

A SHORT HISTORY OF MY FAMILY – WASHINGTON D.C.
(As I now remember it.)

March 9, 1901

By

William Lastra Roberts, Emporia, Kansas
(1830 – 1909)

Transcribed from an old photostatic copy in the possession of my Mother (Mrs. Laura Catherine (Roberts) Bivins). Some words were illegible but have been transcribed as nearly as possible.

Mrs. Maurice (Grace) Bewley
Wichita, Kansas

April 22, 1971

About the year 1745 and after the union of the two Houses of Stuart and Lancaster, George (The Pretender) put forward his son Charles Edward for the Throne of Scotland. The Jacobites and highlanders espoused his cause and he joined them in the Scottish rebellion. Many gallant gentlemen lost their lives and possessions. Charles Edward made his escape to France and my Great Grandfather Sir Robert Chambers, a gentleman of wealth and large possessions in Scotland made his escape to Mona Isle (now Anglesea) and his large estate was confiscated by the Crown. Being a man of education he was employed by the Marquis of Anglesea to open the Parys Mountain Copper Mines near Amlwch, and which is still in existence. He was married to Miss Sarah Edwards and to them were born two sons, Robert and John. They took their Father's first name, Robert, hence the Roberts or Robert's Sons.

My Grandfather John Roberts was a man of splendid and noble appearance, 6 feet 1 ½ inches high with broad chest and well built, as I remember him. Grandmother was a small delicate lady of good manners and high moral character.

My father, William Roberts, was employed as a refiner of copper at the smelting works. He was married to Miss Annie Jones. She was brought up on a farm and was known for her excellent good qualities and deep religious convictions. She died the same day as Abraham Lincoln, 1865. There were 9 children, 3 died when babies. My oldest brother, Captain John Roberts, was hurt by a fallen spar on the coast of Russia and died at Holyhead. Robert was Station Master at Arror at the Colony of Victoria, Australia. Owen, a Sheep Rancher at the same place, and both died there. My brother Thomas, known all over Wales as the "Lame Bard" died at the age of 22, a smart good Christian young man. Being helpless, he wrote all his compositions with the pen in his mouth.

I, William L. Roberts, was born at Amlwch, Anglesea, North Wales, on July 22, 1830. There were no schools in the county but the National School and all the pupils were compelled to attend the Established Church, and my parents being strictly nonconformists, I was (like 99 out of every 100 children then) left without any education except the Sabbath School and the efforts of Father and Mother at home. At 9 years of age I went on board a Sloop to Liverpool to an Uncle to heat rivets in a shipyard for the first iron ship that was ever built. I stayed 2 years, went back and started farming, worked until 10 years old on a farm. When at 16 I was compelled by some friends and my own foolish notions, to take u the work of the Ministry and at 17 years was licensed by the Whole Presbetry of Anglesea to preach, and, working 18 hours every day and spending nights in study and growing very tall and slim, I broke down, left my place, went to my home to die, spitting blood and for 8 months could not do anything. Finally got well, but my voice was gone, so I gave up preaching, went to Holyhead and employed as a painter at the Holyhead harbour works. I was married to Miss Laura Jones, August 27, 1850, stayed until works were finished in 1883, went to Liverpool, shipped as Engineers Steward on S.S. Africa. Wages too low, went to the fire room at 4 pounds, 10 shillings per month, found I could do better on American ships. I joined S. Ship Vanderbilt running from New York to Havre in France, calling at Southampton England. In 1858 took my family with me on board Vanderbilt from Southampton to New York, running on that station until the war broke out. Ship was made a present to

the U.S. and fitted up at Brooklyn Navy Yard. My dear wife objected to my going in the Navy, so I left the sea for good, after crossing the Atlantic Ocean 89 times.

