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Dear Rev. Peeples:

Thank you for such a full and interesting letter about the DeWitt family of South Carolina, including several new-to-me items that are much appreciated. It seems that both of us steadfastly refuse to accept circumstantial evidence in the apparent absence of records. I found your DeWitt query written from Jesup, GA and published in the South Carolina Historical Magazine, Vol. 53, ?1952. My DeWitt-Nicks search began about five years ago and has taken me back to Charleston and vicinity several times. I still have sources to search from this distance (Christ Church Parish Church Records, 1700-1784?, Charleston newspapers c1785, and the Statutes at Large of South Carolina). In genealogy, hope springs eternal.

Yes, Rebecca, baptized 1765, the daughter of Joseph DeWitt and Mary ---, his first wife, could be the mother of Joseph DeWitt Nicks, albeit Rebecca, the name, was not carried on in the family. Salley's Genealogy of the Rumph Family, pg. 4, was not helpful with regard to Sarah(2) (Rumph) DeWitt, mis-naming her husband "William" instead of James, mentioning only Sarah(3) DeWitt as "one of their daughters", and held no mention of their sons. I knew about Charles, and your information filled the gap, adding sons, William and James, Jr. (probably*your ancestor). I assume the latter sons were married and lived with father, James, at the time of the 1790 Census, having 3-2-7 in his household. * Miss Corin an estr.

The will of William Stead of St. Georges Parish, dated 7 Nov 1785 and proved 4 Feb 1786, names son Charles, daughter Ann Stead, wife and executrix Maryann Stead. Witnesses: John Riggs and John ---. (The Riggs lived near Charles DeWitt, 1790 Census.) There was a subsequent division of the Stead estate on 28 April 1786: "Ann DeWitt, daughter of William Stead, received 2 slaves and 10 shillings". I wonder which DeWitt married Ann Stead before 28 April 1786 -- Charles (wife, Hannahy?), his son, William, or Joseph DeWitt, Jr. of Dorchester?

Who was Mr. Dewart (23 slaves and 3 males 16+ yrs.) on the 1790 Census, St. Georges Parish? My guess is James DeWitt, Sr. (20 slaves and 3 males 16+ yrs.). You will notice that Ralph Izard and William Regg/Riggs were enumerated twice in St. Georges Parish, among others. The greater concentration of slaves (some 1,700+ in number) is found at the end of the St. Georges Parish enumeration (Heads of Families, pg. 33), suggesting that part of the census was taken in a large agricultural area. They were counted and listed under surnames of their owners as reported to the census takers by overseers and others. Meantime, other census takers enumerated the white families with full name of the head-of-family, resulting in some duplicate entries for heads and slave owners. [Note: Michael Derr (Durr) was one of my progenitors, born probably Germany, 1749.] About the 1790 Christ Church Parish census: Again, there may have been more than one census taker. At least one took the time to alphabetize; most did not. I read the films of the original rolls for the William Nicks entry (written twice, one lined out, both correctly spelled NICKS). I did not notice if there was more than one style of handwriting (more than one enumerator). Alphabetizing was a mixed blessing, helping 20th century eyes find a subject but losing the lay-of-the-land scheme of actual location and neighbors.

William NICKS of Christ Church Parish, the father of Joseph DeWitt Nicks (c1795-1832), does not appear on the South Carolina 1800 Census. He had moved across the Savannah River to Screven County, GA by 1798. (Several references to Nicks in the Savannah newspapers.) His occupation is unknown; he did not own land in SC or GA. One newspaper item mentions him as a factor and manager of a warehouse at Poole's Wharf, Savannah. William married 2) in Screven County during June 1805, Mrs. Eleanor (--) Greene. They had one son, James Rinaldo Nicks, born about 1806, half-brother to Joseph DeWitt Nicks. William Nicks managed Eleanor's slaves and property (some 3,700 acres of timber and 35 slaves) until his death in Screven County before 13 April 1812. I located a descendant of James Rinaldo Nicks in Tennessee. We combined our data and have made real progress on the Nicks line.)

William Nicks also lived in Glynn County, GA before his second marriage, but is not entered on the deeds. Charles DeWitt, (son of James) held land near Clarks Bluff, Altamaha River in Glynn County that fell to his sons, Charles, Jr. and John B. DeWitt, 1822-23. The Pendarvis surname also appears in the deeds with references to the DeWitt sons. Charles DeWitt (probably son of James) is found on the name indexes extracted from Savannah, GA newspapers, c1784 - 1809. One is indexed "Dr. Charles DeWitt". I will provide these references if you want them (*index only*).

If you know, who were the following: Samuel DeWitt of Abbeville, 1790 Census; William Divitt of Union County, 1800 Census; Daniel Dewett, and Letitica, Fairfield County, 1800-1810 Census? Do you think that Daniel of Barnwell County, 1820, then over 46 years/born before 1774, was another son of James and Sarah (Rumph) DeWitt?

I have enclosed my version of the DeWitt Family Genealogy. Our ancestral information appears similar: Jacob(1); William(2); Charles(3). Sr.; Charles Jr.(4) and his sons, Joseph(5) and James(5) Dewitt, later of Orangeburg District, SC. (Another source claims six sons for Charles(3), adding William(4) DeWitt.) The DeWitts probably were French as were the Strothers of early Virginia. (This lends weight to my grandmother's belief that she was of "French blood".) Although I read the deed records of Spotsylvania, Orange, and Culpepper Counties, VA, I did not read the Orange County, VA estate administration and inventory of Charles(3) DeWitt to determine the names of the five-six sons. (Orange County, VA - Will Bk 1, pg. 153). The final paragraph in the Genealogy explains my current belief that James DeWitt was the grandfather of Joseph DeWitt Nicks.

There were other DeWitt families in Virginia. Peter from New Jersey (moved to Kentucky); John Ross DeWitt (from Maryland?) of Fairfax County (Tax List, 1761), later of Bedford County (obtained land grant in Boutetourt County, VA, 1789). George DeWitt died in Bedford County, VA, 1772; also James DeWitt of Bedford, "born France, c1740", was too young to have been a son of Charles(3). I doubt any were directly related to the Orange County DeWitts. However there is a major coincidence, being that William Nicks was orphaned in Bedford County, Virginia, 1769, about 10 years of age. An extensive search of the Bedford records revealed no connection between William, Sr., his father, and the DeWitts. The Bedford court appointed church wardens to apprentice William and bind him to a family - unknown. Alas, the vestry records are lost.

It is always a pleasure to find another researcher with a mutual interest. Again, thanks for your data.

Sincerely,

Regina Wright