

## INTRODUCTION

Genealogy is much like a disease, the main symptom being an intense, close to insatiable curiosity about your ancestors. How did they live? Why did they settle here? Where did they come from? What did they believe? My curiosity began after the death of my grandmother Martha Clark Roberts (1892 - 1976) Who were the Roberts' of Chester and Fairfield counties?

My father Talton Clark Roberts (1922 - 1964) had taken me to visit our Chester relatives, who we called Uncle Elbert (John Elbert Roberts, Sr.) and Aunt Jessie (Jessie Wages Roberts). Actually they were the brother and sister-in-law of my grandfather, James Wade Roberts (1890 - 1958). I remember as a small boy from the city of Greenville, South Carolina being amazed at the huge old unpainted house, with lights that hung from the ceiling by a cord; the animals; the watermelons; the wood cook stove; the outhouse; Uncle Elbert's chewing tobacco; his catfish stew; Aunt Jessie's cheerful greeting when we drove up; the pears that never seemed to get soft enough to eat; and the people, lots of people - it was a big family. I remember, too, when Aunt Jessie and Uncle Elbert moved into a new house, near the 'old home place.' This house had lights, an electric stove and plumbing, just like my house in the city. And I remember one very sad trip made by my father and me when my best Chester friend, Uncle Elbert's and Aunt Jessie's son Troy Wages Roberts, was killed in an automobile accident. Troy had been a few years older than me, but I had liked him. More than that; I had respected and trusted him. I was young and naive, while Troy had been bold and he had known lots more than city boys.

When we would visit, there was always a time set aside to catch us up on family happenings. This bored the boy in me and I tried to find something more exciting to do, which was usually easy. Now, I wish I could remember some of those conversations.

When I started looking into Roberts' history, I discovered that I was blessed, or cursed, with having two great-great grandfathers with the Roberts surname. I also quickly learned that my Roberts ancestors left very little in the county and state records to mark their passing through this life and the memories of them were diminishing in their descendents.

The manuscript that follows is an outline of the little that I know about my two great-great-grandfathers, William Roberts and Elbert Roberts. It is incomplete and I'm sure it has errors. I hope, however, that it will be read by those who are interested and that maybe we can piece together a complete history of them. Not to glorify them or to increase our present status, but because we want to know.

If you find errors or can make any additions, please contact me.

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William Roberts

William Roberts was probably born around 1827 and he probably died in 1858 or 1859. He married on 4 March 1844 a girl named Jane Halsell. Jane was born on 16 November 1819, she was the daughter of Peter and Sarah Combest Halsell. (This is the family for whom the community of Halsellville is named.)

William and Jane had six children.

Leroy	born	17 December 1844
Sobaski Combest	born	3 February 1847
Peter Albert	born	26 February 1849
Abigail	born	1 July 1853
Elizabeth	born	3 January 1856
Wade Oscar	born	19 May 1858

These births were recorded in the Halsell family Bible, which is now lost, but which was kept by Miss Maggie Harris, who passed this information to relatives, in her own handwriting, prior to her death.

William and Jane struggled to raise their children. William was a farmer but he never owned land in Chester county. Jane, like most women of that time, was uneducated. Jane did inherit 1/17th share in the estate of her Aunt Mary Halsell in 1859, however, this was probably after William's death and the inheritance was not enough to help her greatly. On the 1860 census, she list herself as a farmer, with \$100 in personal property. By 1870 only Abigail and Elizabeth were listed at home with her.

As an indication of the struggle this couple had, in 1846 William was arrested for trading a pair of shoes for a bushel of corn from a slave of Mr. Francis Land. William's grandfather-in-law, John Halsell, who was a shoe maker by trade, posted bond for him. William was found guilty and fined \$92.15 for his offense.

Both William and Jane may have been buried at Bethlehem Baptist Church near Blackstock in Chester county, South Carolina, but if they are there there are no remaining markers for them.

