Lukin. "Royal Medico-Botanical Society." *Provincial Medical Journal and Retrospect of the Medical Sciences* 5, no. 125 (1843): 415-16.

[45] Louise Hill Curth, 219.

[46] Wilfred Niels Arnold, "Absinthe," *Scientific American* 260, no. 6 (1989): 114.

[47] Pedanius Dioscorides, *De Materia Medica* Book V, 42.

preventative medicine[48] Large doses of rue can make individuals sick and physically touching it causes rashes, indicating Gordon needed a level of expertise to properly handle it.[49]

Similarly, Yarrow is native to Europe, Asia and North America. Yarrow was referenced in ancient times, such as in Greek myths detailing Achilles carrying it with him to treat battle wounds, hence its genus name Achillea. The *Illiad* details Achilles using yarrow on a wound per the suggestion of Chiron the centaur: "He then crushed a bitter herb, rubbing it between his hands, and spread it upon the wound; this was a virtuous herb which killed all pain."[50] Yarrow within this myth possessed almost magical qualities and throughout time it was a popular astringent. Gordon called on traditional magical and medicinal knowledge with roots in Ancient Greece, despite living his entire life in North America. Gordon engaged in well accepted and recorded medical practices of his time.

His spells also required a great deal of specificity in selecting materials for his spells. Given the array of materials gathered to cure animals, Gordon's cures for sick humans also required certain ingredients. Gordon's spells pointed to greater material access in the upcountry as well as scientific techniques:

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[48] Wade Sirabian and Elizabeth I. "Fifteenth-Century Medicine and Magic at the University of Heidelberg," In *Fifteenth-Century Studies Vol. 32*, edited by Gusick Barbara I., DuBruck Edelgard E., and McDonald William C., 191-208. (Boydell and Brewer, 2007), 196.

[49] D. Furniss and T. Adams, T "Herb of grace: An unusual cause of phytophotodermatitis mimicking burn injury," *Journal of Burn Care & Research*. 28 (2007, 5): 767–769.

[50] Homer. *Illiad*. Book XI.

A receipt for the meatism are point of good

Jamaican rum and one pint of dropping of old

Rusty bacon one pint of

Bay salt put altogether

Into a post and stew them

Constantly stirring them

Until the whole becomes an oil when the above is

Prepared set down before

Warm fire and anoint

The part aggrieved for the

Space of one hour every night

Before you go to bed

And with th blessing of god you will git ease[51]

As archeologists have uncovered desired physical goods in the upcountry, Gordon offers textual evidence of their access of goods to support these findings. Archeologists found well-desired material goods in homes, demonstrating access and excess wealth in the upcountry.[52] York County is about two hundred miles from the major port of Charleston, but this lucrative access point connected them materially.[53] Gordon clearly had financial means and access to imported rum. Although this is a magical spell, Gordon implements specific, scientifically styled techniques such as "constantly stirring" and denoting time intervals of "one hour" between every application. Gordon also understood

[51] Gordon, 4.

[52] David Colin Crass, Bruce R. Penner, and Tammy R. Forehand. "Gentility and Material Culture on the Carolina Frontier," *Historical Archaeology* 33, no. 3 (1999): 14-31. And Mark D. Groover, "Evidence for Folkways and Cultural Exchange in the 18th-Century South Carolina Backcountry," *Historical Archaeology* 28, no. 1 (1994): 41-64.

[53] Andrew D. Johnson, "The Regulation Reconsidered: Shared Grievances in the Colonial Carolinas," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 114, no. 2 (2013): 139.

time, often seen as a marker of modernity.[54] Historians in the early modern period have housed the history of medicine within the history of science, placing esotericism as an obstacle to progress. Travel sources described frontier populations of the South as so violent that historians referred to them as "pre-modern."[55] The focus on health and healing through clear methodologies undercuts stereotypes of the region as medically incapable, insinuated by Charles Woodmason in a 1779 sermon, "How dismal the case—How hard the Lot of any Gentleman in this part of the World! No Physicians—No Medicines—No Necessaries—Nurses, or Care in Sickess."[56] Writing this five years later, Gordon's spells demonstrated traditional knowledge and healing in the upcountry provided care for the sick. His access to Atlantic goods and clock time indicated the upcountry was equally modernizing, despite "pre-modern" characterizations. He served as an example that intellectual life did happen in the upcountry despite negative stereotyping. The methodologies he employs for his witchcraft and magical practices had features recognized by modern, and they have a place in the study of the early modern world.

