

By Geo Mason Stafford

Tradition tells us that the Robert family originated in Wales and that several hundred years ago it was spelled Rhobert. Sometime after 1598 when Henry IV of France proclaimed the Edict of Nantes, thus giving religious freedom to his subjects, it is said that members of our Robert family left Wales and emigrated to France in order to take advantage of the blessings offered by this act. They located in the Piedmont valley within the borders of what is now Switzerland, and it is there that we meet the first Robert whom we can definitely name. He was Daniel and was born at Basle, Switzerland, in 1625. He was very probably the second generation of the name born in a foreign land. We have very little information about him; however, we do know that he lived at St. Imier, Switzerland, and that his wife was named Marie. It was their son, Pierre Robert, who was the first of the name to emigrate to America.

PIERRE ROBERT.

Pierre Robert, the first generation of the family in the New World, was (as far as we know) the only son of Daniel and Marie Robert of St. Imier, Switzerland. He is usually known as the Rev. Pierre Robert. He was born in St. Imier, Switzerland, in 1656. There is some reference to him in the early Swiss records as a Doctor, but this was probably an ecclesiastical title. The following item from the church records in Basle, Switzerland, verifies his ordination:—

“Ce Dimanche, 19 Fevrier, 1682, le St. Pierre Robert de St. Imier a recu l'imposition des mains.”

A glimpse of the early Robert genealogy has been left us by the Rev. William Henry Robert of Centerville, Mississippi, who was a son of James Jehu Robert and his second wife, Phoebe McKenzie, and a grandson of John Robert and Elizabeth Dixon of Robertville, South Carolina. This information was left in an article in his own handwriting entitled “My Christmas Musings,” which we will here insert in full: —

A few days since I met these two words as contrasted in their meaning; I have been thinking of times and things away back beyond my own personal being. I have felt like Paul when he was induced to speak of his ancestry. I have thought how the affection of the poor Welsh Christians must have driven them to the throne of grace.

Exact Weight Notes are somewhere?

1946  
1968  
Walters Pub  
M/R, Lc

ED ROBERTS  
307 Roselawn  
Monroe, La. 71201

8/1989

I say  
1716 +  
Maybe  
1717

See Picture

Joe P. Roberts  
Catcher  
wt est of  
Weight.

When in 1285, under the reign of Edward II, Wales became an English principality the “H” was left out of the name Rhobert, and it became Robert. Many of the name, however, taking on an “S”.

I have been full of the thought of that family (Robert) which went into France to enjoy the privileges of the Edict of Nantes (1598), how they suffered loss of all things, save the love they had for the Saviour. In my thinking I was forced to say:—‘We’ll glory in tribulation also, for it only worketh patience, experience, hope and boldness in the love of God shed in our hearts.’ I was thankfully thoughtful that tho’ in France they suffered so much, yet the despised Huguenots were blessed, the Testament and Psalms having been translated into French by Farel and Le Fevre, and that Pierre Robert was enabled to enjoy the religious instructions of his parents in his youth near Basle, Switzerland, and to labor in the Piedmont valley as a pastor of the Waldensian Church until the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, when by that cruel act of Louis XIV, he was forced to leave his home or be sent to the galleys.

Rev. Pierre Robert came with a colony of French and Swedish refugees to Santee, South Carolina, being only thirty years old, with his wife Irania Buysler Robert\* and their only son Pierre II, then five years old. When he, Pierre Robert, died in 1715, and his wife in 1717, they left three sons, Pierre II, Elias, and John. The last two allowed the “S” to their names and thus were lost to our family. One, a Col. Roberts of the Revolutionary Army, a prominent Presbyterian, settled in Pendleton county† and from him a village and church were called Roberts. Although we may not be able to trace our connection with many of those who claim and use “S” in the name Roberts, yet it is very pleasant thinking (as was remarked to me by a Methodist minister the past summer) that most of the aged men whom he had known of the Welsh Robert family were men of great piety and prayerfulness.

Jacques (James) Robert, a son of Pierre II, was a man of large size, six feet high and quite fleshy, a man of scientific education, became wealthy, and at one time

\* This should be Jeanne Brayé Robert. In the court house at Charleston, S. C., there is a record of the marriage settlement of Pierre Robert II in which is mentioned the wife of Rev. Pierre Robert as Jeanne Brayé.

