

When Mrs. DeLong extended the invitation to me to talk to the Jasper County Historical Society about the historic community of Robertville and one of its many distinguished inhabitants, Gen. Henry Martyn Robert (1837-1923), a first cousin of my grandmother, Lila Rhodes Peoples, I accepted the task dutifully, perhaps a trifle eagerly, thinking of all the tidbits & goodies I could share with you. Upon re-thinking, however, it appears that I could have been grasping for an excuse for not working on that federal document which must be filed by April 15th. And when I was filling my gas tank for the drive up here I remembered hearing about a faithful employee's Retirement Party. It seems that all his fellow workers chipped in & bought him three gallons of gasoline.

There's no doubt about it, money isn't worth what it used to be. Instead of buying a New car, if you put your money in a bank, you only have to wait a few years before you'll have enough to buy a USED car.

Still, the best thing we can all do is to stay calm & study our history. In an exciting year such as this, don't be surprised if some of your best friends turn out to be Republicans or Democrats.

Now let's look at Robertville and General Robert. He didn't say it but it is true that the oil & wine of a merry meeting is honest good humor. So let's enjoy our history. If we find it difficult to love our enemies, at least we can try to treat our friends a little bit better. Nothing astonishes men so much as common sense and plain dealing.

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When S.C. becomes a royal colony in 1729, the weakest section of its defense was the southwest with its entry road at Palachucola, a crossing of Savannah River about 60 miles from its mouth, from which Indian trader Samuel Noxner "came dashing into Charles Town in April 1715 with warning of the Yamasee uprising. The Colonial Assembly had stationed a company of the S.C. Rangers there in 1717 and ordered the construction of "a small fort... and convenient huts to lodge in" in 1722. Called Fort Prince George, it was garrisoned until 1735, by which time both Purrysburg "on the great Yamasee Bluff" and Savannah downstream "on the great Yamacraw Bluff" were well-established. The road from St. Augustine to Charles Town, via Palachucola crossed Black Swamp a few miles to the east where the road from Ebenezer - Savannah, via Sisters Ferry on the Savannah, ran northward to Orangeburg. The crossing became Robertville, although it was long known by the name of its chief topographical feature, Black Swamp. The Battle of Bloody Marsh in 1742 ended the dangerous Spanish threat to Carolina. In 1745 the Colonial Assembly established Prince William Parish between the Combahee & Coosawhatchie and in February 1747 St. Peter's Parish between the Coosawhatchie & Savannah Rivers. St. Peter's church was built at Purrysburg.

Meriwether's Expansion of South Carolina 1729-1765 notes that by 1740 50,000 acres had been granted on the lower Savannah, chiefly about Palachucola. John Robert had 1000 acres at the mouth of lower Three Runs. (p.73) He was probably an uncle of Jacques (James) Robert (1711-1774) whose widow, Sarah Jaudon, died in Robertville in 1779.

One of the most romantic & gratuitous stories about the founding of Robertville was invented by a Robert cousin late in the 19th century. It says that during the Revolutionary War Samuel Noxner was detailed to find a safe hiding place for the slaves

Elizabeth { John Grumball  
Rae Alex Scott

Sarah - Joseph Lawton

Judith { John Andebert  
John Chenery Secretary  
John Callahan

K. V. K. K. K.

Peter - Annie Grumball

Chamblee, Georgia  
February 29, 1980

John - Eliz Dixon

Elias - Mary Rue

& horses of generals Marion & Sumter, and after hiding them in the swamp along the Savannah, he was so pleased with the area, he persuaded John Robert's family & others to leave French Santee c.1785 & join him in forming the settlement afterwards called Robertville. This erroneous fable was widely printed, was even presented as fact in Cousin Annie Miller's 1931 classic, Our Family Circle. The truth is that the brothers Samuel & William Maner were born in Bertie Co., N.C. in the 1750s & drifted down through what would later be Barnwell District into St. Peter's Parish where Samuel Maner got a headright grant for 100 acres on Black Swamp 30 Oct. 1772, having married in July, Mary May, whose sister Jane would later marry his brother. The May sisters were also from N. Carolina. Both brothers became large landowners; Samuel was said to have owned 30 miles along Savannah River. Their children married into the Robert family. It has been noted that the mixture of their Welsh blood with the Huguenot blood produced extraordinarily successful financial results.

