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The Rev. Dr. Robert E. H. Peebles
8 Moon Shell Road
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Dear Cousin Dr. Peebles:

In the scenario imagined a year ago, I would be writing to tell you that the Platts family history was finally off the press and that Ted Turner wanted to make it into a movie of the week. (They'll want you to play John Platts, Jr., I think.) However, the Varnville book is, instead, six months overdue and the Platts family history, is, alas, behind an equal amount of time. I make no excuses for myself (and both overdues are my fault); I just did not anticipate what an arduous task writing a whole book would be and I either didn't start soon enough or didn't finish fast enough. I do, however, apologize to you and all the other people whom I hurried to gather information and come to meetings. The good part is that Todd has entered all the names in the computer and gotten it to print in the format you suggested, so all that's left to do is edit the text.

Now I'm asking you to take on another task which I have no right to do, but you've indulged me so often in the past that I'm just brazen enough to ask again. Please read the enclosed computer print-out of the Wiley Peebles descendants and make any corrections that should be made through the *third* generation. Several of Varnville's "first families" are included in the text, and rather than describe their kinship, I refer readers to descendant charts in the appendix. The Peebles chart will actually be the descendants of **Nancy Ann Peebles** (so as to include the Reid and Speaks connection). Nancy Ann Peebles's children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren will be displayed on the chart, as will her children and grandchildren's spouses. Neither the birth and death dates nor the spouses of the great-grandchildren will be printed.

My sources are the following:

Anne Bradbury Peebles, *Peebles: Ante 1600-1962* (N.p.: Privately printed, 1962); the 1880 census of Varnville; and Varnville Cemetery and Goethe-Youmans Cemetery markers. Betty Rentz Rhodes of Varnville provided information on the descendants of the Rev. E. W. Peebles. Information on his first two wives came from a biography of Rev. Peebles in the history of St John's Baptist Church, Ehrhardt, and his second wife's maiden name came from an 1882 item in the *Hampton County Guardian* that said "Mrs. Duncan and her granddaughter May Balfour" were visiting in Varnville. Since we knew that Susan D. Balfour (wife #2) was a widow whose daughter by her previous marriage died young, we concluded that she was a Duncan before her first marriage.

You may disregard the descendants after the third generation unless some egregious error just jumps out at you demanding to be corrected. On the other hand, if you have information for anyone in the second generation (birth and death dates, spouses, and children) that I don't have, please provide that. I am especially interested in the children of Julia R. Goethe and Wm. Tate Speaks. Following is what I have on them, and I'm sure they should be more fully treated:

The Speaks Family and the Varnville Hardware and Supply Co.

Although the Speaks family was not in town until after the 1880 census and was no longer in Varnville after the mid-1930s, their impact was long felt: one of the most enduring institutions was the Varnville Hardware and Supply Company organized in 1910 (see Part II, chapter 2, Nos. 38-40). Archie R. Speaks organized the company and ran it. Frank Drawdy was the manager and E. A. Terry the bookkeeper and clerk. The other principal owners were L. R. Dowling and William S. Rentz (but in the name of C. R. Rentz rather than his own). The capital stock was valued at \$15,000. Mr. Dowling was elected President, Major E. F. Warren of Hampton, Vice President, and Speaks Secretary and Treasurer. The Directors were Dowling, Warren, Speaks, Rentz, and B. H. Tuten and E. A. Terry.

The Speaks family was closely related to the Reverend E. W. Peeples; Mary Goethe Sanders and Dr. James H. Goethe; and Annie Goethe Ruth and Mary Susan Goethe Dowling. Left a widow by the Civil War, Julia Goethe Speaks (Mrs. W. T.) remained on her farm in the Silver Hill settlement in Goethe Township until moving into town with some of her children. In 1883, she bought a lot from the Reverend E. W. Peeples and built the house that for many years stood between the Polk-Peeples House and the Randolph Murdaugh House on what is now Carolina Avenue. Her children who lived in Varnville included John J. Speaks; Alexander McBride Speaks, Archie Raymond Speaks, and Ida Speaks.

