

Oates/Oats

“Just plain ‘Oats.’” Mariam said. But O-A-T-S was just *one* way to spell the family’s name. Even cousins (sometimes brothers) spelled it differently. In the 1840 Kentucky census, we find “Oates” in Hopkins County and, across Pond River in Muhlenberg County, it’s spelled “Oats.” This may have been more the result of the census takers than the family since other census records reverse the spelling pattern from county to county and year to year.

In 1870, for example, W.W. Oats is listed with his family (wife and six children) in Madisonville (Hopkins County). Ten years later, Wm. W. Oates (widower) is still in Hopkins with his two youngest daughters.

When looking at original records from North Carolina (the origin of the family before their Kentucky migration), “Oates” seems to have been the preferred spelling. In England, other spellings (such as “Oots”) can also be found.

Scattered throughout history books, the Oates name can be found here and there and is usually spelled with the ‘e.’ Alabama boasts an Oates as one of its heroes: William Calvin Oates (William⁵, Stephen⁴, James³, Joseph², James¹) served as Colonel in Alabama’s Confederate Army (leading his men up Little Round Top at Gettysburg). He was also a Representative in the General Assembly of Alabama from 1870 to 1872, Representative in Congress from 1880 to 1894; Governor of Alabama, Brigadier-General in the War with Spain, and Member of the Alabama Constitutional Conventions of 1875 and 1901. An Oates Street in Dothan, Alabama is named for him.

In more modern times, Lawrence Edward Grace Oates (1880 - 1912) was a member of the Antarctic Expedition led by R. F. Scott in 1910. The group reached the South Pole in January of 1912. On the return trip when his illness threatened to delay (and endanger) the expedition, Oates deliberately walked to his death in a blizzard.

The Oates in England and the Colonies.

Although the name “Oates” has appeared in England since the Norman invasion, it’s possible (or even probable) that some of the men who arrived with William the Conqueror were of Danish extraction.

The specific Oates family which is the basis of this chapter was located in Virginia. The Coat of Arms used on the seal is definitely Danish in origin (see left). The silver shield has a large black bear

rampant with a red muzzle over its mouth. The bear, the strongest carnivorous animal in Europe, was adopted by the Danes as their symbol or badge. However, the rampant (attacking) bear was always displayed with a muzzle to remind everyone that the "Sons of the Bear" were powerful but restrained.

In looking through old documents from early Colonial times, it becomes apparent that a coat of arms, embossed on a signet ring, was an important addition to legal papers -- one that verified signatures. Undoubtedly, it was also a symbol of importance. The seal with the Danish bear was used by James Oates and his descendants.

The Oates family appeared first in Warwick County, Virginia, in the 1600s, later becoming one of the first families to move into what is now Halifax County. James Oates (who married Elizabeth Eivans in 1694) was an attorney and a friend of many leading men of Virginia, including Nathaniel Bacon. The colonial governor of the time set out to limit the democratic process, and Virginians were soon feeling oppressed. The growing discontent came to a head in 1676 when the governor refused to protect the frontier from attack by Indians. An overseer on Nathaniel Bacon, Jr.'s plantation was murdered by Indians and Bacon (without consent from the governor) marched against the natives at the head of a volunteer force of planters. For this he was denounced as a traitor. A rebellion followed as small planters sought to maintain what they thought of as their rights. Bacon captured and burned Jamestown driving the governor across the Chesapeake Bay.

I think that is when our James Oates left Warwick County. To save his neck, he had to lie low, which meant going to another part of Virginia. He went to Halifax County, and when a new colonial government came into power, he went to Albemarle County, Virginia -- now a part of North Carolina ¹

Oates seems to have moved near the village of Little River, the first town settled in the Perquimans District. Colonial records state "January Court, 1696 was holden at ye house of Thomas Nichols, Perquiman's County, North Carolina. James Oates was present for the first time as an attorney." Within six weeks of his arrival in the area, all courts were being held at the Oates' house. James became a member of the General Assembly, representing the interests of the Perquiman's District, Albemarle County, where he continued to live until he was forty years old.

¹ Letter from Mrs. Lucille Trimble to Dr. Charles E. Oates, descendent of James Oates and an Oates family researcher who lives in Montgomery, Alabama.

Joseph labeled himself a “planter,” but at other times stated that he was a “Cordwainer.” In colonial times, a cordwainer was a worker in cordoval leather -- a soft, fine-grained, colored leather, originally made at Cordova, Spain. This was a trade and product highly prized by the colonists.

Joseph Oates and his wife Elizabeth Wyatt had three sons: James, John, and Jethro. They lived on southern plantations in tidewater North Carolina much as other landed gentry of that day lived. The three sons all became plantation owners in Perquimans or Duplin County, North Carolina. As young men, all three were in the colonial army in North Carolina. By the end of the French and Indian War, they were all commissioned officers: John and James were Captains and Jethro had been commissioned as a Lieutenant.² Eventually, descendants of these Oates families spread out from North Carolina, taking trails into South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Missouri, Arkansas, Kentucky, Texas, Florida, and Illinois.

