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30th March, 1989.

Dear Reverend Peeples,

Or do I address you as Dr Peeples? Thank you very much for your delightful letter of the 18th March, 1989. It was informative and a pleasure to read. I will be able to follow-up on a great deal of the information you gave me during the summer..

I have already received a reply to my letter from a Ms Virginia Gourdin of Charleston, which I answered a few days ago. I sent Ms Gourdin some information by sea mail, which I am unable to duplicate here, as I need to retrieve it from one of the computers at college, but be assured I will send it to you as soon as possible. I must also point out that I am supposed to be writing a thesis on image enhancement for my Higher National Diploma in Printing, which I will gain at the end of this year. The HND is a sort of technical degree, but perhaps a little lower. I would like to write at will, but I cannot as time presses, as you will well understand. After the HND I intend to commence a degree in Computing Science through the Open University. My project tutor for the HND, Dr A. G. Saleh, has graciously consented to be a tutor for my degree, when and if I do it that is.

I will answer each of the points in your letter in turn. It is lengthy, but that way I will not miss anything. First, I learned of your Society by writing to the National Geographic Magazine in Washington, D.C. I was sitting in the college library some months ago, and like all students I was supposedly studying, doing anything else but, when I picked up the National Geographic Magazine. I read therein a very interesting article on the Spaniards, who first settled in Winyah Bay. Prior to this, I knew from Mr Rob Burgoon of Campbell, California, a North Carolina descendant, that the Commanders also settled in Winyah Bay, South Carolina. I wondered if the National Geographic Magazine during their last 100 years had made any reference to the Commander family, or had any photographs, so I wrote to them. They had not, but gave me your Society's name and address, as being someone who might be helpful. I only managed to furnish enough time to write to you this February.

As far as I know, the late Mrs Beatrice Brown Commander has not published her loose leaf book, but sold it direct from her home address from 1964 and thereafter. I received a few pages from a Mrs Wilder of Jackson, Tennessee about 1986, and I received a complete copy from Mr Lawrence Commander of

Chipley, Florida about 1987. I did write to Mrs Commander's address, which I will send with this letter, but I received my letter back with the notation that she had died on the 26th December, 1976. The person, who returned the letter, must have known her well enough to give me her exact date of death. I wondered why they never wrote to my address, which was on the outside of the envelope. I do not know what the Federal laws regarding post are. I suppose they are the same, but differ in minor details. I know it is an arrestable offence to tamper with the Royal Mail. This is what you would term a felony. This statement has just made me realize that Mrs Commander did sign her book. I hope I am not breaking any copyright laws, as I am gaily quoting it to everybody. There must be at least about 30 years' worth of solid research in the book and it mainly connects family to family. Mrs Commander also gave a thumbnail sketch of any person or family, where that person was well known to her personally or through reference books. I am gradually putting all the book onto disc on the Apple-Mac desktop publishing system at college, and when I have it done I will try and trace the family again to see if they have any objections to my sending you a copy. I do not foresee any objections, but it is best to check beforehand. I do not know if her family still live at her Orlando address. I will definitely journey to the City Library in London, the source of all American phone books in England, and look up her address, but that will be in the future.

Joseph and Samuel Commander appear to be a brothers, but this may not be so. For some reason the North Carolina family quote Joseph as being Joseph Matthew. Now if one looks at Lewis Commander's part of the family tree (marked with red '*'). There are a Mathew and Samuel baptized in April 1667 and 21st December, 1673 respectively, but there is no definite proof that these are the Joseph Matthew and Samuel, who went to the Carolinas. I think not, unless more evidence comes to light. I think Joseph and Samuel will have left a little earlier than this, as the royalists regained power in 1660. If one were as strictly brought up as they seemed to be, then it would be logical that they would have left straight away, and probably would have made for Holland first, where they could have made plans and picked up a ship at leisure. Unfortunately the Parish Registers for this period are very fragmentary, owing to the English Civil. The Battle of Edgehill in 1643 was about 20 miles distant from Bishop's Tachbrook. There was a particularly very vicious engagement at Oddington in Gloucestershire and at Bristol as well, where other sprigs of the Commander family are mentioned in the registers. I believe that headway on the problem of Joseph and Samuel is going to be difficult until the family tree is reconstructed over the Commonwealth period. I thought I had made the first link from the 1660's to the Elizabethan period the other night. I should have been working on my project. But, I want to check it out with Lewis Commander, before I go any further. I will call him tonight. There are a number of wills for many families, the Olneys, Savages, and Reading families to name but a few, who intermarried with the Commanders, which could give the

relevant information that I need, but I do not have the time to search for them. There is another problem, and that is I do not read Latin, which I have been meaning to learn for years. I intend to have a quick crash course this summer. My son is learning Latin, and I hope to catch him up. Perhaps I am trying to run too quickly.

Oliver Cromwell, whom I do not denigrate as he was not as bad as he was made out to be, issued instructions for a Register to be kept of all births, marriages, and deaths. This Register, kept by a man called the Register, was very comprehensive. Unfortunately, many of the royalists, who still held quite a lot of influence, persuaded simple country folk to ignore this instruction. I might add that there was another more practical reason for ignoring it too. The populace were frightened that it might be used for regressive tax purposes, and as there was no law to enforce the system people tended to ignore it or falsify entries if they could. When the royalists regained power the republican system was swept aside on the principle that anything the republicans had thought of must be bad. It was another case of winners rewriting history and the losers suffering, as you stated about the Revolution. If one happens across a fragment of the Register system, it is like finding a nugget of pure gold, especially in the case of births where it will give the wife's maiden name, and the name of the person who registered the birth. It was a good system, which had nothing comparably until 1837, when registration of birth marriages and deaths became compulsory in this country. One tends to find in this country that family historians and genealogists tend to blame the republicans for all this destruction, which is not exactly true.

