

## The Earles

The lineage of John Earle (1612 - 1660) was investigated by Burke, the eminent English genealogist, who accepted Nye<sup>\*</sup> as the immigrant's birthplace. Burke went on to list him in *Prominent Families of the United States of America* and stated that the Earles of South Carolina were entitled to use the arms of the Earle family of the west of England (Somerset and Dorset).

As was true in the case of many of Virginia's first families, the Earles had a coat of arms or crest on a signet ring that was used as a seal for important documents. The Earles' coat of arms had a (red) shield, three (silver) escallops, and a crest of a lion's head "erased" (jagged edges) pierced with a broken arrow. The motto was *Vulneritus Non Victus*, "wounded by not conquered."<sup>\*</sup> A framed chart showing the Earle genealogy and coat of arms is hung on a wall at St Michael's Church at Somerton, England. Not too surprisingly, the church has a large de Erleigh Chapel, undoubtedly a donation from the family.

John Earle (the immigrant), was the 18th generation after the original Herlei. In 1637, he married a woman named Mary Symons. Mary had been born in 1617 in Gloucestershire, the county of Bristol. The first positive proof of John Earle's presence in Virginia is dated 12 April 1642, when he signed his name as a witness to a land sale. It is thought that John was a merchant operating ships out of Bristol, and his first voyages to the American colonies (1639 and 1642) were business trips. However, he was also a Royalist (a person who supported the king) which was not an expedient position to take at that time.

The 1640s were a time of great unrest in England. Charles I drove out thousands of people by his religious persecutions, and his political intolerance eventually led to civil war. When parliament failed to carry out his wishes, he dissolved the governing body and tried to rule through appointed ministers. He had to abandon this plan (and call a new parliament) when he found that he needed money to carry on his reign. For obvious reasons, this new parliament was almost unanimous in its opposition to the king. After a civil war (1641 - 1649), the king was tried for treason, convicted, and on 30 January 1649, beheaded. Those who supported King Charles during this civil war were called "Royalists" or "Cavaliers" Practically all the colonists who came to Virginia before, during, and immediately after this war were Cavaliers who believed in the established Church of England and supported King Charles. Many were

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<sup>\*</sup> The official description of the Earle coat of arms is "three escallops within a bordure engrailed, and tinctured gules and argent."

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members of the middle or lower class — some indentured servants — who came to Virginia to find land and wealth for themselves. Some who came were well-born gentlemen and noblemen. It is in the group of landed gentry that we find John Earle.

**John Earle migrates.** A few months after the execution of Charles I in 1649, John Earle arrived at St. Mary's County, Maryland, with a man named Francis Symons (probably his brother-in-law). Members of the Symons family had already been in Virginia for a decade, so it's not too surprising that the men crossed over the Potomac River from Maryland and patented land in Virginia in an area called Northumberland County. Early records show that Earle patented 150 acres; he must have used his headrights — 50 acres each for himself and his two sons, Samuel and John Jr. — to obtain the land.

The system of "headrights" gave property to men who transported people and paid their passage. The date of the sons' arrival in Virginia is unknown, but they probably accompanied their father to Maryland while their elder brother, William, remained in England with their mother and sister.

John Earle's land was located on Lee's Creek, a tributary of the Chicacoan River (which emptied into the Potomac River) in Virginia's Northern Neck. The area to the west (present Westmoreland County but then a part of Northumberland) was separated by the Yeocomico River. There was an Indian village at Sandy Point where the Yeocomico joined the Potomac. This fertile land appealed to John Earle, and he bargained with the Chief of the Machtahotas Indians for its sale. The deal was concluded on 20 Feb 1650 and gave Earle 1,000 acres extending from the Yeocomico River to a wide stream running through the northern portion of the tract that became known as "Earle's Creek." Earle then obtained an official grant for the land by transporting indentured servants to the colony.

John's wife Mary and their daughter Mary arrived in Virginia in 1652 (their passages plus those of two other women were paid by John Earle so he was able to claim headrights for them). William Earle, the eldest son, apparently remained in England at school for two more years. He arrived in Virginia in 1654 and probably died not long after since there is no further record of him.

The system of headrights is an interesting one since it allowed people to claim land *each time* individuals arrived in the colonies. For example, when John and Mary Earle made a trip to England in 1652, their passage back to Virginia was paid by Thomas Keene who then proceeded to claim them as headrights. The fact that John Earle had already claimed himself and his wife at an earlier date seems not to have mattered at all.