The line of our family’s descent was through the third son of Joseph -- Jethro Oates. He, like his father and brothers, owned extensive tracts of land and raised a large family. Jesse Oates (1756– 1831), Jethro’s eldest son, was born sometime around 1756 during the French and Indian War.

At the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, Jethro was too old to fight with the colonial forces. However, he aided the troops with food and other goods (for which he has been labeled a ‘patriot’ in the listings by the Daughters of the American Revolution). Jethro was greatly pleased when his eldest son Jesse took an active part in the struggle and gave him a large part of his holdings outright.

There is a rumor -- possibly false -- that Jesse Oates fought in the Revolutionary War under Colonel Francis Marion (known as "the Swamp Fox") and attained the rank of Captain. This would have been in *South* Carolina. A search of records, in both the national and (North and South Carolina) state archives, shows no one by the name of Oates fighting with Colonel Marion. The records do show that Jesse served in the Sampson County Militia; he reached the rank of an Ensign (Second Lieutenant) in 1778 and Captain four years later.

Much of the action in the South was done by militiamen who fought only when invasion was threatened. Then, furnishing their own horses, uniforms, weapons, and equipment, they would rally around their officers and serve until that particular campaign was over. Afterwards, they would return home until summoned later. It is possible that Jesse Oates may have been in one of the militias that joined Marion’s forces

² The service records of John, James, and Jethro are given in the Roster of North Carolina Troops in colonial Wars, North Carolina Historical Commission, File G.O. 146, Dobbs County, North Carolina, Richard Caswell’s Regiment.

during the final stages of the war. Whatever his service, the title of "Major" (which he assumed in Kentucky in later years) seems to have been fictitious or perhaps honorary.

Jethro Oates died 30 August 1780, and his will was probated five months later. In the will, he named his eight children: Jesse, Jethro E., Lydia, Amia, Elizabeth, Michael, Susannah, and John. Jesse, as the eldest son, was in charge of his deceased father's estate; this was to be divided equally among his children after the death of his wife, Artesha (whose maiden name seems to have been lost over time). The widow Oates allowed Jesse to manage the family estates; this was eventually to cause problems with the other children.

During the Revolutionary War (in 1782) at the age of 26, Jesse Oates had married Laruhama Stevens who gave him five children before she died at a relatively young age. In 1798, Jesse married a second time -- a woman named Zelpha Mason who gave him twelve more children, several of which were destined to be born in Kentucky.

By the late 1790s, Jesse Oates had acquired large land holdings of his own which he added to the estate lands he had acquired from his father. In addition, he bought the inheritance of two of his sisters and acquired dowry lands from Laruhama Stevens, his first wife who died in 1797.

Then, in 1800, disaster overtook Jesse Oates, and the entire course of his life was changed. He was forced to leave North Carolina, barely escaping with his life, leaving land, property, and family behind him.

There are two or three versions of the story. Here is a combination of the most likely events:

David Cogdell, a neighbor, had a daughter named "Susannah" who married Jesse's younger brother. Artesha, Jesse's widowed mother (given use of her husband's property during her lifetime) appears as "head of household" in the 1790 Census. By 1800, the widow was living with her youngest son and daughter-in-law, John and Susan (Cogdell) Oates.

Many reasons have been suggested for the antagonism that flared between the Jesse Oates and David Cogdell. It's possible that difficulties started when Cogdell suggested that his daughter and her husband did not get a fair share of Jethro's estate. He also didn't seem to like the way Jesse was managing his mother's affairs. Artesha might have been influenced by the Cogdells (or at least *appear* to have been), adding to the conflict between her eldest son and her daughter-in-law's father.

David's negative feelings toward the younger man were undoubtedly increased by opposing political views: Jesse Oates was a patriot while the Cogdells were known to have "Loyalist" leanings.

Still another factor that probably escalated the conflict between the two men was their forced contact during military drills. Jesse Oates and David Cogdell, like most able-bodied men of their time, were obligated to attend militia musters which took place once a month. Jesse was an officer; David Cogdell was not. Nearly every day of muster, after the drill, a fight would break out between the two men. Cogdell was large and strong; Oates was smaller so he usually got the worst of the fight. Although nothing has been written to validate this, it seems logical that Oates, as an officer, would retaliate by coming down hard on the older man during the next drill session.

Matters went on this way for quite some time until one day "Oates challenged Cogdell to a duel in which Oates shot and killed the older man."

Or so goes *one* version of the story. However, "duel" might be putting a bit of a polish on the event. Today, we hear the word "duel" and immediately have images of southern gentlemen issuing challenges, calling up their seconds, and meeting under old oak trees at dawn. This doesn't seem to have been the case in the Oates - Cogdell debacle.

One account of the "duel" states that after one of the monthly musters, Oates threatened Cogdell with a flintlock and would have shot him if the older man had not begged for a chance for his life. Oates agreed to let Cogdell go home -- a distance of two miles -- to get the gun the older man said he preferred to use in a duel (instead of the one he had with him). The two men and some of their friends mounted their horses and started for Cogdell's home. When the crowd arrived at the end of the lane leading up to the house, Cogdell put spurs to his horse and, dashing to safety, dared Oates to shoot. The fleeing man was probably convinced that an accurate shot at a moving target was impossible and that Oates would miss. He was wrong. Oates fired and killed Cogdell instantly.

