

The History of Robe, Washington and The Robe Family Who Settled It

A presentation at the March meeting of the Sno-Isle Genealogical Society by Margaret Robe Summitt, Ph.D.

I am Margaret Robe Summitt, Sno-Isle Publicity Chairman and Sounder editor. I've been researching the Robe family most intensively for the past 16 years or so, but have been absorbing family history one way or another for most of my life.

I first heard about Robe, Washington from a second cousin once removed in Dayton, Ohio, after my 1986 trip to Salt Lake, during which I found a family history of the Robes he had deposited there. My cousin copied for me a map from Phillip Woodhouse's book "The Everett and Monte Cristo Railway". This is a well-known book widely available in used bookstores, and with one of the most easily accessible histories of the area. I was living in Los Angeles at the time and had no idea I would ever be able to visit the Robe area, let alone live in the same county. But God led me to Christopher, and we decided to bring our family up here to Chris's corner of the country.

It takes some doing to get to Robe Valley - it always has. On my first trip there, Chris's Dad was driving, and he got confused, but we did manage to arrive at the campground at Verlot, just 13 miles northeast of Granite Falls, and Chris took a slide of me standing on the old railroad grade beside the south fork of the Stillaguamish river.

The old town of Robe used to be on the river, by the way, but the town was moved in 1907 to its present location along the highway northeast of the original site, and it is now called Robe Valley.

To get there you go out toward Lake Stevens on Highway 9, then take Highway 92 to Granite Falls. Once you pass through Granite Falls, you officially begin traveling the Mountain Loop Highway. Robe Valley is about ten miles east of Granite Falls on this highway. It's a handful of homes, two gas station stores, a bed and breakfast, the Sillaguamish Country Club, and Fire Station 23. They have an informal festival, called Robe Valley Days, and fund raiser for Fire Station 23 every Labor Day weekend, and we eat at the Mountain View Café and look up at Mount Pilchuck, and I add to my collection of Robe-themed shirts and mugs. This one says "I've been around the Mountain Loop, Robe Valley, Washington," and this one is from the Lochsloy store. Lochsloy is between Lake Stevens and Getchell, and was named Lochsloy in 1902 by a MacFarlane postmaster.

Lochsloy is the battle cry of Clan MacFarlane - this is the clan tartan I'm wearing and when we go by in the car we raise our arms and shout "Lochsloy!" to the great embarrassment of our children and the consternation of oncoming traffic. Anyhow, in the Mountain View Café there's a painting in the bar of a white Bigfoot, and the only time my husband Chris goes into a bar is when he looks at it. There have been reported sightings of Bigfoot, some quite recently, in the Robe valley area. If you continue east up the south Stillaguamish valley on the Mountain Loop Highway, it's paved as far as Barlow Pass, near where Monte Cristo used to be, about 40 miles beyond Granite Falls. In the warmer months you can continue driving the unpaved section along the Sauk River Valley and complete the loop via Darrington to Arlington on Highway 530.

Now imagine that it's 1892, 110 years ago, and there is only a trail up to Monte Cristo, but everybody's talking about the silver and other minerals that have been discovered in the upper reaches of the south Stillaguamish Valley. Plans are made to have smelters go up in Everett, making it the "Pittsburgh of the West" (at this time a comparison to Pittsburgh was still considered a good thing). Plans are made, with

John D. Rockefeller's money, to get a railroad-fast-up to the mines in Monte Cristo. In a political tradeoff, Everett is made the county seat, and Granite Falls the head of the railroad. M.Q. BARLOW, for whom the pass is named, recommends laying the tracks hundreds of feet above the river gorge. But his idea is rejected in favor of the "quick and dirty" method of laying track down close to the river.

This railroad, for all its fatal flaws, is still a thing to marvel at. You wonder how they ever did it. The gorge between Granite Falls and the old town of Robe is six miles of granite cliffs, and this rock is fractured and unstable. A bridge at the near end of the gorge crossed the river, and seven tunnels were blasted. You can read about the building of the railroad in Woodhouse's book, and in a new book that he co-authored called *The Everett and Monte Cristo* (show book). I got this copy at a train store in the Everett Mall called the Iron Horse Trading Post. It is full of delightful pictures and technical information to please railroad fans.