John used the headrights he claimed for the women's 1652 passage to Virginia to obtain 200 acres on the Potomac beyond the Yeocomico River. He built a small house, planted an orchard of pear trees, and called the place "Waterview." The Earles lived at Waterview for two years while their manor house was being constructed at Yeocomico plantation. Once the house

was complete, John and Mary Earle sold Waterview to a neighbor named William Thomas and moved to Yeocomico plantation. The house was named “Spring Neck” and was built on a promontory overlooking Earle’s Creek. The fertile fields had already yielded a large crop of tobacco which was rolled in hogsheads to the newly constructed wharf at the mouth of Earle’s Creek. There the tobacco was loaded onto merchant vessels and taken to England.

In the next few years, John Earle acquired 1,700 acres in Northumberland County for transporting indentured servants (a total of 34) to Spring Neck Creek.

Only seven years after moving into Spring Neck, Mary Earle died (in 1659) at age 42. Not too long after his wife’s death, John married (as her third husband) Mrs. Elizabeth Howell. Elizabeth was barely a bride when she was a widow again: John Earle died in 1660 at age 49. Shortly after John’s death, his widow married as her fourth husband William Clement, and apparently they lived at Spring Neck.

Although there is no record, it’s likely that John and Mary Earle are buried in the graveyard of Cople Parish Church. While there are now relatively few tombstones, at one time the ancient churchyard was filled with graves. It’s also possible that John Earle and his family were buried on his plantation, as so many planters were at that time. John Earle’s will is torn and fragmented, but it is extant. The inventory of his estate shows that he was a wealthy man. He left his plantation to his sons Samuel and John Jr. (500 acres with housing to Samuel and the other 500 acres with the cattle to John Jr.). The sons as well as daughter Mary were willed feather beds and rugs – rare possessions in early Virginia. Since John Jr. and Mary were young, they were directed to live with their new step-mother; Samuel was to look after the estate until his brother and sister “shall come to age or marry.” Samuel, who had *just* turned 21 when his father’s will was probated, was already married and lived in a house at the head of Earle’s Creek.

In October 1662, young Mary (then 20) made a trip to England. Apparently she did not get along with stepmother Elizabeth Clement and her stepmother’s husband: when returning to Virginia, Mary petitioned to live elsewhere. The court forced her to “return to William Clement and Elizabeth his wife until good cause appears for her removal.” Six months later, for some unknown reason, the court rescinded the order. Mary was allowed to choose a guardian, and she selected Martin Cole who, with his wife Alice, lived near Samuel Earle (Mary’s brother) at the head of Earle’s Creek. When Alice Cole died, Martin married the young Mary; it is speculated that they moved to England around 1670.

John Earle Jr. died before 1666 and left his share of his father’s property to his brother Samuel, who sold the Spring Neck property to his stepmother’s husband. This occurred at a time when there was a general recession in the colonial economy, so it was probably Samuel’s way of

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\* Northumberland County, Va. Record Book 1558-1560, will of John Earle dated 19 Sep 1660, pg. 47

patching together the family fortunes and paying the ever eternal taxes. For whatever the reason for the sale, the Earles no longer had any holdings at Spring Neck.

In looking over all the “facts” and records, there are many questions that arise that will probably never be answered. Why did the court change the order that forced Mary to live with her stepmother and her husband? Was Mary already attracted to Martin Cole when she chose him as her guardian? What was the cause of John Junior’s death? Was it *just* business that caused Samuel to sell Spring Neck, or were there emotional reasons for his decision as well? Unfortunately, records merely list the events; they don’t give us the more interesting reasons behind them.

**Samuel Earle I.** Samuel Earle<sup>1</sup>, only surviving son of John Earle, was born in England around 1640. He was 20 years old at the time of his father’s death and held together his inheritance while operating a large tobacco plantation of his own. He began to sell off parcels of his Spring Neck inheritance during the 1667 recession. He went on to acquire additional tracts of land in the interior of Westmoreland County.

Samuel<sup>1</sup> and his wife Bridget Hale had one known child: Samuel<sup>2</sup>. When Bridget died around 1694, Samuel<sup>1</sup> married Mattilda Allerton; when *he* died three years later (in 1697), Mattilda married a neighbor (William Rust) and after his death married a third husband, John Bennett. During the 1600s in Virginia, women were scarce, and records show that widows remarried quickly (and often).