Threatened by Cogdell's friends and family, Jesse rode home, took some money and a pocket compass, bade good-bye to his children and pregnant wife, mounted his horse, and with his flintlock laying across his saddle, started west. The date of this is uncertain, but supposedly it occurred before the birth of Jesse's daughter Elizabeth (who was born 4 Nov 1800). Jesse would have been in his early forties.

Oates rode through Tennessee into Mississippi. While at Natchez, he stopped at a tavern and saw an advertisement giving his full description and offering a reward for his capture. That same day, he started for Kentucky and eventually landed in the region along the Pond River.

The Oates Family in Kentucky.

There are *many* colorful stories about Jesse's arrival in Kentucky. Jesse supposedly had taken a slave with him, and the two men ended up near the present site of Hopkinsville, Kentucky. In a (successful) effort to lose their pursuers, they had mingled their horse tracks in the tracks of a buffalo herd. Supposedly the two men set up house in a large, hollow poplar tree until they could build a more suitable shelter. William Winebarger in his book³ disputes this colorful story and states that documents show that Jesse bought 200 acres of land with a dwelling already on it and lived there until 1800. This hardly sounds like a situation in which a man was so desperate that he was forced to live in a tree!

For some time, Jesse Oates communicated with Stephen King (his brother-in-law) who kept the family informed. To keep his whereabouts secret, letters and papers were sent by way of William Stevens who lived in the state of Mississippi. Some of the letters written by Jesse are still in existence. They show a middle-aged man, living in what was then a wilderness, away from family, friends and the plantation life that he had known. However, Jesse had every intention of having his entire family join him.

In September of 1803, an arranged meeting of some of the family members was held in Williamson County, Tennessee, to plan the family's move. Jesse was briefly reunited with his wife Zilpha,⁴ his son William, and some of his other children as well as his two brothers-in-law: Stephen King and James Blackman. A power of attorney was drawn which named Stephen King as Jesse's attorney; the fugitive's caution is evident in the document which states that Jesse Oates was "of the State of Tennessee and County of Williamson." Jesse and his son William rode to Kentucky, and Stephen King returned to North Carolina where he began to sell off the fugitive's land holdings -- four tracts totaling over 1600 acres.

In one of his letters to Stephen King, Jesse stated that Matthew Mason (the father of Zilpha Mason Oates -- Jesse's second wife) had forbidden his daughter to join her husband in Kentucky. Two other daughters married Jesse's sons (Jethro and Bryant) and received similar warnings. Despite Matthew Mason's admonitions, the entire family eventually moved to Kentucky.⁵

After the sale of his North Carolina property, the exile took the proceeds and purchased hundreds of acres along the fertile Pond River in Muhlenberg and Hopkins Counties. By 1808, tax records show that Jesse owned 1,722 acres. His sons William

³ *Oates-Earle and Related Families*

⁴ It seems obvious that Jesse Oates must have arranged other clandestine meetings with his wife Zilpha: at least one child (Jesse Oates Jr.) was conceived during Jesse's exile.

⁵ Not wanting to be separated from his children and grandchildren, Matthew Mason finally capitulated -- selling his North Carolina plantation and buying one in Kentucky (in Christian County).

and Jethro began buying land in 1803 and 1805. In less than a decade, Jesse Oates and his family owned hundreds of acres of land which were considered some of the best farm land in the Pond River country.

The Children of Jesse Oates

William Oates, Jesse's eldest child, was born on his grandfather's plantation in Duplin, North Carolina around 1783, during the Revolutionary War. William received a good education for his times and undoubtedly had acquired military training as a young man, accompanying his father to the monthly musters of the local militia.

When a young man in his early twenties, William joined his father in Muhlenberg County in 1803, and began buying land along Pond River and its tributary Gipson Creek. Land records indicate that in two years, he bought nearly 400 acres (from the Commonwealth of Kentucky). This was the beginning of the large farm that remained in the family for 165 years. The Oates land included Harpe's Hill and several hundred acres of fertile valley east of it. It was situated about three and one-half miles west of the old Jesse Oates plantation.

The story of Harpe's Hill is an interesting one: two men, Micajah and Joshua, whose last name was Harpe, were cousins from North Carolina --"Tories and sons of Tories." One of the men was large, the other small; soon they were called 'Big Harpe' and 'Little Harpe.' They were "two of the most brutal outlaws in the West, spreading death and terror wherever they went." The governor of Kentucky offered a reward for their heads, and parties of volunteers pursued them. About a year after Muhlenberg County was formed, Big Harpe was chased across Pond River and run down by men seeking revenge. Wounded and unrepentant, the outlaw even confessed that he had killed one of his own children because "it cried." Micajah Harpe was killed by his pursuers and his head was chopped from his body; the bloody trophy was carried to nearest magistrate and eventually was placed in the fork of a tree near what has since been known as 'Harpe's Hill' (located on the Oates' farm). The road that passes the hill was called 'Harpe's Head Road.'