The next evidence of Robert presence is 3 Sept. 1764 when James (i.e. Jacques) Robert "of Granville Co." deeded 6 tracts in St. James Santee to John Robert "of Granville Co." On 31 Dec. 1768 John Robert of Saltcatchers applied for the Administration of "the estate of William Gould late of St. Peters Parish". John Robert & his 1st cousin, both "of Indian Lands", Prince William Parish, in 1770 married sisters, elder daughters of Captain Thomas Dixon, deceased Baptist deacon & planter of James Island. From their grandmother, Mary Hume (1690-1776), widow of I handgrave Thomas Smith, each had inherited £500, her clothes & linens, and a share in her books & furniture from Goose Creek Plantation (later called

Yeamans Hall). On 2 March 1772 Joseph Lawton acquired 250 acres on Savannah River waters in St. Peter's Parish, surveyed by Elias Robert. In March 1773 Joseph Lawton married Sarah, sister of John & Elias Robert, the Surveyor, who had a 500-acre grant the next month, April 1773 on Black Swamp. The next year Jacques de Bourdeau (James) Robert, their father, was buried in Stoney Creek Churchyard, Nov. 1774. His widow died in Black Swamp (Robertville) 6 April 1779, either at Cotton Hill, home of John Robert (1742-1826), founder of Robertville, or Elias Robert (1747-1820), the Surveyor.

One month earlier 1 March 1779 Continental Army Commander, Gen. Benjamin Lincoln, Gen. William Moultrie, Gen. Griffith Rutherford & Gen. John Ashe of N.C., held a Council of War at Black Swamp, making plans for recapturing Savannah. Gen. Lincoln established military headquarters at Black Swamp & turned same over to Gen. Moultrie while he marched off toward Augusta. The following day Gen. Ashe's army was severely mauled at Briar Creek, for which debacle he narrowly escaped Court Martial for cowardice. From Black Swamp all four armies retreated toward Charles Town. John Robert served in Captain Blake's Company in 1778; 103 days in Captain Joseph Darrell's Company 16 Sept. 1779 to 12 May 1780 when he was captured at the fall of Charles Town, and 114 days as prisoner of war until 1 July 1781. After his release he served another 148 days to July 4<sup>th</sup> 1782, which was surely well-celebrated in Robertville.

In 1785 the Legislature officially divided Granville Co. into 4 Counties: St. Peter's Parish became Lincoln Co.; named for Gen. Benjamin Lincoln of Massachusetts, had Robertville as its county seat; it served as an election district & had a justice conveyance office. Prince William Parish became Shrewsbury Co.; St. Luke's Parish became Hilton Co. & St. Helena's became Granville Co. with Coosawhatchie as county seat. These counties ceased to exist in 1798 when Beaufort

Judicial District was established. Cossawhatchie was its county (4) seat until 1838 when Gillisonville took that position until 1865.

