

Robert Gentry  
1730 – 1811  
Echoes of the Past  
A Book For the Descendents of John Alexander Gentry & Minnie Bell Woods  
Compiled by Helen Watson Edwards  
Montgomery, AL 1992  
Pg. 67

Robert Gentry was born in 1730 in Hanover, Virginia (later became Louisa County). He was the 5th child of Nicholas II and Jane (her maiden name is unknown). Robert was reared in a landed family, owning a plantation with a number of slaves in what is now Louisa County, Virginia. Robert was educated because he signed his deeds. He married Judith Joyner, daughter of Phillip Joyner of Albermarle County, Virginia.

Robert and Judith had seven children, four boys and three girls. These children consist of Charles, Jesse, Bartlett, Martin, Elizabeth, Sarah, and Mary. The first child was born in 1755 so Robert and Judith probably married in about 1752 or 1753.

When Judith's father died in 1762, Robert Gentry was one of the witnesses of Phillip Joyner's will. Robert Gentry's sons, Charles and Jesse, inherited 200 acres of land each from their grandfather. This land is now the University of Virginia.

In 1776, Robert and Judith sold 234 acres in Albermarle county, Virginia, to John Woodson and probably left shortly there after to go to what is now East Tennessee, but then was known as Washington County, North Carolina. Robert was probably about 47 years old. They may have soon been drawn into the Revolutionary War. Robert and his sons Jesse and Martin probably served in the Revolutionary War under North Carolina Militia as there is a record in the North Carolina Military Pay Roll Department where they requested payment for services although it does not say what those services were. It is logical to assume that they were for military service.

The earliest record found of Robert Gentry's presence in East Tennessee is that of his oldest son, Charles, serving on the first Grand Jury of Washington County, North Carolina. (East Tennessee)

Both Robert and Charles are listed on the first tax lists of Washington County which are on file in the County Court Clerk's office in the court house at Jonesboro, Tennessee. On this list Robert showed property valued at 173 pounds 10 shillings and was charged a tax of 1 pound 15 shillings and 6 pence.

The May 1780 minutes of the Washington County Court of Pleas in Vol 1, mention Robert Gentry putting up bond to guarantee his presence as a witness in the trial of the State vs William Nelson who was charged with passing counterfeit money. Robert was apparently put under bond to guarantee his attendance as a witness.

The Court records show that in 1781 Robert was on a jury in a case of the State vs Patrick

Murphy on a charge of stealing a bell. Incidentally Mr. Murphy was found not guilty.

In May, 1782, Robert was again on a jury.

Robert moved to Jefferson County in 1783. He is listed as one of the earliest settlers in that area. His name is on the earliest records of the courts and in the second church founded around Dandridge, Tennessee. The French Broad Baptist Church was established about two and a half miles East of Dandridge in 1786, by Jonathan Mulkey and Isaac Barton. Robert Gentry's name is on the original roll of members. Charles' name also appeared on the original membership roll as the church clerk.'

Robert received two land grants from the State of North Carolina. One of them dated 1783 was for 375 acres on little Limstone Creek. Another land grant occurred in 1787 for 475 acres on the head of Kelsey's Mill Creek in Green County. In February 1789 Robert sold land to Hugh and James Cunningham and it was acknowledged in open court. In the same court Robert was a witness to a man's power of attorney.

Then in February 1790 Robert appeared before the court to report he sold Thomas Embree 62 acres of land. (In the early days it was the custom to appear in court to vouch for your signature on a deed to make a record of it and authenticate it.

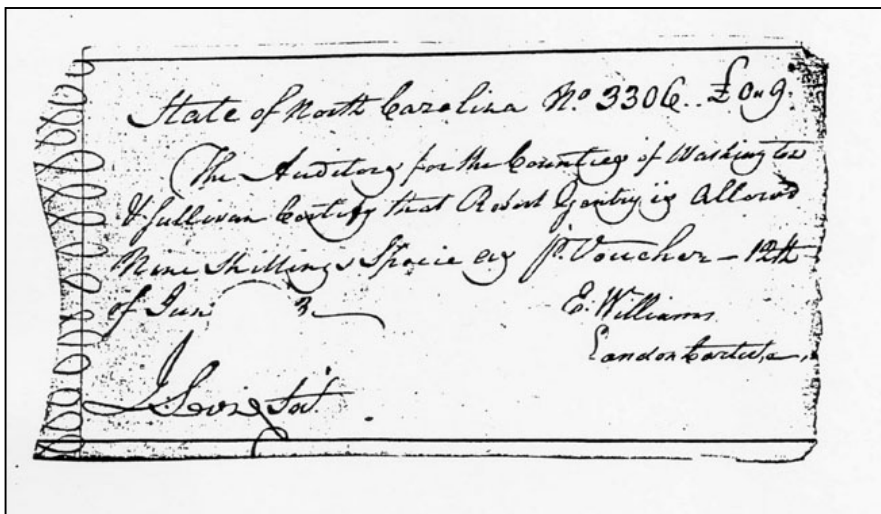
In Jefferson County court Minutes in February Session 1795 it says, "Robert Gentry hath leave to record his mark which is a crop and two half pennys in the right ear and a swallow fork in the left". It was the custom in those days to mark their cattle to show ownership.

Sometime during this time Robert lost his wife, Judith, because there is a record of his marriage to Rachel West on November 13, 1804. Robert would have been about 74 years old and his new wife was probably beyond the child bearing age as they had no children.

Robert Gentry died sometime during the year of 1811 as his will was probated at that time. He is probably buried outside of Dandridge, Tennessee, but thus far there is no record of the location of his grave.

(See copy of the Will) & (See Land Deeds of Jefferson County, TN).

<sup>1</sup>Patrechek, Ruth. Tennessee Cousins. Pages 98-99.



A Voucher issued by Washington County, North Carolina authorizing payment of nine shillings to Robert Gentry.

# State of North Carolina

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Department of Cultural Resources

Division of Archives and History



This verifies that the following information is recorded in a manuscript volume in the custody of the State Archives titled "Revolutionary Army Accounts" (Volume I , Page 8 , Folio 2 ):

Heading: An Account of Specie Certificates paid into the Comptrollers Office by John Armstrong Entry Taker for Land in North Carolina - viz<sup>t</sup>-

Number: 3306

By whom Granted: Bledsoe and Williams

To whom Granted: Robert Gentry

Date: 16 Aug 1782

Sum: 9 shillings

Interest: None

To what Time: 21<sup>st</sup> Oct<sup>r</sup> 1783

Total amount principal and Interest: 9 shillings

Other information: None

Raleigh, North Carolina

December 12, 19<sup>91</sup>.

*John R. Lankford, Jr.*  
Chief, Archives and Records Section

## Washington County History

The first white settlers arrived in what is present day Washington County in the 1760's. Abingdon, Va. was known as Wolf Hills before "Abingdon" was selected as the name of the county seat. Washington County was formed from Fincastle County in 1777, the county seat, Abingdon was formed in 1778. The original Washington County, VA in addition to containing some of the other present day surrounding counties also contained what is today, Sullivan County, TN. Visit this page, Early Settlers of Washington Co, VA, to see some of the names of the early settlers to county (before 1780).

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