

11 July 1988

Dear Cuz:

First, thank you for your confidence and support. Through your good offices, my brief survey trip to Charleston was a great success.

I was able to get on David Moltkehansen's calendar for a courtesy call on short notice Saturday. He was very encouraging and helpful. Am going to count up my money on my fingers and toes and see if I can afford the Landgraves Club of the South Carolina Historical Society.

Through Bill Baldwin, who remembers you fondly, I got an introduction to Mr Robert Hortman, the present manager at Medway. He kindly gave up his Sunday morning to conduct us on a great tour. I got to visit the grave site of the 1st Landgrave, and am enclosing a picture of the slab covering his grave.

We visited the museum, and I think (because it didn't have any mention of Landgrave Thomas Smith on the card in the display case), saw the colonial silver pitcher that belonged to the 1st Landgrave. It looks like it might be the cream pitcher to a tea set. I wonder where the rest of the tea set went? Perhaps it was hidden (and never found), melted down, or carried off with all the other loot during the Civil War. The cream pitcher might have survived because it is small enough to be easier to hide than the other pieces.

Of course, we saw the historical marker on E. Bay and Longitude Lane and the historical marker on the road into Medway.

You may have difficulty reading the 1st Landgrave's grave marker in the enclosed photo. I was successful only after looking at the print in the bright sun light. It is now hard to read when you are standing beside it. Robert Hortman told us that he had recently copied the inscription for the South Carolina Historical Society and that they are going to have a bronze plaque made of the inscription on the grave slab for attachment to the low wall surrounding the grave.

Although you may be very familiar with Medway, I thought you might like to see some of it through my camera's eye and so I am also enclosing some other snap shots of the river (South?) entrance and the original one and one-half story structure, and the (West?) side of the house with the bronze grey hounds gamboling in the foreground. Since the 1st Landgrave's crest was a grey hound (or Whippet?) we thought the grey hounds were a nice touch.

I am also enclosing some pictures of the coat of arms passed to me through my parents by my grandfather (Richard Russell Smith - the Landgrave Thomas Smith of that generation died at age 2), and of a plaque of the coat of arms I had made in England, that I thought you might find interesting.

I realize the junior American branch of the family should show silver instead of gold, but have never gotten around to having one made with silver instead of gold.

Finally, I am also enclosing a picture of my IBM retirement portrait, since I didn't get to meet you this trip. I would enjoy a snapshot of you if you happen to have one laying around the house.

I also have a picture of the 2nd Landgrave which my grandfather passed along to me. It is either an old photo engraving of a pencil sketch, or perhaps an early engraving of a portrait. Gold lettering on the mat underneath his picture, which is now barely readable, states "Thomas (2nd) Landgrave Smith of Carolina. From portrait painted in 1691". I wonder if he and his father had their portraits painted at the same time? Do you suppose someone in South Carolina might have the original portrait from which the sketch was made? I plan to try to get the antiquaries at the Archives, Smithsonian, and/or the National Gallery of Art to take a look at it one of these days. I made some snapshots of it yesterday and will send you a print if any of them turn out.

Now, the most interesting and fun part of this letter. The picture of the 1st Landgrave. I am returning your negatives with many thanks. I am enclosing a 5 x 7" 'framed' enlargement made from your negative. This is the best resolution we could obtain. We cropped it close so that the original frame could be framed out or the center portion cut out for an oval miniature if one wanted to. I also had a slide made from the negative and am enclosing a standard 3 1/2 x 5" print made from this slide.

The picture of the 1st Landgrave raises more questions in my mind than it answers. Of course, it is invaluable to see him, at least as the artist saw him, in his prime. But, we can't figure out why, what seems to be, the original portrait portion is octagon in shape. Was the original frame an oval, or perhaps even an octagon too? Were the corners trimmed off by some tidy soul because they were worn or discolored from handling or previous framing? It seems to me that this present frame, although obviously old, can't have been the original frame. It looks like the original center octagon portion was simply stuck on a mat and reframed at some later time.

I wonder if he sat for the portrait, or if his face was simply painted over the elegant clothes that were sometimes prepared in advance by artists of that day. And, was it painted from the artist's memory?

If they are his clothes, was that the traditional 'uniform' of a Colonial Governor? We tried to see the detail of his pin with various magnifying glasses, without much success. It looks like a little gold half moon with a red figure inside. Is this likely? Was there a political or religious organization of that day that had that sort of logo?

Finally, do we know that it is authentic? Who has it now, and is there an audit trail of previous owners?

If the present owners can be interested in parting with it briefly and would loan it to me, I could explore having an evaluation made by the antiquaries here of the 1st Landgrave's portrait when I approach them about evaluating the sketch I have of the 2nd Landgrave. Needless to say, it would have to be suitably wrapped and adequately insured and may take quite some time.

I am enclosing a copy of my note to Jim Truluck. I must say I was flattered by your apparent assessment of my technical depth in Smith genealogy. I feel like I have only taken the first step in a journey of a thousand miles. There must be many who know a lot more about it than I do.

I have only done some background reading and made a very rough outline of a chronology of the life of the 1st Landgrave. I am taking the liberty of enclosing it for your, corrections, comments and criticisms.

I would very much like to become a focal point for information that anyone may have on the life of the 1st Landgrave. I will deeply appreciate any leads and references anyone can give me. In that regard, would you kindly give me the complete bibliographical reference for the "Dr. Ramsey" and "Heyward" you mentioned in your last letter?

In closing, I must again thank you for your confidence and support. There are certainly going to be many problems I will want to discuss and many clues to evaluate in the coming years with which we can have great fun.

Warmest regards,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large loop and a trailing flourish.