In the Gimball family records it is said that John Gimball, husband of Elizabeth Robert, moved to Black Swamp with several of his wife's relatives in 1775 to found the town of Robertville. John Gimball died 31 Oct. 1780, leaving Elizabeth with three children: John, Paul & Providence Gimball. In January 1786 the widow Elizabeth married Rev. Alexander H. Scott who, with that potent alliance, was able to organize Black Swamp Baptist Church in February 1786, assisted by Rev. Abraham Marshall of Georgia and Rev. Henry Holcombe (1762-1824) of Pipe Creek Church which had dismissed 2/3 of its members to the new church. It was then located 2 1/2 miles N.E. of present Robertville where the Robert Cemetery stands, probably on property given by Elias Robert (1747-1820), the Surveyor. Elias was the church's first messenger to the Charleston Association; he was dismissed to the Savannah Church in 1800. Elias married Mary Rice in 1774 & their 5 children were born in Robertville; he died in Scriven Co. in 1820. Family records say he was a charming & beautifully educated but rather "ineffective" man. Other founding members included Joseph & Sarah (Robert) Lawton, William Chesney (who was a 1788 association messenger with Joseph Lawton), John & Elizabeth (Dixon) Robert. Rev. Alexander Scott had 1st visited Robertville in 1779 as an itinerant preacher after the British captured Augusta; his 2nd wife Hannah, widow of Rev. Nathaniel Kolbick, had taught him to spell & read a little. He and Elizabeth Robert (his 3rd wife) had 4 sons & a daughter born in Robertville. One born 1787, Abraham Marshall Scott, moved to Mississippi with his parents in 1810, was captain of a company which

represented Wilkinson Co. (5) in the Mississippi Constitutional Convention 1817, served 2 terms as Lt. Gov. of Mississippi, was elected Governor in 1831 & died of Asiatic cholera in Nov. 1833 at the capitol while serving as 6th Gov. of Mississippi. His death was widely lamented & a county was named in his memory. His son Thomas B. Scott was Brig. General in the Confederate Army.

The 1790 Census showed John Robert (1742-1826) leading planter of Robertville with 34 slaves. Staple crops were rice & corn; a little cotton was grown, awaiting Whitney's 1793 invention of the gin at the widow Green's plantation just down the river. Indigo had been a staple until the Revolution ended the British subsidy. Some silk was still being made but cotton would quickly pre-empt that time-consuming endeavor. Eight of John Robert's 10 children had been born, 2 daughters already married: Mary Harriet (1771-1816) to Richard Bostick (1758-1831) & Elizabeth Ann (1772-1832) to Thomas Benjamin Singleton. Richard Bostick, planting with 9 slaves, was "very proud of marrying into the aristocracy; his descendants had the Robert coat-of-arms painted on their carriages", wrote one of their Robert cousins who knew them well. John Robert's brother-in-law Joseph Lawton (1753-1815) at Mulberry Grove 2 1/2 mi. N.E. had 20 slaves. Three of his eleven children had been born & he was Justice of the Peace for the area. John Robert's sister-in-law Rebecca Dixon Hamilton (1752-1795) was the 3rd largest planter with 19 slaves. Family records show her Rev. War soldier-husband, Capt. Thomas Hamilton (Ireland 1744-died January 1791). He was probably unwell in Charleston where he died January 1791. He was buried in Capt. Thomas Dixon's Cemetery on James Island but his magnificent 5000-acre Hamilton Ridge Plantation west of Robertville was inherited by one of his 9 daughters & has long memorialized his name. Rev. Alexander & Elizabeth (Robert) Scott reported 17 slaves & 3 children; his virtue had been well-rewarded. John Robert's brother-in-law Elias Jaudon (1739-1809) was next with

14 slaves & 9 children. Another brother-in-law John Audibert (6) & his wife Judith Robert had 13 slaves. In 1792 John & Judith Audibert of Lincoln Co., St. Peter's Parish, made a deed to Thomas Campbell of Effingham, Georgia. John Audibert died c. 1795 & Judith married (2) John Cheney (1732-1811) widower. Audibert Plantation, west of Black Swamp, was later acquired by William Henry Lawton. In 1790 Capt. Peter Robert (1738-1825) planted with 7 slaves; his brother Elias Robert (1747-1820) with only three. Capt. Peter Robert's sons: James, Peter & Grimball were heads of families, Grimball Robert with 2 slaves. Their sister Providence Robert (1774-1856) married in Robertville in 1793 planter Robert Tanner (1769-1839). On <sup>3 Nov.</sup> 1791 another Baptist preacher, Rev. Moses Hadley <sup>"late of New York"</sup> was allowed to marry into the family, marrying Capt. Peter's daughter, Anne Grimball Robert. A daughter Mary was born 18 Aug. 1792.