The building of the railroad was plagued with problems. The rock the tunnels were blasted through was not stable enough to support them, and every tunnel had to be hored up with beams. It is said that the locals warned the railroad engineers of floods, and that their response was to pooh-pooh these warnings, calling the river a "mere trout stream." I am told by David Cameron, a local historian, that this trout stream" remark has never been documented. The chief engineer, a graduate of a civil engineering school in the Midwest, is said to have underestimated the potential force of Cascade mountain rivers, and this is probably true. Whatever warnings were given were ignored. The seventh tunnel collapsed in September 1892, before the track was laid through it. A washout occurred on November 18, obliterating the right-of-way before any rails had been laid. The track was rerouted around the tunnel, and the construction continued. The first locomotive chugged into Monte Cristo in September 1893.

The quick and dirty method proved to be too expensive in the long run. A disastrous flood in November 1898 tore away the bridge at the mouth of the gorge. In 1899 a back room deal was done in which Rockefeller forced the owners of the mines to sell out to him. Once John D. owned the mines, the smelters and the railroad, he rebuilt the railroad himself and expected to turn a profit. Unfortunately, the ore was not of high enough quality to make mining profitable over the years. As for lumber, as Truitt K. Robe and the owners of the other mill, the Canyon Lumber Company, were to discover, the sharp turns and bends of the railroad made carrying full-length logs on flatcars a dangerous proposition. The railroad therefore demanded that the mills produce only goods that could be carried in boxcars. The mills did so, but the market for this type of product kept shrinking to the point that operating lumber mills was no longer profitable. So industrial use of the valley was not a long-term proposition. Although industry is gone, it has always been popular for recreational use. This is where the future of the valley lies, and I'll return to this point later.

Now that we have the background, we can put Truitt Kendall ROBE and his family into the picture. Truitt, who was called Tru, was my third cousin once removed. And this is how I, whose maiden name is ROBE, am related to him. My great-great-great grandfather, William ROBE, Sr., had a son named David ROBE, who is Truitt's ancestor, and a son named Josiah ROBE, who is my ancestor. David ROBE had a son named William ROBE, and a grandson named William Ristine ROBE, who was Tru's father.

William Ristine ROBE was born in Adams County, Ohio, in April 1835. Adams County is in southern Ohio on the Ohio River. William married 22 March 1860 Mary Jessimah BOWEN in Fairview, Adams County, Ohio. Mary was born 14 January 1843 in Sardinia, Brown Co., Ohio; Brown county is next door to Adams County. William Ristine ROBE fought in the Civil War, and rose to the rank of Corporal. In the aftermath of the Battle of Shiloh, he found a dead soldier's diary on the battlefield, and this is now preserved in the family as a relic, along with the letters home that William wrote. William and Mary had seven children, and the four surviving sons - Wirt, Campbell, Tru and Roy - figure prominently in our story.

First there were two baby boys who died in infancy. Then William Wirt ROBE was born in Adams County in 1865. Then the family moved to Missouri, apparently because the father's service had taken him there, and he decided that Missouri would be a good place to live. Alexander Campbell ROBE, the second boy, was born in Clay County, Missouri, in 1867, and Truitt Kendall ROBE was born in Cass County, Missouri on 16 January 1869. The names Truitt and Kendall come from his mother's father, Kendall

Truitt BOWEN.

The farm in Missouri did not work out, so the family returned to Adams County. Truitt taught school for a while in the town of Manchester, Ohio, on the river. The family also apparently lived for a time in Illinois, at some point after 1877 and before 1886. 1877 was the year Roy ROBE, the youngest son, was born, back in Adams County. There was also a daughter, Catherine ROBE, about whom I have no information except that she was dead before 1900.