I worked in New York until 1870, when I thought it was to the children's interest to go out West. I prescripted a lot of land in Lyon County Kansas. The first crop was destroyed by grasshoppers in 1874. Nothing to eat for man or beast, lost two valuable horses worth 300-75 dollars. Fall of 1874 exchanged claim for town property. My old boss, W. A. Miles wanted me to come back to him and sent 50 dollars to pay any expenses, so I went and worked for him until 1879. When I went West to work for AT and Santa Fe railroad as a boiler maker, my health was poor, hard work, excess heat and smoke in hot fire boxes with flue dust, was attacked by sciatic rhumatic pains. Went with my wife to Wales for health in 1886, found no relief, went to work again at same work, but was soon sick again. Went to Eureka Springs, Arkansas, finally to Topeka Hospital on March 10, 1899. Staid to May 26, 1899. Was transferred to Las Vegas, New Mexico to the hot springs and mud baths, taking bath every other day for 3 weeks, then twice a week, improving rapidly. July 16, 1899 left hospital before getting well and discharged. Found my dear wife in poor health. July 21 she was confined to her bed with inflammation of the bowels, and died on July 29 – aged 71 years, 7 days, and had the largest funeral ever seen in Emporia. All her children was at her bedside, even her son David James Roberts from Washington D.C. and friends from Burton, 78 miles, Argonia and Osage City. Since then I am making my home with my daughter Anne, visiting occasionally the rest of the children, am very happy in any family.

Last May by kind invitation went to Newton, stayed 6 weeks with my son-in-law, T. B. Jones and Laura Ellen and family. Last December on the 17, 1900, she died of pneumonia and was buried near her mother at Lower Dry Creek Cemetery on the 20, aged 41, leaving a lovely family of a husband and 6 small children. A noble woman, industrious and of high Christian character. My oldest son, Wm. Henry Roberts, is living at Emporia employed as Engineer for Lewis W. Lewis, Contractor. David James Roberts is (at this writing, April 10, 1901) Foreman of the 1st Division of Government Printing House Washington, with whom I am now making my home for awhile by his kind invitation and kinder treatment by him and his noble intelligent and good hearted wife, an American lady from Americus, Kansas.

John Thomas Roberts is also there, printer for the Government, is a widower for 6 years with 3 children, 1 girl and 2 boys, and (as I said before) Anne Jane is at Emporia, Kansas, having a large family of 10 children, 4 boys and 6 girls. I have living 25 grandchildren, Wm. – 5, Annie – 10, Laura – 6, David - 2, 1 boy Leo, 1 girl Mona, and two grandchildren dead.

Now at 71 years old, I am looking back and I find I have much to be thankful for, above all for good parents, also a good honest kind and sympathetic Christian wife, and for her companionship for 49 years, her good counsel, cheerful aid, and careful attention to myself and family. I miss her very much, as well as our beloved daughter that followed her so soon to their rest and everlasting joy with the Master they served so well. Although I miss them I would not recall them if I could, for it is much better to be with

the Lord there than to be here for the Lord. Also to be thankful for better health than I have enjoyed for years.

Of my dear departed wife's folks now living there is one brother and his daughter, David Jones, Bob, Jane and family, also one sister, Anne Williams. Brother about 76 years old, sister 83, all at Rosbol, also one niece, Mary Jones at Holyhead, Anglesea, G.B. In the United States, one nephew, one niece, John W. Williams and wife, Fair Haven University.

I have spent my years in connection with the Presbyterians but I am inclined much always to the Congressional Church Government and believe the Calvinistic doctrine to be the nearest to the work of God.

July 9, 1901

As the days of separation from the children in Washington draws near, this family (David's) to Europe and I to Kansas, with some longing as to the parting (perhaps forever) I am glad to be able to trust them to Him that takes care of the Sparrow, and I find much of my prayer for them (as well as all the children) summed up in the 20th Psalm, "The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble, the same of the God of Jacob defend thee, send thee help from Zion and strengthen thee from the Sanctuary, Remember thy offerings, and accept thy burnt Sacrifice, Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfill all they counsel," also 2nd Timothy 1 – 16, "May the Lord give mercy to thy house, for you have often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of me in my loneliness and old age." Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think, Unto Him be glory by and through myself and dear family forever, Amen.