**Samuel Earle II.** Samuel Earle<sup>2</sup> (1670 – 1746), the only child of Samuel<sup>1</sup> and Bridget Earle, married Phillis Bennet (who was probably the daughter of his step-mother’s third husband, John Bennett).<sup>\*</sup> The young couple lived in the house that his father built at the head of Earle’s Creek. Samuel<sup>2</sup> and Phillis had five children: four daughters and one son (Samuel<sup>3</sup>).

Samuel<sup>2</sup> was a planter, large landowner, and a surveyor of roads. He widened the paths across Yeocomico plantation to accommodate the ox-drawn carts that came into use to carry tobacco to the wharves on Earle’s Creek. He also acquired a 400-acre plantation in Stafford County which he deeded to his only son (Samuel<sup>3</sup>) at the time of the young man’s marriage. Samuel<sup>2</sup> lived out his entire life span (of seventy-five years) in Cople Parish, Virginia.

Samuel Earle<sup>2</sup> left a will in which he left his daughters one shilling each and named his only son executor. As was common in the day, Samuel had already given his son (Samuel<sup>3</sup>) extensive lands and property. For this reason, the only mention in the will of the younger Samuel was to appoint him as executor. “I give and bequeath to my Grandson Samuel Earle my Dwelling Plantation and all my land thereunto belonging to him my said grandson and to the

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<sup>\*</sup> Distances were great, transportation was poor, and people tended to marry their neighbors, stepsiblings, or cousins.

male issue of his body lawfully begotten forever . . . I give and bequeath to my said Grandson Samuel Earle two negroes, George and Moll, to him and his heirs . . . My will and desire is that my land before bequeathed shall be and remain in the male issue of the name of Earle forever descending from me . . . I give and bequeath all the remainder of my estate not before mentioned unto my said grandson Samuel Earle and his assigns whom I appoint Executors of this my last will and testament when he shall arrive at the age of twenty-one years to take all the before mentioned Estate into his full possession.”

**Samuel Earle III.** Samuel Earle<sup>3</sup> (1692 – 1771), like his father, was a planter, but he was also a pioneer, attorney at law, high sheriff, justice, burgess, church warden, investor, soldier, and a major in the colonial regiment. He was the only son (but as mentioned before — not the heir) of his father. Born in Westmoreland in 1692, Samuel Earle<sup>3</sup> resided in the counties of Prince William, Stafford, Fauquier, and finally in Frederick County. He was educated at the College of William and Mary and was the first member of the Virginia House of Burgesses from Frederick (1742 –1747). He owned extensive properties in six counties including land next to that of Augustine Washington (the father of George Washington).

Samuel Earle<sup>3</sup> ‘s first wife was Anna Sorrell, the orphaned daughter of Thomas and his wife Elizabeth (Occany) Sorrell of Westmoreland. Samuel and Anna were married in 1726. As mentioned previously, Sam’s father gave the couple a lavish wedding present — the deed to the Aquia Creek plantation (with its slaves and stock) plus 200 acres at the Yeocomico site. The marriage contract of Sam and Anna is mentioned in the deed: “Whereas there is a treaty of marriage . . . between Samuel Earle, my son . . . and Anna, daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Sorrell . . .” \*

Anna Sorrell was descended from a family of Huguenots who went to England from France at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Her father, Thomas Sorrell, was a captain in the James City militia and was killed during Bacon’s Rebellion in 1676.

The Earles’ first child, Samuel, was born in Stafford County in 1727, followed by baby Anna (b. ca. 1728). There is a gap in years between Anna and the next child, Baylis (b. 1734), which probably indicates the birth of another child who died young. Baylis was followed by John, Rachel, Hannah and Lettice.

“Baylis” might seem an unusual name for a boy. Like many families of that time, sons frequently were given the surnames from the female side of the family. Baylis Earle (Samuel and Anna’s son) was named for Colonel John Baylis of Westmoreland County who had married Samuel’s sister, Hannah Earle. So Baylis Earle was named for his aunt’s husband. Since the Baylis family was closely associated with the Earles, records show that the Oates, Earles, and many other related families continued to use some form of the name (Baylis, Bayles, Bailes, Bayless) as a given name from that time on.

