

Little Rock, Ark., Oct. 14, 1966

Dear Sidney:

Yesterday I received your very nice letter of September 28 which you addressed to me at my office in THE TOWER BUILDING. While I still maintain an office and secretary in the Tower Building, I seldom go down to the office. This accounts for the delay in receiving your letter.

After more than 55 years in my own business here in Little Rock I have at long last retired having sold my business to long time faithful employees.

I was born in Memphis September 24, 1886 and thus celebrated my 80th birthday 4 days prior to the date of your letter. Your grandfather (Jacob Brooks) and my father (Samuel Brooks) were brothers. My grandmother (your great grandmother) Jeanette Keiler Brooks was married twice. Her first husband Sidney Brooks died when my father was 3 years old, your grandfather 8 yrs and a sister (Leah Brooks who married later to Isaac C. Levy of Holly Springs, Miss.) *she was 6,*

I have a brother (Merrill S. Brooks of Memphis) 78 years of age and a Sister (Jeanette Brooks Cohen of St. Louis and a member of Shaare Emeth) 76 years of age.

My father died Feb. 28, 1904. I was 17 at the time. I have lived in Little Rock since July 27, 1911, having come here after I finished college.

I enclose several items for you to read which PLEASE RETURN TO ME in enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope.

I live at 464 Ridgeway, Little Rock, Ark. 72205. I have one child a daughter 55 years of age and she and her family live next door to us for more than 31 years. I have a grand daughter (Sallye Rosen Phillips who has two boys and a girl) a grand son (Brooks Louis Rosen who has a boy and a girl) consequently I have 5 great grand children. My son in law Louis Rosen is a past president on Congregation B'nai Israel, Little Rock of which I am a member.

Now one thing more of interest to you (I am sure). When I was a child of 12 we were in Chicago running away from a yellow fever scare in Memphis. We met an old aunt of my father (and your grandfather's) an English Jewess a Mrs. Leit who told us of her father and mother. She said he was the rector of a church in Sheffield, England who fell in love and married an orthodox Jewess. He was consequently defrocked and her people set "shiver" (wrong spelling I am sure) for her. They came to America and at the age of 35 he was circumcised and became a Jew. We all had our doubts about what we thought was an old woman's tale (she was 94 years old at the time).

In 1932 our Rotary Club elected as its president the Very Rev. John Williamson who was Dean of Trinity Cathedral here. Later I learned he was born in Sheffield, England and he was going home to visit his relatives. I then told him of Mrs. Leit's story and he promised me to look of the church records in Sheffield with the result when he returned he completely verified that my great grandfather (your great, great) was indeed defrocked for marrying a Jewess. The Rev. Williamson is now 84 and retired living in a Kentucky suburb of Cincinnati. I hear from at least each New Year.

My grand mother (Jeanette Keiler Brooks of Paducah, Kentucky) married a second time (when my father was 5 years of age) to Sol Halle and when my grandmother died when my father was 16 and your grandfather was 21 they learned for the first time (at least so my father told me many times as a boy) that his name was Brooks NOT Halle. My grand mother is buried in the cemetery in Memphis (sic). Sol Halle a few years thereafter (so I was told) married Maria Grassheim of Philadelphia whose sister Julie was your grandmother.

I am typing this myself at home as I did not care to dictate it to my secretary.

I am married to Irene Joseph Brooks and we are both so grateful to the good Lord

for the ~~amazing~~ abundance of blessings we have received.

We have been on all the continents but Asia, our last trip was to the South Pacific and New Zealand and Australia. We are hoping to treat my daughter and son in law to another trip to South America this winter, the Lord willing.

My middle name is really "MAJOR" but my maternal grandfather was German and pronounced it "May-Yor" for in the German language "J" is pronounced As "Y". Your middle name came from your ~~great~~ step great grand father Sol Halle.

I believe the Rev. John Williamson told me that the Rev. Sidney Brooks of Sheffield spelled the name BROOKES (with an "e").

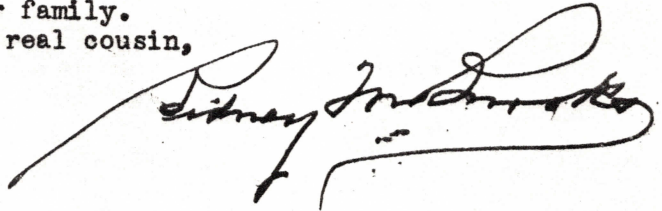
Now if all this rattling sounds like senile chatter from a 80 year old, please know that this is not so. I thank God for the blessings of vigorous health and an alert mentality. Just yesterday completed my yearly physical wjich took several days) with the verdict x "your report could well be for a 40 year old", (THANK GOD.)

Incidentally , your grandmother Julie was one of my favorites and I always visited her on my trips to se my mother each month during her life. My mother (Your Sunt Hattie) lived at the Parkview also.

All my dear ones join me in warmest greetings and affectionate regards.

Next time you write tell me all about your family.

Your real cousin,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sidney J. Brooks". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

The copy of letter
enclosed is from my
old time employee
A. Hall Allen