

## THE FAMILY OF ROBERT COBB, SR.

Robert Cobb Sr. was born about 1707 in Surry County, Va., the youngest son of Joseph Cobb (3) and Susanna Braswell. The family returned to Isle of Wight in 1715. He was raised near Ivor on the south side of the Blackwater River, now in Southampton County, but did not settle there. He followed the trend to migrate southward and went to Bertie County, N. C. sometime in his early years before his brother Benjamin and his father went there. He bought property, married, raised a large family and died there in 1767 at age 60, ten years before the death of his father who lived to be a very old man. Robert married Mary Deberry, the daughter of John and Jane Sowerby Deberry as evidenced by Deberry's will in 1763. They lived in the same area and were closely associated over the years. One of Robert's grandsons was named Deberry Cobb.

When he bought 165 acres on the south side of the Meherrin River and Middle Branch from Nicholas Boon for £25 in silver on 17 October 1739, the Bertie County deed stated that it adjoined his own property line so he was already living on adjacent property. The deed was witnessed by his brother Joseph (4) who went back to Virginia. He bought another 125 acres on the river by an undated deed recorded in the August 1746 court (then Northampton County, formed from Bertie in 1741) from Arthur Stephenson. The deed said "the tract at the present time in the actual possession of Robert Cobb." His brother Benjamin witnessed this one. This must have been the land previously mentioned that he may have had for some years but on which the deed had not been recorded. If he ever had any other land it was not recorded. However his will was probated in Wayne County also and it is possible that he had property there, but he made no mention of it in his will unless it was included in the phrase "all the land I now possess". His brother Benjamin bought land near his on 16 October 1739, the day before he bought the 165 acres, then in 1745 their father Joseph (3) came to Northampton and bought next to Benjamin so they were neighbors.

Robert Cobb Sr. must have had the same ability to make money as his brother Benjamin and his nephew William (4). The extent of his estate cannot be estimated as there are indications that he helped his sons. He had at least eleven slaves. At least two of his sons learned something from him for Stephen became very wealthy indeed and Jesse must have been moderately so.

Robert did not make any recorded news during his lifetime for nothing more is learned about him until he, anticipating his death, made his will on 14 October 1765. His daughter Sally witnessed it. He lived another two years for it was probated in the November 1767 court. His will was well written, clear and precise. He "loaned" everything to his "beloved wife Mary Cobb" during her widowhood—meaning until she died or until she married again. This meant that she actually owned nothing, could not dispose of anything without a court order and if she remarried she lost the use of it then. North Carolina was still a Royal colony in 1765, remember. Later on the State of North Carolina provided dower rights for widows which were strictly delineated by the courts. He left her the use of the home plantation, then described as 160 acres more or less, the 125 acre tract and added in another paragraph "all the land I now possess" which may or may not have included other tracts. Subject to the use

of their mother during her widowhood he left the home place to his son Absolom and the 125 acres to his son John. He left seven slaves outright to his various children and loaned four to his wife. Of these, a man named Will was to go later to his son Jesse and a man named Tom, to John. Two others, Bep and Cate, together with their increase were to go to children Absolom, John, Pricilla and Sarah. His wife already owned one slave girl given her by her father's will a few years before. He called on his brothers-in-law John, Henry and Peter Deberry and Abraham Stephenson to divide the two slaves, their increase and all of the personal property remaining, after his wife's widowhood, between the same four children. They did so—but not until more than twenty years later. The court records of 1791 showed that distribution had been made in accordance with his expressed wishes.

It is impossible to determine exactly from his will or otherwise the order in which his children were born or their birth years. He did not leave his lands according to the old English laws of primogeniture that were followed in the earliest days in America or name his children in order as most wills did at that time. He mixed them up thoroughly—no doubt for his own reasons. John, who received part of the land, was not even of age when he made his will for he provided that the slave Tom was to be his when he became of age. A reasonable explanation is that he had already made certain gifts during his lifetime. Stephen had bought valuable lands before he possibly could have accumulated the wealth to do so, had sold them and left home for an illustrious career of his own. Jesse left home early and bought a huge tract of 640 acres on the Neuse River. Little is known about Robert Jr.'s early years but from all indications Robert Sr. had already done what he cared to do for the other sons, whom he left personal property only, and gave his lands to the two boys who stayed in Northampton—Absolom and John.