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\* Westmoreland County, Va. Deed Book 8, 5 May 1726, p. 173.

On 5 March 1747, Samuel Earle<sup>3</sup> bought 340 acres at the mouth of Muddy Run (in what is now Warren County, Virginia) and made it his permanent home. He built a manor house and a tall, one-story wooden chapel on a promontory overlooking the sparkling Shenandoah River. Below the cliff, at a crossing which became known as “Earle’s Ford,” he constructed a still and gristmill. It was probably here in the family chapel that the Earle’s eldest daughter, Anna, 19, married Charles Buck in 1747.

= John Earle’s Yeocomico (1651)

= Samuel Earle<sup>3</sup>’s Muddy Run (1739)

Anna Sorrel Earle died the following year, 30 December 1748, and was buried in her garden, about 200 yards from the mouth of Muddy Run. Her monument bears the inscription:

Here lies the body of Anna  
the wife of Samuel Earle of this County  
who departed this life the  
30 day of December A Domini 1748  
in the 41 year of Her Age.  
She was a Religious, Devout & Godly Woman,  
a loving & Virtuous Wife,  
an Indulgent Mother, a Liberal Mistress,  
a kind Neighbor, a true Pattern of Goodness  
an example to all Her Followers  
and by all much lamented.

Anna's death left Samuel to cope with a household of children. Hannah Baylis, his sister (now a childless widow), moved to Shenandoah to keep house for her brother. Meanwhile, Samuel<sup>4</sup> (the eldest son of Anna and Samuel<sup>3</sup>) then 21 years old, was in Westmoreland County, managing the Yeocomico plantation left him by his grandfather. Sometime in this period, young Samuel<sup>4</sup> died; his estate was left to an infant son (also named, what else, "Samuel"), and the baby's grandfather was named as administrator. Distances were great, and it was difficult to manage Yeocomico plantation from Muddy Run (see map on page 8). Although Yeocomico was entailed to remain in the Earle family, the court eventually allowed the restrictions in Samuel<sup>2</sup>'s will to be set aside. The old Earle's Creek plantation was sold and the proceeds invested for the infant.

While staying at his Aquia plantation in Stafford County, Samuel<sup>3</sup> (then 62) took as his second wife Elizabeth Holdbrooke (a girl "younger than several of his children"). The couple remained in Stafford for the next five years, probably due to the unsettled conditions on the frontier and what was called "the Indian menace."

It was there at the Aquia plantation that three children were born: Theodocia, Elizabeth, and Mary Ann. The frontier finally calmed down in 1757, and Samuel and his wife Elizabeth sold the Aquia Creek plantation and moved to the Town Run place in Fauquier County. Their fourth child was born there in 1760, and Earle, overjoyed to have another male after the death of his eldest son and namesake, used the name again and christened him Samuel Earle IV.

The Hungry Run plantation in nearby Loudoun County was thriving. Neighbors hauled their wheat to Earle's mill in great Conestoga wagons, a style that had been developed during the French and Indian War. After converting the wheat to flour, the wagons rolled on to meet ships

at Tidewater ports. Perhaps Old Samuel grew weary of traveling to his various plantations; in 1761 he and wife Elizabeth “of Fauquier” sold the Hungry Run plantation. Sometime in 1762, the Earles returned to their Shenandoah Valley home on Muddy Run.

Samuel and Elizabeth (Holdbrook) Earle had three more children: Elias, Esaias, and Ezias. They remained in residence at Muddy run where Earle continued to operate his mill, his ferry, and several plantations until his death in 1771 at age 79. His will divided his property among the sons of his second wife (since he had already settled on Baylis and John).

Being so much younger, Elizabeth (Holdbrooke) Earle had, of course, outlived her husband. She continued to reside at Muddy Run with her seven children, and, along with Joseph Byrne, was named as executor of the estate. A year later, Elizabeth *married* Joseph Byrne (her co-executor) and, when he died, later married Edward Rogers. She eventually moved to South Carolina (along with the families of her son Ezias and her daughter Nancy). In her later years, Elizabeth Holdbrook Earle Burns Rogers was known as “Granny” Rogers.

In 1787, Elias Earle joined his half brothers (Baylis and John) in South Carolina. When Samuel Earle IV moved to Kentucky, Esaias came into possession of the entire Muddy Run plantation of the Shenandoah Valley. Although it passed out of the family over a hundred years ago, it continues today as a working farm. Standing near the site of the original mansion, destroyed many years ago, is a modern house surrounded by a white fence. Just outside the front gate is the old stone marker over Anna (Sorrell) Earle’s grave, now 250 years old.