In 1798 Lincoln County was officially discontinued but in 1800 Robertville became a federal post office with the name Black Swamp. Its Postmaster 1800-1812 was young planter-merchant William Henry Lawton (1775-1827) who married in 1797 Catherine, daughter of Revolutionary War Capt. William Maner.

The 1800 Census showed cotton crowned king. John Robert worked 58 slaves. His sister's brother's mother-in-law Mary Stone Grimball Lawton Fickling (1720-1804) seems to have moved her 31 slaves to Robertville although she described herself "of Prince William Parish" when she made her 1804 will. Her son Joseph Lawton worked 28 slaves. His 2<sup>nd</sup> son, Joseph James Lawton (1777-1859) married in Savannah in 1798 Phoebe Mosse (1781-1858), daughter of Dr. George Mosse (1742-1808) & the 1<sup>st</sup> of their 13 children: George Washington Lawton was born January 1800; the little fellow died only 2 1/2 years old. Joseph Lawton's nephew, Paul Grimball (1773-1841) worked 13 slaves. Two sons of John Robert: John Hancock Robert (1775-1835) & William Henry Robert (1780-1835) were young planters with 15 & 13 slaves respectively. Their ambitious brother-in-



law Richard Bostick had dramatically expanded his workers from 9 to 23, laying the foundation of the fabulous empire of his son Benjamin Robert Bostick (1791-1866). John Robert's brother-in-law Elias Jandon (1739-1809) had 19 slaves, his son Elias Gabriel Jandon (1772-1826) worked 14, Captain Peter Robert (1728-1825) worked 12; he had long operated a leather-tanning operation, having furnished leather supplies for the Continental Army there in 1781. His son, Peter Robert, Jr. married to Elizabeth, daughter of Elias Jandon, planted with 5 slaves. Land for expanding cotton fields was growing scarce around Robertville. There was much talk of millions of acres of new land in Mississippi & Louisiana. In late 1803 (not 1806 as published elsewhere) Capt. Peter Robert, then 65, as patriarch, his son-in-law Rev. Moses Hadley as spiritual leader, 97 persons, including Paul Gimbball's & Robert Tanner's families, packed themselves onto ox drawn wagons (no mules in those days) & wandered up through the wilderness of the Cherokee country, searching for the Tennessee River. There they built crude but sturdy flat boats on which they floated to the Ohio River & down the Mississippi, 50 miles below Natchez to Fort Adams. There Robert Tanner in 1804 surveyed & laid out the town of Woodville in what was then called West Florida but would soon become Wilkinson Co., Mississippi. Ten years later Captain Peter Robert moved his tribe to a new "Promised Land" 100 miles west on Bayou Boeuf, near present Cheneyville, Rapides Parish, Louisiana, dying there at 87 years in 1825.

This large emigration from Robertville resulted in many land sales, most of which cannot be accurately traced since Sherman burned <sup>Beautiful districts</sup> a records. But Robert & Laurton cousins bought everything for sale. Also in 1803 planter Benjamin T. D. Laurton married at her father's house in Savannah, Jane 1803, sister of his brother Joseph

wife. A year earlier his sister Charlotte Anne Lawton had married their 1<sup>st</sup> cousin, planter James John Robert (1781-1852), a deacon, but never an ordained Baptist minister, despite many published statements, including my own, to the contrary in the past. Two of their daughters would marry planter George Rhodes (1802-1881) of the Hermitage, Lawtonville, Signer of the 1860 Ordinance of Secession. Their son, Joseph Thomas Robert (1807-1884) will appear below. (8)