The dates and order of births following cannot be proved, except by reasons given, but are the best estimates based on information available. It is readily agreed that they could vary by a number of years:

Jesse Cobb,	born	about	1730—see later.
Jane	“	“	1731—no further record.
Sarah “Sally”	“	“	1732—was dead by 1792, unmarried.
Rebecca “Becky”	“	“	1733—no further record.
Stephen	“	“	1735—see later.
Robert	“	“	1737—see later.
Absolom	“	“	1740—see later.
Priscilla	“	“	1743—dead by 1792, unmarried.
John	“	“	1745—see later.

1. Jesse Cobb is believed to have been the oldest child of Robert Sr. and Mary Deberry Cobb. A DAR record states that he was born in 1730 in Goochland County Virginia and died in 1807. The time of his death was correctly shown and the date is acceptable in consideration of all known facts, but the place of his birth is erroneously taken from an early historian who traced him to the family of Ambrose Cobb of York County, a supposed brother of Joseph Cobbs Sr. Recorded deeds leave no question about his ancestry or birthplace.

Some time about 1758 to 1760 he went to Craven County, probably with his brother Stephen who sold out his holdings in Northampton then. His father died in 1767, leaving him a negro girl named Rose and a man named Will, the latter to be his only after his mother's widowhood. Will may have been dead long before then, twenty four years later. Not having received any of his father's lands it must be supposed that he had received some portion of his inheritance beforehand, but this is only conjecture for we do not know what either Jesse or Stephen was doing in those years. One thing is certain: they had gone from the relatively quiet and peaceful atmosphere of Northampton County which had never been rich, volatile or politically intransigent to the hot bed of revolt, confusion and excitement that was evident at New Bern. The Royal proclamations and the various Acts to tax the colonists were announced from the Governor's palace there in the years 1763 to 1771. Governor William Tryon was enforcing the will of Parliament in London to the best of his ability, causing a growing resentment that grew into violent protests that finally resulted in a pitched battle at Allamance.

The Palace itself was controversial. It was built by Governor Tryon in the years 1767-70 and has been described as the most beautiful building in Colonial America, rivalled only by those in Williamsburg. The cost was tremendous, and did not come from the treasury in London but from taxation on North Carolinians. It burned in 1798, but has been rebuilt on the same foundations from the original blueprints into the beauty and splendor that Jesse Cobb saw in his day. It is well worth a trip to New Bern to capture its grandeur and its significance to the people of the 1770s.

On 17 October 1771 Jesse married Elizabeth Heritage, the daughter of William and Susanna Francks Heritage, at New Bern. Her sister Sarah Heritage married Richard Caswell as his second wife and the family was closely associated with him. He was one of the most active men in the Revolutionary movement.

Since there was no national Government it was necessary to make some attempt to promote unity among the thirteen colonies, and Jesse worked with others in this endeavor. In 1774 he met with them in a Provincial Congress right in New Bern, under the nose of Governor Josiah Martin, who had succeeded Tryon. Caswell was elected one of the three men to represent North Carolina in the Continental Congress, and when independence came was the first Governor of the State. As an indication of the esteem in which he was held by the Cobb family one of the Cobbs of the Watauga named a son in his honor. The prestige of Governor Caswell was justifiably great; he had a fine plantation and appeared to be wealthy—but he died penniless.

Jesse Cobb received a grant of 640 acres on the north side of the Neuse River which bisects present Lenoir County—it was Dobbs then—and made his home there. Later he bought one of the first lots in the city of Kinston when it was laid out.

He was also active in the Revolution. He was Captain of Company A, Dobbs County Minutemen and was in the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge on 26 Feb. 1776, together with Colonel Richard Caswell. This was one of the decisive defeats handed the British by American citizens who turned into soldiers. This battle took place about 15 miles north of Wilmington, N. C. on the Black River, lasted only a few minutes, resulting in the death of a few but the capture of an entire Tory army of about 850 men. After then Jesse served by gathering supplies for the Revolutionary

Army as a Commissioner of the Commissary, 1st Battalion of Volunteers. He was elected to the House of Commons from Dobbs County on 14 April 1778, was a Town Trustee of Kinston in 1784 and was appointed a Trustee of Dobbs Academy on 29 Dec. 1785. A service of which his descendants can be proud was fulfilled when he was elected as a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1776.