They came to the state of Washington in 1886, because Truitt's mother had tuberculosis, and it was thought that the change of climate would recover her health, which she did at Gig Harbor. Then they moved on to Auburn in King County, and then to a place near Machias in Snohomish County. There the ROBES met William M. TURNER, who had located at Machias after an 1884 residence in Snohomish. The TURNERS had come by covered wagon in 1880, following the Union Pacific tracks through Kansas, Wyoming, and Utah, arriving at Boise on August 1st. After a brief stop in Walla Walla, they continued on to the Stillaguamish Valley. The ROBE and TURNER families were to remain close for generations; Mr. TURNER's daughter Ella (known as "Daisy") was to be Truitt K. ROBE's wife. They were to be married 25 November 1891. Their daughter Mildred was born in 1895, and daughter Doris in 1897.

Truitt's first employment was as a clerk in a store that he himself built. He left storekeeping temporarily to help his father care for a rented hop farm. Granite Falls was then in its infancy; it had no name yet, except for the general term, the "Big Burn," that applied to the entire area. Mrs. TURNER wanted to call it Portage, because here the Indians carried canoes across land from one fork of the river to the other. But Truitt's brother Wirt wanted it called Granite Falls. The first two settlers were Joseph S. ENAS (1883) and George W. ANDERSON (1884). Our Society historian, Roberta SHEARER, by the way, is the granddaughter of George W. ANDERSON's brother, Fred Parker ANDERSON. Roberta's grandfather was a postmaster of Granite Falls and worked for the Robe-Menzel Lumber Co.

In 1886 William M. TURNER located a claim on the southwest 1/4 of section 18, township 30 north, range 7 east. The Turners were the first permanent white settlers east of Hartford. "There was no road into Granite Falls then, so TURNER lived at Machias from April to August, until he could cut out a rough road from Machias into his claim" (History of Snohomish County, Washington, ed. William Whitfield, vol.1, p. 618 [1926]). At this time Truitt and his brother, Campbell ROBE, went with a partner to Marysville to establish a shingle business.

In 1890, the year the post office came to Granite Falls, Mark SWINNERTON of Marysville established Granite Falls' first store, a store that was built for him by Truitt ROBE, who soon became his employee. There were at that time about 60 people living in the area. In this period Granite Falls was quite frequently troubled with earthquakes. One of them shook all the groceries and supplies off the shelves of the store where Truitt was working. It caused no major damage, but since this was the only store in town, the people wondered how soon it would be before they would all have to go to Snohomish to stock up.

In 1891 Truitt ROBE platted the eighteen blocks of Granite Falls' original townsite; the plat was filed August 6 by Stanley W. HOLLAND, who with Wirt ROBE had bought the land on which the town was built. The survey was made by Truitt's father William Ristine ROBE. Incidentally, I do not know when Truitt's father died, but his father and mother are buried in the Washelli Cemetery in Seattle.

By a series of purchases and sales of land claims and businesses, Truitt ROBE prospered. In addition to managing some of the town's first stores, he was in business in the 1890s both with J.H. BOYD and George WHITCHER. Then Truitt ROBE entered into a partnership with two other men (C.P. LAST and W.H. HARDING) in a sawmill. He sold out in order to open his own mill; when his former partners went bankrupt, ROBE bought their machinery. He was in the process of moving it to his own mill when he met with a serious accident that laid him up for a year. I believe this mill was located at what was the site of the old town of Robe, and he must have brought the machinery in by pack train. To recover his losses, he took a partner (the German immigrant Henry MENZEL) and together they built up the Robe-Menzel Lumber Co. and sawmill.

By 1910 Henry MENZEL had left the lumber business; he is listed that year in the Everett City Directory as president of the Coast Ice and Cold Storage Company on Riverside Ave. Apparently he took on Truitt K. ROBE as partner the following year, for the 1911 city directory tells us that he was vice president, still residing at the time in Granite Falls. The company sold ice, ice cream, creamery butter, eggs and cheese.

Truitt's brothers were also busy at this time. Although in the 1894 city directory for Snohomish County all the ROBES are listed as farmers, they started thereafter to work at new enterprises. Polk's 1902-1903 City Directory for Granite Falls (see the Sounder, vol. XIII, issue II, p.66) lists four members of the ROBE family: Campbell (Alexander Campbell), a carpenter; Roy, a millhand; Truitt K., sawmill owner; the father Wm. R. (William Ristine), a farmer, and Wm. W. (William Wirt), "cigars and bakery and proprietor of the Granite Falls Opera House." The Robe and Menzell (sic) sawmill is also listed.

