



Haverford Township Historical Society



W. HARRY ROBERTS (1869-1938) AND FAMILY

Compiled by Richard D. Kerr

[The following is excerpted and adapted from A History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania and Its People, John W. Jordan, editor, published by Lewis Historical Publishing Company, New York in 1914.]

Those of the name of Roberts are numerous in the vicinity of Philadelphia, it being a common patronymic in the region forming the counties of Chester and Delaware. Two branches are there represented, the one of English stock, which in the early days of Pennsylvania history allied itself with another of the oldest families of Pennsylvania, that of Sharpless, the other of Welsh descent, the origin of the two on the continent probably being the same. It is from this latter branch that **W. HARRY ROBERTS**, of this narrative, is traced, this record beginning with his grandparents, George S. Roberts and Lydia Roberts. Both were members of the Society of Friends, observing with strict rectitude the many exacting regulations of that sect, George S. Roberts being a landowner and farmer of Willis township, Chester county, Pennsylvania. His line continues through his son Joseph Roberts, his other child, Elma Roberts, dying unmarried.

JOSEPH ROBERTS, son of George S. Roberts and Lydia Roberts, was born in Willis township, Chester county, Pennsylvania, in 1832, and died there in 1877, aged forty-five years. He grew to maturity on the farm of his father and early in life accepted agriculture as the work for which he was best fitted, subsequently beginning independent farming operations and following that occupation until his early death. He received not only his calling from his father, but also his religious convictions, and he was ever an adherent to the faith of the Society of Friends, while his political support was accorded the Republican party. He married Amanda Rennard, like himself a native of Chester county, Pennsylvania, born in 1833, died in 1899, daughter of Henry Rennard and Prudence Rennard, the parents of a family of eleven. The Rennard family is one of about the same length of residence in the United States as that of the Roberts branch with which it became connected, Henry Rennard having been a farmer in Lewis township, with his wife a member of the Presbyterian church, his death occurred when he was aged seventy-five years. Children of Joseph Roberts and Amanda (Rennard) Roberts:

1. Mary Elma Roberts, lives unmarried in West Chester, Pennsylvania.
2. Irene Marion Roberts, died unmarried.
3. George S. Roberts, a member of the reportorial staff of the "Star," a periodical of West Chester, where he lives.
4. W. Harry Roberts, of whom further.

W. HARRY ROBERTS, youngest of the four children of Joseph Roberts and Amanda (Rennard) Roberts, was born [in 1869] in Willis township, near White Horse, Chester county, Pennsylvania, and in his youth attended the public schools of West Chester. Soon after the death of his father he discontinued his studies and obtained a position, subsequently placing himself under the teaching of Joseph Dicen, spending three years with him learning the trade of carpenter. When he had mastered all of its departments he found employment as a journeyman, the pursuit of his trade taking him to the various towns then in the full vigor of growth along the Pennsylvania Railroad main line. This he made his

business until 1904, when he established independently, advertising as a contractor and builder. As such he has since continued, finding profit in the pleased satisfaction of those for whom he has executed commissions, gaining in reputation and prosperity with the growth of his business. He is an architect of no mean ability and designs not a few of the homes that he erects, giving his personal attention and supervision to his works of importance. As a Republican he has served one term as a member of the school board of Haverford township, and holds membership in the Masonic order and the Independent Order of Odd Fellows.

Mr. Roberts married, April 12, 1898, [Annie] Gertrude Vickers, born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, daughter of Eugene Vickers and Mary Vickers, both of whom reside in Philadelphia, her father an engineer in the employ of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Children of W. Harry Roberts and Gertrude (Vickers) Roberts:

1. William Harry Roberts Jr., born July 29, 1899; [died October 17, 1940]
2. Alma [or Elma] C. Roberts, May 6. 1902; [died November 11, 1981 in Media]
3. Eugene Vickers Roberts, July 16, 1904; [married Alice Roberts; died January 10, 1991 Walnut Creek, Contra Costa, California]
4. Florence E. Roberts, November 30. 1906 [married Claude Henry Charles Archer; died September 2, 1997].

Since 1903 the Roberts home has been in Grassland [now called Oakmont], Haverford township, Delaware county, Pennsylvania.

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