Some information is available about his children although this history will not attempt to follow them in great detail. The lives of those of Jesse and Stephen Cobb would require a complete book:

(1) Ann Cobb was born 3 Sept. 1772—no definite information.

(2) Susanna Cobb, born 3 Feb. 1774.

(3) John Cobb was born 3 May 1776 in Lenoir County before his father moved into the town of Kinston. He married (1) Ann "Nancy" Whitfield, daughter of Brigadier General Bryan Whitfield of that county, on 13 Jan. 1803. They lived in Kinston, and had three children before Ann's death on 27 Jan. 1814:

A. William Donnell Cobb (see later)

B. Nancy Cobb—born and died in 1807

C. Elizabeth Heritage Cobb (1808-1830)

After Ann's death, John married (2) Ann Bryan. They had no children. Later, he married (3) Ann Bryan Grist, and they had the following children:

D. Nancy Cobb

E. John Bryan Cobb

F. Frederick Henry Cobb (#2—see index)

G. Jesse Cobb III

H. Harriet Olive Cobb

I. Richard Grist Cobb

J. John Washington Cobb

An historian has said that John died in Kinston in 1834. This history will not follow all of these children, away from the Tidewater. His first son is noteworthy:

A. William Donnell Cobb was born 26 August 1805 in Lenoir County. On 11 June 1833 He married Ann Spicer Collier, daughter of Probert Collier and Elizabeth Green Bryan Collier. He had been living with his grandfather Bryan Whitfield after his mother died when he was nine, according to Whitfield's family record "Whitfield, Bryan, Smith and Related Families", to which we refer you for a more detailed study of this family. William and Ann made their home in Mount Auburn, Wayne County, and had nine children over the next eighteen years. William died in 1865. Two of his sons were:

(A) John Probert Cobb

(B) Needham Bryan Cobb

#### The family of John Probert Cobb:

John Probert Cobb was born 23 Nov. 1834 in Wayne County. He was among the first of this branch of the family to receive a college degree—an A. B. from the University of North Carolina in 1854. For the next seven years we do not have a record of his activities, but when the War came he volunteered, on 1 April 1861, as a private in the "Goldsboro Rifles" and was assigned to Company H, Second Regiment, North Carolina Troops.

He was a natural leader of men, proven by the fact that he was a second lieutenant within a month. Already North Carolina had sent its First Regiment to Virginia. The North Carolina coast had been blockaded, and within another year Union forces held all of it. John was part of the unit that defended Fort Macon, and in recognition of his courageous leadership was promoted to captain on 10 May 1862. He was diverted from his duty for a short period in 1862, then rejoined his unit which became a part of the Army of Northern Virginia. He was wounded in the Seven Days Battles on 1 July 1862 at Malvern Hill when General Stonewall Jackson was attacking the positions of General McClellan on the peninsula. After that, they were in almost constant action. The next record of him was in the Battle of Chancellorsville, when General Lee defeated General Hooker's forces that outnumbered his three or four to one. Capt. John Cobb was wounded in that battle, on 3 May 1863. He was sent to General Hospital #4 at Richmond, then transferred on 12 May to Goldsboro, N. C. for recuperation. He rejoined his unit on 1 August 1863, and for the next year served with his unit as duty demanded. He was wounded again on 3 June 1864 at Cold Harbor in a defensive action as General Grant was trying, with an army of over 100,000 men but unsuccessfully, to capture Richmond. It was not a serious wound, for he was with his unit near Bunker Hill, Va. on 3rd Sept.