I will order some of the books that you have mentioned through our library system, which is good, but American books, especially of the learned type are difficult to come by. One often wishes that there was a world library service, perhaps it will come one day. Unfortunately the ordering of books will have to wait until the summer vacation again.

I do not remember who mentioned Elizabeth Screven marrying Samuel Commander. Maybe it was mentioned as a possibility and I mistook it for a definite marriage. I looked for the Rev. William Screven in the 'Alumni Oxoniensis' a few years ago, but found no trace. I wondered where he had done his theological training. There was no mention for Cambridge University. I do not know when the Scots Universities were established, but I have not tried them yet. I will write them a letter when I can. I found two Commanders though Michael of Magdalen Hall in or before 1572 and Samuel son of Joseph of Tachbrook, county of Warwickshire, gentleman, Queens College matriculated 26th February 1711-12 aged 19. B.A. from New Inn Hall 1717. I would point out that there was a vicar of Bishop's Tachbrook named Richard Harvye in 1626. The roll of vicars for the village does not state when he left, but in 1650 a new vicar, Thomas Walker, was mentioned during the Parliamentary Visitation of that year. Does that help

any of your members? As far as I know the Harvey family came from the Snitterfield, Warwickshire, which is about five to nine miles from Bishop's Tachbrook. I sent a bit of information on them to Ms Gourdin. When I can get it copied I will send you the same information. Another bit of information that points to the Commanders being long time protestants, was that a Johannes Comeander was a priest in Chur, Switzerland in 1523. If I remember my history from school most of the English protestants went to Geneva to follow Calvin, because of persecution in England. I heard that fact somewhere, when I think about it, I think of myself as a schoolboy sitting at a school desk at Aldersbrook Primary School in Wanstead for some reason. This is more years ago than I care to remember. I was about 9. I can remember learning about the Armada, which would be at the same period of my life. I even remember the colour illustration of the Spanish galleon on the right hand page of the history book. I am 46 years old now. I digress. Perhaps William Screven did his training at Geneva, which is a thought. An American friend of mine is translating the German ^{ENTRY.} at this moment. I gave her address to Ms Gourdin. I speak German well, but not that fluently. I speak French too, but I am even worse at that, but I can make myself understood and that is the fun part.

Thank you for all the information you gave. It was most helpful. I shall pass your Society leaflet around, when the family meet, but I do not think the meeting will happen this year, as the members of the Commander family, who said they would come to England have too many family commitments. I expect we will see them this year or next. It was pleasure to meet some of the North Carolina family last year, and they said they would definitely be back. Unfortunately illness has struck one of them, so I think they will not be visiting in the immediate future.

Please tell Ms Gourdin I will keep a look out for the Brockinton family. I forgot to mention it in her letter. One never knows the name may have died out here. This is possible, especially when one thinks of infectious diseases, such as smallpox, plague, typhus, and other delightful goodies, that were rampant then. It is possible that the name died out here because of having female children. I have heard of that happening to more than one knightly family.

One of the reasons I mentioned Thomas Commander was that I intend to write an article on him for 'The Midland Ancestor', the journal of the BMSGH, therefore any information on him would be welcome.

Thank you for mentioning the Bohun family, because I think I can help you now. I have had this bit of information for years in my memory. I remember reading in the historical novel 'Monmouth Harry' by A. A. Maugham that Margaret de Bohun or Bohun married Henry Bolingbroke, Earl of Derby (pronounced Darby from D'Arblay), later Henry IV (I should crack the 'old chestnut' about Parts I and II here) and was mother to Henry V of Agincourt

Ms Maugham's research

fame. Ms Maugham went on to mention that any person with the name Bowen, Bunn or a similar derivative to the name were probably related to the Bohuns. It sounded as though she had done a lot of research for her novel, which may help you, as you belong to the same family. The story was told through the eyes of Walter of Hungerford, one Henry's advisors and friends, and was very moving. I believe it was quite as historically correct as it could be, even to the fact that Dick Whittington was Lord Mayor of London during that period. I do not know whether she is still alive and the book was published here a number of years ago, but perhaps you contact her through her publishers, and ask where she obtained her information. I am so glad I remembered that information. I do hope it helps you.

Yours very sincerely,

Malcolm Commander

Malcolm Commander.

P.S.

The former address of the late Mrs Beatrice Brown Commander is:-

4726 Cranston Place,
Orlando,
Florida, 32806

Her son's name is Jack Brown Commander, but whether he lives at this address I do not know. Her grandson is also called Jack Brown Commander. Whether any information can be obtained for your Society I do not know, but as I stated she appears to have researched hard. The amount of material she gathered comes to 248 pages, plus the index.

I also can give the society the names of Mrs Louise Wilder, who lives at

450 Roland Avenue,
Jackson,
Tennessee, 38301

and

Mr Rob Burgoon,
4023 Twyla Lane,
Campbell,
California, 95008.

I hope these addresses may be of assistance to someone, who may stuck on their research.