My problem is finding the parents and brothers and sisters for William Roberts. On the 1850 census he stated that he was born in South Carolina. He may have been born in Chester or Fairfield counties, but I doubt it. There is a possibility that he was born in Edgefield county, but this is only a hypothesis. Jane Halsell Roberts' uncle was Thomas Halsell. Thomas had moved to Edgefield county and it is possible that Jane Halsell met William Roberts while visiting her Uncle or that William moved to Chester county on the recommendation of Thomas Halsell.

William and Jane Halsell Roberts' son Wade Oscar was my great grandfather. He would marry Catherine Sara Roberts the daughter of Elbert and Mary Ann Long Roberts.

## ELBERT ROBERTS

Elbert Roberts, my great-great grandfather, was born in 1827; he died on 7 April 1914. He was married to Mary Ann Long (born 4 March 1834). They are buried at the New Hope Methodist Church in the Armenia Community of Chester county, South Carolina.

Elbert and Mary Ann had the following children.

John	born	?
Jane	born	?
Catherine Sara	born	15 February 1858
Obediah	born	11 June 1860
Francis	born	1 October 1865
Margaret	born	1869
Laura	born	1970
Winifred Louise	born	13 May 1871
Robert-W.	born	9 March 1876

There is a possibility that Elbert was married prior to his marriage to Mary Ann Long. The 1880 census list a granddaughter named Addie aged 12 years old. This child may be a daughter of a child from Elbert's first marriage.

Elbert was literate and that gave him an advantage. He chose farming as his occupation, and like all farmers his fortunes rose and fell based on the weather and insects and the fickle marketing systems that are a part of farming. He did have some land, but by the time of his death he had sold most of it or lost it when it was collateralized for a crop loan. In his later years he lived in a house built for him and Mary Ann by their son Robert. He was well liked and referred to by the nickname of "birdie" because he could make bird sounds.

Elbert had at least one brother named Moses. Moses, too, was a Chester county farmer; however, he did move for a time to the state of Georgia. Nothing else is known of Elberts family. It has been reported, but not confirmed, that his mother's maiden name was Estes.

Elbert and Mary Ann Roberts' daughter Catherine Sara Roberts was my great grandmother.

Wade Oscar Roberts and Catherine Sara Roberts

Wade Oscar Roberts was born on 19 May 1858. He died on 20 May 1925. His parents were William and Jane Halsell Roberts.

Catherine Sara Roberts was born on 16 February 1860. She died on 17 November 1944. Her parents were Elbert and Mary Ann Long Roberts.

Wade Oscar and Catherine Sara were married in December 1878. They had 12 children.

Peter Oscar	born	19 November 1879
Eunice	born	24 December 1880
Mary	born	26 January 1882
Martha	born	?
Laura Viola	born	21 February 1888
James Wade	born	5 January 1890
John Elbert	born	5 March 1892
Lula Bethany	born	23 June 1895
Samuel Boroughs	born	15 April 1896
Margaret Evelyn	born	?
Estelle	born	26 November 1900
Marion Douglas	born	19 August 1903

Their son James Wade Roberts was my grandfather.

James Wade Roberts

On Christmas day in 1912 James Wade Roberts married Martha Lee Clark. She was the daughter of Talton Elam Clark and Maggie Pamela Robinson. Their marriage was witnessed by Elbert and Mary Ann Long Roberts. It was performed at the Beaver Creek Baptist Church.

James Wade also started his married life with the intent of farming. Martha Clark Roberts had inherited some land on the Chester-Fairfield border and it was on this ground that they started. Somewhere around 1920 the family moved to Greenville, South Carolina, where James Wade started work for a tire recapper. It was likely that the family planned to return one day, because they never sold their land. However, Greenville became their home and the land in Chester became known as the 'old home place.' It was one of the sites we visited when I was a boy.

James Wade and Martha Clark Roberts had the following children.

James Arthur	born in Fairfield/Chester
Margie Lee	born in Fairfield/Chester
Charles Franklin	born in Fairfiled/Chester
William Morrison	born in Fairfield/Chester
Talton Clark	born in Greenville
Mary Halsel	born in Greenville
Eugene White	born in Greenville

James Wade and Martha Clark Roberts' son Talton Clark Roberts was my father.