Alexander Campbell ROBE was Granite Falls postmaster for ten years (ca. 1897-1907) and was succeeded by E.R. TURNER (ca.1907-1914). Alexander Campbell also worked as a carpenter. He built several houses, two of which are still standing, the school, and the Presbyterian Church, where he was up all night building the pulpit the night before the first sermon was to be preached. This church is now the Community Bible Church. Campbell organized the Sunday School in 1892 and was superintendent for 15 years.

By 1904 Roy ROBE was in charge of the Granite Falls Bakery, and in 1905 Wirt presented him with a brand new oven. Roy was a foreman at the Robe-Menzel Lumber Company in 1907. In 1914 Roy joined with a partner, Ira S. THOMPSON, in the Everett-Hartford-Granite Falls Auto Stage Line, based in Everett. Roy and Ira added a partner, Gus ANDERSON, in 1916. Roy worked as a clerk and salesman, and sometimes as a stage driver, through the 1920s; in 1930 the Everett City Directory shows him in charge of the Granite Auto Truck Co. His daughter Sybil ROBE was a clerical worker at the county treasurer's office.

Now Wirt ROBE was a character, an odd fellow in more ways than one. Not only did he name the town Granite Falls, but he was an entrepreneur and entertainer, in addition to working in the lumber mill. By 1904 Wirt was deputy sheriff; in 1908 he was managing the Granite Falls Athletic Hall. Always looking for new lines of business, he was also the manager of the town's "Electric Theatre," which he may have converted from the "Opera House." Wirt was apparently a talented vaudeville actor, locally known for his blackface routine. At performances in the Odd Fellows Hall, Wirt and Campbell would add their talents to the town band, with Wirt on trumpet and Campbell on the banjo and harmonica. For two or three years Wirt and Lon BROWN went down to Oklahoma doing minstrel shows. There are two photos of Wirt in the Granite Falls Museum, holding his tuba while posing with the Granite Falls town band. Wirt used to sell strawberries from the bed of his Model T pickup, and he worked for the Robe-Menzel lumber mill. He would bring a lunch consisting of crackers and limburger cheese, that a dog got into once. He was also in charge of the toilet facilities at the lumber camp; he had a high-stepping horse that would draw a wagon into camp, and mounted on this wagon was a porcelain toilet.

I was talking on Sunday with Norman Blythe at the Granite Falls Museum, and while he was telling me about Wirt, I was simply amazed at how much Wirt was like my great-uncle William Walker ROBE. My ROBE family was down in Linn County, Oregon, and the two families didn't know each other, but both Wirt and my great-uncle Will were eccentric old bachelors. My great-uncle was an inveterate practical joker, who would often play jokes on his comrades in mines and logging camps, and one of his jokes involved limburger cheese, smeared on the underside of the victim's coat lapel. Like Wirt, great-uncle Will ROBE even had a cancerous growth on his nose, which he burned away with a solution of blue vitriol (copper sulfate).

I wish I had my photographs here to show you. Somewhere in my house is a binder full of the photos that Patricia Hilscher, Truitt's granddaughter, had copied for me, and I just have not been able to find it. In the Granite Falls museum there are photos of Wirt with the band, and Roy with his wife and daughter Sybil, and even the elderly parents, including William Ristine ROBE, with a long white beard and black

hat pulled over his eyes. Among the photos I have, there are a couple of Truitt, who was a man of moderate height-I'm guessing five feet eleven inches. He had an oval shaped head. He lost nearly all the hair on his head but he did have a little toothbrush mustache. His brother Campbell had no mustache but he was bald also, and he wore wire-framed glasses. I have a baby picture of Roy's daughter Sybil Robe-and she is bald. I also have a photo of her as a toddler, with curly dark hair. So I know that these ROBES did have hair. In my father's direct ROBE line the men did not lose their hair. Truitt's granddaughter described William Wirt to me saying that he was a bachelor, very homely, and didn't bathe often. When I mentioned this to my husband, Chris, he replied: "So? What's your point?"

