
Indirect Evidence Corrects the Parentage of Lemuel Offutt of Baltimore County, Maryland

By Malissa Ruffner, JD, MLS, CG

Many family trees identify Lemuel Offutt of Baltimore County, Maryland, as a son of Archibald Offutt of Kentucky. Indirect evidence rebuts that kinship and identifies James Offutt of Maryland as Lemuel's father. Tracing the error to its origin provides a genealogical cautionary tale.

Long-standing errors sometimes surface when publications disagree on a relationship or identity. Family historians can correct these errors by searching thoroughly, aggregating relevant evidence, and resolving conflicts. Then they can set the record straight by publishing a documented explanation. Lemuel Offutt, a prominent nineteenth-century farmer, provides such an opportunity.

Lemuel lived his adult life in Baltimore County, Maryland, where he married Maria Worthington Walters in 1832.¹ They had five children and settled on a two-hundred-acre property, *Norwood's Delight*, which remained in the Offutt family until 1949.² Lemuel served the county as a justice of the peace and commissioner.³ He died in 1865, days before his sixtieth birthday, and Maria died nine years later.⁴ Both are buried on Maryland Historic Trust property.⁵

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1. Baltimore Co., Md., Marriage Licenses, 1832–1839, fifteenth page, no. 358, Offutt-Walters, 3 September 1832; series CM174-6, microfilm WK 1397-1398, Maryland State Archives (MSA), Annapolis.

2. "Mount Welcome Retreat (Norwood's Delight)," inventory BA-0009, PDF, sect. 8, p. 2; Maryland Department of Planning, *Maryland Historical Trust* (<https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Baltimore%20County/BA-9.pdf>).

3. "Commissions of the Peace," *Sun*, Baltimore, Md., 19 April 1841, page 1, col. 4. Also, "Baltimore County Court," *Sun*, 15 November 1841, page 1, col. 1.

4. Walters and Blunt Family Cemetery (Granite, Montgomery Co., Md.), Lemuel and Maria W. Offutt marker; read and photographed by author, 18 May 2013.

5. "State Preserves Historic Mt. Welcome in Baltimore County," press release, 6 March 2013, Department of Natural Resources (<https://news.maryland.gov/dnr/2013/03/06/state-preserves-historic-mt-welcome-in-baltimore-county/>).

Baltimore County records agree on Lemuel's life there, but accounts of his parentage conflict. Most family trees place him in Archibald and Jane (Odle) Offutt's family, originally of Montgomery County, Maryland, and later of Scott and Harrison counties, Kentucky.⁶ Fewer trees identify his parents as James and Rebecca (Offutt) Offutt, also of Montgomery County. Both couples had a son Lemuel, but little credible direct evidence links Lemuel of Baltimore County to either couple.⁷ Only his gravestone records his death.⁸

The less-often-reported parentage is correct. Archibald's son could not have married in Baltimore County in 1832. That groom grew up in Montgomery County as James's son.

REBUTTING AN INCORRECT CONNECTION

Evidence from varied sources establishes that Lemuel, the youngest of Archibald and Jane Offutt's four sons, did not marry and settle in Baltimore County.

Early Censuses and Probate Records Identify Children

Archibald's family lived in at least three counties. On 1 January 1803 Montgomery County issued him a license to marry Jane Odle.⁹ Seven years later

6. "Public Member Trees," *Ancestry* (<http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=1030>), search for Lemuel Offutt, 1805–1865. Thirty-six of sixty-four public family trees identify Archibald and Jane as Lemuel's parents. Other publications name James Offutt and Rebecca Magruder, Lemuel's maternal grandparents, as his parents. See, for example, *1962 Year Book of the American Clan Gregory Society, Incorporated: Containing the Proceedings of the 1961 Annual Gathering* (Washington, D.C.: The Society, 1962), 26, no. 1372.

7. Both Lemuels descend from William Offutt who died in 1734. See James S. William Offutt, "Maryland Colonist: Patriarch of the Offutt Family in America," typescript, 16 pp., 1978; PDF, *ExLibris Rosetta* (https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE9618379), viewable at a FamilySearch center. Their fathers were acquainted; Archibald purchased five sheep at the estate sale held for Rebecca's mother in 1810, which James oversaw as administrator. See Montgomery Co., Md., Estate Record G:224, James Offut, account of sale of Rebecca Offut's personal property, 13 November 1810; series C1138-9, MSA.

