

MY YODER LINEAGE “A CASE OF ENTRENCHED DISINFORMATION”

In 1999, while tracing my grandfather’s family, I learned that I descended from Ephraim A. Yother of Gilmer County, Georgia. (*The German surnames, Joder, Yoder, Yeoder, Yother, etc., are used interchangeably, often in the same document. Names spelled as found in records.*) While researching this family, I discovered at least two serious clerical errors or inaccuracies that have perplexed my cousins and me for many years and completely changed the trajectory of our Yoder lineage.

According to historian Fred Roy Yoder, Conrad and Catherine (Huffman) Yoder’s son Adamⁱ married Sally Davis, moved to Tennessee, and then all contact was lost with his branch of the Lincoln County, North Carolina family.ⁱⁱ It was later assumed that the Yothers who appeared in north Georgia by 1836ⁱⁱⁱ were Adam’s and Sally’s children, but the relationships were impossible to prove, since **ADAM YODER/YOTHER died between 1826-1830, and SALLY (DAVIS) YODER NEVER EXISTED.**

I was unsuccessful in obtaining copies of the original Lincoln County, NC Zion Lutheran Church Birth and Baptism Records, but in a widely distributed *typed* German-to-English transcription, I read that Adam’s wife was listed as “Sally.”^{iv} However, in attempting to document this line, marriage records proved that Sarah “Sally” Davis had married Richard Johnson on 04 March 1800.^v

At the same time, an 1807 marriage bond between Daniel Yoder and Elender Davis surfaced.^{vi} This conflicted with Lutheran Church records proving that Daniel had married Elizabeth [?Cline]. Even if the intended groom’s name had been correct, that marriage did not take place. (*Eleanor (Davis) Yoder and Sarah “Sally” (Davis) Johnson were the eldest children of Allen and Susannah Davis of Lincoln County, NC. Allen Davis named Adam Yoder “friend” and co-executor in his will.*^{vii, viii}

Newly discovered documents proved that Daniel’s brother Adam married “Elender” (*Eleanor*). While Conrad Yoder’s sons, John and David, remained in Lincoln County, and sons Jacob, Elias, and Daniel, migrated to Indiana before 1820, Conrad’s only remaining son Adam and wife Eleanor “Nelly” (Davis) Yoder moved to Haywood County, NC before August 1820. In 1828, Macon County was formed from the southern portion of Haywood County, and Eleanor Yoder and her children were enumerated there in 1830.^{ix, x, xi, xii, xiii, xiv, xv}

I subsequently obtained three 1830 Macon County Apprentice Bonds proving that Ephraim A. Yother’s father was deceased, and his mother was known as the “Widow Eleanor Yeoder” aka “Elender Yoder.”^{xvi, xvii, xviii}

In 1907, although his Eastern Cherokee Indian application was rejected for lack of proof of native descent, Benjamin Franklin “B.F.” Yother claimed his grandfather Adam Yother, Sr. was the father of at least five north Georgia Yother men: Adam, Jr., George, Ephraim, David, and Jefferson.^{xix}

Armed with these conflicting documents, I searched in vain for the original church records for years. I recently learned they were on microfilm at the Crumley Archives in Columbia, SC. To my utter amazement, I immediately saw that **ADAM JODER’s wife was listed as “NELLY”, not Sally!**^{xx} Her name was later verified by an independent expert in old German handwriting, Bruce Stahly.^{xxi} (*Nelly is a common nickname for Eleanor.*)

Now we know some of “the rest of the story”... my fourth great grandparents were ADAM & ELEANOR “NELLY” (DAVIS) YOTHER!

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USE OF APPROPRIATE BYLINE IS REQUESTED. Additions and/or corrections are appreciated.

[ANITA NEWSOM NAIL - 303 Crittenden St., Greenville, MS 38701, anitanail@me.com. 26 February 2021.](mailto:anitanail@me.com)

<sup>i</sup> **“THE CONRAD YODER FAMILY BIBLE,”** This Bible was passed down through Conrad’s first son, John’s family, and is now on loan, is housed in the vault in the Catawba County Historical Museum, Catawba County, NC. Anita Newsom Nail, photographer, August 2015. The names and birthdates of all eight of **Conrad Yoder’s** children are listed in German script on the page between the Bible’s Old and New Testaments. His youngest child, **“Adam ist auf die Welt geboren den 23ten Juny 1785.”** (*“Adam was born into the world the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 1785.”*) **Conrad** and his third wife, **Catherine Huffman**, were also parents of Elizabeth, Elias, Daniel, and Catherine.

<sup>ii</sup> Fred Roy Yoder, A.B., A.M., Ph.D., LL.D., *HISTORY of the YODER FAMILY in NORTH CAROLINA*, (Rpt., 1970, Ann Arbor, MI: Edwards Bros. Inc., 1976), pp. 14, 20, 21. p. 14 - German to English translation of the Conrad Yoder family births. p. 20 – List of Conrad & Catherine (Huffman) Yoder’s children with their spouses: Elias m Uilla Hahn; Daniel m Elizabeth Cline; Catherine m John Baker; and **Adam m Sally(sic) Davis**.