Nearly a decade later, in 1807, William Oates, who owned the farm that contained Harpe's Hill, married Elizabeth W. Earle, granddaughter of Judge Baylis Earle of South Carolina. Elizabeth's father (also named Baylis Earle) owned a large farm in a part of Christian County that became Hopkins County. (William and Elizabeth are of our family's line and more about their lives and family will be described later.)

Jesse's second son, Jethro (then pronounced "Jeether") was born around 1785 in North Carolina. He married Piercy Mason (sister to his father's second wife). The

couple eventually left Muhlenberg County, forded Pond River, and bought over 600 acres of land in Hopkins County in an area southeast of White Plains. The river crossing is still known as "Jeethers Ford."

Jesse's other children included Nancy Oates (born around 1787), David Oates (born around 1792), and Bryant Oates (born about 1794) who married Mary or "Polly" Mason (another sister of his father's second wife). Bryant died sometime in 1830 -- a year before his father. Many of the Oates families in Hopkins County can trace their ancestry to Jesse's two sons: Jethro and Bryant.

By his second wife, Jesse had John Mason Oates (b. 1799), Elizabeth Oates (b. 1800 after her father had left North Carolina), Jesse Oates Jr., (b. 1803), Richard Mason Oates (b. 1805), Rachel Oates (b. 1807), Mariah Oates (b. 1809), Zilpha Anne Oates (b. 1811), Matthew Mason Oates (b. 1813); Harriet Oates (b. 1814), Oliver Hays Oates (b. 1817), Wyatt Oates (b. 1819), and Charles Campbell ("C.C.") Oates (b. 1821). It's interesting to note the 38-year age span between the youngest and oldest of Jesse's offspring. This had led to endless problems for genealogists, with some of Jesse's children being listed as belonging to William.

Jesse Oates and his wife were members of the Baptist Church which in 1815 was located just three miles west of the Oates' farm. Other members included Baylis Earle (who "long lived near what is now Earlington"). As will be seen, these two families were to be joined in the next generation.

William Oates

Jesse's oldest son, William, was the person Jesse most depended upon during the trying years in Kentucky. The young man left North Carolina and joined his father in 1803 when he was twenty years old. He helped prepare a home for the rest of the family and returned to North Carolina to bring them to Muhlenberg. William made at least two trips east -- one to help settle the estate of his grandfather in the fall of 1807.

A few months prior to the death of his grandfather (Jethro Oates), William Oates had married Elizabeth Earle. The marriage bond (6 April 1807) was made in Muhlenberg County (his home) and the marriage was the first to be recorded in the newly formed Hopkins County (7 April 1807).

(copy of original marriage records)

Marriage of William Oates and Elizabeth Earle
Hopkins County, Kentucky, 1807

William and Elizabeth Oates had nine children including Baylis Earle Oates (their eldest son) and William W. Oates (1817-1845) who is one of our ancestors (more about him later).

William may have made one more trip back to North Carolina -- quite possibly after 1810 since the census for that year shows very few slaves in the Oates households. The 1820 census, on the other hand, shows a total of 53 slaves owned by Jesse and his four sons, all living in Kentucky by that time.

In the summer of 1812, the Indians of Indiana and Illinois territories were showing intense hostility. The governor of Illinois territory appealed to the Governor of Kentucky for aid. On September 8, 1812, Governor Shelby issued a stirring proclamation, calling for volunteers to protect the frontier settlements of Illinois and Indiana. He asked the Kentuckians to rendezvous at Louisville on September 18th, with thirty days' provisions. Shelby's proclamation brought throngs of Kentuckians to Louisville from every part of the state -- a great many more than were needed -- and hundreds of them were turned away. One veteran Indian fighter (who was rejected) said: "Well, Kentucky has often glutted the market with hemp, flour and tobacco, and now she has glutted it with volunteers."

One volunteer who *wasn't* turned away was William Oates who had been commissioned as an Ensign in the Muhlenberg County militia four years before in 1808. William served as a sergeant under Captain Alney McLean (commander of one of three companies from Muhlenberg County) in the War of 1812. The company enlisted September 18, fought briefly, and in 1813, records show that William was commissioned as Captain in the Muhlenberg County Militia. Elizabeth Earle was later to obtain a land grant and a pension based on her husband's military service.

In 1815, the Unity Baptist Church was the choice of the Oates and Earles: the list of church members included Elizabeth Oates, Jesse Oates, William Oates, Zilpha Oates. Church services at that time were held in a small log house complete with puncheon floor, a block pulpit, and a number of puncheon benches. This modest church was used for many years until it was torn down and replaced with a frame building. The third Unity Church was a log house built in 1875, near 'the 'Widow Earle Spring,' located about a quarter mile from the original building site.

