

THE [1221 JAMES] ROBERTSON BIBLE

By Mrs. Felix Robertson Hill, Jr. in WORLD OUTLOOK, Nashville, Tenn., September, 1932. "Editors note: Mrs. Lavinia Craighead..., who was the youngest daughter of Gen. James Robertson, the founder of Nashville, was the grandmother of Dr. Felix Robertson Hill..., who was born in Nashville, and who for half a century served great churches in Southern Methodism as pastor . . . Mrs. Felix R. Hill, Jr., at the request of the editor, furnishes the following story of the Robertson Bible."

"After a brief visit to North Carolina in 1784, General Robertson returned to the tiny frontier post, flung as it were on the very outskirts of civilization by his own adventurous hand, and with him he brought the Bible which is now a cherished keepsake of his descendants. This book, bound in sheepskin and published in London' in 1774, is as sturdily put up as was the stockade which protected the early home of Nashville's illustrious founder, in which it served as the family Bible. It is eight and one-half inches long, five and one-half inches wide, and three inches thick. In the one binding are two volumes, the second volume beginning with the book of Isaiah.

"Inside the front cover is the original signature of 'J. Robertson,' as attested to by his son, Dr. Felix Robertson..., the first white child born in the settlement, and by Lavinia, the youngest daughter. On the back of the title-page of the New Testament there appears a complete record of the births of James and Charlotte Robertson and their eleven children. Soon after Peyton... , then twelve years old, was killed by the Indians, another son...was born and was named for his massacred brother. Two daughters also bore the mother's name, Charlotte.

"General Robertson died in 1814, but Mrs. Robertson lived to the advanced age of ninety-two and was buried from Old McKendree Church in Nashville in 1843. Sometime after her death, her youngest daughter, Mrs. Lavinia Craighead, in whose home she died, gave the Bible to her daughter, Mrs. Georgianna Hill.... She, in 1876, gave it to her son, Dr. Felix Robertson Hill, Sr., Charlotte Robertson's great-grandson, who was born in Nashville the year following her death and who for more than half a century served Southern Methodism as a pastor. When he gave it to a son (Dr. David Spence Hill...), who now has it. WCH), several years before his death in 1917, he expressed the wish that it be kept in the possession of a lineal descendant of James Robertson.

"This old book was brought to the Cumberland Settlement only a decade after the first regular Conference of Methodism in America was held in Philadelphia, and some three years before the first Methodist circuit rider, Benjamin Ogden, made his unheralded appearance in the Cumberland Settlement. Peter Massie, 'the weeping preacher,' and Wilson Lee soon followed, and it was under the leadership of the latter that James and Charlotte Robertson became members of the first society of Methodists ever organized in Middle Tennessee."

FAMILY RECORDS IN BIBLE

Mrs. Felix Robertson Hill, Jr., ...writes that the family Bible of James and Charlotte (Reeves) Robertson is now [in 1937] owned by their great great grandson, Dr. David Spence Hill..., 1028 Connecticut Ave., Washington, D. C.

She has furnished photostats of pages upon which are manuscript family records which follow.

Records on page opposite beginning of New Testament (see facsimile)

James Robertson was Born June
2^d in the ^{year} 1742

Charlotte Robertson was Born
January 2^d in the year 1751

Jonathan Friar Robertson
was born June the 13th 1769

James Randolph Robertson
was born December the 17th 1771

Duliah Robertson was born
November the 30th 1773

Peaton Henderson Robertson
was born November the 22nd 1775

Charlatti Robertson was born
July the 1st 1778

Felix Robertson was born
January the 11th 1781

Charlotte Robertson was born
March the 11th 1783

William Blount Robertson was born
June the 13th 1785

Peaton Robertson was born
January the 9th 1787

Lewiswah Robertson was Dec 25 1790

Colonel Harlee's photostat of one of the
record pages from 1221 General James
Robertson's family Bible

"James Robertson was Born June 28 in the year 1742
"Charlotte Robertson was Born January 2nd in the year 1751
(The following were their children).
"Jonathan Friar Robertson was born June the 13th 1769
"James Randolph Robertson was born December the 11th 1771
"Delilah Robertson was born November the 30th 1773
"Peaton Henderson Robertson was born November the 22nd 1775
"Charlotte Robertson was born July the 11th 1778
"Felix Robertson was born January the 11th 1781
"Charlotte Robertson was born March the 11th 1783
"William Blount Robertson was born June the 13th 1785
"Peaton Robertson was born December the 8th 1787
"Livinah Robertson was (born) Fe (b) 23rd 1790"

On the top of the next page is record of their eleventh child

"John McNairy Robertson was born April 26th 1792"

Opposite the title page of Vol. I is the signature:

"J. Robertson."

On a page otherwise blank:

"James Robertson his book."

Assuming that the inscription, "James Robertson his book," was written by James Robertson, it is inferred from similarity of handwriting that he wrote the records of birth of himself, his wife, and his children.

Then follows a repetition of that inscription:

"James Robertson his Book"

Then follows in another handwriting:

"George Allanson Manasho was born the 14th of June 1810 "William Reeves was born the 9th of March 1794"

Opposite the title page of Vol. II, in a different handwriting:

"Charlotte Garland was born July the first day A. D. 1782

"Sary Garland was born September the twenty third day 1784"

Then follows in another handwriting:

"William Reeves Son of George Reeves was born Marth 9th 1794

"George Reeves the son of Burrel Reeves was born the 2nd day of January 1799

"William Reeves" (apparently a signature) "Hanah Reeves was born the November 1795"

Mrs. Hill writes that also the following records are in this Bible.
Back of title page of Vol. I:

[Children of...Felix Robertson].

"James Walter Robertson was born 18 February 1812
"Elizabeth Anderson Robertson was born 23 July 1813"

End of Vol. I. [These were probably nephews and nieces of Charlotte (Reeves) Robertson]

"John Reeves was born January 17th 1786
"Thomas Reeves was born February 11th 1784
"Betsey Reeves was born August 18 1791
"William S. Reeves was born March 9 1794
"Dorinda Reeves was born November 1 1798
"George A. Manashco was born June 14th 1810
"William R. Manashco was born November the 8th 1812"

Reverse of title page Vol. II:

"R. C. Napier was born Nov 1st 1774
"Charlotte Napier wife of R. C. Napier was born March 11th 1783"

[Children of R. C. and Charlotte (Robertson) Napier:]

"James Robertson Napier was born August 25th 1800
"Balinda Tennessee Napier was born June 16 1806
"Materson C. Napier was born June 9 1808"

Source: William Curry Harlee, *Kinfolks: A Genealogical and Biographical Record*, 3 volumes (New Orleans, LA: Searcy & Pfaff, 1935-37), 3: 2538-2541.