In 1892, the year after Truitt ROBE married William TURNER's daughter, he built his lumber mill along the river, about ten miles east of Granite Falls. The original site of the town of Robe, where the lumber mill, and the depot, and the hotel were, is on marshy ground, and the present Old Robe Trail goes right through it. By the following year a school was established there. The Robe homestead was not in the town, but on a slope away from the river, on the north side of the present highway. This claim Truitt ROBE later sold.

Now I'm going to talk about the other Robe family associated with Snohomish County, but I have no idea whether the two families are related. Marge Reid, our Society's webmaster, has abstracted Truitt K. Robe's biography, and you can see it on our webpage, from the 1904 History of Skagit and Snohomish Counties, Washington. Marge has been telling you that these abstracts contain "just the facts, ma'am." And as far as Truitt and his immediate family goes, the biography is pretty reliable. But there is also a great deal of wishful thinking, embroidery, and misinformation in it.

According to this biography, when the ill-fated railroad came up the valley, Truitt ROBE made the acquaintance of another man named ROBE, who was working for the railroad, and claimed to be his distant cousin. So they started comparing genealogies. I might consider myself lucky to have found a biographical sketch that deals with Truitt's genealogy in detail, but it is maddening to separate the fact from the wishful thinking that it contains. I will try to do that for you now, point by point.

"Truitt K. ROBE might justly be proud of his ancestry," it begins. "The ROBE family, originally from Scotland, settled in Massachusetts in the early days, and was prominently identified with the famous Boston Tea Party."

I have found no connection between Truitt's ancestors and an early ROBE family of Massachusetts; but in any case, by 1773, the date of the Boston Tea Party, Truitt's great-great grandfather William ROBE, Sr. had already settled in Monongalia County, Va. Of William Senior's four children who left major lines of descent, however, each one has preserved the tradition that the family originated in Scotland. Mrs. Patricia Hilscher of Wenatchee, Truitt's granddaughter, has preserved an ornate silver fork and spoon, pieces of an original set that were melted down from a silver tray that the family brought from Scotland. They melted down the tray because they needed eating utensils more than they needed the ornate tray.

The biography goes on: "Two members of the family were Revolutionary heroes" (I have found no Revolutionary War record for William ROBE, Senior or any of his sons, but the other ROBE did have a Revolutionary soldier ancestor, whose conduct in the war, heroic or otherwise, has not been recorded).

The biography says: "Soon after the close of that war, the family divided, one branch locating in Maryland, the other, of which Truitt ROBE is a direct descendant, in West Virginia." It is true that Truitt's ancestors came from that part of Virginia that later became West Virginia; however, if the two branches of the ROBE family split in this fashion, it must have happened before, rather than after, the Revolutionary War. And the other Robe's family came not from Maryland, but from Connecticut - I have found no Maryland connection in the ancestry of either man.

The biography goes on: "As so frequently happens, the two branches failed to keep in close touch, and in the lapse of years became lost to each other. The best known member of the Maryland branch is Major ROBE of Fort Vancouver. During the construction of the Monte Cristo railroad Truitt ROBE met the Major's son, who was the chief engineer in charge of the work. They soon discovered their relationship, being led to compare notes

and trace it on account of the close family resemblance existing between them, a resemblance which was so pronounced that strangers noticed and commented on it." I wonder if this other Robe was also bald, with a little toothbrush mustache.

Using the Fort Vancouver records at the National Archives, I have identified this Major ROBE as Charles Franklin ROBE, who served at the fort from 1895 to 1898. At that time he had just been promoted to Major from Captain. He had served with the New York Volunteers in the Civil War and made the military his career. His longest term of service was as captain (ca. 1870-1895) in the 25th U.S. Infantry, one of the four "Buffalo Soldier" regiments consisting of black soldiers and white officers. He served as commanding officer at Fort Vancouver from March to May, 1898, at which time he was transferred to San Francisco. In 1900 he was at Bautista in the Philippines. He rose to the rank of Brigadier General and retired in 1903. His ROBE ancestors, whom I traced through D.A.R. records, came from Simsbury, Hartford County, Connecticut; one of the many Andrew ROBES in his line was a Revolutionary War veteran. No stories of his heroic deeds have come down to us.

