

27 February 91

Dear Robert,

Thank you so much for your most recent letter, which I enjoyed and appreciated immensely, as I do all of your letters. Your ability to condense so much detailed information into a single epistle has always been a source of amazement and delight to me.

Among particulars, thank you first of all for the Society's new address. I sent my application papers back out again in yesterday's mail, and will let you know the moment I hear from the registrar.

You are quite welcome for the stamps. I will send you some more in a few days for that "third box" of Cousin Florrie's material, which I am most eager to examine. I still need to go back through the first batch of material for the "winnowing" process, but I do already have everything fairly well sorted and filed into general family categories. You can not imagine how much fun I have had going through all these old papers. The experience has been equivalent in so many ways to a journey back into the past. Along the way I have alternately laughed out loud and all but cried as I have read these old letters, particularly the ones dating from the "Occupation" period. What treasures these old letters are! I thank you for them again and again and again.

As for the account of Lawtonville, it is here, and is, as you said, very interesting. Would you like for me to send you a copy of it? If it is to be "properly annotated," who but you would be equal to the task?

As you suggest, I will forward Cousin Florrie's Peeples file to my aunts in Hampton and request that they pass them along to the Hampton Co. Historical Society as a gift specifically from you. No doubt I eventually will send a number of the other papers--along with some of my own papers--there also.

At my earliest convenience I will follow up on your suggestions as to how I might be able to obtain the rest of Narcissa Lawton's Diary, for if I do not somehow obtain this journal, my students will never let me rest. Their "line" now is that if a teacher can not do his "homework," he should not expect his students to do theirs! How's THAT for a "no homework" excuse? I am hard-pressed for a satisfactory response, too!

Yesterday I received a letter and bundle of material from my "cousin" in California--the "jack-in-the-box, surprise descendant" of my gg-uncle, Lewis Reeve Sams, who (according to all the sources) "never married and had no issue." Anyway, among other items Roberta sent me ^{are} a few which I'm enclosing. As you can see by the pictures, her husband is white, and she is very light herself--an ^{sp?} octaroon, I would imagine. I just thought that you might be interested in seeing what this family looks like.

Roberta also sent me a biography of Bonum Sams and a history of the Sams family on Datha. In this history the author quoted an "Occupation-Era" letter from my gg-grandmother, CMO, who wistfully refers to how much she misses her "lovely Retreat"--the name of the Sams plantation on Datha. I was thrilled to find this nugget of information, especially since I had just recently written to several people in an attempt to obtain it. I am continually amazed by these "ancestral synchronicities": One week I write a cousin in South Carolina for a minute item of information, and the next week the answer arrives from a most unlikely source in California!

Thank you so much for confirming my Oswald information, and for fine-tuning the small details I was uncertain about. All of this data will be an immense help to Brent Holcombe (sp?) when I get around to asking him to work on my Oswald line....that is, if ever Camille Crouse is satisfied with his research on the Reynolds and Chaplin lines! I do hope we soon will be able to resolve that mess!

I will be delighted to assist Col. Charles McRay Milam in any way I can with his Milam "problem"--whatever it might be. I am not familiar with

his line right off the top of my head, but I have a substantial amount of Milam material and correspondence from contacts in Arkansas. Col. Milam will of course be welcome to anything I might have to assist him in any of my Milam (or other) files. I am glad you told him to contact me, and I will look forward to corresponding with him.

As for Michael Berry, I knew that you and Miss Cora would want to be informed about him, but please don't tell Tommy I let you know about this tragedy. For whatever reason, Tommy is extremely "close" with his details on this subject, and I certainly would not want to violate his sensitivity.

As for the "failure of school teachers and the clergy" to impress upon today's youth the ABSOLUTE NECESSITY of obeying a certain THOU SHALT NOT, all I can say is this, Robert: A hungry possum will eat a poisoned persimmon, no matter how eloquently a pine tree pleads with him not to. It is as simple as that--and statistics attest to the veracity of that statement. What doesn't begin in the HOME does not begin at ALL.

On to less cryptic matters, let me mention something I almost forgot to ask you about--the enclosed baptism record of Mrs. Rosa Garvin.

Do you know anything about this Jillette Baptist Church and the place known in 1879 as Ruddell, S. C.? I am asking, of course, for Roberta, who is having a time with her Garvin ancestry. I have nothing at all on this place called Ruddell, and Roberta can not locate it on any map. It seems to have been in the area between Lawtonville and Allendale, but the only thing I can find in my limited files is a reference to a family by that name in the 1880's and 1890's. Do you have anything on this church or the place it was located?

I have thirty minutes to get ready for school, so this must end. I will be in touch again soon.

In the meantime, remember me as always to Miss Cora.

*Yours as ever -
Paul*