Early in 1806 an important family bought former Robert lands east of Robertville: Dr. George Mosse (Ireland 1742-1808) & his wife Dorothy Phoebe Norton (of Stanyarne-Ladson-Chaplin-Fitch early S.C. Heritage). Settling next to them was her sister Elizabeth Norton (1749-1832) widow of Rev. War Capt. John Goyner & of Rev. William Eastwick Graham (1748-1800) Rector of Prince William & St. Helen's Parishes; she came with 22 slaves; affectionately known by Dr. Mosse's 7 daughters as "Aunt Graham", she dispensed hospitality & gifts lavishly. Dr. Mosse who also operated a tannery, had ten slaves. His daughter Mary Anne married in 1803 Adam Fowler Brisbane & settled in Robertville with ten slaves. Their son Dr. William Henry Brisbane (1806-1879) later became a Baptist minister, sold his 30-inherited slaves to his brother-in-law, Capt. Edward H. Peeples (1811-1892), bought them back & carried them north, freed them and became a candidate for president of the U.S. on the 1860 Abolitionist ticket. Dr. Mosse, founding deacon of Savannah's First Baptist Church, lived to plant only one crop; he died Feb 1208, his wife 6 weeks later. Their widowed daughter, Eather Marie McKenzie & her daughter Phoebe, continued at Mosse Hall with her 2<sup>nd</sup> husband, Professor Terence Hughes, teacher of Robertville youth. Sarah Mosse married in June 1808 in the home of their Aunt Graham, their 1<sup>st</sup> cousin Robert Godfrey Norton who followed them to Robertville with his six slaves. In Nov. 1809 Martha Mosse married her twice-brother-in-law, Col. Alexander James Lawton (1790-1876), establishing another

great family, then son; Gen. Alex Robert Lawton, Commissary General, C.S.A.

(1)

The 1810 Census showed the Robert family still preeminent:

John Robert (1742-1826) continued patriarch with 18 slaves; his sons:

John Hancock Robert with 56, William Henry Robert with 34, James

John Robert with 22, Thomas Smith Robert with 23. His nephews,  
James Robert & Grimball Robert with 11 & 10 slaves respectively,  
left Robertville in 1811 to join their father in Mississippi. John Robert's

brother-in-law John Cheney (1732-1811) had 21 slaves; he died in 1811  
& his widow Judith Robert married John Calliham (1756-1825) who  
took her to Rapides Parish, Louisiana with her nephews. Representing

the Jaudon family in 1810 Robertville were John Robert's nephews:

Elias Gabriel Jaudon (1772-1826) with 44 slaves; he married 1799

Sarah Chovin, widow of Thomas Wilbingham; their youngest daughter

Mary Hynes Jaudon (1823-1884) would marry Edward Perry in 1848,

many of their descendants still residing in Jasper County;

Dr. Thomas Dixon Jaudon, born 1776, had 8 slaves; he was still

practising medicine at age 75 in 1850; and James de Bourdeaux

Jaudon (1786-1834) had 8 slaves. He was Postmaster of Robertville

1816-1819, married Rachel Elizabeth Polhill who died with their two

daughters before 1834 when he died intestate in Savannah in partner-

ship with James Porcher. John Robert's brother-in-law, Joseph

Lawton had 38 slaves at Mulberry Grove; his eldest son, William

Henry Lawton, still Robertville's Postmaster, prospered mightily with

49 slaves; Joseph J. Lawton had 13 & B.T.D. Lawton 10.

In late 1810 Joseph J. Lawton, B.T.D. Lawton, their sister Thirza

& her husband (since 1806) Thomas Polhill, Rev. Alexander Scott, Rev.

Howell Wall, David McKenzie, William Hall Tuten, Robert Christoph,

Joseph Thomas, John Tison, Jesse Parker, 4 Smart brothers (James,

Naaman, John & Seth) & 2 Sweet brothers (Allen & ...), set out from Robertville in ox-drawn wagons across Georgia & Alabama to Mississippi. On 15 Feb. 1811 in camp on the bank of the Hightower River, Cherokee Nation, Joseph Lawton Hightower Polhill, 1st son of Thomas & Thirza (Lawton) Polhill was born; both mother & son died in Mississippi that year. In 1812 both Joseph J. & B.T.D. Lawton, the 4 Sweet brothers, John Tison & Allen Sweet returned to Robertville. B.T.D. Lawton bought lands 10 miles up the Orangeburg Road and founded the village of Lawtonville - a mile west of present Estill.