Samuel<sup>3</sup> had a total of fourteen children, seven by each wife. All of his sons served as soldiers in the American Revolution except Ezias, the youngest. Three sons (Baylis, John, and Elias) moved to South Carolina. However, it’s the family with the first wife that holds the most interest for us since it contains *Baylis Earle*:

To Samuel<sup>3</sup> and Anna:

Samuel<sup>4</sup> b. 1727-28 (died before 1752)

(daughter) 1728-29 (died before 1761)

Baylis b. 8 August 1734 (Stafford Co., VA)

m. Mary Prince 16 April 1757 (she was “nearly” 13 years old)

d. 6 Jan 1825 at Earlesville in Carolina

John 1737 - ca 1800-1802

Rachel

Hannah

Lettice

**Judge Baylis Earle.** Baylis Earle was the second son of Samuel Earle<sup>3</sup> and was born 8 August 1734. Although his birth took place in Westmoreland County, he spent his childhood

and his adulthood (until about forty years old) in Frederick County, Virginia. He served as an officer in the militia during the 1750s.

On 16 April, 1757, “when she was 13 years, nearly,” Mary Prince, daughter of Prince, married Baylis Earle. They and their seven children followed her parents and his brother (John Earle) to South Carolina and bought John’s working plantation, Earlesville, on the South Pacolet River. The Earles located on the west side of the Pacolet River in Spartanburg County, about a half mile south of the North Carolina line, at what was afterwards known as “Earlesville.” Here Baylis established the permanent home of the family and here were born seven more children.

The Earles were staunch patriots. Although Baylis was a little too old (he was in his forties) to fight in the Revolutionary war, he provided supplies for the troops and his home was a center of activity for the Whigs (Patriots). As a consequence, British armies plundered the Earle plantation on their way to the battle at King’s Mountain in 1780. This event combined with the murder (by Whigs) of his son-in-law, Edward Hampton, only served to strengthen Baylis Earle’s patriotism. Although by then he was in his late forties, he served for short periods of time in the last two years of the war (1780 – 1782).\*

Baylis and Mary Earle’s eldest son (Samuel) was 17 when he joined the 5<sup>th</sup> South Carolina Regiment in 1777 to become a Revolutionary soldier. He was in Charleston at its surrender in 1780 and although paroled at that time, he volunteered again and fought under Gen. Thomas Sumter at the Battle of Blackstocks. He lost an eye in this battle and in late life was called “Blinky” Sam.

Mary’s father, John Prince (who had moved to Spartanburg with the Earles) had stockaded his home during the Revolution for protection against the British and the Indians. The place was called “Fort Prince” or “Prince’s Fort.” In addition to maintaining the fort, he was at times a member of the General Assembly and of the Provincial Congress of South Carolina. John Earle (Baylis’ brother) located on the North Carolina side of the river, just a short distance from his brother’s home at Earlesville. He, too, erected a stockade known as “Earle’s Fort” which was a place of retreat for the families of the Patriots.

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\* Baylis’ father was a Colonel in the colonial wars; his brother John was a Colonel in the Revolution. Baylis’ son-in-law, Captain Edward Hampton, was killed in action. His son Samuel was a commissioned officer as was Captain Reese, another son-in-law. His son John was too young to participate in the Revolution, but he fought in the War of 1812 as a volunteer from Muhlenberg County, Kentucky.

\* Revolutionary War Records, South Carolina Archives.

“The old place” is where Judge Baylis Earle spent the last half century of his life. Around 1810, he added a two-story red brick addition to his home with white columns in front; today the house is known as “Four Columns” and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Four Columns was still in the family as late as the early 1970s.

(photograph)

Earlesville Plantation near Landrum, SC is today a magnificent country estate. Baylis Earle built the original section of the house in 1786 and added the two-story structure about 1810. It is called Four Columns.

After the Revolutionary War, Baylis Earle of Spartanburg was elected to the South Carolina Senate, to the South Carolina House, and was a founding commissioner of Spartanburg County. He was appointed by the governor of South Carolina as Court Judge for Spartanburg County.