<sup>iii</sup> **Fold3**, Electronic, <https://www.fold3.com/images/311681664>. Ephraim Yoder, soldier in Seminole Uprisings: “Indian Wars Service Record Index,” Group 94, NARA M629. Index to compiled service records of volunteer soldiers who served during the Indian wars and disturbances from 1815 to 1858. (*Ephraim Yoder, among others.*)

(1) **Ephraim Yoder, Pvt., “1836-7 Florida War” Barker’s Company, Nelson’s Battalion, Georgia Mounted Volunteers. 11/20/1836, Kellog’s Store (Forsyth) GA - 9/23/1837 (Hall) GA.**

(2) **Ephraim Yoder, Capt., Florida War, (War of 1837-8), Cantrell’s Co. 2, Georgia Mounted Volunteers.**

<sup>iv</sup> **“ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH BIRTH and BAPTISM RECORDS,”** (1) “Church located five miles south of Hickory, N.C. **Translated** from the German script of the original Church record, 1806-1844; English 1844-1861”. Crumley Archives, 4201 N. Main Street, Columbia, SC. Ellen Fishburne Triplett, Assistant Archivist

<sup>v</sup> Ancestry.com. **“NORTH CAROLINA, U.S., MARRIAGE RECORDS, 1741-2011”** [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015. Original data: NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY REGISTERS of DEEDS. Microfilm. Record Group 048. North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC, p. 71, **“Sary Davis m Richard Johnson, Tryon and Lincoln, NC, 04 March 1800,** Elijah Johnson (Johnston); Ligt Williams, JP.”

<sup>vi</sup> NC State Archives, Raleigh, NC, **“MARRIAGE BOND of DANIEL YOTHER and ELENDER DAVIS,”** Lincoln County, NC, 24 Feb. 1807. Daniel (his X mark) Yother and Richard Johnson, both of Lincoln County, bondsmen. Daniel was Adam Yother’s older brother; Richard Johnson was Elender Davis’ brother-in-law. (*A marriage did not take place between Daniel & Eleanor Davis. A marriage bond can be used as proof of marriage, along with other evidence, but it is not a certificate, only “an intent to marry.” Daniel married and had children with Elizabeth Cline, then moved to Indiana. See History of the Yoder Family in NC, pp. 20 & 21. There is no marriage certificate, nor is a divorce record on file for Daniel & Eleanor Davis in the NC Dept. of Archives & History.*)

<sup>vii</sup> Miles Philbeck, Jr. and Grace Turner, *LINCOLN COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA WILL ABSTRACTS, 1779-1910* (1986). **“Allen Davis**, 28 October 1807, January 1809. Wife: **An SUSANNH**. Children: **NANCY DAVIS, GEORGE DAVIS, ALEN DAVIS, MARAY MAGLIN DAVIS, LISABETH DAVIS, SARAH (oldest daughter), ELLINER (second daughter).** Exec. **ADAM YODER, MY WIFE.** WIT: THOMAS THOMPSON, JAMES CHITWOOD.”

<sup>viii</sup> Additional proof that Adam Yoder married Allen Davis’ daughter Eleanor: Adam was named co-executor of Allen’s will, along with his mother-in-law, An Susannah (“An” was probably Susannah’s nickname) -Courtesy of Mills Yoder Bridges, <millsb@mindspring.com> 2111 Ridgefield Dr, Chapel Hill, NC 27517-8661, Aug. 2009: “I made a copy of the **Allen (his A mark) Davis** original will in Lincoln Co. NC dated October 28, 1807 and probate Jan’y. session court 1809 (*copy in NC Archives*). **“Adam Yoder / Goder is mentioned two times, as Allen's friend and executor. Allen names his wife “an Susana Davis”.** Allen names his children to receive an equal part of the estate, Nancy davis, George davis, Alen davis, Maray Maglin davis, Lisabeth davis. Allen says, **“I do giv my OLDEST daughter Sarah one inglish shiling, and I do give SECOND daughter ELLINER one inglish shilling.”**

<sup>ix</sup> **“THE 1810 LINCOLN COUNTY, NC FEDERAL CENSUS”** - Roll 40, FHL film #0337913. [*Sons of Conrad Yoder & Christina Cline*]: **John Yoder**, Image 00635, p. 422, line 26; **Jacob Yoder**, Image 00697, p. 282, line 1; **David Yoder**, Image 00618, p. 405, Line 9. [*Sons of Conrad Yoder & Catherine Huffman*]: **Elias Yother**, Image 00698, p. 483, line 17; **Danl Yother**, Image 00698, p. 483, line 16, and **Adam Yoder**, Image 00698, p. 483, line 19.