In 1812 Rev. Hezekiah A. Boyd (1779-1827) became Pastor of Black Swamp Baptist Church. He brought to the ministry Rev. Winborn Asa Lawton (1793-1878) whose 1st wife, Mary Cater, widow of Thomas Rhodes (1775-1809) died in 1823, after bearing him 4 children, & was buried in Robert Cemetery near his aunt, Elizabeth Dixon Robert who died in 1820 at Cotton Hill. Pastor Boyd also brought to the ministry Rev. Thomas Polhill (1783-1830) who succeeded him as Pastor of Robertville in 1825. Thomas Polhill married in 1813 as his 2nd wife, Judith Rebecca Jaudon & was Postmaster of Robertville in 1815. The name of the P.O. was officially changed to Robertville in 1812 when Benjamin Brooks succeeded William Henry Lawton. It was Brooks who in 1813 engaged Tristram Verstelle of Connecticut to clerk in his Robertville Store. In 1819 when Verstelle wrote to his sister Charlotte, he mentioned Black Swamp or Robertville Academy which educated both male & female students. Col. Alex Lawton's 1818 plot showed the 20x40 school house centered on a half-acre lot on Sisters Ferry Road adjacent to the Baptist Church which had been moved into Robertville before Joseph Lawton died <sup>1815</sup> & was buried there. In 1820 the Academy lot was deeded by William Henry Lawton to its Trustees: Col. Alex Lawton, Joseph J. Lawton, John Maner, William S. Maner, John

Robert & James John Robert. In 1821 Charlotte Verstillle arrived from Connecticut "for her health's sake" to live with her brother & began teaching in the Academy. She wrote, "This splendid village contains but six houses, a Church, an Academy, 2 stores & a blacksmith's shop. But there are a number of houses situated at unequal distances around it, & inhabited by wealthy planters. These buildings boast neither a cellar nor an upper story. Glass windows are quite a rare luxury, light being usually admitted by throwing open a wooden door swung on hinges where windows should be... our situation is... at the union of the Savannah, Augusta & Charleston roads, with a green, in front of which stands the Church & Academy. Our table is plentifully supplied with variety. The grand eatable here is bacon & collards, a sort of cabbage you will find on every table at every season." She also reported that the residents of Robertville were "very worldly minded and... appear to think more of the rise & fall of cotton than of the rise & progress of religion." In 1821 she reported that Samuel Howard, nephew of the Charleston writer, Mrs. Caroline Gilman, was Headmaster of the Academy with its six scholars.

From 1819-1828 Col. Alex<sup>r</sup> Lawton was Postmaster of Robertville. We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to him for preserving a remarkable assortment of some 2600 documents which came into his hands as executor of various estates & guardian of widows & orphans. He was a planter, militia colonel, member of the Legislature, surveyor, postmaster, lawyer & politician. Through the efforts of Thomas O. Lawton, Jr. of Allendale & Jas Ives of Jacksonville, Col. Alex's papers are now in the South Caroliniana Library in Columbia: bills, receipts, wills, inventories, bills of sale for slaves, deeds & plots, some tracing titles back to 1733, all legal proof of Col. Alex's stewardship as administrator or

guardian.

Schoolteacher Charlotte Verstelle reported in 1821 the congregation of Black Swamp Baptist Church numbered 30 white & 100 black members. On 13 May 1824 its Building Committee, which included Col. Alex & Joseph J. Lawton, signed an agreement with 2 contractors which contains specifications for a splendid new church building. Total cost: \$4000.