In September 1864 John was a Lieutenant Colonel in command of the 2nd Regiment at Winchester when Brig. General W. R. Cox's Brigade, under General Early, met the forces of General Sheridan. In the defeat of the Confederates on 19 September, a cannon ball took off John's foot—and he was captured. He was taken, as a prisoner, to the U. S. A. General Hospital at Baltimore, Maryland where his left leg was amputated. Then he was taken to the Federal prison at Fort McHenry, Maryland, transferred to Fort Delaware on 1 Jan. 1865. On March 4th he was included in a prisoner exchange and taken to Chimborazo Hospital in Richmond. He was listed as a Colonel then. On March 7th he was given a thirty-day furlough. The war was over for him—and soon was over for the South. He was thirty years old—with one leg.

That year, the war over, Colonel John P. Cobb married Sarah Elizabeth Whitfield, on 7 Dec. 1865. She was the daughter of James Whitfield, and a cousin. They lived in Wayne County, where their seven children were born; then in 1883 they moved to Florida. He was active in political affairs; deputy clerk to the circuit court in Hernando County, tax assessor, a postmaster, then moved to Tallahassee. He was an assistant secretary to the state Senate, and in 1889 clerk in the office of the Comptroller.

Colonel Cobb and his family were Episcopalians. He made his will on 30 April 1914, leaving his estate to his wife. Sarah died, however, on 30 October 1922; John died 13 March 1923 in Tallahassee. A painting of Colonel John P. Cobb once hung in the halls of the home of Dr. William Cobb Whitfield of Salisbury, N. C., and is doubtless still in the possession of the family. John and Sarah had seven children:

1. Sallie Elizabeth Whitfield Cobb (1866-1867)
2. William Donnell Cobb II, born 1 Dec. 1867. He lived in Florida; was once Sheriff of Hernando County.
3. Lucy Whitfield Cobb, born 20 Nov. 1867, married John Cabell Burwell.



4. Ann Spicer Cobb, born 21 Nov. 1871, married George T. Marshall of Greenwood, S. C.
5. Mary Ella Cobb, born 7 Sept. 1873, married Algernon Sidney Nelson.
6. Winnifred Elizabeth Cobb, born 28 July 1875.
7. Grace Probert Cobb, born 15 Dec. 1878.

The family of Needham Bryan Cobb

Needham Bryan Cobb, born 1 Feb. 1836, was the second son of William Donnell and Ann Whitfield Cobb. He received his B. A. degree from the University of North Carolina in 1854, and his Master's two years later. He was honored with a Doctor of Divinity degree by Judson College in Alabama; in 1860 he was ordained as a Baptist minister. After serving during the Civil War as a Chaplain, and afterwards as pastor of several churches in Virginia and North Carolina, he filled important positions in the denomination in North Carolina. He was superintendent of the Baptist Sunday School Board in 1871-73, and was elected as the president of the Baptist State Convention in 1891.

He married (1), on 27 Dec. 1859, Martha Louise Cobb, daughter of James Lang Cobb and Fannie Mae Williams Cobb, of Pitt County. James L. Cobb must have been the son of Stephen Cobb of Edgecombe County and his second wife, Patsy Long. Reverend Cobb married (2) Ann Delisle Fennell. By his two marriages Rev. Cobb had fifteen children; these have not all been researched for this limited record of the family—we reiterate that the Lenoir County branches deserve an entire book, and will not be covered in this one devoted primarily to the Tidewater families. The first son of Needham Bryan and Martha Louise Cobb to live beyond infancy was:

1. Collier Cobb, born 21 March 1862 in Wayne County. He attended the University of North Carolina, then Harvard where he received his A. B. degree. He also received his Master's in Geology there before embarking on a distinguished career as an educator. He taught at Harvard, at an University of Mines in Paris, France, and then at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He decided to return to Chapel Hill—at half the salary he was receiving at MIT—and in 1892 became the Head of the department of geology at the University of North Carolina. He married Mary Lindsey Battle, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Wm. H. Battle of Lilesville, N. C., and they had three children. He married (2) Lucy Plummer Battle—they had one son—and (3) Mary Knox Gatling. During the years he was the author of a number of publications, traveled extensively, and lectured. He died in November 1934. His children:

