

Sunday Morning

12 August 84

Dear Robert,

Since last writing, I haven't "taken a wife" or fathered "some offspring to carry on the family line," as you put it, but I **have** located a more recent picture of myself ('70 "vintage," my first year as an instructor at Carlisle Military School), a copy of which I am enclosing, along with copies of two pictures of Black Swamp Church and Cemetery that I thought you might appreciate. The side-shot of the church is from a volume entitled **FROM SEA ISLANDS TO SAND HILLS**, and the other, more all-encompassing shot is a copy of an original photograph I have--which I welcome you to borrow, if you would like to have a duplicate made of it. Tommy Lawton has it at the moment, but as soon as he's finished with it, I'll be delighted to send it to you, if you wish.

In case you haven't already heard of it and might be interested in ordering a copy, I'm also enclosing the "blurb" and order form for Uncle Manny's book, which will be off the press the first of October, so Aunt Peggy tells me. All bias completely and truly aside, I really think this chronicle of his experiences as a Japanese POW and his first-hand account of the Bataan "Death March" will swiftly be considered a masterpiece in its genre of autobiographical-historical literature--albeit rather intense reading for the average sensitivity. I've read excerpts, and they were as compelling and elevating as they were numbing. I can hardly wait to read the book in its entirety, though I expect to be totally enervated when I do so.

I appreciate so much your sending me the unabstracted copy of John Milam's Will from the State Archives, and like you, I cannot **believe** how long it often takes to have these seemingly **simple** things reproduced! By the time a person receives some of these items, it amazes me that he has not become an ancestor **himself**! I despise feeling like an eternal ingrate, but there really are times that I almost have to bite my lips together in order to keep from foaming at the mouth with impatience and indignation at the lackadaisical dillydallying of some of these bureaucrats and public records personnel in Columbia and other places. But enough of all that--and thank you again for sending this record to me so promptly. I already have a copy of it on the way to Mrs. Brownlee, so perhaps with your help and mine she'll eventually be able to resolve at least the most urgent of the many Milam enigmas we are grappling with. (I fear the Milams are somehow descended from the Sphinx, but Mrs. Brownlee seems to have a few drops of Oedipus' blood in **her** veins, so there is great hope that she will be able to solve our ancestral riddles).

As for your comments and observations concerning the Hart-Frankie "debacle," you are absolutely correct about Jenny's mother's **not** being a slave when she conceived Jenny. As a matter of fact, Jim and I (with John Boyd's assistance, of course) have concluded that

Jenny must have been born in about 1883, certainly not much later. Her mother was the family cook, who lived in a little cabin just behind the house (where Dad still lives, as you no doubt know). And yes, **everyone**, Maners, Lawtons and all their kith and kin, were **well** aware of **exactly** who Jenny was, and of what was going on as far as Hart and Frankie were concerned. Goodness only knows **what** made Frankie think he could step in and take her away from Hart, but one thing is for certain: That step was for everyone the ultimate "Rubicon." What a sorry, sad mess--but enough of all that.

Your thoughtful and generous offer to permit me to read through your Chaplin and Oswald files has me champing at the bit to drive right down there and take you up on this invitation--**yesterday, if not sooner**. Since we last spoke over the telephone, however, I have been in the process of moving--as far from this tourist-tangle as I can get. Actually, I have for several years been searching for an affordable place in a more or less rural area, so as to be able to achieve **some** sense of sanctity in this general "condominium-explosion, real estate war zone" so many people chose to call a "home away from home." I have too much "Garnett (the place) in my blood" to survive well as an "asphalt denizen" (I need trees and creeks and swamps)--so, to make a long story short, I've found a nice, three-bedroom house out in Socastee, less than a block from my school, and I'm getting myself out there as fast as I can. It will therefore not be possible for me to get down to visit with you and Miss Cora until toward the end of September, but please keep me on your calendar, for I will be there just as soon as I have settled in my new place and have everything spread all over every room and piled to every ceiling--you know, "arranged my chaos." I really am eager to get down to see you--and for goodness sake don't worry about not having room, because I always stay at the Palms Motel in Ridgeland when I visit the Lowcountry, since it's equidistant for all my favorite purposes and places. (Too, you wouldn't believe all the "bales" of stuff I haul around on my genealogical excursions. You would need a motel to **accommodate** me!) Anyway, we'll work out all the details of my visit between now and whenever it best suits us both to get together.

