SMITH

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Dear Robert:

It is always such a pleasure to have a letter from you, and I am always so remiss in replying. I have a large family, and a lot goes on around here, and I use that as an excuse. In any case, I remind myself that you are in a position to grant me absolution and remission for my sins, and I shall draw on your store of Christian charity and ask you to do so.

Let me start at our points of agreement. First, concerning A, S. Salley. I find him to be a waspish and dogmatic man, who probably delighted in hassling the good ladies of the Colonial Dames about the accuracy of their "papers", which he corrected for as large a fee as he could manage. Prof. Andrews of Yale took him to task for needlessly denigrating Oldmixon. Salley is the only historian I know of who was derogatory of the First Landgrave Smith -- not the only *person*, of course, for his political opponents were derogatory, but that was to be expected. All others, including his immediate friends associates, spoke well of him. He by no means an "adventurer". He was a gentleman and a man of ability, and he was recognized as such.

On the matter of Barbara Atkins, I find your suggestions to be appealing. They clarify much, and they are in accord would what one would expect to find: that Barbara was born about 1650, that she married Thomas Smith about 1669, when she was about 19 years old, and that she had her first child in 1670, when she was about twenty years old. You indicate, I believe, that the records of the baptism of Barbara and her siblings were found in the church at Chard. If these records have been excerpted and published somewhere * I shall be very grateful if you can give me a reference to the place of publication. Also, I do hope that you will rack your brain a bit and let me know where you saw the statement of Thomas Smith II to the effect that he was fourteen years of age when he arrived at Charles Towne in 1684. This statement, if documented, has highly important implications for our understanding of the circumstances under which his parents were married.

Now for a bit of disagreement: I do not think that we should speak of the Coat of Arms that First Landgrave used as being "Sir George Smith's Coat of Arms". These Arms were acknowledged by the Heralds as having been used by Sir George's grandfather "John Smith of Borage" and his family, "from time immemorial". Arthur Smith makes it very clear that these Arms were not granted to Sir George Smith, and that they were being used by other branches of the family long before Sir George was born. The Smith Coat of Arms can be used as evidence that our ancestor, the First Landgrave, was descended from John Smithe and Alice Muttleberry, who lived in the first half of the sixteenth century, but not as evidence that he was descended from Sir George Smith, who lived at the end of that century. For reasons with which I shall

not again burden you, I find the evidence that the Landgrave was descended from one of the Dissenting branches of the Smith family, and not from the Mudford - Larkbeare branch, to be compelling.

And I do not think that the first names of the Smith males alter the case for a Dissenting origin of the First Landgrave. "Thomas" and "George" are indeed favorite Smith names. They occur in the generation of Sir George Smith, and in subsequent generations. In the subsequent generations they occur more frequently in some of the Dissenting branches of the family than they do in the Mudford-Larkbeare branch.

And as for the particular name "Aaron", which we discussed in our last exchange, I would not have expected it to appear among the offspring of the Second Landgrave. If anyone were going to name a child after the father of Barbara Atkins [Smith], I would have expected it to be Barbara herself. But Barbara had only two children, to whom she gave the customary Smith names, "Thomas" and "George"; so the opportunity for an "Aaron" did not arise.

And after this, I am afraid I shall require more absolution than ever!

With best regards,

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