In 1819 Col. Alex opened a store in Robertville; Alexander J. Lawton & Co., in partnership with his brother William Henry who died in 1827, his estate appraised at \$90,000, including his thousands of acres of land; his 155 slaves were valued at \$42,000 & he had \$10,000 in bank stock. In 1815 he bought 1,265-acre Gardens Barony on Boggy Gut Creek from John S. Manser. His daughter Eliza married Dr. Sidney Smith who in 1853 sold 700-acre Gravel Hill, 1050-acre Manigault & 150-acre Horse Pond Plantations to her nephew John Goldwain Lawton (1823-1870), son of Joseph Manser Lawton (1800-1860) of 1300-acre Cypress Vale Plantation. His brother Joseph Manser Lawton, Jr. (1825-1884) resided at 5000-acre Hamilton Ridge Plantation; his 2nd wife, Rosa Caroline Martin, inherited 3,227-acre Oaklens Plantation in the 1891 will of her father. William Henry Lawton left his Robertville Plantation directly across Black Swamp from the church to his youngest son, William John Lawton (1824-1912); his summer home, The Pine-needle, still stands about 2 miles N.W.

The Lawton Papers contain a remarkable undated map (ca. 1824) of the junction of the Charleston - Augusta - Robertville - Savannah roads with the location of Col. Alex's home, his store & cotton gin, the homes of nephew Joseph Manser Lawton, Benjamin Smith (grandfather of Benjamin Spicer Stafford whose memoirs

of his early years at the Hermitage Plantation, Stafford Crossroads, (13) Robertville, I have annotated & published in the 1977-1980 TRANSACTIONS of the Huguenot Society of South Carolina) and Peter Jaudon's (1791-1824) Sadler's shop. The Lawton Papers also have 1829 specifications for construction of a parsonage for Black Swamp Baptist Church. Robertville carpenter, Erastus Swift, was the contractor.

West of Robertville was Black Swamp Methodist Church; a subscriber to its building fund was Dr. Samuel Perry from Connecticut, who died 1821 with a house & lot in Robertville. His widow, Isadora (1801-1826) married as his 2nd wife Rev. Winborn Asa Lawton (1793-1878). Other Robertville physicians included Dr. Alexander R. Norton who later moved to Savannah, Dr. Thomas H. Harris, Dr. Sidney Smith of Gravel Hill, Dr. F. Y. Porcher, Dr. Charles Atkins, Dr. James Stoney Lawton, Dr. Theodore Dehon Mathews (1816-1860), born on Hilton Head, who was practising medicine in 1846 in Albany, Ga. where his father-in-law B. T. D. Lawton died while visiting his daughter, Dr. Needham F. Kirkland (1831-1920) & Dr. William Henry Brisbane (1806-1878). At the 1845 estate sale of 22 year-old Dr. Thomas E. Lawton, his medical library, drugs & supplies were bought by Dr. A. R. Norton, Dr. Nichols & Dr. Duncan. Among Col. Alex's papers is a receipt signed with an "x" by black midwife Mary Wall.

The Rev. Dr. Joseph Thomas Robert (1807-1884), son of planter James John Robert (1781-1852) attended Columbian College, Washington, had his A.B. from Brown 1828, studied medicine at Yale 1828-30, married Col. Alex's daughter, Adeline in Sept. 1830, M.D. from S.C. Medical College 1831, then studied for the ministry at Furman. He was Pastor of Robertville for several years before being called to churches in Kentucky, Georgia & Ohio; he sold his slaves. He was President of Burlington University in Iowa in 1869, then in 1879 became President of Atlanta Baptist Seminary, dying there in 1884.

The son of Dr. Joseph & Adeline (Lawton) Robert, Henry Martyn Robert was born in Robertville 2 May 1837 and moved in accordance with

his father's calling until he entered West Point, graduating 4<sup>th</sup> in honor in 1857, having such mathematical proficiency that he was Asst. Prof of Mathematics during his senior year and taught there a year after graduation. In 1859 en route to fortify San Juan Island in Puget Sound, Washington State, his health was permanently damaged by tropical fever contracted while crossing Panama. He married Helen M. Thresher in December 1860 at Dayton, Ohio and in 1862 was engineer in charge of building the defenses of Washington, D.C. when the fever recurred and he was transferred to <sup>Coler</sup>New Bedford, Mass. where Confederate ships were preying on the whaling fleet. He was asked to preside at a church meeting which deteriorated into a bitter fight, a great embarrassment to him since he failed as an officer & a gentleman to maintain order. He determined to master parliamentary procedure before presiding again.