I have a copy of Truitt ROBE's and Major ROBE's ancestry here on the table. Here is a copy of Major Robe's obituary, from the 1910 San Diego Union, 3 July 1910. The Major had two sons: Lucian Stevens ROBE and Harvey Ord ROBE.

Major ROBE's eldest son Lucian would have been just twenty-four years old in 1892, the year the railroad chief engineer is said to have met Truitt K. ROBE. So far I have not confirmed that either Lucian or Harvey was in Washington that year. Harvey was in the West, however; he had a son Harvey Jr., born in Dawson, Yukon Territory, Canada in 1906. Major ROBE's obituary gives Lucian's residence as Fairbanks, Alaska, along with his sister Margaret, and Harvey's residence as "near Seattle."

Here's a photo that an e-mail correspondent sent me, showing a group of people picnicing near the falls of the Columbia River. One of the young men in the photo is supposed to be Harvey ROBE, and one of the young women is his sister Margaret. I like the way this young lady has decorated her hatband with ferns, and put curled wood shavings into her hair.

Of the men who served as engineers of the Everett and Monte Cristo Railroad, I have found none named ROBE: there were chief engineers Samuel B. FISHER (1893) and J.C. BARLOW, and assistant engineer T. TONNESON. Perhaps young ROBE held a subordinate engineering position. It will be hard to find out, however, since there are few records of the railroad construction in existence today.

Mrs. Hilscher, however, told me that the railroad engineer cousin was named Charlie ROBE. She thought he came from Illinois, and that the relationship between him and Truitt was not so distant as the biography implies. Unfortunately, he could not have been the railroad engineer, and the relationship, if there was one, was distant. This Charles ROBE belongs to the Connecticut line, and he is a first cousin once removed to Major Charles Franklin ROBE. Truitt K. ROBE seems to have known him, however, since the 1912 Everett City Directory lists a Charles A. ROBE, who the following year was a bookkeeper at the Coast Ice and Cold Storage Co., the very company of which Truitt K. ROBE was vice president.

This Charles A. ROBE was married to Olive E. VINCE by a Catholic priest on 20 Dec 1919 in Snohomish County; the couple continued to live in Everett but they drop out of the city directories after 1923. This Charles A. ROBE, according to the 1920 Census, was born in 1886, too young for him to have been the railroad engineer. He was indeed born in Illinois, but the person who gave the information to the 1920 census could say only that his father was born in the U.S., and his mother in New York. Together I and Cathy Robe of Michigan, who is researching the Connecticut Robe line, found Charles Arthur ROBE born in Illinois in 1886, son of a Charles W. ROBE in the 1880 Census, residing in Chicago. Charles Arthur died in Los Angeles in 1968, and we have found his mother's and sister's death records in California, but not his father's.

I would love to find a relationship between Truitt K. ROBE and the railroad employee named ROBE, for if there is a connection back in New England, I would in the process break down one of my most obdurate 'brick walls.' There is much I have yet to learn about Charles Franklin ROBE's ancestral families. At present, my best guess

is that it was Lucian Stephens ROBE, the Major's eldest son, who met Truitt in 1892 in Robe Canyon, but I have no idea what he was doing for the railroad. I do not think he was the chief engineer. This is just one example of how the details of Truitt's biography in the 1904 Snohomish county history got embellished. Here is another example:

Returning to Truitt's biographical sketch in the old Snohomish county history, we learn that his great-grandfather "was at one time a wealthy Virginia slave owner. He was a man of great strength of character, and when he realized the injustice of the existing system voluntarily freed his slaves numbering nearly one hundred, although he knew his action would render him bankrupt." The true story is somewhat different.

David ROBE, the ancestor in question, was a resident of Monongalia County, Va. This county is across the border from Pennsylvania, and it's mountainous, and it snows in the winter. Farther south, where it was warmer, it was possible to have the large plantations to raise the cash crops, like cotton and tobacco, that made enough profit to offset the expense of having a hundred slaves. But in the 1790 census for Monongalia County (which of course was reconstructed from the 1782 Virginia tax lists) the head of household who owned the most slaves owned 14.

