

1 May 91

Dear Robert and Miss Cora,

Before responding to the specifics of your most recent letters, I need to tell you--in case you don't already know--that John Kilgo, Jim's father, died this week at his home in Darlington. Aunt Adelaide called last night to tell me the sad news. I spoke with Caroline and Jim last night, both of whom said John simply "closed his eyes and never woke up again." He'd been in extremely poor condition for months, you know, so his death was not that unexpected. The funeral is today but I won't be able to attend.

On a more cheerful note, I am pleased that y'all are pleased to have me as a new member in First Families. For a while I was concerned that one of the "reviewers" might object to my application's having been printed rather than typed, but obviously it was both legible and acceptable. I know that I will enjoy my membership in the Society.

Thank you so much for Miss Cora's paper on Hon. John Rutledge, which I hope you don't mind my sharing with Mrs. Brownlee. I sent her a copy of it last week, but have not yet spoken to her about it. I'm certain she'll be as pleased and impressed with it as I am, for it is a splendid biographical research effort. I now will have to re-read my Hext section of SCG, to see exactly how I am related to Hon. Rutledge. I'm sure his mother's line goes back to my ancestor, Hugh Hext, who emigrated to S. C. in about 1686.

Speaking of interesting and unexpected family connections, I recently read something in Cousin Carolyn Harrell's Kith And Kin that I made a mental notation to ask you about. On page 50, first paragraph, Carolyn writes of my ancestor, John Barnwell, "At about this time [1703] he met and married in Charles Town Anne Berners, a 'good English Lady' whose family was described as 'perhaps more noble than the Barnwells.' She traced her ancestry through Sir John Bouchier, first Baron Berners, who was a great-grandson of King Edward III."

Do you know anything about this first Baron Berners? I have nothing at all on the Berners line--just a few random tidbits on Anne--but I would like to spend some time investigating it this summer, just to see whether Carolyn's information is correct. If it is correct--and if I didn't make any mistakes in tracing Edward III's pedigree--Anne descended from someone else who was far more interesting than Edward III--namely, the cause of "1066 And All That," William the Conqueror. I'm not sure how my "English genes" "feel" about that prospect--having all those little "bastard chromosomes" still "recording Domesday" in their DNA! Anyway, do you have any information on the first Baron Berners?

As for my descent from Bridget Barnwell, I thought I had mentioned it to you before, or at least included her name on one of the charts I've sent to you over the years, but obviously I didn't. Anyway, Mrs. Moore thought this was a thrilling research discovery on her part when she was "doing my Charleston charts" back in the early 1980's. Back then, of course, I primarily was interested in CWL and my Sams line--as I still am--so Bridget was less "fetching" to me than she is now.

Reading your "itinerary paragraph" makes my head spin! How many miles per year do you put on your car--and how many "months per week" do you have on your calendar?! You and Miss Cora should have been jet airplane pilots! You practically are as it is.

Your super-success record in the First Families membership recruitment drive speaks eloquently and splendidly in your behalf, Robert, and you have every reason to be proud. I share your pride, for I know how difficult and time-consuming such goals are to achieve. (Look how many years you devoted just to convincing me to join! I simply am not what my students refer to as a "groupie," but I certainly am delighted that you "reformed" me.) I've read every page and word of my "Yearbook," and eagerly look forward to receiving my updated edition in the fall.

You asked for suggestions on "prospective candidates" for membership in First Families, so for what this one is worth, I urge you to consider Roberta Miles. I fully realize that my desire to sponsor her will be regarded as tantamount to heresy and/or "racial treason" by some people, but these are a tragic lot who need to "get real" about this world and all the people in it. Roberta on a number of occasions has indicated to me that she would love to join the Society, but as I've told you before, in doing her extensive Sams research she's been snubbed and rejected so many times over the years, that she's apprehensive about "daring to apply"--only now primarily because she is afraid that her doing so might "embarrass" me in some way. I've told her a number of times to lay that silly concern aside forever, since I am perfectly capable of "embarrassing myself" if need be, by which I meant that I would approach you at the appropriate time, and ask whether it might be possible for me to sponsor her application without sending genealogical "seismo-spasms" through the Society. Your request for new members made the time seem "appropriate," so--what do you think about this suggestion? As you ponder it, please consider the following points:

1. Except for her color and one "lost link" in legitimacy, Roberta otherwise qualifies splendidly--on well over a dozen bloodlines.
2. The past three generations of her family on both sides have been prominent and distinguished professional people--doctors, lawyers, teachers, etc.
3. She is not in the least one of those "radical racist upstarts" who wants to force herself upon anyone; on the contrary, she is a very sensitive, intelligent person who simply wants to be recognized and acknowledged, and thereby to "become one" with her ancestral heritage.
4. Her great-grandparents, Lewis Reeve Sams and Rose Garvin, lived together for at least forty years, and reared a family that quite

obviously was acknowledged and accepted by Lewis' family--one item of proof being the enclosed letter to Rose from R. H. Sams, Lewis' brother. (The letter, by the way, was written over twenty years after Lewis' death--in May of 1892.)

5. The last several years of Lewis' life were fraught with respiratory complications--lung cancer, I believe, in reading his letters from the late 1880's and early 1890's. Anyway, when he was sent up to Philadelphia for treatment, Rose moved there to be with him. She remained at his side for months, and accompanied his body back to Gaffney when he died. In short, there was much, much more to this relationship--"solemnized" or not--than appears at first glance or upon casual mention.
6. Though such a union would not have been legal at the time, Lewis and Rose might have been secretly married. I am attempting to find some type evidence of this possibility, and have ordered copies of Lewis' will and probate papers from Gaffney.
7. Whether married^{or} simply cohabitating, Lewis gave each of his children by Rose his name. Enclosed is a copy of a photo of one of them--Dr. Luetta Theodosia Sams, Roberta's grandmother.

I will give you a call one day soon--probably toward the end of next week. In the meantime, I hope my suggestion about Roberta's possibly applying for membership in the Society will not alarm or upset you; if I thought it would, I wouldn't have mentioned it. I certainly wouldn't want to cause another "Jim Kilgo thing" in the family. As you know, Virginia has treated him like a pariah for years because of his book on Hart, Frankie, and Jenny. The coup de gr^âce to their relationship occurred in March: Jim was the only member of the family not to receive an invitation to Stilesie's reunion at Bluffton, and this very "unsubtle snub" really cut him to the quick--much more deeply than I thought it would. Even so, Jim remains undeterred in his

determination to complete his chronicle, the title of which I believe I've mentioned to you before: Into A Deeper Wood. Anyway--back to Roberta--I've no desire to create another "family flap" over her, so I will wait to hear from you in her regard.

I will tell you all the details later on, but for now keep this in mind: Roberta and I will be in Beaufort for a tour sometime in June, and we might either call on you or arrange a rendezvous with you somewhere between there and Hilton Head. Would you object to such a meeting? Roberta wants to see all the Lowcountry "sights and cemeteries," and asked me to be her guide--to which request I of course immediately agreed, fully aware of how "rather irregular" such a jaunt might appear to some folks. Naturally, I've told no one else in the family about this trip, for obvious reasons. Anyway, let me know what your plans are for June (in 500 pages or less), and we will go from there.

I wanted to tell you about something else, but it's time for me to get ready for school. I will save "the rest" of this letter for our telephone conversation next week.

Cousinly regards as always,

Paul