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Robert - Sorry I was so long in getting this to you. I was not ignoring your question - simply looking for an answer to it. You are a computer; I am simply a simpleton in comparison.

How on earth do you keep everything so organized, and respond in such detail to every question people ask so promptly?!

Robert - It took me a while, but I finally found this - the best I can come up with in response to your question about P. R.'s baptismal record and DOB. My Robert files are in better order now, so let me know if you need more information.

*As ever -
Tom*

W. RICHARD GARRETT, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
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31 August 85

Three weeks before Dad died. I have done no Robert research since.

Dear Tommy,

We may very well be mistaken, but Danny Wilson and I can discern utterly nothing by way of absolute proof in the most recent old Swiss records you sent to me, to give us any assurance that they represent the baptismal record of Pasteur Pierre Robert.

Actually, these records are the baptismal notations of a number of infants who were baptised in the Parish of St. Imier during the first two months of 1656. There is not a single "Pierre" recorded, however, nor is there anyone by the Robert surname. It is quite possible (in fact, very likely) that some of the people referred to in the records were Roberts, since many of them are listed by first name only, but there is no actual, specific mention of a Robert. Needless to say, I am puzzled and chagrined by all this, and am hoping that you will be able to provide me with a new "angle" for resolving this mystery.

If you will consult your copy of this supposed "baptismal record," you will see a 3 February 1656 entry (second from the bottom on the first page), which I naturally assumed at first to be that of our Pierre Robert, since 3 February is the date of his baptism, according to every source I have checked. A literal translation of it, however, reveals merely this (roughly translated, as some of the script is illegible): "The 3 Feb. 1656 baptism at St. Imier of the son of Daniel [or David--I really do not know which] and Marie [and her surname is ambiguous, but it is almost certainly what I would call a "first cousin" to Pétremand].

Danny and I intend to pore over this document further, since there are so many little "squiggles" we have been unable to decipher, but of this we are already sure: There is no "Pierre" anywhere on either of the two sheets, nor is there any "Robert."

Exactly where did the 3 February 1656 baptismal date first come from? Is there perhaps some other record I might examine? Slowly but surely, I am beginning to be able to decipher this old French script, so I hope to become at least fairly adept at reading it eventually. In the meantime, any other specimens would be of use, for purposes of comparison, etc. Certain names and terms written unclearly in one place

"pop up" clearly when discovered in another place--one in which the recorder was not in as much of a hurry. The simple phrase "at St. Imier" is such an example. In the 3 February entry, it was unrecognizable, apparently scribbled hurriedly, but in one of the other entries, it stood out clearly.

Again, I will be back in touch as soon as I am able to make more sense of the baptismal records. The primary difficulty in reading them is obvious--the archaic legal terms, very few of which appear in modern French dictionaries. Danny has an old 1800's French dictionary, however, and is going to bring it to me next week, so perhaps it will be of some help.

If you have a free moment, will you please send me the address of the place in New York where you have pictures reproduced. I have a number of old pictures I am interested in having copies of, if I can have them made for a reasonable price.

*Yours -
Paul*