

Freedom is our God-given right to do what we ought to do. When you call on a thoroughbred, he gives you all the speed, strength of heart & sinew in him. When you call on a jackass, he kicks. Freedom is historically the character of that nation at the heart of Europe we call Switzerland. Three-fifths Alpine, with deep valleys & towering mountains which insured isolation & ethnic diversity, its people spoke 4 languages: French, German, Italian & Romansh. Yet in the year 1291 they formed the Perpetual Union, or Swiss Confederation still extant. Except in times of crisis, each canton considered itself an independent, sovereign state. Individuals considered themselves citizens only of their particular canton. Lying along the eastern border of France, the French-speaking canton, or principality of Neuchâtel was a ready haven for religious & political refugees from France. There a 1st cousin of John Calvin named Pierre Robert from Picardy, using the pen name of Olivetan, translated & first published the Bible in French 1535. No known relationship, Robert is not an unusual name, simply means "bright with honor", can be traced back to 8th century Frankish warriors.

Some 30 kilometers west of the city of Neuchâtel in the Jura Mountains is the town of Le Locle, 15th century home of Jehan Robert & his son, Amund Robert (died 1506) whose son Guillaumes (William) Robert moved a few kilometers up the Urquel Valley into the Parish of St. Imier, settling in the Mountains du Droit where his son Daniel Robert was born 1570. Daniel left a son Pierre, born 1598, who married 1622 Judith Sagne whose dowry included 1600 crowns, a heifer & her trousseau. Their son, born 1625, named Daniel for his grandfather, also lived in the mountains, married 1 April 1651 Marie, daughter of Pierre Pétremand of the valley town of Sornviller, just south of St. Imier. They took their first-born to be baptized in the Reformed Evangelical Church of St. Imier 3 Feb. 1656, named him Pierre for his two grandfathers. This is our hero.

Resolved to become a higher education, Pierre left St. Imier for Basle, a bilingual city on the navigable headwaters of the Rhine River, matriculating

at the University 13 Jan. 1674. His 1st year studies included Latin, Greek, Rhetoric, Eloquence & philosophy but he found time to woo & wed the 14-year old Jeanne, daughter of Jehu & Susanne Brayer. Their son, Pierre, Jr. was baptized in the ancient French Church there 9 May 1675 with Mlle. Elizabet Guervi, Mons. Remy Frey & Mons. De Biuleau, a minor nobleman, as sponsors, or godparents. The Predigerkirche, built by Dominican monks c. 1250, was granted by Basle City Council by 1614 for use by the French Church. A haven for French Huguenots for centuries, it still stands on the bank of the Rhine, used by today's Old Catholics. This French Protestant Church, with its Calvinistic presbyterian polity, was of vital importance to Pierre Robert. There he was married, his son baptized & on 19 Feb 1682 in the ceremony known as the "laying on of hands", he was ordained to the sacred ministry. He returned to St. Imier as Asst. Pastor 1682-1685 with the M.D. degree.

King Louis XIV's persecution of his French Huguenot subjects after the 1661 death of Cardinal Mazarin, became sharply more violent, culminating in his Oct. 1685 Revocation of the 1598 Edict of Nantes. A contemporary Swiss historian writes that the Pastor Pierre Robert is said to have left the country in 1685 "without my knowing either where or why".

Well, we know that he arrived in Charles Town by 1686, our family tradition says to minister to a French Huguenot congregation gathered at Isle de Re or La Rochelle under the leadership of Captain Philippe Gendron. They had headright grants at Jamestown, French Santee where they hoped to plant grapes, olives, rice, cultivate silkworms, raise cattle, sheep, hogs & horses. A wooden church was built on the Santee River bank, transportation by water being the rule, although it is said that Pastor Robert owned the first horse in Jamestown, a necessity for visiting his parishioners. The town was laid out on 360 acres, the pastor's lot being next to the church, the cemetery & town common. The threat of hostile Indians, as well as armed soldiers of his catholic majesty of Spain, entrenched at St. Augustine & still claiming Carolina, was unsettling. But more urgent were the problems of physical survival in a swampy, undeveloped land with malarial mosquitos, dangerous wild animals and reptiles and devastating floods. They could scarcely communicate with the English-speaking authorities in Charlestown 40 miles away. These highly cultivated & educated bourgeois-upper middle class with a sprinkling of petty nobility - French & Swiss ladies & gentlemen, their "politeness

• & elegance of manners far superior to the majority of English inhabitants," have been repeatedly noticed by historians. The little colony of French Santee became particularly noted for the exquisite urbanity its founders took with themselves into the wilderness.