We know that David had at least one slave. Her name was Milley. I'm going to tell you a story that I am still piecing together from court records and from the family legends that my cousin put in the Salt Lake library. David ROBE had a bachelor elder brother, William ROBE, Jr., only this William's family legend is not funny but tragic. William came home to his family from plowing one day "entirely insane," and he "did not know anything." They went out in the field for clues to what had happened, and they found his mules still in their traces, and the great oak in the cornfield was split in two by lightning. Perhaps he had had a stroke. In February 1798, when his neighbor Richard Merrifield sued William, Jr. in a chancery case, David was appointed by the court to handle it in place of his brother. This may be a sign that William, Jr. was already mentally incompetent. David, whose first wife was dead, therefore probably purchased his slave Milley to take care of himself, his eight-year-old daughter Sarah, and his brother William Jr. In August 1798, the court record tells us that Milley was accused of preparing poison to kill William, Jr., and admitted to hitting him over the head with a hammer, and with the help of another slave, belonging to their neighbour Barsheba Ferguson, Milley set fire to David's barn. Milley tried to escape execution by claiming to be pregnant, but a jury of twelve women appointed by the court found that she was not, and Milley was hanged Sept. 1st, 1798. David ROBE was compensated \$75 by the court for the loss of Milley.

For what it's worth, the oral history that tells us of William Jr.'s insanity was the testimony of David's granddaughter Sarah Shell ROBE; she says that David "was not a Christian," or not so much as his brothers Robert and Josiah, for whom she has high praise. And nowhere does she say anything about David owning a slave.

Somewhere, somehow, Truitt must have heard that his great-grandfather owned a slave, and somehow the story got embroidered.

To return to the history of the town of Robe, it began growing after the railroad was rebuilt in 1898. J.A. THEURER in 1899 formed the Canyon Lumber Company at Robe; the following year he started a sawmill with a capacity of 40,000 feet of lumber per day, and a shingle mill capable of producing 75,000 shingles per day. In 1901 Robe boasted 75 people, and double that population by 1905. Truitt ROBE, however, at that time appears to have been residing in Granite Falls.

In 1907 the town of Robe was moved from its location beside the river to its present location. By 1926, as the county history tells us, it had a post office and railway station, and had been the home of the Canyon Lumber Company, Best Shingle Company, Johnson-Dean Lumber Company, and the Rucker Brothers shingle mill. Mr. THEURER was postmaster for about 5-6 years before 1911, followed by a Mr. C. NICHOLS. The town was served by the Puget Sound Telephone Company, and had an express office. (History of Snohomish County, vol. 1, p. 623). A new school was erected in the nineteen-teens. At one time, Robe was the richest school district in the state, due to the wealth of the Monte Cristo and Silverton miners.

During this period of prosperity, Truitt K. ROBE resided in Granite Falls, ranching and raising poultry, and serving as vice president of the Coast Ice and Cold Storage Co. He was elected and served two terms (1913-14 and 1915-16) as a state representative from District 49 as a member of the Progressive Party, the Roosevelt-Taft splinter from the Republican Party.

The parents, William Ristine ROBE and Mary Jessimah BOWEN, celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in 1910. Back home in Adams County, the News-Democrat of Georgetown, OH noted it (7 April 1910): "Twenty-three years ago W. R. ROBE and wife and family left this county and settled in the state of Washington. On Thursday of last week these good people celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. There were thirty-four guests, all members of the ROBE family, or residents of this state who have settled in that section. For the last 18 years since going to that state they have lived at Robe and Granite Falls. The local paper in speaking of the event said: 'Three daughters-in-law arranged the table for the dinner and Mrs. ROBE was not allowed to enter the room while preparations were being made. When all was in readiness the wedding party entered the dining room to the strains of a wedding march composed by Pat MARSHALL for the occasion and played by him. The scheme of the table was golden-the dishes, vegetables, fruits, etc. being as far as possible in that color. On the table were several articles that were used at the wedding dinner fifty years ago. The same sugar bowl was at both dinners; but the article of greatest interest was the tablecloth. Mrs. ROBE was the oldest of seven children and was the first to get married. The cloth used at her wedding feast was in turn used at the weddings of six others; and it was spread upon the table Tuesday. When Mrs. ROBE cut the bride's cake she was surprised to find a gold mine consisting of seven five-dollar pieces in the center of it. A number of other very beautiful presents were received. After the dinner a music recital was given by the five grand-daughters. Out-of-town guests were Mrs. Orange EDWARDS and child and Miss E. PICKERILL, of Seattle. Mr. and Mrs. ROBE are parents of seven children, four of whom are living in Granite Falls. Two sons and a daughter are dead.'"