I haven't yet heard anything from Miss Rosa but imagine she is still recovering from her ordeal and will contact me when she is feeling more up to a call. When I spoke to Uncle Manny last week, he said that he had heard from her, and she mentioned my having called her. My new place will be only about seven miles from her home, so I hope we'll be able to take better advantage of being in each other's "neighborhood."

I spoke with Mrs. Brownlee last week but she had nothing new or interesting to say, other than the fact that she has enjoyed your letters and finds them useful as she now researches for both of us. (I've sent her a copy of your last two letters, because they contain so much information and so many dates. I attempt to provide her with every clue possible, you know, and always send her copies of any Milam correspondence I receive.) She doesn't like to commit herself to anything over the phone, preferring for me to have

the facts in print before we discuss anything long-distance. On your (or rather Miss Cora's) Thomas Milam, however, she did mention a few things, one of which is that she isn't so certain he was married more than once--to the Elizabeth (maiden name yet to be determined) referred to in a record of a land sale. I'm sure this record is one of the items she plans to send you. Also, she is fairly well convinced that Thomas did not die in Laurens, and in fact lived there only a few years. As for his "first" marriage, Mrs. Brownlee said it would have to have occurred in Virginia, if it occurred at all. Beyond these few data, she was pretty "close" with her comments, other than a passing speculation that the land Thomas owned and sold in Laurens (a small tract of something like 40 acres) was more than likely his wife's portion of her parents' estate. Oh--she did also say that if and when we do find proof that Thomas was the father of Coleman, her hunch is that the above-mentioned Elizabeth will be his (Coleman's) mother. I am unable to bring all these random pieces together into a clear picture, for I lack the aperçu type of "wavelengths" Mrs. Brownlee seems to be so abundantly blessed with, when it comes to bringing fuzzy things into "pre-focus"--if that makes any sense--but give her time, and the result will be worth the wait, I am certain.

While she is searching through all the old Laurens records, Mrs. Brownlee is going to attempt to put you in touch with a descendant of Thomas and Coleman Milam, but she needs to write off for an address. It seems that there was a query on Thomas and Coleman in some genealogical magazine, and she believes the person who sent it in had done some rather extensive work on this particular Milam line. I would be eager to contact this person myself.

In the meantime, you might want to contact Ed S. Milam of Macon, Ga., a copy of whose letter to my Uncle Bill Milam I am enclosing. Somehow this Ed Milam managed to get Uncle Bill's unlisted address, and mailed him this letter. Uncle Bill (a CPA in Las Vegas) has no interest whatsoever in genealogy, and forwarded the letter to me a few days ago. Admittedly, I was at first somewhat suspicious about what appeared to be the opening "spiel" and "Hail Cousin" tone of this communication, but on a what-the-heck hunch I called the gentleman, and he is perfectly on the up-and-up about everything he says. I've already mailed him copies of some of my Milam material and he promised to see what he might have on my Diataphus. He also gave me the name, address and phone number of another Milam descendant and researcher--one who has been working on the family history since 1933. I called her also and thoroughly enjoyed our chat. She, too, is going to send me some of her material. If you are interested in writing her, her address is: Mrs. J. P. Lantrip/ 603 Bankhead Ave./ Amory, Miss./ 38821. Her phone number is 601/256-3259.

Well, I've about "typed your ears off," so I will wind this up and get it on out to the mailbox.

If I hear (or receive) anything else interesting from anyone, I'll get a copy of it in the mail to you right away.

Just as soon as I can get my September schedule in order, I'll be in touch to let you know about my visit to Hilton Head--and I'll of course notify you and Miss Cora well in advance.

Until our next contact, you and Miss Cora stay well--and in touch.

*Warmest regards,
Paul*