

Migration of the Easley Family

Shared by [Becky Brandvik](#)

Important Locations:

James and Betsy Easley spent their entire lives in Halifax County, NC, but Northampton, Edgecomb, and Warren Counties were important to their livelihood and extended families. Note the locations of these counties in the northeastern portion of NC.



Proven Generations:

Easley Family -

(GEN 9) **Roderick Easley** (b ? – d 1768) was the husband of Elizabeth Weldon (b 1725 – d 1768). Inferred Residence: Halifax Co, NC.

(GEN 8) **James Easley, Sr.** (b 1747 – d 1799) was the son of Roderick Easley and Elizabeth Weldon. Note the maiden name WELDON. This is the middle name of William Weldon Harris, Sr. (GEN 5). Proven residence and place of death for James Easley, Sr. is Halifax Co, NC.

Wife #1 of James Easley, Sr. was Elizabeth “Betsy” Norwood (b 1745 – d 1795). Betsy was the daughter of Samuel and Mary Norwood of Northampton County, NC. Samuel Norwood died in 1796 after Betsy’s death. As a result of not having a will, there is a court dispute over Samuel Norwood’s 260 acres in Chockoyotte Creek. This stream is located a mile from Weldon, NC, in present-day Halifax County. Betsy is referenced in the land dispute as the “late wife of James Easley.” (Edgecombe County, NC, Book 18, p. 147-148, Nov. term 1796).

Wife #2 of James Easley, Sr., was Frances who likely died shortly after her husband in November 1799. Per the Halifax Co, NC Record of Estates, Fanny Easley was appointed guardian of the orphaned children from Wife #2 (Frances). Benjamin Allen Weldon was appointed guardian of the orphaned children from Wife #1 (Betsy). Betsy’s children, James Easley, Jr. (GEN 7) and Roderick Easley, were given guardianship under Benjamin Allen Weldon who was also named as

executor of the estate of James Easley, Sr. Benjamin was likely the great uncle of James, Jr. and Roderick.

James Easley, Sr.'s will of May 1799 states he was "weak and low in health but of good and sound mind and memory." This suggests he did not die suddenly, but was suffering from an injury or illness. In his will, Easley bequeaths to wife Frances the first choice of livestock and household items including "six new plates, knives, and forks." (Halifax Co., NC, Will Book 3, p. 320. 1799).

In his will, James Easley, Sr., states "I wish my executor to take the whole of my negroes to Warren Town and sell them on credit while Christmas next. (except Britt) I wish her to be set free." Warren Town is most likely present-day Warrenton in Warren Co, NC. Warren County borders Halifax County. Per Wikipedia, ". . . the area was developed as tobacco and cotton plantations dependent on the labor of enslaved African Americans. Warrenton served as a center for trade and entertainment for the region's planters and their slaves. The planters and merchants built large homes in the town, and kept slaves as domestic servants. The majority of slaves worked as laborers on the plantations; some would package and transport the tobacco and cotton to town for shipping out to markets."

Since Frances Easley died shortly after her husband, it makes sense that the courts would have distributed the assets among their children. The theory is it was James Easley, Jr. who inherited the forks that were listed in the household items.

(GEN 7) James Easley, Jr (b 1794 – d c1870) was the son of James Easley, Sr. and Elizabeth (Betsy) Norwood. James, Jr. was the husband of Tabitha Yarborough (b c1790 in NC – d ?). James Easley, Jr.'s inferred place of birth is Halifax Co, NC. Some researchers on Ancestry.com believe that Tabitha was the daughter of George Yarborough of Halifax Co. In his 1798 will, Yarborough lists a daughter, Tabitha Yarborough, with the notation, "Not married yet." There is no direct proof of the marriage of James Easley, Jr. to a Tabitha Yarborough.

Proven residences for James Easley, Jr. and Roderick Easley:

- Roderick Easley is listed on the muster roll for the Halifax County NC Regiment, Second Company, 1812-14.
- The earliest proven residence for James Easley, Jr., in the State of Tennessee, is in Montgomery Co (1820 US Census). He would have been 26 years-old. There was an adult female listed in the household, so presumably this is James's wife Tabitha.
- There is a Roderick Easley listed on the 1830 US Census for Montgomery County, TN, however his name is incorrectly spelled as Roderick Easty. It is assumed that this is the brother of James Easley, Jr.
- Could James, Tabitha, and Roderick have migrated to Tennessee together? If so, they would have moved between 1815 and 1819.
- James Easley, Jr. appears on the 1836 Montgomery Co, TN tax list.
- James Easley, Jr. (age 57) resided in Montgomery Co, TN in 1850 per the US Census. His wife Tabitha (age 60) is listed with her place of birth being NC. Their 25-year-old daughter, Elizabeth, is also in the household. Elizabeth would

inherit a good deal of her father's estate and would go on to marry a Mr. Majors. The search is still out for the first name of Mr. Majors who is said to have been partial to drinking and living the high life. Elizabeth, Mr. Majors, and Sallie Harris, great niece of Elizabeth Easley Majors, lived together. At one point, they rented BenFolly (c1823) in Clarksville, TN.

- The earliest proven residence for James Easley, Jr. in Stewart Co, TN is 1860 when he was age 66 (1860 US Census). Other members of the household include Patsy (age 35) and Betsy (age 25). These women are most likely servants or slaves. The value of his personal estate is listed at \$18,000 which was considerably higher than that of his neighbors.
- James Easley, Jr. does not appear on the 1870 US Census for Stewart County, TN, so he may have been deceased by this time.

(GEN 6) Martha Easley (b 1812 – d before 1860) was the daughter of James Easley, Jr. and Tabitha Yarborough. She was the wife of Henry Harris (b 1809 – d?). Martha had a sister named Elizabeth.

- Martha's husband, Henry Harris, appears in the 1860 US Census as a resident of Stewart County, TN. His age is listed as 66. Other members of the household include two of his children, Henry Cole (age 11) and Bettie (age 13).
- Henry Harris appears in the 1870 US Census in Stewart County. At this time, he is living in the household of his sister-in-law, Elizabeth Easley. Elizabeth, listed as head of household, was estranged from her husband Mr. Majors. Family lore suggests that Majors left Elizabeth as she ran out of funds to finance his drinking habit. Also appearing in the household are Henry's granddaughter, Sally Janett Harris (age 10; GEN 4), Lucinda Easley (age 45, domestic servant), and Polly (age 16, domestic servant). Elizabeth Easley's land value is listed as \$1500 and the value of her personal estate is listed as \$600.

(GEN 5) William Weldon Harris, Sr. (b. 1831 – d 1893) was the son of Martha Easley and Henry Harris. He was the husband of Mary Lucy Kelly (b. 1831 – d 1860).

(GEN 4) Sally Janett Harris (b 1860 – d 1943) was the daughter of William Weldon Harris, Sr. and Mary Lucy Kelly. She was the wife of Jacob K. Bayer.

Becky Brandvik, September 20, 2020 (great granddaughter of Sally Janett Harris)