John J. Speaks is shown in the Business Directory for 1905-1910 with a general store, but he was primarily a farmer. He owned land north of the Varn land (beyond the "Ellis Tract."). He never married.

A. McB. Speaks married Nettie Ogilvie of Allendale whose father was Dr. John William Ogilvie "who brought the Millett child back to life" (see the account of the fiftieth anniversary of Allendale in chapter 2). In the 1905-1910 Business Directory she is listed as a milliner. They later moved to Bamberg.

Archie Speaks went into the mercantile business with their cousin the Reverend E. W. Peeples. From at least 1886 until 1891, the firm was known as *Peeples & Speaks*. He married Sara Quinn Lane, and they had one daughter, Mary, who was one of Varnville's belles in the 1920s.

Zoe Peeples Routh says that A. McB. Speaks, "Cousin Alec," lived across the railroad (on what is now Palmetto Avenue), and "their sister Cousin Ida . . . lived in the house . . . next to the Murdaughs for a long, long time." Presumably she and her mother lived with Archie Speaks and his family.

Mr. A. McB. Speaks of Bamberg was in town last week looking after his business interests for the cultivation for his farm for the year as well as visiting his brothers J. J. and A. R. Speaks. "Varnville Etchings," ca. 1907, undated clipping in custody of Hampton Museum and Visitor's Center.



This Speaks information does not jive with that on p. 22 in *Peeples* which raises two questions: (1) Is the Reid info on that page correct? and (2) What was the relationship between Nancy Ann Peeples and Wiley Peeples? I think they're both great-grandchildren of Abraham Peeples, the fourth generation from David (according to *Peeples*) which would make their fathers first cousins and them second cousins, but I may have made a mistake about that.

I am also enclosing my Peeples and Goethe sketches in the hopes that if you see something wrong you'll tell me. I hope that it goes without saying that if you don't have time to look all this over, you'll disregard it completely and know that I will appreciate anything you do and understand if there is anything you don't do. You will notice that I've not included the information that A. McBride Peeples was "Treas. of Beaufort Co., retiring in 1883" from p. 34 of *Peeples*. It seemed obvious to me that he was too busy founding Varnville (which after 1878 was in Hampton County) to be treasurer of Beaufort County until 1883, and I never got around to following up on this. Likewise, I never followed up on Henry Goethe's being "High Sheriff" of Beaufort County before the War, and I was disappointed to find neither of them in Dr. Rowland's history. I believe that Dr. Rowland is a descendant of Henry Goethe's (through Mary T. and J. O. H. Sanders), so I was expecting to see Henry Goethe in the index.

I look forward to finishing Varnville and the Platts family and getting back to the Misses Cater in Abbeville. Mr. Mohlmann may have told you that we finally found a typescript of one of Miss Lizzie's journals, the one documenting their trip by covered wagon to Mississippi in 1860, and that I'm planning to publish that along with an account of the lives and times of Miss Lizzie, her mother, brothers, and sisters in Abbeville in the years following the Civil War, up through the death of Miss Beck in 1938. I've finished the research and will start writing at the end of the year. This time I'm making no claims to when I'll finish it!

I hope you and Miss Cora had a good summer, that El Niño will keep the hurricanes away this fall, and that winter will be pleasant. I also hope to spend some time in Beaufort in January and February and will look forward to seeing you then, if not before.

Love to you both,

Rose Marie

P.S. Coy Johnston's obit in the Guardian didn't give his parents' names, and I don't have the energy to call Huck as he talks more than I do! and I can't be sure from the Lawtonville book who is who, but I'm satisfied that N.I. Johnston was a Goethe descendant and I'd like to say how when I talk about his organizing Battery "D" and marching those boys off to Italy. I had Betty Ruth's Peeples & Coy Johnston's "Goethe" books, but I've long since returned them.