8. Maryland's twenty-three counties began keeping death records in 1898, and the city of Baltimore in 1875. Compliance was poor with an 1865 requirement that county circuit courts record deaths; no Baltimore County records from that period exist. See "Death Records," finding aid, Maryland State Archives, *Guide to Government Records* (<http://guide.mdsa.net/viewer.cfm?page=death>). Four local newspapers did not publish Lemuel's obituary: (1) *Sun*, 1865, (2) *Maryland Journal*, Towson town, Md., May–June 1865, (3) *American and Commercial Advertiser*, Baltimore, Md., May–June 1865, and (4) *Baltimore County Union*, May–June 1865, Towson town. The author searched the *Sun* at *ProQuest Historical Newspapers* (<http://www.proquest.com>), library subscription, and the other three on microfilm.

9. Maryland State Archives, *Guide to Special Collections* (<http://speccol.mdarchives.state.md.us/pages/speccol/collection.aspx?speccol=3985>), MSA SC 3985-1-1, PDF, "[Photo]Copies of Original Marriage Licenses of Montgomery County, Maryland: 1798–1866," fol. 10r, Offutt-Odle, 1 January 1803. The original record is missing from the Montgomery County Circuit Court clerk's office.

their household included two boys and two girls, all under age ten.¹⁰ About 1815 the family moved to Scott County, Kentucky.¹¹ Their 1820 household included eight children.¹² By 1830 the family had settled in adjacent Harrison County.¹³

Archibald died of cholera in Harrison County in 1833.¹⁴ His estate's administrator was Nathaniel E. Offutt.¹⁵ On 9 February 1835 Jane and Lewis, "infants over 14," chose Nathaniel as their guardian. The court also appointed him guardian to Lemuel and Louisa Ann, under fourteen.¹⁶ Thus, Lemuel was Archibald's youngest surviving son. Credible, official, and contemporaneous records with participants' firsthand information—scrutinized by a judge—support that conclusion. The process allowed for challenge and correction.

Bible Records Corroborate Birth Order

A family Bible lists Archibald's children with their birth dates. See table 1. The addition of Sabret's birth in a different hand indicates that two people made the entries. His omission from the chronological list suggests erroneous copying from an earlier record. Sabret and his wife likely would not have remembered his eight siblings' exact birth dates.

10. 1810 U.S. census, Montgomery Co., Md., p. 952, Arch^d. Offutt; microfilm publication M252, roll 14, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

11. Son Lewis B. was reported born in Kentucky in 1814–15, and daughter Jane (Offutt) Barnett in Maryland in 1815–16. See 1850 U.S. census, Harrison Co., Ky., population schedule, District 2, fol. 157v, dwelling 636, family 642, Lewis Offut (age thirty-five), and fol. 165v, dwell. 693, fam. 699, Jane Barnett (thirty-four); NARA microfilm M432, roll 203. Also, Scott Co., Ky., Commissioners [Tax] Book for 1817, p. 27, Archibald Offutt; Kentucky State Historical Society, Frankfort; microfilm 8,021, Family History Library (FHL), Salt Lake City. For Archibald's 1816 (not 1815) arrival in Scott County, see William Henry Perrin, ed., *The History of Bourbon, Scott, Harrison, and Nicholas Counties, Kentucky* (Chicago: Baskin, 1882), 607.

12. 1820 U.S. census, Scott Co., Ky., Georgetown, p. 124, Archi^d. Offutt; NARA microfilm M33, roll 27.

13. 1830 U.S. census, Harrison Co., Ky., Western Division, p. 147, Archibald Offutt; NARA microfilm M19, roll 37. For a 1828 date of the family's move, see Perrin, *History of Bourbon, Scott, Harrison, and Nicholas Counties, Kentucky*, 607.

14. Perrin, *History of Bourbon, Scott, Harrison and Nicholas Counties, Kentucky*, 607. For an account of the cholera epidemic, see Mrs. L. [Lucinda] Boyd, "Cholera—The Pestilence That Walketh in Darkness and Wasteth at Noonday," *Chronicles of Cynthiana and other Chronicles* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke, 1892), 119–21.