<sup>x</sup> **“THE 1820 LINCOLN COUNTY, NC FEDERAL CENSUS.”** West of the South Fork of the Catawba River, p. 332; NARA Roll M33\_83; Image 220. [*Sons of Conrad Yoder & Christina Cline*]: **Jno Yoder, Sr.**, line 37. **David Yoder**, line 35

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<sup>xi</sup> “**THE 1820 HAYWOOD COUNTY, NC FEDERAL CENSUS,**” p. 217; NARA Roll M33\_80; Image 197, line 2. [*Son of Conrad<sup>8</sup> Yoder & Catherine<sup>8</sup> Huffman*]: **Adom Yoder.**

<sup>xiii</sup> “**THE 1820 CLARK COUNTY, IN FEDERAL CENSUS,**” [*Son of Conrad<sup>8</sup> Yoder & Christina Cline*]: **Jacob Yoter** – Jeffersonville Twp., p. 37. NARA roll M33\_13, Image 52, line 26. [*Son of Conrad<sup>8</sup> Yoder & Catherine<sup>8</sup> Huffman*]: **Daniel Yoter**, Charlestown Twp., p. 39. NARA roll M33\_13. Image 54, line 28. [*Widow of Elias Yoder, (deceased son of Conrad & Catherine (Huffman Yoder))*]: **Atila Yodor**, Charlestown Twp., p. 37, NARA roll M33\_13, Image 52, line 18.

<sup>xiv</sup> **FIND-A-GRAVE**, "Electronic," <<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gs&>>, Memorial #23113813, Grace Lutheran Cemetery, Newton (Catawba) NC, Tombstone photo available: "In Memory of John Yoder who died Dec. 29, 1835 in his 71 Year (restored 1963)."

<sup>xv</sup> “**THE 1840 LINCOLN COUNTY, NC FEDERAL CENSUS,**” [*Son of Conrad<sup>8</sup> Yoder & Christina Cline*] **David Yoder** – Upper Regiment Militia, Roll 364, p. 78, FHL film 0018095, line 9

<sup>xvi</sup> NC State Archives, Raleigh, NC, “**MACON COUNTY, NC APPRENTICE BONDS,**” (Box C.R. X 323), **March Session 1830**: Macon County, NC, Minutes, Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions. Microfilm C.061.30001. Original volume is C.R.061.301.1 in Search Room of NC Archives. - Courtesy of Mills Yoder Bridges, <millsb@mindspring.com> 2111 Ridgefield Dr, Chapel Hill, NC 27517-8661, Aug. 2009. **March 23, 1830**, p. 97, "**Ordered by Court that the Court bind a boy fourteen years old, the child of Eleanor Yeoder (widow) by her consent.** The Boy was accordingly bound to Thomas B. Love, Farmer." "**A boy who will be 14 years old May 7, named Ephraim A. Yeoder** to live as an apprentice & servant until he is 21.

<sup>xvii</sup> Ibid, **May Term 1830**: “a Boy of the age of fourteen years named **Ephraim A. Yeoder/Yoder**

<sup>xviii</sup> Ibid, **Sept. 23, 1830**, page 142. "**Ordered by Court that Col. Thomas Love have leave to surrender to Elender Yoder her son Ephraim A. Yoder bound to said Thos. heretofore by the court and that the contract between said Thos & the court (the subject) be & is hereby rescinded**".

<sup>xix</sup> **EASTERN CHEROKEE APPLICATIONS of the U.S. COURT of CLAIMS, 1906-1909**, Washington, DC: National Archives Trust Fund Board National Archives and Records Service, 1981. Records of the U.S. Court of Claims Record Group 123. – Courtesy of Jimmy McBride, Sherman TX, 2020. **Marble Hill (Pickens) GA. B.F. Yother, Record #18482, Rejected**

- Benjamin Franklin “B.F.” Yother was born in (Dawson) GA in 1846. He listed his father as **Adam Yother, Jr.**, and his grandfather, **Adam Yother, Sr., born in NC, who claimed to be an Eastern Cherokee Indian.**
- **In answer to the question, “Give names of all their children and residence, if living, if not living, give dates of deaths: B.F. Yother listed Adam Yother, Jr. as his father, and his father’s brothers:**
  - **George Yother, dead. Died at ElliJay, Ga.**
  - **EPHRAIM YOTHER, dead. Died near ElliJay, Ga**
  - **David Yother, dead. Died Dawson Co.**
  - **Jefferson Yother, dead. Died \_\_\_\_\_, Ga**

*[There were others]*

<sup>xx</sup> “**ORIGINAL ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH BIRTH and BAPTISM RECORDS 1806-1844, LINCOLN COUNTY, NC,**”. Microfilm. Crumley Archives, 4201 N. Main Street, Columbia, SC.10/30/2020, Ellen Fishburne Triplett, Assistant Archivist. #105, 09 July 1811. **ADAM YODER and his wife NELLY a son John George born 9 July 1811.**

<sup>xxi</sup> According to German script expert and YNL consultant, **Bruce Stahly**, the birth entry in Zion Church records confirms the name of Adam Yoder’s wife’s name as “**NELLY.**” (*Eleanor (Davis) Yoder’s nickname.*)