The large farms in the Pond River Country produced enormous amounts of hemp, tobacco, and pork. Getting these products to New Orleans, the major market, was a problem faced by the farmers of the region. Cargo flatboats were built along the rivers and tributaries of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio. Once the boat and cargo were sold at New Orleans, the men walked or rode horseback up the Natchez Trace or took passage on upstream keelboats (if the value of their cargo had been great enough to warrant such extravagance).

One site for the building of flat-boats was at Boat Yard Creek near Harpe's Hill. "William Oates built a number of flat boats here and shipped many loads of hides and produce to the South."⁶

Flatboats carrying produce were usually manned by the owners, their neighbors and their sons. William Oates probably became actively involved in the flat-boat river trade around 1825, selling the products of his own farms as well as products consigned or sold to him by relatives and neighbors.

According to Elizabeth Oate's testimony (in her application for a military pension), her husband William died in 1834 (court records show 16 May 1833 as the correct date) while "on a trip down the Mississippi River." Thomas Mundell states in a sworn affidavit that William Oates died at the head of Stackland Reach on the Mississippi River and was buried on the west side of the river; Mundell "was present, helped dig the grave, and helped cover him up."

⁶ Rothert, *Muhlenberg County History*, pages 98 - 99.

When William died, Baylis E. Oates, his eldest son, was 24 years old and Elizabeth (Earle) Oates, his wife was only 42 years of age. Seven of William's children were still under age when Elizabeth took over the running of the estate. Later, Baylis E. Oates bought the undivided interest of all the heirs except one, thus keeping the large farm intact. Elizabeth lived another 51 years as a widow, outliving five of her own sons and a number of her grandchildren.

Many of the original Oates, including Elizabeth, were buried in the Oates family cemetery located on their farm. William and Elizabeth Oates' eldest son, Bayliss Earle Oates, was originally buried in the family cemetery also but was later moved to the Unity cemetery; the old tombstone remains. His mother, Elizabeth Earle Oates *wasn't* moved; the old stone remains and a concrete top has been placed over the grave. A memorial tombstone with both Elizabeth's and William Oates' names has been placed in the Unity Cemetery (located on Highway 62 about 10 miles west of Greenville, near Highway 175). The inscription reads "Elizabeth Earle Oates 1790 - 1884 wife of William Oates 1780 - 1835." Once again, the date for William's death is incorrect.

William W. Oates

William W. Oates was born right after Independence Day, on 5 July 1817. Little is known about his early years, growing up as the fifth son (out of seven) of William and Elizabeth Oates.

William W. married Susan E. Stanley (or Standley) 19 April, 1845. They had eight children. Susan E. died at a relatively young age (she was around 40 years old). In 1880, now a widower, "W.W." (pronounced southern style: "dubya-dubya"), was living with his two underage daughters (Jessie A. and Annie). Apparently he never remarried and disappears from records sometime after the 1880 census. He is mentioned in a letter written by the postmistress of Greenville Kentucky, dated 1886; the letter concerned the death of Elizabeth and was sent to the Pension Office of the Department of Interior. Apparently Elizabeth Oates was living with William Wallace Oates in McNary, Kentucky at the time of her death in 1884.

One of W.W.'s daughters, Mariam Oates, is pictured below in a double photo with her husband William Wallace Warner. The photograph was taken at North Jellico, Kentucky, and is marked "1894" on the back. This date *may* be inaccurate since the couple in the photo don't appear to be 40 years old. If a wedding portrait, the picture would have been made in 1876 -- when the couple were in their mid-twenties. Despite the forbidding stares (early photography required several minutes of

unflinching and unblinking concentration), Marion and W.W. look closer to twenty than to forty.

(Family photographs)

Mariam has been listed in census records as “Mary M.,” “Marian,” “Marium” and “Mariam A.” To her family she was “Mariam” (or “Granny” to her grandchildren). She was born in April either in 1851 or 1852, in Hopkins County, Kentucky (although there’s some controversy about whether she was born in White Plains or Madisonville where she grew up with the Littlepages and Whitfields as neighbors).

Records of her wedding haven’t surfaced, but the 1900 national census shows that she married William Wallace Warner sometime around 1876. The young couple lived in Hopkins County, Kentucky where they raised their family; they had four children of which three survived. Through the years, Mariam watched the birth of many grandchildren -- and the death of three of her grandsons (the brothers to Marie, Juanita, and Ida Warner).

Mariam was apparently a strong woman with grit, or perhaps “full of piss and vinegar” would be a better description. There’s a family story that tells how when she and W.W. were sleeping on a hot summer night, she felt something at the foot of the bed. Half asleep, batted at it. “It” turned out to be a burglar! Mariam grabbed the shotgun leaning near the head of the bed and took out after the intruder who got away. When she returned to the bedroom, she found that her husband (W.W.) had been chloroformed. Apparently Mariam would have been next if she hadn’t been so quick witted and fearless.