Religious narratives about the upcountry have been dictated by ministers such as Woodmason. The minister travelled to the upcountry during the Regulator Movement in hopes of converting and incorporating residents into the Church of England. His sermons

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[54] Mark M. Smith, *Mastered by the Clock: Time, Slavery, and Freedom in the American South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

[55] Elliot J. Gorn, "Gorn: Poor, Violent Men in a Premodern World." In *Old South,* edited by Mark M. Smith (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 2001): 97-118.

[56] Charles Woodmason, *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution: The Journal and Other Writings of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant* ed. Richard J. Hooker (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), 38

and journals became the authority for future historians studying the upcountry, which he stereotyped as unchristian, promiscuous, ignorant, and dangerous. He described religious diversity of the upcountry, noting that religious differences outnumbered even the variety of nationalities.[57] He described the settlers of the backcountry as, "The People all new Settlers, extremely poor—Live in Logg Cabbins like Hogs—and their Living and Behaviour as rude or more so than the Savages."[58] Gordon's *Witchcraft Book* offers a counter-narrative to these characterizations and undercut points made by Woodmason in 1770 about literacy, "The same as for Society and the Converse—I have not yet met with one literate, or travel'd Person—No ingenious Mind—None of any capacity."[59] As characterizations of the "ignorant" upcountry settlers prevailed, Protestant denominations targeted the region during the Second Great Awakening.[60] Religious narratives have incorrectly characterized the American South as a place of devout religiosity throughout colonization and into present day. Historians such as Christine Heyrman have questioned the religiosity of the South in *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt*.[61] The

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[57]Charles Woodmason, XXVI.

[58] Charles Woodmason, 7.

[59] Ibid, 38.

[60] The First Great Awakening was the first large scale, protestant evangelical effort in the British colonies spanning from 1730 to the 1740s. The Second Great Awakening followed the same missionary fever with ministers traveling throughout the now United States in 1790 through the 1820s, often embracing dance, music, and outdoor spaces for worship.

[61] Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1988). By studying church records, she calculated a majority of Southerners did not regularly attend religious service or belong to a church from the colonial period to the Civil War.

narrative of religion in the upcountry in transition during the Early Republic still remained one of diversity and syncretism.

Gordon sought protection for himself via magic, a remnant of the long-standing occult practice of magical weapons rooted in religion conviction. Hunting was vital to obtaining food and to protecting oneself from enemies. In this instance, Gordon wanted to improve his abilities to shoot deer, a valuable food source,[62]

> Your gun is Speled lod your gun
> In the name of the father sun
> And holy gost and put the pint
> Of the tung down next the powder
> And do not shut without a fare
> Chance & when you discharge your
> Gun do it in the name of father
> Sun and holy gost and when you
> Cum to the dear take your nife
> and scrape the bulet hole and
> make a ball of hair and blood
> while the dear is yet alive and
> lod your gun with it in the name
> of the father sun and holy gost

Realistically, loading one's gun with the hair and blood of an animal could potentially harm the mechanism of the weapon. However, Gordon must have felt this spell was successful enough to write down and use it. His use of blessed magical elements in hunting defied what present-day readers would see as a logical manner to load a weapon. The mythos surrounding a magical weapon was rooted in Celtic traditions, predating

[62] Gordon, 13-14.

Christian conversion, which had a large foothold in Ireland where his parents immigrated from.[63] Gordon's magical practices intersected into Celtic tradition and Catholicism through an incantation of Saint Patrick.[64] While loading a gun and cutting into the bullet, he advised,

> Through and finegrove pull out their
> Take all in your right hand/Then put your left hand
> Your right arm and what Hair
> You catch between your
> Thumb and finger pull out
> And take all your right
> Hand and of all this you must
> Lose none and this must be put
> Down next to the powder and
> You put in the Braket in the
> Pisel of the gun take your
> Nife and make a cross on the
> Bullet and Say Saint Patricks
> Cross then run it down and
> As long as you follow this
> Practis you will kil deer
> If this is dun right it will be a
> Cure[65]

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[63] E. Ettlinger, "Magic Weapons in Celtic Legends," *Folklore* 56:3 (1945): 295-307. The most popular example is the legend of Finn McCool.

[64] Saint Patrick is a Catholic Saint known as the patron saint of Ireland due to his missionary efforts there on behalf of the Catholic Church in 5th century, converting the area from Celtic, polytheistic religious traditions to Catholicism.