† In West Virginia.

Our Branch may have followed or — ?

I think they hope relatives  
C1300 for Champagne when →

? S.C.?  
Owen

Elmer H. Doe & Son  
c 1275

7 at least ER 8/89

owned four plantations in Santee, South Carolina, and at the same time carried on a store. By imprudence in trade, and by loaning the use of his name as security to his friends, he lost most of his property and had to resort to the school room for a living. He went to North Carolina and took his eldest son James with him. From the falling of an old house during a cyclone James was killed. His father soon after returned and moved his family to Colleton District, South Carolina. He died and was buried at Stone Creek Church in 1774, leaving three sons, Peter, Elias, and John, and three daughters, Elizabeth, Judith and Sarah. In 1775 his wife, Sarah Jaudon Robert, with her brother Thomas Jaudon,\* her sons Peter and Elias, and her daughters, Elizabeth Grimbball and Judith Cheney, moved to Black Swamp and established the village, Robertville, which was a place of considerable importance until the late Confederate War when Sherman had it thoroughly destroyed—even the fine old oaks and hickories under which I played as a school boy—burning the church and school house and Sunday school, also the fence around the graveyard, wherein laid the bodies of my grandmother and a sweet little girl nine weeks old, as well as other relatives and friends. God be praised! war could not touch their souls, these were at God's right hand, having fullness of joy and enjoying their inheritance undefiled, and that will never fade away. //

The compiler of this work feels that we are most fortunate in having the above information from the pen of the Rev. William Henry Robert, affectionately known to his many Louisiana relatives as "Cousin Billy." This same has been handed down to us through other sources—principally tradition—and we feel more secure in our genealogical position in having it from one who really knew. His statements definitely establish for us the names of the first three generations of our forebears in this country. Rev. William Henry Robert was a great grandson of Jacques (son of Pierre II) whom he mentions in his "musings." He himself was the grandfather of Dr. James Jehu Robert of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, one of the prominent physicians and surgeons there at this date (1945).

\* Rev. W. H. Robert has evidently made a mistake in the first name of Sarah Jaudon Robert's brother. We can find no Thomas Jaudon of that period. Sarah, who was the daughter of Daniel Jaudon, had five brothers, Daniel, Noah, Elias, Matthew, and Paul.

Rev. Pierre Robert was married some years before he was ordained, probably in 1674 when he was eighteen years of age, as the church records in Switzerland show that his son, Pierre II, was baptized on May 9, 1675. His wife was Jeanne Brayé, daughter of Jehu and Susanne Brayé. She was born in Basle, Switzerland, in 1660. They were happy in that beautiful Piedmont valley until Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes and religious persecution began again with all its cruelty and fury. There was one hope for them—emigration to the New World across the ocean.

Captain Philip Gendron, a man of enterprise and daring, organized a large band of Huguenots for transportation overseas and in 1686 they sailed from the Isle of Ré, in the Bay of Biscay, just off the coast of France, and during that same year they landed safely on the friendly shores of South Carolina where they found peace and security. More came later and soon there was a large French population in this southern colony. In September, 1705, the Lords Proprietors of the Carolinas ceded to these French refugees a large tract of land on the Santee river, in St. James parish, for a town or plantation. In the following January the Huguenots moved there and laid out a town which they called Jamestown (probably named for James II, King of England). The streets intersected at right angles and in the middle was a lot set aside for a church and cemetery. The pastor of the large band of Huguenots composing Captain Gendron's expedition was our Rev. Pierre Robert. With him came his wife and their son, Pierre II. He was the first Huguenot preacher in South Carolina, and as far as we can ascertain, the first in America. He organized the church at Jamestown and was pastor of it until his forced retirement on account of bad health in 1715. Jamestown was generally called *French Santee* to distinguish it from another *Santee* which was an English settlement in the adjoining parish of St. Stephen. But in spite of the efforts of the refugees to make it a success this new town never prospered. Its location was its downfall. The river was given to freshets which overflowed the surrounding country and the climate was not very salubrious. By 1712 the people living there began to migrate to other more desirable parts of the colony and the site where Jamestown, or French Santee, once stood was eventually aban-