(1) William Battle Cobb was born in Cambridge, Mass. in 1891. He received his B. A. degree in 1912, his Master's in 1913, received his Ph. D. at the University of North Carolina in 1927; and became a Professor of Soil Technology at North Carolina State College. He married Eva Cohoon, of Columbia, N. C. on 28 Dec. 1920. William died in 1933, Eva died in 1974. Their children:

A. Mary Martha Cobb

B. Eva Carolyn Cobb

C. William Battle Cobb Jr.

(2) Collier Cobb Jr. was born 23 Dec. 1893. He received his A. B. at the U. of N. C. in 1914, and a B. S. in civil engineering there the following year. Instead of following an engineering career, however, he started Collier Cobb and Associates, dealing in insurance and real estate. He married Emma Belle Estes on 30 June 1925. She is the daughter of Benjamin Estes and Arabelle Rodery Estes. He is retired now; they continue to live in Chapel Hill. They have two children:

A. Collier Cobb III, born 3 July 1928. He received his A. B. in business administration from the U. of N. C., and is Vice-President of Collier Cobb and Associates. On 5 Jan. 1965 he married Carolyn Roycroft, daughter of John K. and Bessie Gladys King Roycroft. He adopted her three children of a previous marriage:

(A) Wesley Kenneth Cobb, born 5 Dec. 1956—student at U. of N. C.

(B) Jennifer Ann Cobb, born 13 Feb. 1960—in school

(C) Bess Marie Cobb, born 27 July 1962—in school

B. Nancy Cobb, born 17 Sept. 1930. She married Edward Lilly, Jr. in November of 1961.

(3) Mary Louisa Cobb, born in 1899 at Chapel Hill. She is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, receiving her A. B. degree at the University in 1921. She was the third of the children of Collier and Mary Battle Cobb.

(4) Richard Battle Cobb was the son of the second marriage. No information on this son of Collier and Lucy Plumber Battle Cobb.

2. Lucy Maria Cobb, born in 1877, was the tenth and another of the noteworthy children of Needham Bryan Cobb and his first wife Martha Louise Cobb. She was a writer of unusual ability, the author of a number of publications, and a feature writer for newspapers. She is remembered with great affection by Dr. William M. Mann, who has given valuable assistance in compiling information about this line of the family.

Continuation of the family of Robert Cobb, Sr.

Refer to chart #9

2. Stephen Cobb was the second son of Robert Sr. and Mary Deberry Cobb, born in 1735 according to Boddie, which is an acceptable date based on all available information. He was born on the south bank of the Meherrin River near the Virginia line. Of all the contemporary Cobbs he appeared to have the greatest amount of drive and ambition, and although all of the Northampton group seemed to be very successful financially he became both politically prominent and rich. He knew that he would not inherit his father's land, as a second son—although his father disregarded this precedent later—and set out to make it on his own. His father must have helped him for he was only about 22 when he began a program of land acquisition. He first bought the 100 acre tract that his Uncle Benjamin had bought from Carolus Anderson in 1753, on 26 Feb. 1757. He bought another 100 acres in a Sheriff's sale for £3 -15 shillings proclamation money on May 10th. Within a few months he bought another tract from Carolus Anderson and a portion of the property that Benjamin

Cobb had bought from his father Joseph Cobb (3). The last two deeds were not recorded. A year later on 11 July 1758 he sold the whole lot of 400 acres for £50 "current money of Virginia" and soon left the county.

He married Patience Bridgers about 1754; and they raised a large family of twelve children.

Dobbs County had been newly formed from Johnson in 1758. Stephen received a Granville grant there on 12 October 1762 of 700 acres. Dobbs County was discontinued and the counties of Lenoir and Wayne were formed. The old records of Lenoir were lost when the courthouse burned in 1878, but there is some material available on Stephen. Boddie has accumulated it and in Vol 12 of "Historical Southern Families"; says that he became a merchant, owned 3,800 acres in Pitt, Edgecombe and Wayne Counties, had 2,120 acres and an iron foundry in Nash together with a personal estate of 41 slaves and £1,688. It is of record that he, also, was a Captain of Militia in the Revolution and was elected a member of the General Assembly in 1780 from Wayne County. He had become the wealthiest member of the Cobb family up to that time. Numerous deeds are on record showing his real estate transactions in Edgecombe and other counties.