[65] Gordon, 16.

Gordon's reference to Saint Patrick points towards the influence of living in a community of European immigrants because there was not an organized Catholic church in the area. The first Catholic Church established South Carolina, excluding brief Spanish colonization in the sixteenth century, was in Charleston in 1789, after Witchcraft Book was written.[66] The religious history of the British Isles is a complex exchange between pagan traditions, Catholic missions, and tension between Protestant and Catholic English monarchs. When magical practices such as an enchanting a weapon became Christianized through a incantation of Saint Patrick, they became accepted practices.[67] Mainstream syncretism and enthusiasm for the occult, cultivated in the upcountry and could not be deterred by religious missions like that of Woodmason.

Given the acceptance of witchcraft, his manual points to the possibility of witchcraft throughout his community as a threat. Individuals like Gordon wanted to protect themselves from rival witchcraft, which points to belief witchcraft was prevalent. He employed magic to identify enemies in his community,

> If you are Suspecious of the person that does you
>
> Hurt write their name and
>
> Surname on a piece of paper then bore a hole in your horse trough make a pin that will
>
> Just fit the hole then put in the piece of paper into the hole and drive the pin a little way next day drive it in a little more and
>
> So on Every day till it be driven Home
>
> all this mist be dun

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[66] Richard No. Côté,"South Carolina Religious Records: Other Denominations," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 86:1 (1985): 59.

[67] Charles Freeman, *Holy Bones, Holy Dust: How Relics Shaped the History of Medieval Europe* (Yale University Press, 2011), 48-60.

> Without any persons knowledge but yourself.[68]

In the relative isolation of the backcountry, trusting one's neighbor was important for survival. Gordon's desire to guard his practices with secrecy are deep rooted. As the formally educated experienced "disenchantment," hermetic magical traditions survived because people simply kept practicing magic in private.[69] There is no way of truly knowing the extent of these practices or their specific origins, given the secrecy magic was shrouded in. Cunning men and women sought medicinal plants in surrounding forests, and often orally passed down that knowledge to family. Almanacs included medicinal knowledge through pictures with simple labels to serve semi-literate populations. By studying the context of oral traditions, more information can be gained about the practice of magic. There are instances of magical practices throughout the upcountry South, particularly through charms of protection.[70] He was so concerned about identifying those who wished him ill will that he offered a second method to identify them, adding,

> In all the afore menchened
>
> Cases you must put lend any manner of a thing off for the Space of 3 Days your plantaton the person or persons guilty will afsuredly come wanting to Borrow Something
>
> But by no means Lend otherwise you lay open a gain to their malies which will Bemore desperate then Before.[71]

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[68] Gordon, 11.

[69] Wouter J. Hangraaf, "How Magic Survived the Disenchantment of the World," *Religion*, 33 (2003): 357-80.

[70] Kay Moss, *Southern Folk Medicine, 1750-1820* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 158.

[71] Gordon, 18.

Adam Jortner described Gordon trying to identify other witches as "counter magic." He argues that Gordon's references to Christianity and desire to reverse spells against him demonstrated a primary objective to fool witches in the area into exposing themselves.[72] However, Gordon was certainly practicing witchcraft for personal gain. He spent time gathering knowledge through experimentation on his farm. It was pertinent to him to write down a variety of spells and cures, not just cures but protection measures.[73]

[72] Adam Joseph Jortner, *Blood from the Sky: Miracles and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2017), 48-49.

[73] Owen Davies *America Bewitched: The Story of Witchcraft After Salem* (Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2013).

# CHAPTER 3

## TRANSITION TO SLAVEHOLDER

Gordon became a popular figure in his community through his economic clout through slaveholding and religious influences. Beyond the pages of *Witchcraft Book,* Gordon's religious life was much more nuanced than it seems. Despite participating in these occult practices, Gordon was a founder and active member of Six Mile Presbyterian Church. His notability as a church member survived so strongly in local memory and oral traditions, he is the only congregant mentioned by name in the Work Progress Administration's Survey of State and Local Historical Record taken in 1936. In an anecdote related on the back of the form the WPA representative stated:

> The church was burned and rebuilt in a different location. An old man, Joshua Gordon, a staunch member, vowed he would never darken the new church's doors if it were built in a different location from the first. He was a regular attendant but sat on the doorstep during the sermon. When the Lord's Supper was celebrated the pastor always administered the sacraments to the stubborn old man as he sat on the doorstep.[74]

Per this anecdote, Gordon was clearly particular about how he chose to worship. His occult leanings did not exclude him from prominence in the church community. But his growing involvement in the church, as a growing property owner, and then slaveholder is also indicative of religious changes in the upcountry alongside political ones. More notably, Reverend James Henry Thornwell is cited as the first recorded clergyman at Six

[74] Blanche M. Paul, "Works Progress Administration Survey of State and Local Historical Records: 1936," *Church Records Form: Six Mile Presbyterian,* back of page 2.

