

May 29, 2001
West Lafayette, Indiana

Mrs. W. R. Keene
2335 Drury Lane
Mission Hills, KS 66208

Dear Janet:

Over the Memorial Day weekend, my son (Bruce Runnels) and I spent several days working on our genealogy. We made a trip to Eaton (Preble County), Ohio, to research the ancestors of Ida Mae Surface. We also made a trip to Huntington (Huntington County), Indiana, to research the ancestors of Lewis Clarence Runnels (and Nell Runnels Card, your mother). I thought you would be interested in what we found, and we need your help in answering one question.

Based on this research, I am almost certain that our grandfather, Levi Sherman Runnels, was born in Huntington, Indiana. I am enclosing a Genealogy Report that provides the details we have been able to collect so far. We noted in our research that Blake Dunn of Alamosa, Colorado, has furnished genealogy information to the LDS Church that shows Levi Sherman Runnels as being born in Lyndon (Osage County, Kansas). Based on what we found in Huntington, Indiana, we are of the opinion that this is probably incorrect. Interestingly, it appears that Levi Sherman's may have met Ida Mae Surface (later his wife and our grandmother) in Lyndon or Vassar, Kansas. My son, Bruce Runnels, plans to visit Lyndon, Kansas, this summer to research the Runnels and Surface records further.

In Preble County, Ohio, we also learned more about the ancestors of Ida Mae Surface. I am enclosing a Genealogy Report that provides the details. I am also enclosing a schematic of the family tree showing the ancestors of Noah Surface (our grandfather). I am very confident that our information concerning the ancestors of Noah Surface is correct up to Jacob Surface (our great, great grandfather). Beyond that, I need help.

The only information I have about the ancestors of Jacob Surface is a typewritten note written, I believe, by Nell Runnels Card, which is a transcription of information provided by Noah Surface when he was 83 years old. The problem is that the information in this typewritten note is very difficult to decipher, mainly because the dates and some of the relationships are inconsistent. I am enclosing a copy of this typewritten note, which you may already have in your records. My son, Bruce Runnels, tried to give this typewritten note the most logical interpretation, and that is what is represented on the enclosed family tree. However, this interpretation may not be correct. Can you help clarify the typewritten note?

Some of the questions we have about this typewritten note are as follows:

1. The note suggest that the lineage goes from Adam Zerfas (Captain Adam Zerfas, born in Coblenz, German, 1742), to John Uhlrich Zerfas, to Adam Surface, to John and Jacob Surface. Based on our other research in Preble County, which showed Jacob Surface (presumably the same Jacob Surface mentioned in the typewritten note) as the grandfather of Noah Surface, then Captain Adam Zerfas would be the great, great, great grandfather of Noah Surface. However, the typewritten note says that Captain Adam Zerfas was the great, great grandfather of Noah Zerfas. Do you think the typewritten note is mistaken on this point, or is something missing?
2. The typewritten note says that Noah Surface was the son of Noah. That is almost certainly a mistake. My son and I believe that Noah is the son of Adam J. Surface, who is the son of Jacob Surface, who is the son of Adam Surface, etc. Do you have information that would confirm or clarify this?
3. Early in the typewritten note, it states that John Uhlrich Zerfas was born in 1799 and died in 1866. Later it says that Adam Zerfas, son of John Uhlrich Zerfas, was born in 1774. Obviously, there is a mistake here. Because the father of John Uhlrich Zerfas reportedly was born in 1742, my son believes that John Uhlrich Zerfas may have been born prior to 1774, and it was his son Adam who was born in 1774. That seems to be consistent with the information that we found showing the birth of Jacob Surface, apparently the son of this Adam, as being in 1802.

I realize this may be confusing, but any help you can provide in clarifying the information in Nell's typewritten note would be much appreciated.

It is very exciting to discover more about our ancestors. I don't know if there is anyone else in our family who has been working on the genealogy (Blake Dunn?), but it would be very helpful to make contact with them. Do you know of anyone else?

I hope all is well with you and Dick. Nancy and I had another good six weeks in Hawaii this winter. I believe you wrote last Christmas that you were planning some extensive travel this year. I had planned to come to KSU for my 55th class reunion but changed my mind later after I found many of my classmates would not be there. Nancy and I would like to have made a stop to see you on our way.

It has really been interesting to pursue the family genealogy. Bruce is the main "ramrod" on this and we have had a very interesting experience with it. Of interest to you might be that he and I visited the Clear Creek Church cemetery in Huntington County and found the gravesite and head stone with the name Levi Runnels on it; our Great Grandfather. Unfortunately, we did not have a camera with us. I will try to get back sometime and get

a picture, although some additional inscription below the name is worn to the point of being almost illegible.

Share this information anyway you like – perhaps with other family members that you know of. It is well documented in the records we found with the expert assistance of genealogists and genealogy libraries in both places. We have this all stored on my computer and backed up so that it won't be lost. Nancy says Hello!

Love

L. Jules
L. Jules

Janet:

This version does not include you, Barbara & Phyllis & your families. We do have you, B, & P on the Master Chart but need birth dates (& death date for Barbara). We will update that info on the master which seems to have a "life of its own" It just keeps going!

LJR