While living in Illinois near her son (Larry Warner) and his family, Mariam proved herself to be a grandmother who didn’t put up with any nonsense. Marie Warner remembers a time when (at the age of three or four) she wanted to go to the

store, but Mariam told her “no.” The determined toddler took the grocery basket (which was almost as big as she was), put the handle over her arm, and took out down the dirt road. She didn’t get far before she saw her Granny coming after her -- with a switch! Marie described her grandmother as “tall,” but that was probably only in the eyes of a small child. Mariam was whipcord thin in her later years. She was said to smoke a pipe, not an uncommon habit for Kentucky woman at that time.

Mariam is shown below as an elderly woman (note the goiter). She and her husband, W.W. Warner, were living with their daughter and son-in-law’s family in Illinois when she died in 1920. Through an error in memory, her tombstone bears the date “1919” however, both the census records and her death certificate show the correct date.

(family photograph)

Mariam Oates Warner died 23 July 1920 and is buried in Maple Hill Cemetery in Sesser-- a small town in southern Illinois where she lived out the last years of her life.

Muhlenberg County

Muhlenberg County, where many of the Oates family were born and raised, was formed in 1798 out of parts of Logan and Christian Counties. Named in honor of General John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg, an officer who had fought in the Revolutionary War, the county is situated in what was known as ‘Green River country.’

When first formed, this thinly populated region south of the Green River was reserved for men who had been Revolutionary soldiers. The new United States government, having little money, paid its military debts with bounty land. Many of the early settlers in Muhlenberg were Revolutionary soldiers, but more of them were the veterans’ sons.

The map below shows the Pond River which in 1807 became the dividing line between Muhlenberg and the new Hopkins County. Harpe’s Hill, where William Oates owned land, can be seen near the river. The town of Earles was named for the

family of early settler Baylis Earle (whose daughter Elizabeth married William Oates).

The Oates Family

Descendency The numbers at the beginning of the lines stand for the generations. For Example, all names preceded by a "2" are offspring of James Oates (who is "1" for first generation). Oates' names for the first three generations are in bold-faced type.

- 1 **James Oates** b: 1647 (probably in England) d: 3 Oct 1703 in NC
 - +Elizabeth (Perry) Eivens (widow with children) m. 11 Sep 1694
- .. 2 **Joseph Oates** (probable only child of James and Elizabeth)
 - b: 7 Aug 1697 in Perquimans County, North Carolina
 - (d. 1747 Bertie Co, NC or after 15 Jul 1752 in Johnson Co?)
 - +Elizabeth Wiat Wyatt) b. 7 Aug 1697 in Perquiman's District, NC
- 3 **John Oates** b: 7 Oct 1720 in Perquima's Precinct
- 3 **James Oates** b: 1722 d: January 1776 in Perquimans County, NC
 - + Sarah Clayton 1729 - 1766 Sampson Co, NC m. 1752
- 4 John Oates b. 8 Dec 1753, Sampson Co, NC
- 4 Susaner Oates b. 24 Mar 1756, Sampson Co, NC
 - + Adam Carraway
- 4 James Oates Jr. b. 25 Dec 1757, d 22 Mar 1815
 - + Mary Ann Wyatt, m. 1782
- 5 Lenny Oates
- 5 Stephen Oates b. 1783, d. 17 Feb 1836 Sampson Co, NC
 - + Elizabeth Shipp, m. 1807
- 6 Carraway Oates
- 6 Henderson M. Oates
- 6 James Oates
- 6 Seany Oates
- 6 Faraby Oates
- 6 Robert R. Oates
- 6 John Charles Oates
- 6 Anna A. Oates
- 6 Stephen Wyatt Oates
- 6 Ephraim Oates
 - + Mary Ann Ward
- 6 Margaret Jane Oates
- 6 Elizabeth Oates
- 6 Fannie E. Oates
- 6 (William Oates?)

..... 5 Susan Oates
 5 Fanny Oates
 5 Michael Oates
 + Mary Ann Wyatt
 6 Calvin James Oates
 6 Oliver Wyatt Oates
 6 Luana Caroline Oates
 6 Mary Oates
 5 Ann Oages
 5 Merat Oates
 4 Samuel Oates b. 4 Feb 1760 NC, d. 1801/2 SC
 + Fanny Cannon
 4 Wyatt Oates 26 Jul 1762, Wayne Co, NC, d. 13 Oct 1851, Sumter Co, GA
 4 Stephen Oates b. 1764 NC, d. 14 Oct 1817 in Darlington SC
 + Ferrebey Carraway m. 9 July 1783
 5 John Oates b. 19 Aug 1784
 5 James Oates b. 7 Oct 1786
 5 Salley Oates b. 16 Jan 1789
 5 Elizabeth Oates b. 14 Apr 1791
 + Jessie Hudson
 5 Stephen Oates Jr. b. 4 Aug 1793
 5 Susanna Oates b. 19 Jan 1796
 5 Nancey Oates b. 30 Mar 1800
 5 Polley Oates b. 9 Jul 1802
 5 William Oates
 + Sarah Sellers
 6 William Calvin Oates (Col. in Civil War and Governor of. of Alabama)
 b. 30 Nov 1833 Cullock Co, AL
 d. 9 Sep 1910 Montgomery, AL
 + Sarah Toney
 7 William Calvin Oates, Jr.
 6 John Alva Oates b. 24 Dec 1835, d. 25 July 1863 at Gettysburg
 6 Mary Jane Oates b. 21 Mar 1838, d. 14 Oct 1912
 + James B. Long m. 17 Jan 1855
 6 Amelia Louise Oates b. b. 13 May 1840
 + Thomas J. Kelly m. 17 Feb 1856
 6 Melissa Ann Oates b. 12 Sep 1842

