

A Brief History of the Gabriel Family

The first formal family history of the Gabriel family of western North Carolina was written by James Alburtus “Alley” Gabriel in 1936, and subsequently updated by Jack Gabriel in 1975. This brief synopsis for the Genealogy Web could not hope to include all descendants, but highlights the author’s direct ancestors and their families. Much more information is available to interested researchers. Another useful source is Raymond Gerald Gabriel’s work on the Missouri Gabriels, which has been maintained by Billy Gene Gabriel.

These histories maintain that the first Gabriel to settle in what is now Catawba County was Jacob Gabriel, who arrived in Philadelphia on 30 Sep 1754 aboard the ship *Edinburgh* from Rotterdam. He moved through Berks County, Pennsylvania to eventually settle on Balls Creek, an event recorded in a deed dated July 1778. Jacob Gabriel appears in the nation’s first Federal Census of 1790 in Lincoln County. Jacob had 10 children: Elizabeth, Mary, Susanna, Ruhennah, Rachel, Sara, Agnes, Abraham, and John. Abraham Gabriel married Fanny Abernathy, and had three children: Jacob Forney Gabriel, John Wilson Gabriel, and Joseph Madison Gabriel.

Jacob Forney Gabriel was born in 1806. He married Nancy Robinson on 10 May 1834, and they had four children: Forney, Joseph Pinkney Gabriel (1835-1918), Harriet Gabriel (1839), and Fanny Elizabeth Gabriel (4 May 1842). In 1842, the family moved to Madison County, Missouri.

John Wilson Gabriel was born 21 Sep 1807, and died on 24 Aug 1882. He married Harriet Caroline Sigmon (24 Oct 1824 – 12 Oct 1875) on 16 Dec 1840. Their children were: Milton Monroe Gabriel (25 Jan 1842 – 12 Feb 1906), Abraham Alonzo Gabriel (4 Jan 1844 – 9 May 1864), Harrison Sigmon Gabriel (15 May 1846 – 28 Jan 1917), Susan Medora Gabriel (11 Oct 1848 – 16 Dec 1854), John Wilson Gabriel, Junior (6 Feb 1851 – 23 May 1916), Fanny Elizabeth Gabriel (26 Oct 1853 – 17 May 1941), Laura May Gabriel (14 May 1856), Harriet Caroline Gabriel (15 Sep 1858 – 23 Oct 1886), Bruce Alexander Gabriel (26 Feb 1861 – 3 Jul 1936), Ada Eugenia Gabriel (1 Mar 1863 – 2 Jan 1947), and Annie Jackson Gabriel (21 Aug 1865 – 8 Jun 1911). Of this family, Monroe, Alonzo, and Sigmon all served as Confederate soldiers, while father John Wilson served the Confederacy as a postmaster, and 61-year-old grandfather Martin Sigmon also enlisted for a time before his age caused him to depart. Alonzo was killed at Spotsylvania Courthouse, Virginia.

Joseph Madison Gabriel was born on 22 Aug 1810, and died on 24 Mar 1893. He married Rebecca Malvina Robinson (22 Dec 1813 – 29 Apr 1900), the sister of brother Jacob’s wife Nancy, on 6 Feb 1842. Their children were: Abram Alburtus Gabriel (27 Jun 1843 – 10 Oct 1935), William Pinckney Gabriel (11 Jun 1845 – 9 Apr 1910), Jacob B. Gabriel (1848 – 27 Sep 1914), Sarah Frances Gabriel (20 Mar 1849 – 26 Nov 1934), Mary Gabriel (1852 – 20 Oct 1869), and Joseph W. Gabriel (1856 – 17 Mar 1875). Both Alburtus and William served as Confederate soldiers.

Joseph's eldest son, Alburtus, married Zella Elizabeth "Lizzie" Milligan (15 Dec 1845 – 17 Apr 1922) in Catawba County on 28 Feb 1866 upon his return from the War Between the States. Their children were: Alexander Milligan Gabriel (17 Apr 1867 – 23 Mar 1952), William Alonzo Gabriel (1868), Vestor R. (1871), Minnie C. Gabriel (1873), Henry Madison Gabriel (6 Dec 1874 – 26 Dec 1948), Fred Cline Gabriel (16 Aug 1876 – 29 Apr 1952), and Franklin A. Gabriel (23 Apr 1879 – 30 Dec 1880). Before the 1880 Federal Census, Alburtus moved his family one county east to Iredell County, where descendants still reside. Alburtus died on 10 Oct 1935 in the Old Soldier's Home in Raleigh, reportedly the last surviving Confederate veteran of Iredell County. He was preceded in death by wife Lizzie. They are buried in the Blue Door Cemetery along Route 21, along with several of their children.

Alburtus's youngest surviving son, Fred Cline Gabriel, moved to Guadalupe County, Texas, sometime before the 1900 Federal Census. On 18 Dec 1901, he married Ida Belle Scott, the sister of the wife of his landlord, Quincy Lowman. To Fred and Ida were born the following children: Connie Oxley Gabriel (1902), Florence Bernice Gabriel (26 Jan 1904 – 31 Aug 1991), Melvin Cline Gabriel (23 Feb 1908 – 11 Jul 1972), Frances Gertrude Gabriel (22 Dec 1909 – 16 Apr 1910), and Lois Elizabeth Gabriel (15 May 1911 – 14 Mar 2000). Fred died on 29 Apr 1952 and Ida on 1 Jan 1960. Both are buried in the Staples Cemetery, with Bernice and Ida's sister Sara Elizabeth "Bettie" Scott and her parents, the Reverend William A. Scott and wife Texas Anne Gray. Other Gabriels from North Carolina moved through Guadalupe County, Texas on their way to settling elsewhere.

Melvin Gabriel left Staples for San Antonio, where in business school he met Lula Vivian Taylor, of Real County. They appear separately as boarders in San Antonio in the 1930 Federal Census. They married on 3 Jun 1933, and had three children, the eldest of whom was the author's father, Dale Cline Gabriel (21 Aug 1940). Following military service in the Army Signal Corps in the Pacific in World War II, Melvin returned to San Antonio and worked for Southwestern Bell. He died on 11 Jul 1972, and Vivian died on 27 Mar 1999.

Dale married in June 1961 and was graduated from Texas A&M University in 1962. He was commissioned an officer in the armor branch of the United States Army. He served overseas in Germany, where the author's brothers were born in 1964 and 1965, later in Korea in 1967, and again in South Vietnam from 1969-1970. He was divorced in 1975, and remarried the following year, with two beautiful daughters (1981 and 1983) before his untimely death at age 43 on 1 Apr 1984. The author was graduated from Texas A&M the following month and entered the United States Air Force.

<Submitted by D. Scott Gabriel>