In 1696 they applied for naturalization as English citizens. Miraculously, the "Liste" by families, with their European places of origin, maiden names & often parents' names, has survived. In 1699 the Church of St. James, Santee had 111 members, largest outside Charles Town. In January 1701 Pierre Robert, Jr. married Anne Marie Louise LeGrand, daughter of Louis LeGrand, Sieur de Fremoy, & his wife Anne de Magneville, both of the nobility of the lovely old city of Caen, Normandy. Pasteur Robert & his wife in a pre-nuptial agreement generously gave their son half of their present & future land, slaves, orchards, cattle & sheep, & even the right of the young couple to share their home, which they did. By then the Pastor owned more than 1000 acres of land. He had a warrant for 200 acres in 1697 which may have been headrights for two reputed sons: Jean & Elias Robert, who do not appear on the 1696 Liste but definitely lived in the area after 1696 & whose descendants still claim Pasteur Robert as progenitor. No proof is found. In 1700 Pasteur Robert bought 200 acres from Augustus Chastaigner.

The first grandchild, Pierre III arrived 1703. His mother was dead by 1704. His grandmother Jeanne raised him in the parsonage.

In July 1706 Pierre, Jr. as a Commissioner of Jamestown, signed a deed of a town lot for Nicholas LeTud, affixing his seal with his heraldic arms: a fleur de lis & 3 mullets (stars). Similar arms have been used by a well-known Robert dynasty of artists descended from Jehan Robert of Le hocke.

Also in 1706 Pasteur Robert & his congregation petitioned the government to be erected into the Anglican Establishment as the Parish & Church of St. James, Santee, with a representative in the Commons House of Assembly. Accordingly, by Nov. 1706 Pasteur Robert was officially the 1st Rector of the 2nd oldest parish in S.C., using a French translation of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. In 1709 his widowed son, now militia Captain Pierre Robert, married Mlle. Judith, daughter of the late Jacques de Bourdeaux & Madeleine Garillond of Grenoble, Daphne, France, who had immigrated with her parents to Charles Town. The family all appear on the famous 1696 St. Julien Liste. Judith's father died in

Charles Town 1699 owning the entire west side of King St. between Broad & Queen Sts. then mother in 1700, leaving her independently well-to-do & well-served. Her niece Madelaine Pinchart married Henri de Saussure, progenitor of the de Saussures. Pastour Robert welcomed his 2nd grandchild in April 1711, Jacques de Bourdeaux Robert. A year later he deeded 200 acres to Captain Pierre, Jr. who added to his holdings another 40 acres bought from Henri Bruneau in Oct. 1712.

Meanwhile, the most-loved & respected Pastour Robert continued celebrating parish weddings, baptizing the babies & burying the dead, his successor having outraged the tight-knit community by marrying a quite elderly & rich widow, selling her property & leaving her in dire poverty while he disappeared back in Europe. The arrival of the Rev. Claude Philippe de Richbourg from Manakintown, Va. in 1712 restored peace & harmony at Santee for the last 3 years of Pastour Robert's life. He welcomed a grand daughter, Elizabeth Robert in 1715 & died in early fall. His will, probated in Nov. 1715, has been lost. His widow, Jeanne Brayer Robert & their son Captain Pierre, Jr. & his family continued residing in Jamestown. Madame Jeanne was buried in the town cemetery in 1717. Captain Pierre prospered, becoming the father of another daughter, Madelaine in 1719, a Justice of the Peace for Craven Co. 1721, buying 1000 acres from II Landgrave Thomas Smith in 1726, was elected Church Warden 1731, his will in French & his estate inventory dated the same year 1731. He had lived to see his elder son, another Captain Pierre Robert, married in 1723 to Mary Lynch, a 1st cousin to planter Thomas Lynch whose son Thomas signed the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Their daughter Anne Robert married Huguenot planter John Horry; two of her sons were Revolutionary War heroes: Gen. Peter Horry (1742-1815) for whom Horry Co. is named, & Col. Hugh Horry (1744-1795). Captain Pierre Robert, Jr.'s other son, Jacques de Bourdeaux Robert, deeded his Santee holdings of 2045 acres, including 210 acres of the original 360-acre town site, in 1761 to his son John Robert (1742-1826) & moved to Prince William Parish, Granville Co. where he was buried in Stoney Creek Churchyard Nov. 1774. His children were the founders of Robertville in St. Peter's Parish, where they flourished, there being 5 generals plus Governors of Mississippi, Florida, Tennessee & North Carolina, & innumerable clergymen, physicians & educators among his progeny.

The Robert surname is extinct in South Carolina but there are representatives in Louisiana & Texas.

The most beautiful parts of the present can be & often are renewed visions of the past. Across the top of the great seal of the United States are these words: annuit cœptis, translated "He smiles on our undertakings". The Rev. Pierre Robert, M.D. believed & lived by the faith that God the Creator, Redeemer & Sanctifier is "above all & through all & in you all". (Eph. 4:6)