+ George W. Linton
 + Robert M. Hickman

..... 6 Amanda Elizabeth Oates b. 8 Jan 1845
 6 Thomas Carraway Oates b. 4 Mar 1847, d. 27 Nov 1850
 6 James Wyatt Oates b. 14 Jan 1850, d. 9 Dec 1915
 + Mattie Solomon m. 11 Aug 1881

..... 6 Claudius Oates b. 18 Jun 1865
 6 Joshua Oates b. 13 Dec 1867
 5 Carraway Oates b. 1804
 5 Wyatt Oates b. 9 Dec 1808

.... 3 **Jethro Oates** b: 1732 Perquimans Co, NC d: 30 Aug 1780, Duplin County, NC
 +Artesha b. 1736 m. 3 Jun 1756 d: 1807

..... 4 Jesse Oates b: 3 Jun 1756 in NC d: 10 Aug 1831 in Muhlenberg County, Ky
 +Laruhama Stevens b. ca 1764 d. 1797,

..... 5 William Oates b: ca 1783 in North Carolina
 d: 16 Mar 1833 On the Mississippi River
 +Elizabeth Earle b. 1792 in Spartanburg Co, SC;
 m. 7 Apr 1807, Hopkins Co, KY
 d: 1884 in Muhlenberg County, Ky

..... 6 Bayles Earle Oates b. 21 Feb 1809, Muhlenburg Co, KY d. 4 Oct 1881
 + Elizabeth Randolph

..... 6 Charles E. Oates b. 1810, d. 1854
 + Erzula Martin

..... 6 Geraldine Moncrief Oates b. 21 Feb 1812, d. 20 May 1897
 + Asford Dowden Randolph, m. 4 Nov 1830

..... 6 Louis Thomas Oates b. 18 Jan 1814, d. 26 Apr 1860
 + Margaret Martin m. 6 May 1822

..... 7 William Wallace Oates b. 1837, d. 1927
 + Harriet Sublett

..... 6 Jethro Oates b. ca 1815

..... 6 William Wallace Oates b: 5 Jul 1817, Muhlenburg Co, KY d.
 +Susan E. Stanley b: 1827 in Kentucky m. 29 Mar 1845 d: ? in KY

..... 7 William Alanzo Oates b: 1846
 7 Elizabeth Loss Oates b: 1848
 7 Richard Spandury Oates b: 1849

..... 7 Mary Marion (Mariam) Oates b: 1852
+ William Wallace Warner

..... 7 Bailes (Bayls) Earle Oates b: 1855

..... 7 Lee G Oates 1857 - b: 1857

..... 7 Jessie Arbelle Oates 1861 - 1938 b: August 27, 1861 in Hopkins Co KY
23 January 1938 in Nortonville, Kentucky buried Salem Cemetery

..... 7 Annie E. Oates b. 1866,

..... 6 Martha A. Oates b. 1818, d. 14 Jan 1884

..... 6 Jesse R. Oates b. 12 Mar 1821, d. 16 Aug 1859

..... 6 James Wilson Oates b. 4 Mar 1825, d. 18 Jul 1884
+ Elizabeth Caroline Herring m. 25 Mar 1845

..... 5 Jethro Oates b: ca 1785m d, ca 1833
+ Piercy Mason (sister of Zilpha Mason)

..... 5 Nancy Oates b: ca. 1787
+ Charles Campbell Oates, m. 20 Dec 1809 (moved to Illinois)

..... 5 David Oates b. ca 1792 d. 1866
+ Jane Wickliffe, m. 16 May 1820

..... 5 Bryant Oates b: ca 1794, c. 1835
+Mary Mason (sister of Zilpha Mason; daughter of Matthew Mason)

..... + Zilpha Mason (Jesse Oates' second wife; daughter of Matthew Mason of Christian County),
m. 13 Apr 1798, Sampson Co, NC

..... 5 John Mason Oates b. 19 Apr 1799, c. 1844
+ Elizabeth Wickliffe, m. 17 Feb 1827

..... 5 Elizabeth Oates b. 4 Nov 1800 in NC, d. 25 Jul 1884 Hopkins Co.
+ Vachel Dillingham

..... 5 Jesse Oates Jr. b. 8 Feb 1803 NC
+ Eleanor Cundiff, m. 26 Jun 1823

..... 5 Richard Mason Oates b. 14 Feb 1805, d. 1834 KY; unmarried

..... 5 Rachel Oates 22 Mar 1808, d. 1 Jun 1897
+ Lemuel Bogess m. 11 Oct 1821
+ John D. Wickliffe m. 2 Feb 1836