I think Miss Pickerill may have been from Adams County, and a relative of Truitt's by his great-grandfather's first wife.

At about this time Alexander Campbell ROBE left the area for Seattle so that his daughters could attend the University of Washington. He kept his homestead, which he had logged in the 1890s for the mill at Robe, until 1957. During World War II, his cabin, the highest on Green Mountain, was used as a lookout. Mrs. Hilscher, Truitt's granddaughter, told me that Campbell was a very strict Presbyterian, and he would only let his daughters read the Bible on Sundays. So they would go over to uncle Truitt's house, where the rules were not so strict, and play cards.

Truitt left the area as well. The 1916 Everett City Directory lists him as a resident of Friday Harbor on San Juan Island. After 1917 he was no longer associated with the Coast Ice and Cold Storage Co. He continued to reside at Friday Harbor, where he raised sheep, until the end of his life. Truitt K. ROBE died of rectal cancer in Seattle in 1949. Mrs. HILSCHER told me that Truitt was a kind, gentle man, and was only heard to swear "damn" once, when a cock Chinese pheasant that was a long-time visitor to the area was shot in a front yard by some boys. She also testifies that he was "well-read and very smart."

The last active mining at Monte Cristo ceased in 1920. The 1920s were a period of tourism, with the Big Four Inn being a special attraction, but the Depression dealt a hard blow to the south Stillaguamish valley. Regular rail service discontinued in 1933. The rails were torn up in the summer of 1936 and replaced by an automobile road connecting Robe to Big Four and the Sah Hah Lee Camp. The mills at Robe closed in the 1930s. The Robe School closed for the last time in 1937. Those who remained were largely reduced to living off the land.

Some of the tunnels of the old railroad can still be seen along the Old Robe Trail, which follows the old railroad grade. My sweatshirt has a picture of one of these tunnels along the trail. The trail represents a new era in Robe Valley's history, with the establishment in 1995 of Robe Canyon Historic Park by Snohomish County. The park began with 160-acres with a trail of 2 1/2 miles. This trail was built by Boy Scout Troop #43 from Lake Stevens in the late 1960s; this troop continues to help maintain the trail. After successfully establishing Phase One, the Stillaguamish Citizens' Alliance worked to expand the park in 1995 and 1997. In 1998 Phase Two was achieved, and the park now has

1000 acres and an 8-mile trail being cleared that will lead to the old lime kiln. A third trailhead is envisioned for Phase Three, starting at Iron Mountain in the lower canyon, and making it possible to trek along the canyon from the trailhead just west of Robe Valley nearly to Granite Falls. The Friends of Robe Canyon, an umbrella group, now includes participation by various local conservation, education and service groups. Here is a flyer from them that I recently received.

Robe Valley's "friends" agree today that the railroad, flawed as it was, opened the way for the valley's popularity today as a recreation area. I want to thank you for the opportunity to talk to you tonight, and am open to any questions you might have.

Truitt K. ROBE was my third cousin once removed. I would like to thank his granddaughter, Patricia HILSCHER, of Wenatchee, who also supplied photos of him and his family that are available on request. David CAMERON helped me suggest where to look for records and provided the notes from his 1979 interview with Vivian ROBE. Margaret RIDDLE of the Pacific Northwest Room at the Everett Public Library also provided valuable assistance. Norman and Lois BLYTHE of the Granite Falls Museum shared photos and memories of the Robe family.

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