Mile Presbyterian Church, his tenure 1835-1836.[75] This connection gives Gordon a seat, granted at the door step, listening and participating in the formation of religious messaging to justify slavery and the creation of a type of pro-slavery ideology that would spread throughout the South.[76]

He was a member of a growing, slaveholding class in the upcountry in the decades following the American Revolution. The upcountry's economic and political development was tied to the codification of race-based slavery in the American South. The expansion of slavery was a "route toward modernity" throughout the American South.[77] The planter class became more fluid, less like a kin based aristocratic styled economic system. Per his Catawba land leases and the 1820 Census, Gordon leased land out of Lancaster, South Carolina before 1811.[78] Throughout Gordon's life he continued to gain wealth through the institution of slavery. By this time Gordon held ten enslaved individuals: one male under the age of fourteen, three males aged fourteen to twenty-five,

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[75] Blanche M. Paul, "Works Progress Administration Survey of State and Local Historical Records: 1936," 1.

[76] Eugene Genovese among others have cited the importance of James Henley Thornwell in developing religiously based, pro-slavery ideology Eugene Genovese, "James Henley Thornwell and Southern Religion" in *Abbeville Review*, May 5, 2015, James O. Farmer, *The Metaphysical Confederacy: James Henley Thornwell and the Synthesis of Southern Values* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1986).

[77] Paul Quiglley, "Slavery, Democracy and the Problem of Planter Authority in the Nineteenth-century US South." *Journal of Modern European History / Zeitschrift Für Moderne Europäische Geschichte / Revue D'histoire Européenne Contemporaine* 11, no. 4 (2013): 514-32, 1.

[78] Petition of Joshua Gordon, ca. 1810," *South Carolina Department of Archives and History*, 176.1 0010 004 ND00 66714 00.

three females under the age of fourteen, and three females aged fourteen to twenty-five.[79] Given the age and gender demographics of the enslaved people, there possibly was an enslaved family. Gordon would have solidified himself as a yeoman as the wealthiest fifth of piedmont estates prior to the American Revolution averaged eight enslaved individuals.[80] By 1830, he enslaved sixteen individuals: four males under the age of ten, one male aged ten to twenty-three, three males aged twenty-four to thirty-five, two females under the age of ten, three females aged ten to twenty-three, and three females aged twenty-four to thirty five.[81] In the final decades of his life, Gordon was certainly a member of the back country elite. In the 1840 Census taken four years before his death, he enslaved twenty-four individuals: four males under the age of ten, four males aged ten to twenty-three, three males aged twenty-four to thirty-five, six females under the age of ten, five females aged ten to twenty-three, and two females aged twenty-four to thirty-five.[82] Officials in the upcountry took efforts to maintain a slave society through records keeping, in 1840 York County compiled a list of slaveholders and how many enslaved people lived on their plantation. [83] While Gordon lived in neighboring Lancaster County at this time most of these figures reflect modest holdings of no fewer than fifteen enslaved people, with outliers such as John S. Sitgreanes enslaving fifty-five people and

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[79] Year: *1820* US Census; Census Place: *Lancaster, South Carolina*; Page: *14*; NARA Roll: *M33_118*; Image: *285*.

[80] Rachel N. Klein, 21

[81] Year: *1830*; Census Place: *Lancaster, Lancaster, South Carolina*; Series: *M19*; Roll: *173*; Page: *98*.

[82] Year: *1840*; Census Place: *Lancaster, South Carolina*; Roll: *512*; Page: *390*.

[83] "No of Slaves in the Indian land York District South Carolina 1840," folder 10 MSS, August 1827-26 April 1842, *Hutchinson Family Papers*, South Caroliniana Library SCL.

John Springs enslaving forty-seven people.[84] Given Gordon enslaved twenty-four people in 1840, he was certainly a part of the middling elite of his area. Gordon had acquired wealth in the form of slavery, most likely engaging in cotton agriculture that began booming in the backcountry.