Family structure and finances are apparent in numerous documents concerning the transfer of land and property. For example, Baylis Earle transferred slaves *back* to his father in a document recorded in the Frederick County Court: "I, Baylis Earle for and in consideration of the natural love and duty which I have towards my father, Samuel Earle, have given, granted, unto my said father three negroes (named) which were given to me and my heirs and by my said father amongst several others as by deed of gift executed in Frederick County Court 2 March 1756 . . . as much as my said father had great losses of slaves since by death, etc." Recorded 1 Jun 1762. On the same date, Baylis also deeded slaves to his brother Samuel and his sisters Rachel, Hannah, and Lettice.

Baylis Earle lived a long, productive life, and was active enough at age 90 to kill a bear. He died 6 January 1825 at age 91 and is buried in the family cemetery, a few hundred yards west of Four Columns, at Earlesville.

In his will, he names his wife, most of his children, and numerous slaves. The will does *not* mention his eldest living son, Baylis. Perhaps this was because Baylis had already received property from his father as well as a considerable bequest under the will of Coloney John Baylis (5 Dec 1746) whose name he bore. (John Baylis had no children of his own).

**Children of Baylis Earle and Mary Prince Earle:**

Sarah (Sallie) b. 1759 - ?

Samuel 1760 - 1833

John (Jack) ca. 1762 (died young)

Anna• 1764 - ?

John• 1766 - 1818

John Earle Jr. 1776 - 1818

Baylis Jr.• b. 11 Sept 1768

m. Mrs. Anna Moseley Hewlett

They moved to Muhlenberg and Hopkins Counties, KY

d. 1813 in Hopkins Co., Kentucky

Damaris• 1771 - 1804

Rhoda• 1773 - ?

Miriam 1775 - "

Thomas Prince• 1778 - 1801

Edward Hampton• 1780 - ?

Theron 1783 - 1841 (inherited Four Columns)

Asphasia 1785 - ?

Providence• 1788 - ?

• = moved to Kentucky

Mary Prince Earle lived to celebrate her golden wedding anniversary. She died in 1807 at the age of 63 and she, too, is buried in the family cemetery at Earlesville.

**Baylis Earle Jr.** Baylis Earle Jr. was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia, in 1768. He married Mrs. Anna Mosley Hewlett at Earlesville, South Carolina, and their daughter, Elizabeth Earle, was born there in 1792. Around 1800, the Earles moved to Kentucky and settled on land along Pond River (what was to become the dividing line between Muhlenberg and Hopkins Counties).

More than half of the children of Judge Baylis Earle left Spartanburg County and came to the wilderness of Kentucky to make their home. They were a part of a trend of the times — to follow an ever-westward urge that possessed early settlers from the colonial times. Around 1800, the families moved into north Christian County and the part of Henderson that was later to become Hopkins County.

The early 1800s was a time when many new counties were being formed out of older, larger ones. Consequently, what often looks like a great deal of moving on the part of a family (from county to county) is actually changing county lines.

Although many pioneers left the established regions of the east coast to better themselves, their condition was, at least temporarily, worsened. Gone were the spacious homes, the connection to seaports, the old friends and neighbors. Why did they leave? One of the main reasons was that tobacco, the basis of the southern Tidewater economy, was a crop that depleted the soil. Farmers and planters were continually forced to seek new lands.

This led to the second reason for moving south and west: the Tidewater was thoroughly settled and the Piedmont was also filling up. The plantations and farms in the east could not support the growing number of families; there were fewer and fewer tracts of land available to acquire for younger sons. Pioneering families looked west toward great tracts of inexpensive and fertile land; it was the land that drew them to Kentucky.

Life in Kentucky during the early 1800s was nothing like that experienced in the Tidewater region of Virginia and the Carolinas. To survive, many families (like the Earles) brought large numbers of brothers, cousins, and related families with them. These groups of relatives formed a support system and helped one another clear the land, build homes, and harvest crops. Those who married outside the family brought new “relatives” into the fold. The marriage of Elizabeth Earle to William Oates, for example, was to begin an interrelationship between the two families that was to continue for generations. Cousins (distant and not so distant) married cousins, and there are descendants today who can trace their lineage back to two or more offspring of Judge Baylis Earle and of “Major” Jesse Oates.

