

OTTEY

The name OTEY (Van Otte, of Holland) is of Dutch origin - and, derivation of the name had to be traced in order to find the coat of arms. It probably began as Von Otto - from the Teutonic, or German, Von Otto; later becoming a Dutch name as Van Otte.

The Virginia family of Otey cannot be fully traced in lineage because of the place of its early residence in counties having almost no extant records, James City, New Kent, Charles City, etc. But the Register of St. Peter's Parish has records of the family back to 1713 - when John Ottey, son of John, was born in that parish. It is to be noted that the spelling is more nearly that of the original name form having the double "t" which could well be Otte - the final "e" having the sound of "ey" - and accounts for the later corruption of the name to Otey.

Col. John Otey who commanded a company of Riflemen in the Revolutionary War was a distinguished officer - and, a man of prominence. He moved from eastern Virginia to Bedford County and lived in a home called "Mount Prospect; later owned a place called "Fancy Farm" in the same county. His brother, James, was also a Revolutionary War soldier; and his sons served in the War of 1812.

In the Deep South the family became very prominent; and intermarried with members of many distinguished families.

John Otey arrived, or was born, in the Virginia Colonies about fifty years after the first settlers landed at Jamestown. There is no record of his coming by ship. Then we must conclude that he was born in James City County where he was first recorded as having signed a petition to the King of England in 1677. "Journal of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1659-1693, pages 107-108, and taken from the Winder Transcripts II (page 239) shows that after 1659 the inhabitants of James City County, Virginia petitioned His Majesty, the King of England, citing various grievances." One of the signers was John Otey - a copy of the petition is a part of this book.

Many researchers have concluded that John Otey was the grandson of Captain John Utie who came to Virginia (1620-1621) on the Bonaventure. His wife and infant son, John, followed later in the Seafloure. This has not been proven, however, records show that the Utie name changed spelling several times (Uty-Uti-Utie-Utye-Utey). It is therefore reasonable to believe our John Otey changed the "u" to an "o". It is known that John Utie (Utey) returned to England but his son John, Jr., remained in the colonies and was, married. It is also known that he bought land in a section which later, in 1654, became New Kent County. It is therefore possible that our John Otey inherited this land.

A genealogist in London, England was engaged to search their records to determine if John Otey sailed from that port. She found only the record of John Utie, who was a very prominent personage those days. She did find however, that many families spelling their names as shown above, still live in several counties. Also some Utey and some Ottey, Otey and Von Otte. She also secured the photo print of the petition showing John Otey's signature, which as far as we know, is the only signature existing today. This is most important for records. You may wonder, why the curious marks beside many signatures? They represent the man's mark. Since he could not write, a public scribe signed his name to the paper, and he made his mark. Only the so called "Gentlemen" could read and write those days. You may note that John Otey made no mark.

We of course realize that John Otey along with many other of our ancestors lived in a wilderness, sparsely settled and no doubt endured many hardships, surrounded by savages, lacking at times the bare necessities of life. He did however survive, to become the ancestor of thousands of fine Americans who have been a credit to the nation. We, his descendants, owe him much.

John Otey married Elizabeth Shurley of Bruton Parish, daughter of Richard and Elizabeth Shurley whose will was proven 1681 To daughter Elizabeth Sherly Otey, or (Shurly)." Bruton Parish Record Book shows - Richard Shurley, died 1671 - wife, Elizabeth; daughter Elizabeth

To John and Elizabeth Otey were born five children: Isaac, John, Mary, Martha and William.

Isaac married Frances Armistead, daughter of Gill Armistead who is mentioned in St. Peter's Parish Vestry Book - "Mr. Gill

Armistead is empowered to collect every tithable in the parish this present year to the true performance of which, he has given bond. Gill Armistead had five daughters: Betty, Susannah, Mary, Martha, and Frances

It has been impossible to trace the lineage of the Otey Family, due to the fact that the court records of James City, New Kent, Charles City and some of the surrounding counties, were burned by the Federal Army, in the War of 1861-1865. Members of the Otey Family were early settlers of James City and New Kent Counties which is shown by the records of St. Peter's Parish Register.

James Otey who was active in the Revolution, and as stated in a letter from one of his descendants, he married Frances Graves, daughter of Col. Richard Graves of the Revolutionary War, and had issue: James Jr. went to Kentucky.

James Otey and his wife Mary (Frances) had 8 children. Several of them migrated to Kentucky. In trying to trace their location, it was learned that they did go to Kentucky, but most of them returned and later went to Alabama.

James & Mary Frances Otey's son, James, mar. Martha Cowles and were the 3rd great-grandparents of Ira Corbett Stone, Jr.