At war's end Major Robert taught military engineering briefly at West Point before being assigned as Chief Engineer for the Pacific Military District with Headquarters in San Francisco. Again he found in the social organizations to which he belonged disorder & discord. There was no standard rule for organization and order. Available manuals on parliamentary procedure did not agree. In 1869 he compiled a basic 16-page pamphlet with simple parliamentary rules & had it printed in San Francisco.

Transferred to Milwaukee to build lighthouses for the Great Lakes, the severe winter of 1874 brought engineering work to a halt, providing Henry Robert with time to enlarge his manual on parliamentary law. He had 4000 copies printed at his own expense on 19 Feb. 1876. Within 6 weeks he ordered a 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. A 3<sup>rd</sup> edition appeared in 1893. He wrote two text books on the subject. Robert's Rules of Order had become the basic authority & guide for procedures in meetings at all levels of American society. By 1901 General Robert was ready to retire, ending a career of 44 years with the Corps of



Engineers; he had been involved in some degree with almost every major river & harbor improvement & fortification undertaken since the Civil War. As a civilian he worked with the Board of Engineers & was responsible for designing the sea wall for Galveston, Texas & its causeway connecting the city with the mainland. He continued his study of parliamentary law. In 1915 General Robert produced a rewritten & enlarged version entitled, Robert's Rules of Order Revised. He received & answered as many as 30 letters a week on questions of parliamentary law right up to 6 weeks before his death in 1923. By then, more than 3 million copies of his Rules of Order had been published. Presiding officers everywhere continue to bless his name but few know his story.

Here are a few of his golden principles:

1. Abide by the will of the majority.
2. Listen to the minority.
3. Consider one thing at a time.
4. Give everyone a chance to talk.
5. Keep the discussion impersonal.

Long the bases of good manners, Robert's Rules of Order applied these principles to every conceivable tangle of human wills. To do this gracefully required the logic of an engineer, the conscience of a Christian minister's son, the discipline of an army officer & the courtesy of a southern gentleman.

Scott Foresman & Co. still sends a copy of Robert's Rules to each new speaker of every state legislature, his name stamped in gold on the cover. There is a black leather-bound edition for the clergy & a Braille edition for the blind.

A Librarian of Congress said in tribute to Henry M. Robert: "Gen. Robert made it possible for our democracy to express

itself in terms of decision, action and result. His work is infused with and inseparable from our society."

Robert's Rules of Order taught in public schools builds character, the secret strength of America. "Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they shall see God."

Henry Martyn Robert, "The Peacemaking General", died at Hornell, N.Y. 11 May 1923 and was buried with full military honors in Arlington Cemetery. [To \*:]

one year later to this day:

Robertville, 30 buildings including the Robertville Academy, Block Swamp Baptist Church & St. Peter's Episcopal Church, was burned by the 20th U.S. Army Corps on 30 January 1865. Nothing remained standing to bear witness to its glory.

\* → On 30 Jan. 1864 the Episcopal Bishop of South Carolina, the Rt. Rev. Thomas J. Davis, visited St. Peter's Church, Robertville, built 1861, & confirmed eight residents, mostly Robert descendants.

5 Generals of 19th century with Robert blood.

Gen. Alexander Robert Lawton (1818-1896)  
Commissary General, C.S.A.

Gen. Ulysses Robert Brooks (1846-1917)

Gen. Leroy Augustus Stafford (

Gen. Thomas B. Scott, C.S.A.

Gen. Henry Martyn Robert, U.S.A. (1837-1923)