The built environment of his land lease creates questions about the lives of the enslaved there. Given his connection to the occult and Six Mile Presbyterian, did he attempt to indoctrinate those he enslaved with his religious beliefs? Gordon's manual had specific instructions for caring for sick livestock on the farm; would he teach and expect enslaved individuals to use these same methods? The fact *Witchcraft Book* was not destroyed indicated that he did not give up his syncretic practices. However, this position as a slaveholder indicated a rigid, racial hierarchy guided his life too. In the historical report for Six Mile Presbyterian, information about previous buildings indicated, "the second building had two wings, shed rooms, divided from the body of the church by rows of posts, slaves and free (divided from slaves) negros sat in one, Catawba Indians sat in the other."[85] While Gordon sat on the stoop outside, it is quite possible he brought the people he enslaved to church services.

Similar contexts of religiously active people in the upcountry point to efforts to minister to the enslaved on their own plantations and those of others. Camp meeting style revivals surged in popularity during the Second Great Awakening, even if church

[84] "No of Slaves in the Indian land York District South Carolina 1840," 3.

[85] Blanche M. Paul, 1.

attendance was still small.[86] James Pegues, a Methodist minister, physician, and slaveholder, documented enslaved conversion in his journal from 1814-1820.[87] His hand drawn maps depicted groves around the waterways on the Chesterfield plantation, similar to those on Gordon's lease per its location on Old Six Mile Creek. "Hush harbors," the contemporary word to describe these sacred spaces, would have been easily created on this landscape. Enslaved people sang and prayed into pots turned upside down for noise control, muffling the sound of their voices, which is they became referred to as "hush harbors." Pegues wrote of hosting meetings throughout weekday evenings, with the enslaved on his and neighboring plantations, certainly organized in an open air "brush arbor."[88] The enslaved created "hush harbors" to have private Christian religious practices in resistance to white preaching throughout the American South. Scholars have cited "hush harbors" as an effort to preserve African origins within even Christian religious practices.[89] These African cultural traditions transferred throughout the American South through the African diaspora and spread clandestinely to neighboring plantations.[90] These locations emphasized reflection and offered a connection to the natural world that white Christians eventually found attractive. Enslaved religious traditions later influenced the Second Great Awakening by connecting god to nature. This

[86] Rachel Klein, 283.

[87] Pegues Family Papers, 1785-1826, South Caroliniana Library (SCL).

[88] Pegues Family Papers, 1785-1826.

[89] Janet Duitsman Cornelius, *Slave Missions and the Black Church in the Antebellum South* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 9.

[90] Kevin Dawson, *Undercurrents of Power: Aquatic Culture in the African Diaspora* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018).

once secret religious tradition inspired what is referred to as, "brush arbors," used for revivals, which through large tent services brought massive crowds and conversions.[91] The enslaved transformed national religious practices, but whites asserted authority over their control of religious life.

The location of his plantation on the Six Mile Creek would have been advantageous in engaging with trade out of the growing upcountry. As the region grew, so did transportation needs. Gordon petitioned in 1810 to prevent a road from bisecting his property near Six Mile Creek, the report indicating, "there are two public roads already established in that part of the state," in which they decided the road running through his "plantation lands" would no longer be opened as a public road.[92] As the state's infrastructure expanded in the early nineteenth century, Charleston elites also petitioned against the state. Lucretia Horry petitioned similarly about a road on her family property, "There is at this time a good road much more convenient—heading to the public road between Savannah and Charleston."[93] She also cited this road threatened order by going "through the garden and Negro houses of your petitions compelling him [Jonah Horry] to put up and keep in order several large bridges and a double fence."[94]

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[91] Samuel S. Hill, Charles H. Lippy, and Charles Reagan Wilson, *Encyclopedia of Religion in the South* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2005), 127.

[92] "Petition of Joshua Gordon, ca. 1810," *South Carolina Department of Archives and History*, 176.1 0010 004 ND00 66714 00. This petition included a map drawn by Gordon, which according to Pettus was one of the first maps of the area done before Robert Mill's *Atlas Map* published in 1825.

[93] "Horry, Lucretia, Petition Asking for Repeal of an Act Passed in 1795," *South Carolina Department of Archives and History*, Archives
ID: Series: S165015 Year: ND00 Item: 01218.

[94] "Horry, Lucretia, Petition Asking for Repeal of an Act Passed in 1795," 1.