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111 members of St. James Santee 1699  
—Lawson

No!  
No

1674  
18  
1656  
born

Pierre Robert II married his second wife in <sup>1709</sup> ~~1706~~. She was Judith Videaul, daughter of Pierre and Jeanne Elizabeth Videaul, and grand-daughter of Pierre Videaul and his wife, Magdalaine Burgand, both of La Rochelle, France—so we learn from Baird's Huguenot Emigration to America, Vol. I, page 297. Judith Videaul was born in South Carolina. In some family records her surname appears as de Bordeaux. We are unable to account for this dual name, except that it seems to have been a custom among the early French inhabitants of this country to sometimes use an additional name taken from the locality in France whence they came, thus accentuating their identity. Be that as it may, this name seems to have stayed in the family and three generations later we find a Bordeaux Robert. Three children were born of this second marriage:—Jacques (James), Magdalene, and Elizabeth Robert.

Magdalene Robert, the elder daughter of Pierre Robert II, was twice married. Her first husband was Archibald Hamilton and her second was William Gough. In the South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine, Vol. XXIII, we find some interesting data on this lady. On page 112 we read:—

Magdalene Hamilton, widow, daughter of Peter and Judith Robert, French Santee, born there September 28, 1719, married William Gough, widower, May 7, 1749. Elizabeth Hamilton, daughter of Archibald, a lawyer, and the said Magdalene, was born at North Carolina April 1, 1740.

George Hamilton, son of the same, was born at North Carolina, August 19, 1742.

On page 103 of the same volume of the above mentioned magazine we find considerable data about William Gough, the second husband of Magdalene Robert. We read as follows:—

William Gough, Jr., son of William and Martha, born in London October 5, 1703, married in London January 19, 1727, Mary Bearsley, spinster. He died May 12, 1758, aged 55, of pleurisy. He married 2nd Susannah Le Fong, widow, at Savannah, October 24, 1735. He came and settled in South Carolina 1737 and there married May 7, 1749, Magdalene Robert, widow of Archibald Hamilton. They were married by Mr. Hutson.

Martha Gough, daughter by 3rd marriage, born March 24, 1750, baptized April 22, 1750.

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(Page 104) Mary Anne Gough, daughter by 3rd marriage, born November 13, 1753, baptized April 17, 1754.

(Page 107) William Bearsley Gough, son of 3rd marriage, born April 15, 1756, baptized August 31, 1756.

Elizabeth Robert, younger daughter of Pierre Robert II, married Elias Jaudon, son of Daniel and Elizabeth Jaudon, Huguenot pioneers to South Carolina. From the best information obtainable it would appear that they had five children:—Elias, Jr., Sarah, Paul, David, and Elisha Jaudon. The eldest, Elias Jaudon, Jr., married Mary Hyrne Dixon whose grandfather was the Second Landgrave Thomas Smith, son of First Landgrave Thomas Smith, Governor of South Carolina. They left numerous descendants, some of whom married back into the Robert family, thus returning to the fold whence they came. Those interested in this line should read that chapter entitled "House of Landgrave Smith", in Mrs. Annie E. Miller's book, "Our Family Circle."

Pierre Robert II died in 1731, between March 9, and May 1. We do not know the exact spot where he was buried, but evidently it was in French Santee. The date of his second wife's death is unknown to us, but according to his will we know that she survived him. Fortunately for us the will of Pierre Robert II, written in French, is on record in South Carolina. It was published in both French and English in "the Transactions of the Huguenot Society of South Carolina," No. 29, in 1924.

The following is a true copy of it:—

In the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost! Amen!

I, Peter Robert, born in Basle, Switzerland, and now living in Craven county, South Carolina, being by the grace of God, of sound mind and understanding, but unwell in body, not knowing when and what manner it shall please God to take me out of this world, do declare to have drawn up this my Testament which I hereby order to be enforced and executed as being my last will.

I recommend my soul unto God my Creator who redeemed it by the blood of His Son Jesus Christ, beseeching Him to have mercy upon me and receive me on my leaving this life into His eternal Tabernacles. As to my body I commit it to the earth to be therein interred in such a place as my heirs shall see fit.

7 Acres  
How  
place?