..... 5 Mariah Oates 12 Feb 1809, d. 11 Mar 1885 in Texas
+ James Wyatt Oates, m. 1834

..... 5 Zilpha Ann Oates b. 3 Feb 1811
+ Edmund Dunn m. 18 Feb 1833 (couple moved to Missouri)

..... 5 Mathew Mason Oates b. 16 Feb 1813, d. 1850
+ Martha Foster

- 6 William Wyatt Oates b. 19 July 1841, d. 1918
 fought in Battle of Shiloh (C. K 11 KY Infantry); in hospital one year
 + Elizabeth Coleman b. 29 Sep 1864
- 5 Harriet Oates 14 Dec 1814, Muhlenberg Co, KY
 + Joshua Gough m. 24 Dec 1829
 + Robert Randolph Jr. m. 22 Jun 1832
 + J. W. William m 28 Mar 1871
- 5 Oliver Hayes Oates b. 21 July 1817, d. 23 Aug 1840
- 5 Wyatt Oates b. 13 Jul 1819, d. 28 Jan 1888
 + Susan Mary Bennett m. 25 Nov 1841
- 5 Charles Campbell Oates b. 15 Nov 1821, d 1 Apr 1891
 + Susan Ann Catherine Foster m. 15 Jan 1846
- 4 Jethro E. Oates b. 1758 d. 1828
 + Sarah Clayton
- 4 Lidia (Lydda) Oates b. ca 1760
 + Barnabas Stevens (brother to Laruhama Stevens)
- 4 Amia (Amy) Oates b. 29 Dec 1761 d. 23 Sep 1824
 + Stephen King (chosen by Jesse Oates as his attorney-at-law)
- 4 Elizabeth Oates b. ca 1763
 + James Blackman
- 4 Michael Oates b. ca 1765, d. 1829
- 4 Susannah Oates b. ca 1770, d. 1816
 + Joseph Darden
- 4 John Oates b. ca 1775 Sampson Co. NC, d. 1826
 + Susannah Cogdell (Jesse Oates, John's brother, shot and killed David Cogdell,
 Susannah's father, in a duel).
- 5 David Cogdell Oates b. 5 Jan 1802, d. 4 July 1875
- 5 James Blackman Oates b. 25 Dec 1803, d. 14 Oct 1877
- 5 Ann Maria Oates b. 3 Feb 1806, d. 16 Oct 1875
- 5 Lewis Cogdell Oates b. 26 July 1809, d 16 Oct 1876 in Texas
- 5 Jethro Oates b. 14 Aug 1811, d. 18 Oct 1841
- 5 Susannah Oates b. 16 Dec 1814, d. 1827
- 5 Elizabeth Ann Oates b. 11 Nov 1817, d. 17 Dec 1902

OATES SUMMARY: The Four "Js"

(1.) James Oates (ca 1647 - 1703) was born in Cornwall, England; the time he arrived in the colonies is unknown. He was a planter in Warwick County, Virginia, during the 1670s, and appeared "present for the first time as an attorney" in the January 1696 court in Perquimans County, North Carolina.

On September 11, 1694 (when around fifty years old) James Oates married Elizabeth Eivens (widow of Richard Eivens Jr.). They had *one* son: Joseph; although some records say Joseph was an only child, other family histories indicate that he had brothers (named Jethro, James, and John); I suspect that these histories are confused and have listed Joseph's *sons* as his brothers (see item 2 below).

(2.) Joseph Oates (1697 - 1747) married Elizabeth Wyatt and had three sons: James, John, and Jethro. In the 1740s, Joseph Oates and his family moved to a section along the border between New Hanover and Johnston Counties, North Carolina. This section later became Dobbs and Duplin Counties; in 1784, the family was living in a part of Duplin County that became Sampson County.

Joseph's sons, James and Jethro Oates, settled south of the Neuse River in what would become Dobbs and later Wayne County. Jethro Oates (*our line*) "served in Colonial Wars from 1761 to 1765.

(3.) Jethro Oates (1732 - 1780) was born in Perquimans County and was only fifteen years old when his father died. Jethro married Artesha (maiden name unknown) around 1756, and was commissioned Ensign (2nd Lt.) on March 11, 1761; he served in the Colonial wars until 1765. In 1779, the State of North Carolina issued a land grant to Jethro Oates for 150 acres in Duplin County on the south side of Goshen Swamp (situated between Young's Swamp and Panther Swamp). "Swamp" in those days was used to refer to waterways.

Jethro Oates died August 30, 1780; his will (Duplin County, North Carolina, Will book A, pg. 374) was signed in 1780 and proved in court (by oath of Stephen King and James Oates) in 1781. Jethro seems to have had quite a bit of property including 1300 acres of land and nine slaves.

(4.) Jesse Oates (1756- 1831) the first-born son of Jethro Oates, was born sometime in 1756 during the French and Indian War. He had two wives and seventeen children. Although he had no intention of doing so, he was the first of the Oates family to cross the Appalachians and settle in Kentucky. He died at the age of 75 after a colorful life that is more interesting than most works of fiction.