The dozen children of Stephen and Patience Cobb were scattered into Wayne, Nash and Edgecombe Counties. They will not be followed in detail for this reason and because they are removed from the Tidewater area. Two of their daughters married Joseph Pender; Patience as his second wife and then Celia as his third. An item in the N. C. Gazette, Newbern, on 4 October 1796 reads:

"On Saturday the 26 of November next will be sold for ready money in gold or silver, at Stephen Cobbs in Wayne County, two tracts of land: One tract in Nash County of 1,200 acres and the other in Wayne County adjacent Stephen Cobb containing 500 acres, the property of Benjamin Cobb, taken to satisfy a judgment obtained in the Circuit Court by Robert Taylor against Cobb."

Benjamin was the oldest son of Stephen Cobb Sr., had inherited or otherwise acquired a lot of acreage, but seemed to be having trouble with his finances. The Stephen Cobb mentioned in the Gazette article was Stephen Jr., for their father had died in 1785 or before as his estate was being settled in that year. Patience died in 1807.

Other of his children's names read like an index of the Cobb family for a hundred years back: Benjamin, James, David, Nathan, Mary, Martha, Patience, Stephen, Nancy, Priscilla, Celia, John.

3. Robert Cobb Jr., born about 1737 as the third son of Robert Cobb Sr. and Mary Deberry, left Northampton County as a young man. There is no reference there to him except that his father left him two slaves, a girl Fibb and a boy Dred in 1867. Boddie says that he went to Cumberland County, recorded in N. C. Colonial and State Records, where he was appointed to the Provincial Congress in 1774.

4. Absolom was the fourth son and seventh child of Robert and Mary Cobb, born about 1740. His older brothers Jesse and Stephen had left home early, Robert left before 1765, so Absolom and his younger brother John were the only sons left at home when their father died in 1767. It was to them that he left the greater part



of his estate. Absolom received the home plantation, subject to his mother's right to it during her widowhood, plus some furniture and a share of the residue of the estate including two valuable slaves. It was a long time before he got possession of anything except the bedroom furniture and a chest of drawers—about twenty-four years. He never bought any land of record, so it is presumed that he lived on the home place with his mother and sisters.

Absolom was not married until the 1780s. His wife was named Priscilla. In the first North Carolina census in 1786 he was listed as the head of the household, married, his mother living with him and they had ten slaves. His mother was dead by 1790, he then had one son and one daughter and they still had ten slaves. He received title to his land and the residue of his father's estate in 1791 when it was divided by his Deberry uncles and Abraham Stephenson.

As usual with a farmer and good citizen who minded their own business, there is little official notice of him. He attended estate sales in 1787, 1788 and 1791. His two sisters Sarah and Priscilla died, unmarried, and he administered their estates in 1792. He served on the grand jury in 1792 and 1794, administered the estate of John Bryant in 1792, was appointed guardian of his nephew Robert Cobb in 1794 and in the next year was made guardian of the other children of his brother John—Priscilla, Polly, Jesse, Thomas and Rebecca—in effecting a settlement of the widow's dower. He witnessed his Uncle Peter Deberry's will in September 1794 and was an executor with Exum Holloman of his estate in 1796.

Absolom died that year—1796—a relatively young man. He anticipated it, made a will and left his wife Priscilla the use of the home plantation, just as his father had done before him, and then to three of his children. Lucretia, the youngest, was left one slave. Miles Belch was the administrator of his estate in 1799, reported sales of his personal property, a claim from his brother Jesse for £44 against the estate, and a balance due the estate of £209-10s-3¾ pence. Exum Holland (Holloman?) was the children's guardian in 1799. Priscilla must have remarried for she is never listed in a census thereafter. Some information about his children:

(1) Sally Cobb was born about 1792. Her father left his plantation to be divided between Polly, Sally and Deberry. Sally must have been in ill health for she made a will on 19 August 1808 when she was only 16; it was probated in the March court of 1809. She left her brother Deberry her half of the land—which raises a question since she received only a third. She left her sister Polly Brittle a slave—she had married and it is possible that she had sold her interest in the estate to the others. She left her sister "Creesy" all of her part of the money due her from the executor of her father's estate so it had not been fully settled yet, after 12 years. Her mother must have been widowed at that date. Miles Belch filed a caveat against her will, holding up any action on it. The court minutes do not show the cause—possibly because she was not of age—or the eventual settlement, so it was settled out of court.