Backcountry and low country elites' goals in preserving control of their plantation land and enslaved people on it further unified their political stances as South Carolina became a solidified slavey society. Here, a desire to not have state interference on land through public roads serves as an example of political desires closely connected to maintaining not only slavery, but their perceived local authority.

## CHAPTER 4

## THE POSSIBILITIES OF *WITCHCRAFT BOOK*

The relationship between Gordon and Native American knowledge is complex. *Witchcraft Book* offers possibilities to read against the grain to garner information about indigenous people. While his work can offer fragmentary clues about indigenous groups, he is still a part of a system that exploited native people. Although *Witchcraft Book* is one magical source in the upcountry of South Carolina, Gordon's writings point to the impact of magic on the community around him. Whites used Indigenous traditions to assuage immediate needs in North American for which solutions from a European context were less useful or unavailable.[95] In this text, he used Indigenous knowledge to explain how to cure a sick child. Gordon gained this information from a man who was held prisoner for five years by a group of Native Americans,

> An Indian Cure for the riptur in children it was found by a man who was prisonor for five years with a nation who lived in new penseelvaney and on a river named white river the first thing that must be got is an old bucks pisel he must be called in the old of the moon in buck hunting time then take the pisel and dry it then cut of one inch and a half the end of the pisel and boil in half a pint of new milk an till it begins to crud The person being well bound up must drink the milk On a fasting stumock this be don three mornings hand running and this cure must be performed in the old of the moon and between Cock crow and day[96]

[95] Catherine L. Albanese, 115, Jack Weatherford, Native Roots: How the Indians Enriched America (Fawcett Columbine, 1992).

[96] Gordon, 19-20.

This fragmentary source provides important clues to be used in identifying the Indigenous people Gordon refers to.

The White River ends east of Muncie, Indiana on the Ohio border.[97] This area has well documented activity of Native American groups from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, particularly of the Delawares.[98] There are also French records documenting the area as "Blanche River" in 1749.[99] It was also the central hub for Moravian Indian missionaries from 1799-1806, who intended to convert the Native population there. Native groups such as the Delawares began moving westward through the colony of Pennsylvania from their homelands in the Delaware River Valley as European colonizers moved onto their lands.[100] "New penseelvaney" was an ample descriptor for labeling land westward of the defined boundaries of Pennsylvania.[101] The Delaware had mixed relationships with different colonial groups as the Pennsylvania colony became populated by white settlers with occasional violence in the 1750s and individuals captured in

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[97] John D. Barnhart and Dorothy L. Riker, *Indiana To 1816: The Colonial Period* (Indiana Historical Society, 1994), 290.

[98] The Delaware name designation broadly defines Indigenous peoples who descended from the Delaware River who referred to themselves in this area as the Lenape.

[99] John B. Dillion, *A History of Indiana From Its Earliest Exploration by Europeans to the Close of the Territorial Government in 1816: Comprehending a History of the Discovery, Settlement, and Civil and Military Affairs of the Territory of the U.S. Northwest of River Ohio, and a General View of the Progress of Public Affairs in Indiana from 1816 to 1856* (Indianapolis: Bingham & Doughty, 1859), 389.

[100] Jean R. Soderlund, "Conclusion," in *Lenape Country* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 196-204.

[101] Gordon, 19.

raids.[102] White settlers continually encroached onto Native American lands after the French and Indian War.[103] Indigenous people responded though warfare and raids, continuing to move westward into the Ohio River Valley. These tensions culminated in Pontiac's War in 1763, in which the Delaware among many groups participated.[104] The ritualistic nature of these raids in isolated parts of the backcountry from Pennsylvania to North Carolina resulted primarily in the capture of adult men as prisoners, up to approximately two thousand captured in Pennsylvania alone throughout the 1750s and 1760s.[105] Gordon's source was captured for five years, so it was likely he was one of the men captured, and then taken to the Delawares as a part of these raids. Indigenous groups adopted the majority of those captured to replace their population losses in the French and Indian War, and then in fighting Pontiac's War. This man's adoption gave him access to traditional knowledge and ritual. The British struggled to negotiate the release of captives from the 1750s through this period, primarily using their diplomatic relationship

[102] Amy C. Schutt, "Defining Delawares, 1765–74." in *Peoples of the River Valleys: The Odyssey of the Delaware Indians* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 112

[103] The French and Indian War was a part of the larger, transcontinental Seven Year's War between the French and the British from 1754-1763. The French received support from the Lenape in addition to other tribes. Ultimately, the British won gaining large North American land cessions from the French, and ultimately jeopardizing the territorial claims of their Indigenous allies.

