

5 July 93

Dear Robert,

As promised, I called Mrs. Brownlee to ask whether she knew the name of Coleman Milam's first wife, whom he married in Laurens Co. in about 1808. Her response was, "About a thousand people would like to know the answer to that question, myself included."

When you and I were discussing this puzzle over the phone, I had forgotten that this was one of the "unsolved mysteries" left over from the time when Mrs. Brownlee was helping Miss Cora with her lineage papers for membership in the DAR. Anyway, Mrs. Brownlee went on to say that she and a number of other people have continued to be on the lookout for any clues that might lead to the answer to your question, but that so far none have turned up. Mrs. Brownlee also said she doubts that anything ever will turn up in Laurens County, unless someone serendipitiously runs across something in what she refers to as "obscure records."

As for the ²⁴18 acres of land that Coleman sold in 1816, the deed to which was not recorded until 1819, Mrs. Brownlee said that it was not unusual for a deed to go unrecorded for even longer than that. She said that some, in fact, never were recorded during the lifetime of the person who purchased the land. She dealt with one situation in which a man purchased 300 acres of land and kept the deed in a desk at his home for twenty years. Only in going through his equity papers did Mrs. Brownlee discover that he had owned this property. Anyway, I just wanted you to know that I mentioned this concern of yours, and that was her response.

As for the Leake family that moved to Georgia, Mrs. Brownlee said she could not recall exactly which family this was. Was it the family of Samuel or James Leake? Also, to which county in Georgia did they move? I think you told me over the phone, but I didn't write it down. I'm asking because there is one other person who might be able to help us--my sister Maji.

I'm sure I've mentioned Maji to you before. She's actually my step-sister--the only daughter of Marion, Dad's second wife--but we always have been as close as full siblings, even though she is 18 years older than I am. Maji, who is what I consider a darn good "amateur genealogist," lives in Marietta, Ga., and has done some excellent research for me on my Effingham County lines. If you can provide me with the name of the county in Georgia to which the Leake family moved, I will call Maji and ask her to check the early census reports for information on them--or have you already had this done? Beyond this possibility, I wouldn't know where else to turn.

On another subject, I called Dr. Rowland as you suggested, and he said that he is simply too committed to various ~~#####~~ research projects to be able to assist me with my Oswald line--which I of course understand. He recommended that I contact Mr. Peter Wilkerson at the SCHS and ask for the name of a qualified GRS who might be willing to assist me, so this is what I plan to do tomorrow. (And by the way, Dr. Rowland asked me to tell you that you soon will be hearing from him. He had a letter to you on his desk at the very moment I was talking to him.)

I will let you know the results, if any, of my SCHS "Oswald probe." In the meantime, I will conclude this letter with a little anecdote which I am certain that you and Miss Cora will appreciate, as it illustrates so well a number of the "side topics" we have discussed over the years. The story was related to me by a teacher who originally was from AYNOR (keep this in mind), who last summer taught summer school in Conway, and in her class had students from all over Horry County. To "succinctify" (isn't that a "dandy newfangled"?), I will set the situation up as follows, with the teacher handing out test papers at the beginning of class:

TEACHER: These grades are terrible, and we reviewed two whole days for this test. Teaching while everyone else is on vacation is difficult enough, but it would take a person with the patience of Job to endure professional punishment like this.

STUDENT: (Whispering to another student) The patience of what? Was that something on the test?

STUDENT: (Whispering back) Damn if I know. I don't think so. It's "probly jus one of them 'Aynor thangs' she's always talkin' 'bout."

Yours as ever - Paul