(2) Polly Cobb may have been named Mary after her mother but was never called anything except her nickname in documents. She had married a Mr. Brittle by 1808, according to her sister's will.

(3) Deberry Cobb was named after his mother's family, born about 1790

according to later census. His sister called him "Little Deberry" in her will. This eventually turned into "Littleberry" and that was the name he used in his marriage bonds and on land tax records. Maybe he never knew it was anything else. He was married twice: he married (1) Mary Massengale on 24 Feb. 1830. Like his father, he waited until he was about 40 to marry. They had one son born between 1830 and 1835. He married (2) Harriett Davis on 11 Sept. 1839.

The first land tax record now existing of Northampton County is the one for 1823 when Littleberry was shown with 100 acres valued at \$400, the two-thirds of his father's lands he inherited from him and from his sister. In later years he held as much as 188 acres; then disappears from the tax roll after 1844. The 1840 census shows him, his second wife and a son. They were not in the 1850 census—or thereafter. He and his family left the county—or expired without smudging any pages in the court house at Jackson.

(4) Lucretia Cobb, born about 1794, received one slave from her father's will and, if its terms were carried out, some money from Sally's portion of the estate. She witnessed a will in Northampton in 1811—or at least a Lucretia Cobb did. She would have been only about 17. The Cobb land adjoined that of Cader Parker. A Priscilla Cobb married a Cader Parker but they were older people and had seven children by 1812, living in another county. There were several Cader Parkers in three or more generations around this time as the family migrated from Chowan to Northampton, Edgecombe and Hertford Counties. Absolom's daughter Lucretia is lost to us after 1809 or 1811.

5. John Cobb was the youngest son of Robert Sr. and Mary Deberry Cobb, born in 1745 or a year or two later. His father's will in 1765 gave him a slave "When he comes of age." Subject to his mother's widowhood he also received title to the 125 acre tract his father owned, but it was many years before it became his. Meanwhile he acquired another 300 acres, but there are no recorded deeds to him so the source is unknown. Some time around 1776-7 he married Martha Liles, daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Liles. Her father left her a slave in his will in 1785. The 1786 census showed John with six young children and five slaves. In 1788 he was appointed the administrator of the estate of Jess Warren—no known connection with the family.

John died, intestate, in 1789. More is learned about his family after his death from court records. Sales of his personal estate were reported in June 1790 amounting to £198-13-7. Purchasers were Martha, Absolom, his uncles Benjamin and John Deberry and Edwin Liles. This may not have represented the true value of his property for very often in family estate sales little money changed hands, as the heirs bid in the items required for their welfare at nominal amounts. The court minutes show that on 2 Dec. 1793 Martha, as administrator, was empowered to sell, on six months credit terms, as much of the estate that was needed to discharge all debts of his estate—which may have included their slaves. In 1795 she asked the court to establish her dower rights. The court appointed her brother-in-law Absolom Cobb as the guardian of the children Priscilla, Polly, Jesse, Thomas and Becky to protect their rights in the matter—he had already been appointed guardian of Robert the

year before. It was settled by allowing her dower rights on 129 acres including their home. She sold this life time right on 10 Dec. 1797 which may have meant that she went to live with some of the family.

On 11 July 1809 Robert, Thomas, Priscilla, Pleasant Cobb and James Taylor sold a 140 acre tract on the Meherrin River to John Boykins for \$600, part of the John Cobb estate. Their brother Jesse was dead then and Becky may have been. James Taylor married a "Martha-Mercy" Cobb on 6 May 1808. This must have been John's widow, Martha Lile Cobb. The name "Pleasant" had never appeared before and can be explained only as an error in copying the name into the deed book. The children of John and Martha Cobb:

(1) Robert was born about 1778—date never actually known. In 1794 the court appointed his Uncle Absolom Cobb as his guardian and in March 1796 ordered that he be apprenticed to Thomas Cowell to learn the trade of a carpenter. By 1810 he was married and had a family. He must have farmed in addition to his vocation for he bought four weeding hoes in an estate sale in 1809. His wife's name was Elizabeth—possibly Elizabeth Williams but there is no marriage bond on file.