[104] Pontiac's War was launched by several tribes formerly allied with the French near the Great Lakes and present-day Ohio and Illinois against British colonists after dissatisfaction of British land policy after the French and Indian War.

[105] Matthew C. Ward, "Denouement: 'Pontiac's War,' 1763–1765," In *Breaking the Backcountry* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003), 219-254.

with the Iroquois to negotiate release. After Pontiac's War the release of captives was priority for the British with hundreds being released in 1764.[106]

The Delawares had a legacy of traditional knowledge in magic ritual, in which foundation religious beliefs invoked healing. The acceptance of those rituals culturally became contested within tribal governments in the early nineteenth century.[107] They desired a return to older Indigenous traditions to combat the adoption of European traditions within tribes, but it was also revealed by prophets in their communities that the Great Spirit desired to punish those who practiced witchcraft.[108] The practice of witchcraft and magic was punished by death in 1806 by the Delawares in the White River region.[109] Given the persecution of witchcraft around White River decades later, there is compelling evidence to the ubiquity of magical traditions in the decades prior. Gordon's source connects *Witchcraft Book* to a larger narrative of exchange between indigenous people and colonizers.

However, the process of colonization is not simply one of cultural exchange.[110] While Gordon served with Catawbas in the American Revolution, cited indigenous knowledge in his manual and leased Catawbas land, he was a part of the hegemonic force

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[106] Matthew C. Ward, 165-186.

[107] David R. Edmunds, "Tecumseh, The Shawnee Prophet, and American History: A Reassessment," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 14:3 (1983): 261-76.

[108] Alfred A. Cave, "The Failure of the Shawnee Prophet's Witch-Hunt," *Ethnohistory* 42, no. 3 (1995): 445-75.

[109] John B. Dillion, *A History of Indiana From Its Earliest Exploration by Europeans to the Close of the Territorial Government in 1816,* 425.

[110] Aime Cesaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (Monthly Review Press, 2001), 31-46.

that lead to their exploitation and dissemination. Despite debates in the 1780s, the prevailing idea was "conquest theory," particularly against groups like the Cherokees that had been defeated with the British. Some backcountry elites opposed these practices, such as Andrew Pickens, and advocated and attempted to create treaties with indigenous groups. Whites did not honor treaties as desires for speculation rose after the Revolutionary War.[111] These land leases usually averaged at around 300 acres, with rent ranging from $15 to $20 a year.[112] Given Gordon's $36 annual pension for disability during his service, he could cover his rent with that alone, which perhaps created the opportunity for land ownership. While the Catawbas had diplomatic forces throughout South Carolina, difficulties with Indian agents and white resentment towards them undercut their economic position in the upcountry.

Eventually, the Catawbas ceded these land leases after pressures from white tenants and the state of South Carolina. Catawbas agreed to give up their land in exchange for fifteen hundred a year for nine years and a new reservation in North Carolina in signing Treaty of Nations Ford in 1840.[113] Much of the pressure placed by white tenants grew out of resentment of the Catawbas' growing wealth. However, appropriations in this treaty varied greatly and without claims in South Carolina, many Catawbas traveled to join other tribes. Gordon leased a total of 800 acres of land that was

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[111] Jeff W. Dennis, *Patriots and Indians: Shaping Identity in Eighteenth-Century South Carolina* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 2017), 104-105.

[112] "The Nation Ford Treaty," presumably authored by Louise Pettus, in folder labeled "Catawba Indian Lands," in Nancy Crockett Collection, SCL.

[113] Mikaëla M. Adams, "Residency and Enrollement: Diaspora and the Catawba Indiain Nation," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 113, no. 1 (2012): 24-49, 25.