After this short review in general, I would like to say a few things in particular about my dear wife's folks as I remember them. Her Grandfather, William Jones, was a farmer, and a fair scholar, was clerk of the Established Church at Bodorgan, County of Anglesea, for 46 years, of jolly disposition and of poetic turn of mind. Her Father David Jones I remember well. He had charge of horses and cattle at Llynon Hall for Cap Jones Esq. All his life. Her Mother, Jane Jones, died when she was 5 years old. She was the youngest of 6 children. She was brought up as a Baptist. At 18 years of age she was baptized in the Church of England at Llanfugail and at the same church was married. At 14 she was sent to a lady friend to learn dress making after paying in advance four pounds for tuition, worked at her trade among farmers until 1850. She was born July 22, 1827. We went to housekeeping at Holyhead December 1850. There she joined the Presbyterian Church in 2853. We moved to Liverpool, England n 1858. She went from Liverpool with children – William, David and Anne to Southampton through London to meet me coming from France on S. Ship Vanderbilt for New York. We lived in New York City from 1858 until 1870 when we moved to Kansas settling at Emporia. Two of our children were born in Wales, William and David, two in England, David James and Anne Jane, two in America, Laura Ellen and John T. David (our baby of 9 months) died at Liverpool, was buried at Upper Stanope Street, M. E. Church Cemetery. My sister-in-law, Mary C. Jones was seventeen years dairy maid at Pheanip Park Dublin. In 1849 she

was married to James Edmunds, Furrier Magi, 17th Lancers light Cavalry. Served through Crimean War. Was in Faineous Charge at Inkerman, after that he was sent to Calcutta, India. His wife died there, was buried 10 miles west of the city. D James is called after him by request of sister-in-law. He was a fine man, smart and brave. Do not know if he is still alive. Have inquired at War office but no answer. He excelled in his trade (Blacksmith) (won Championship twice at Newbridge, Ireland in horseshoeing) as his namesake D. J. Roberts did in his.

William H. Roberts, born December 15, 1851 at Anglesea, North Wales. Died April 27, 1936 in new Albany, Kansas. He was married to Grace Thomas, December 18, 1876 in Liverpool, England.

Grace Thomas, born August 15, 1851, at Amlwch, North Wales.
Died May 1, 1929 at Emporia, Kansas.

Born, William Owen Roberts, at Anglesea, North Wales, September 20, 1879.
Died March 27, 1954.

Born, Thomas David Roberts, at Carnarvon, North Wales, May 29, 1880.
Died 1963.

Born, Arthur John Roberts, at Emporia, Kansas, February 19, 1885.
Died 1969.

Born, Ella Grace Roberts, Emporia, Kansas, December 13, 1887.
Died, July 1888.

Born, Laura Catherine Roberts, at Emporia, Kansas, August 18, 1889.

Born, Albert Edwin Roberts, at Emporia, Kansas, December 27, 1893.

Laura Catherine Roberts, born August 18, 1889, Emporia, Kansas.
Married to Mark Forest Bivins, May 19, 1915, in Emporia, Kansas.

Mark Forest Bivins, born December 7, 1890, New Albany, Kansas.
Died January 9, 1964.

Born, Robert Issac Bivins, May 21, 1916, Emporia, Kansas.

Born, Mark Forest Bivins, May 4, 1918, LaCrosse, Kansas.

Born, William Kenneth Bivins, March 27, 1920, New Albany, Kansas.
Died October 29, 1920.

Born, Marjory Jean Bivins, June 19, 1922, New Albany, Kansas.

Born, Grace Evelyn Bivins, May 5, 1924, New Albany, Kansas.

William Owen Roberts, born September 20, 1879. Married to Gwendolyn Sarah Ellis, November 27, 1902, in Chanute, Kansas

Gwendolyn Sarah Ellis, born November 25, 1982.

Born, Sarah Grace Roberts, August 27, 1902

Born, Oliver Roberts, March 1905.
Died, August 1925.

Born, Mary Elizabeth Roberts, January 27, 1907.
Died, May 18, 1907.

Thomas David Roberts, born May 29, 1880. Married to Ora Bell Cheshire, October 7, 1903, in Emporia, Kansas.

Ora Bell Cheshire, born January 8, 1884.
Died, January 29, 1947.

Born, Bernice Roberts, November 25, 1906.

Born, Thomas Russell Roberts, January 1, 1914.

Born, Nancy Jane Roberts, September 29, 1918.

Arthur John Roberts, born February 19, 1885. Married to Eunice Byram, June 14, 1909, at Cedar Point, Kansas.

Eunice Byram, born February 20, 1884.
Died, October 1970.

Born, Dorothy Roberts, February 21, 1911.

Albert Edwin Roberts, born December 27, 1893. Married to Beulah Bee Adams, June 15, 1926.

Beulah Bee Adams, born June 24, 1899.