Robert died on 23 January 1812. The court granted his widow a year's provisions, as was customary, and authorized her to pay £36 from his estate for his debts. Elizabeth held a sale of his personal property on 26 Nov. 1812 that included an extensive list of items. Priscilla Cobb, widow of Absolom, bought a riding chair—whatever that was. A Bible and a Hymn Book sold for 17¢, a looking glass for 58¢. The court authorized Elizabeth in 1813 to sell negroes Beck and Jim, the property of the estate, to pay debts and she duly reported their sale on 7 March 1814.

On 6 December 1813 Elizabeth Cobb and Martha Williams sold 81 acres on the east side of Kirby Creek. Martha must have been her mother and the land part of her inheritance, for on 29 Sept. 1812 Martha Williams had given by recorded deed a negro boy named Isham to her grandson, William Cobb.

On 4 Sept. 1815 Turner Peebles reported as the guardian of the heirs of Robert Cobb and was allowed £2-16s-8d for costs and debts.

Elizabeth Cobb married Miles Boon on 5 Dec. 1815. James Boon and Jacob Liles, both her relatives, were surety and witnesses. In 1819 the court approved the final settlement of Robert Cobb's estate by Elizabeth Boon, administrator.

Listed in 1814 as "infants" of Robert Cobb were: Thomas, Priscilla, Mary, William and John. Except for the gift to William by his grandmother they all fade into oblivion—we find them no more. If they took the name of their step-father there was no adoption action filed in the courthouse.

(2) Priscilla Cobb, daughter of John and Martha Liles Cobb, was born about 1780. She married Britton Bryant on 5 July 1814. Absolom Deberry, son of Peter Deberry Jr., was surety and witness.

(3) Polly Cobb could possibly have been the "Martha-Mercy" Cobb who married James Taylor on 6 May 1808 but it is unlikely. "Polly" was used rarely as a nickname for Martha but frequently for Mary. It is a better bet that it was her mother—which leaves Polly among so many of the Cobbs of

this generation and the next whose lives must be told from some family record not available to this history. They didn't leave it at the court house to give us any clue.

(4) Jesse Cobb, born about 1784, was bound by the court on 7 March 1796 as an apprentice to James Bridgers to learn the art of being a tailor. He was dead in 1805—his brother Robert administered his estate.

(5) Thomas Cobb, born about 1786, was sued on 6 June 1814 by Elizabeth Cook for a debt. After he signed the deed on 11 July 1809 with his brother, sister and others this is the only time there is any mention of him. He never made the census in Northampton County.

(6) Rebecca "Becky", born about a year before her father died in 1789, did not sign the deed in 1809 so was probably deceased.

By 1840 the only male descendant of Robert Cobb Sr. in Northampton County was Littleberry Cobb, and he disappeared in 1844. In fact, he was the only Cobb in the county then. The census reports of 1850 through 1880 fail to list even one.

## HISTORICAL NOTES:

From the North Carolina Gazette, New Bern, N. C. 4 June 1793:

Saturday, March 23, 1793: A number of inhabitants of this town, having evinced a desire that the Post-master would cause their letters to be delivered at their own house immediately on the arrival. He will in the future do so with regard to such persons as may require it and be willing to pay therefor 50 cents per annum.

Tavern rates established for Northampton County, N. C. for year 1817:

Dinner	50¢
Supper	37½¢
Breakfast	37½¢
Horsefeed	30¢
Board of man and horse per day	\$2
Lodging	12½¢
French brandy	25¢ per half pint
Holland gin	25¢ " " "
Sherry	25¢ " " "
Country wine	15¢ " " "
West India rum	20¢ " " "
Rectified whiskey	20¢ " " "
Common whiskey	15¢ " " "
Old apple brandy	20¢ " " "
New " "	15¢ " " "
Peach brandy	20¢ " " "
French brandy toddy	30¢ " " "

Northampton County Court March 3, 1817