surveyed on May 17, 1811 and September 6, 1811 along where Six Mile Creek meets Tarkilll Branch.[114] Given these land cessions, Gordon among many would no longer have to pay rents to the Catawbas. The Catawbas faced difficulties in procuring payment and never received the amount of promised reservation land in North Carolina. The 144,000 acres tract of land, where Gordon leased, became a part of a legal battle between Catawba Indians and the State of South Carolina that did not end until 1993. Ultimately, the Catawba tribe relinquished all legal claims to the land, which are now estimated at a value of over 2 billion dollars, for a 50-million-dollar cash settlement. Despite the difference in evaluation, this settlement was one of the largest of its kind.[115] Upon his death, one hundred and sixty-five acres of land on Old Six Mile Creek were ceded to Hannah Gordon (his unmarried daughter), which she later deeded to her sister Jane McKibben and her husband, Thomas McKibben in exchange for her care.[116] The physical land lease was sold to Robert A Carnes by Thomas K. Cureton, who was the administrator for the estate and a neighboring landholder.[117]

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[114] Douglas Summers Brown, "Catawba Land Records, 1795-1829." *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 59, no. 2 (1958): 64-77, 74. Brown organized Catawba land leases into a chart by name. The location of Gordon's specific lease is on page 59 of *Surveys and Leases within Indian Land, York and Lancaster Counties, S.C. (c. 1795-1829)* in a *Miscellaneous Book*, 234-237 at the South Carolina Department of Archives.

[115] Lynn Loftis, "The Catawbas' Final Battle: A Bittersweet Victory." *American Indian Law Review* 19, no. 1 (1994): 183-4.

[116] Land Grant to Hannah Gordon from the State of South Carolina, certified by N.L. Manning, 5 December 1853, Louise Pettus Papers.

[117] Louise Pettus, "Joshua Gordon," Gordon Folder, Louise Pettus Papers. I was unable to find this bill of sale in the collected Carnes, Cureton, or Gordon family papers.

# CHAPTER 5

# CONCLUSION

While Gordon alluded some for so long, local historians had success researching and sharing his story with a public audience. His legacy was interwoven in speculations about *Witchcraft Book*, but local historians focused on his Revolutionary War Service and childhood friendship with Andrew Jackson. Due to popular movements led by groups like the Daughters of the American Revolution, his gravesite at Old Six Mile Cemetery remains intact and clearly marked.[118] Crockett was a part of these efforts as she communicated with professors and preservationists at University of North Carolina, seeking advice on how preserve gravesites properly.[119] Restoration projects there have also been led by the American Legion, citing interest in honoring Revolutionary War veterans.[120] These sites conjure master narratives about nationhood, republicanism, and democratic culture. Louise Pettus wrote frequently about Gordon. He was one of her many local profiles in newspapers about the history of the area. These stories piqued

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[118] "Joshua Gordon," Find a Grave, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/89483979/joshua-gordon, accessed 10 October 2020.

[119]Letter to Nancy Crockett from John Meffert, *National Trust for Historic Preservation*, 17 March 1980, Letter to Nancy Crockett from Bill Walker, 19 June 1991, Letter to Nancy Crockett from Dan Patterson, 8 February 1982, *University of North Carolina,* Email to William Reckert from Nancy Crockett, 9 September 1998.

[120] "Old Six Mile Cemetery," The American Legion: South Carolina Post 250 Indian Land, http://www.sc250indianland.org/about/post-accomplishments/old-six-mile-cemetery/, accessed 10 October 2020.

public interest in history and served as educational tools as public interest in history broadened.[121] But they also promoted a larger sense of community and belonging in the region itself. Advocacy to preserve local history sites and place markers boosted local tourism. To the public, his legacy was tied to arching national narratives, not his occult text. To mainstream historians, he was an oddity who only existed within the parameters of his manual. While stories like his are privileged due to his whiteness, literacy, and wealth through slavery their preservation indicative of continued interest in the Revolutionary Era by a public audience.

His story is not a niche moment of occultism. His experience was normative of slaveholders in the upcountry who had amassed wealth through slavery after the American Revolution. However, given this normative experience, he was an example of how enthusiastic religious syncretism throughout the Atlantic World was mainstream, even for those born in North American. While *Witchcraft Book* is fascinating, it is a small part of a whole picture. Historical imagination can be used by scholars to continually read against the grain of *Witchcraft Book* to create nuanced arguments about the complexities of colonial processes. While the surviving local memory of Gordon alluded mainstream historians, the entirety of his life places *Witchcraft Book* into a central dialogue about the upcountry of South Carolina.

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[121] Richard D. Starnes, *Southern Journeys: Tourism, History, and Culture in the Modern South* (Tuscaloosa: University Alabama Press, 2003), 2. Celeste Ray, *Southern Heritage on Display: Public Ritual and Ethnic Diversity Within Southern Regionalism* (Tuscaloosa: University Alabama Press, 2003).

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