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October 22, 1994

Mr. Brian Lamb
C-SPAN
400 N. Capitol, Suite 650
Washington D.C. 20001

*SPT
Viewer*

Dear Brian,

Since moving to this area about four years ago I have learned about C-SPAN and find myself tuning in to Channel 46 more and more frequently. Two programs which I try not to miss are the Saturday night re-run of Journalists' Round Table and the Sunday night broadcast of Booknotes.

One of my other interests is genealogy. Some years ago I made a study of the ancestry of American presidents and learned of the work of Gary Boyd Roberts of the New England Historical and Genealogical Society. Mr. Roberts has compiled both a preliminary edition (1989) and a preliminary edition, revised (also 1989) called "Ancestors of American Presidents". As I have both editions, the unrevised preliminary edition is surplus and I would be happy to donate it to you or anyone you may designate. I notice that from time to time the authors you interview mention presidential ancestry, so this book may be of interest to you. Please let me know.

However, the main reason I am writing you is to advise that some misinformation may have been disseminated by Liz Carpenter whom you interviewed on the program aired this evening. If I heard correctly, Mrs. Carpenter stated that she advised President Clinton that President Truman was a descendant of President Tyler. Unfortunately, this information does not agree with the information compiled by Mr. Roberts.

It is true that President Truman had ancestors named Tyler. Here is an extract of his Tyler line:

1. Robert Tyler, Jr., born about 1671, died about 1738, lived in Calvert & Prince Georges Counties, Maryland, had:
2. Edward Tyler, born 1696, died about 1726, lived Prince Georges County, Md., had:
3. Edward Tyler, Jr. (1719/20-1802), born Prince Georges County, Md., died Jefferson Co. Ky., had:
4. Robert Tyler (1751-1815), born Frederick Co., Va., died Shelby Co., Ky., had:
5. Ann Drusilla Tyler (1780-1875), born Boone's Station, Ky., died Kansas City, Mo. She was a great-grandmother of President Truman.

On the other hand, here is President Tyler's lineage:

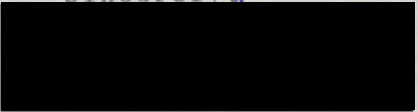
1. Henry Tyler, born about 1604, perhaps in Shropshire, England, died in York County, Va. in 1672, had:
2. Henry Tyler, Jr., born about 1660, probably in York Co., Va., died in 1729, probably at Williamsburg, had:
3. John Tyler, born about 1685, probably in York Co., Va., died about 1727, probably at Williamsburg, had:
4. John Tyler, Jr. born about 1710, probably in Williamsburg, died 1773, also probably in Williamsburg, had:
5. John Tyler (III) (1747-1813), Governor of Virginia, had:
6. President John Tyler (1790-1862).

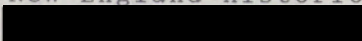
As you can see, not only is it unlikely from the foregoing that President Truman was a descendant of President Tyler, there is also no indication of common ancestry. Since Tyler is an occupational surname, any number of unrelated individuals performing that occupation may have taken that name in the Middle Ages. On the other hand, there could be a connection that had not yet been brought to Roberts' attention in 1989.

I am taking the liberty of sending a copy of this letter to Roberts. If he has more recent information perhaps he will advise us. In the meantime, it might be helpful if you were to forward a copy to Mrs. Carpenter (as I do not have her address) so that she can check her source. If she has specific data that would clarify the matter I'm sure Gary Roberts would appreciate hearing from her.

On a somewhat more serious and perhaps less trivial note, I would like to join the multitudes who have advised you how much they appreciate C-SPAN. However, there may be some politicians who are going to get voted out this year who may not be as appreciative. However, I think the problem is not so much the people who are in Congress, but the way Congress operates. I really didn't understand the situation before C-SPAN showed it to me. Am still trying to figure out a solution, but I know that part of the answer is for you to continue doing what you are doing.

Sincerely,



cc: Gary Boyd Roberts
New England Historical & Genealogical Society

Boston, Massachusetts 02116