The Oates and the Earles settled along both sides of Pond River, a tributary that separates Hopkins and Muhlenberg Counties. The region was wooded, so land needed to be cleared to make way for the farms. The logs in turn became the walls for the first buildings in Pond River

country. The soil was fertile, weather was temperate, and water was plentiful. All the conditions needed for farming were present, and land was readily available. The Oates and Earle families prospered.

In addition to the domestic animals brought from the East, early settlers had wild game at their disposal. In the early 1800s, enormous numbers of pigeons were available in Kentucky and were a common feature at many a supper table.

Great flocks of wild pigeons or passenger pigeons frequented Muhlenberg in the olden days. Up to about 1850, they were on occasion seen in great numbers passing over the county while moving from place to place or at some of the pigeon roosts in various parts of the county. Since about 1860, none have been seen at all. That 'they came by the millions and were killed with clubs by the thousands' and that while flying over the country 'they hid the sun even more than the blackest cloud and 'turned day into night' is verified by many local traditions . . . A few places in the Pond River Country and along Green River are still pointed out as old pigeon roosts.\*

Married when 17 years old, widowed at 42, Elizabeth W. (Earle) Oates remained a well-to-do widow for fifty-two years. At the time of her husband's unexpected death, she had nine children. Her younger children were under ten years of age, son William Wallace Oates was age sixteen. At that time, her eldest son, Baylis Earle Oates (named for Elizabeth's father), was around twenty-three years old with a young wife of his own. Although starting his own family, Bayliss (or "B.E." as he was called) took over management of much of his mother's business affairs, helping her to run the farm and raise the younger children.

Unlike most women of the time, Elizabeth Earle could read and write. The signature of Elizabeth W. Oates appears on several documents, especially after the death of her husband (who died on a trip south along the Mississippi River). In her later years, her signature becomes a little shaky. By 1879 (when she listed her age as 87), she is signing with an "X."

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\* William Lloyd Winebarger, *Oates-Earle and Related Families*, page 71.

Elizabeth lived to the ripe old age of ninety-four. Pension papers (from the government — her husband fought in the War of 1812) show her age as 80 in 1871 and 87 in 1879. These pension documents plus the U.S. Census records indicate that she lived with some of her children: first with Baylis Earle until his ill health (he died in 1881); then in 1880 with Martha (Elizabeth's daughter) and son-in-law John Coleman; and finally with William Wallace Oates (our ancestor) at the end of her life.

Elizabeth W. (Earle) Oates died in 1884 at W.W.'s home in McNary (Muhlenberg County), Kentucky. She was buried in the Oates Cemetery on the old Oates farm (near Harpes' Hill) next to her loyal son Baylis. B.E. Oates' grave was later moved to Unity Cemetery where a memorial tombstone for his father and mother was also erected.

At the time of her death, Elizabeth had outlived four of her children and five of her grandchildren. The year she died (1884) was also the date when two of her youngest children (Martha and James) passed away. Daughter and sister to men who served in the military, Elizabeth was the also the grandmother of four Union soldiers (Wm. Oats Randolph, Edward M. Randolph, George Oates, and Wallace W. Oates). A fifth grandson (Charles R. Oates) was a Confederate soldier who fought on the side most favored by Elizabeth. Born in South Carolina, she did not change her loyalties to the south.

The photograph above of Elizabeth W. (Earle) Oates was supposedly taken in 1870. Although the graininess of the photograph makes it difficult to tell, she doesn't look eighty years old in the picture (which would have been her age in 1870). Clutched in her right hand is ????. Could this be a paper of some sort? Women were sometimes photographed holding their "wedding lines," but 1807 would be far too early for a photograph.

### **Samuel Earle III and Anna (Sorrell) Earle:**

1. Samuel IV (ca 1727 - ?) d. before 1752 m. Miss Perkins
2. Anna (ca 1728 -1749) m. Colonel Charles Buck After Anna's death, Charles Buck married her widowed Aunt Lettice (Sorrell) (Callis) Wilcox.
3. Baylis Earle (1734 - 1825) m. Mary Prince 16 April 1757.
4. John Earle (1737 - 1804) m. (1.) Thomasine Prince, daughter of John Prince, (2.) Mrs. Rebecca Wood.
5. Rachel Earle (1740 - 1829) m. George Neville, Jr. (before 13 Aug 1761, the date of a slave deed from her brother Baylis). The couple moved to South Carolina before 1770, the date of her father's will. The Nevilles moved to Tennessee in 1784.
6. Hannah Earle (ca 1742 - ?) m. Samuel Wilcox. (Hannah was first mentioned in 1761, the date of a slave deed from her brother Baylis). After 1767, the couple moved to South Carolina and later joined George and Rachel (Earle) Neville in Tennessee.
7. Lettice (ca 1784 (Lettice first mentioned in 1761, the date of a slave deed from her brother Baylis). m. John Neville.

### **Samuel Earle III and Elizabeth (Holdbrook) Earle:**

1. Theodocia Earle (ca 1754 - ca 1790) m. Matthew Compton, son of Samuel Compton.
2. Elizabeth Earle (1756 - ca 1790) m. Benjamin Elkins, Jr. Couple listed in the 1810 census. After Elizabeth's death, Benjamin moved to Jessamine County, KY.
3. Mary Anne Earle (ca 1760 - 1830) m. (1.) John Byrne (died 1780) and (2.) John Overall in 1783.
4. Samuel Earle IV (second of the name) (1760 - 1845) m. Tabitha Williams, daughter of George and Catherine Williams. Samuel saw Revolutionary War Service in 1781 with the 2nd Virginia Infantry. *The Revolutionary War Register* (vol. 1) describes him as being six feet six and one-half inches tall, brown hair, blue eyes, and fair complexion. Samuel was a landowner first in Frederick County, VA, and later in Christian County, Kentucky. He died in Mobile, Alabama, 2 Sep 1845.
5. Elias Earle (1762 - 1823) m. Frances Wilton Robinson.
6. Esaias Earle (1764 - 1826) m. Sarah Brownley. Descendents remained in Frederick County, Virginia.
7. Ezias Earle (ca 1767 - 1801) unmarried.

## **Judge Baylis and Mary (Prince) Earle:**

As can see from the list below, many of the children of Baylis and Mary Earle moved to Kentucky and eventually spread throughout the region then considered “the west.”

1. Sarah (Sallie) Earle (1759 - ?) m. (1.) Colonel Edward Hampton, son of Anthony and Elizabeth (preston) Hampton. Hampton was “murdered by Tories” and Sally remarried (2.) Charles Littleton
2. Captain Samuel Earle (1760 - 1833) m. Harriet Harrison, daughter of James and Elizabeth (Hampton) Harrison of Cripple Creek.
3. John (Jack) Earle died young.
4. Anna (Nancy) Earle (1764 - ?) m. Captain Ephraim T. Reese, son of Rev. Joseph Reese of Richland County, South Carolina. The couple moved to Trigg County, Kentucky.
5. John Earle, Jr (again) (1776 - 1818) m. Nancy Holland Burns, daughter of Joseph Burns and Mrs. Elizabeth (Holdbrooke) (Earle) (Burns) Rogers of Frederick County, Virginia. This couple moved to Christian County, Kentucky, and then to Pontotoc, Mississippi. John died on the Wilderness Road between Mississippi and South Carolina while bringing horses and cattle to the new settlement. His family later returned to Kentucky.
6. Baylis Earle, Jr. (1768 - ?) m. Mrs Anna Moseley Hewlett. They moved to Hopkins and Muhlenberg Counties, Kentucky.
7. Damaris Earle (1773 - ?) m. Michael Dillingham. They lived near White Plains, Hopkins County, Kentucky.
8. Rhoda Earle (1773 - ?) m Benjamin Clark. They moved to Christian County, Kentucky.
9. Miriam Earle (1773 - ?) m. John William Gowan, son of John “Buck” Gowan of Gowan’s Fort, Spartanburg County, South Carolina.
10. Thomas Prince Earle (1778 - 1801) m. Mary Stallard. They moved to Hopkins County, Kentucky.
11. Edward Hampton Earle (1780 - ?) m. Susan Davis, daughter of Colonel Richard and Ann (Chiles) Davis of Kentucky.
12. Theron Earle (1783 - 1841) m. Hannah Miller, daughter of Michael and Nancy (Vernon) Miller of Spartanburg County, South Carolina. They lived at Earlesville, and he inherited Four Columns.
13. Asphasia Earle (1785 - ?) m. (1.) Mary Montqgue. They moved to Floyd County, Georgia. Asphasia’s second wife unknown.
14. Providence Earle (1788 - ) m. John Lucas. They moved first to Kentucky and then to Monroe County, Mississippi.