15. *FamilySearch* (familysearch.org/search/collection/1875188) > Kentucky Probate Records, 1727–1990 > Harrison > Will records, 1832–1836, Vol. C > images 145–46, Harrison Co., Wills, 1794–1942, C:234–37, N. E. Offutt, "Archibald Offutt Inven'y & Apprsm," presented on 8 October 1833.

16. Harrison Co., Ky., Minute Book G, Volume 2 [1832–1835], p. 369, for Archibald Offutt, deceased, order, 9 February 1835; County Clerk, Cynthiana, Ky. Cohen Swiney, CS Genealogy Services, LLC, provided a copy of the page. Under Kentucky common law, fourteen was the minimum age for selecting a guardian. See Charles Humphreys, *Compendium of the Common Law in Force in Kentucky: to Which is Prefixed a Brief Summary of the Laws of the United States* (Lexington, Ky.: William Gibbes Hunt, 1822), 143.

Table 1
Transcription of Sabret S. Offutt Family Bible Record

“Children of Archibald Offutt

“Nathaniel E. Offutt
Born Nov. 9th 1803 –
Malinda Offutt born
Jan 12th 1806 – Clarissa
Offutt born Nov. 20th
1809 – Lucinda B. Offutt
Born March 14th 1813 –
Jane Offutt born April
1st 1815 – Lewis B. Offutt
Born Nov 21st 1817 –
Lemuel Offutt born
Jan 14th 1820 – Louisiana
Offutt born Nov 24th
1824 –
Sabert [sic] S. Offutt
Born Dec 4th 1807
Mary H. Offutt his wife
was Born Oct 2nd 1810”

Source: Sabret S. Offutt family Bible record, 1803–1859, pages from unknown Bible; collection of Priscilla Offutt Winkler, Rushville, Ind. One person wrote the entries, and someone else added data for Sabret and his wife and the heading. The absence of Sabret’s children born before 1840 suggests a missing page or pages. Winkler inherited the pages in 1982 from her father, Clark Offutt, who received them from Sabret’s grandson. Handwriting attributed to Sabret or his wife is unknown, but they probably created the list.

With one exception, the Bible record, independent of the guardianship records, corroborates the ages of Archibald’s youngest children: Jane, Lewis, Lemuel, and Louisiana (Louisa Ann). Jane and Lewis were old enough to select guardians in 1835, and Louisa Ann was too young. If Lemuel was born on 14 January 1820, as the Bible record shows, he was fifteen on 9 February 1835, old enough to choose a guardian.

The guardianship record says Jane and Lewis were “over 14,” suggesting the court would not allow a fourteen-year-old to choose a guardian. Any of three possibilities might explain the court’s appointing one for Lemuel:

- An earlier date in the probate process, perhaps as early as Archibald’s death in 1833, may have determined the age of qualification.
- The birth date in the Bible record could be wrong.
- The court may have treated Lemuel as a minor because he lacked capacity for some reason besides age.

Table 2
Correlation of Birth Years of Archibald Offutt's Children in a
Family Bible Record and Three Pre-1850 Censuses

FAMILY BIBLE RECORD ^a		1810 CENSUS ^b		1820 CENSUS ^c		1830 CENSUS ^d	
NAME	BIRTH YEAR	SEX	BIRTH RANGE	SEX	BIRTH RANGE	SEX	BIRTH RANGE
Nathaniel	1803	male	1800–10	male	1802–4		
Malinda	1806	female	1800–10	female	1804–10	<i>Not enumerated in Archibald's household</i>	
Sabret	1807	male	1800–10	male	1810–20		
Clarissa	1809	female	1800–10	female	1804–10		
Lucinda	1813			female	1810–20	female	1810–15
Jane	1815			female	1810–20	female	1815–20
Lewis B.	1817	<i>Not yet born</i>		male	1810–20	male	1815–20
Lemuel	1820			male	1810–20	male	1820–25
Louisiana	1824					female	1820–25

a. Sabret S. Offutt family Bible record, 1803–1859, pages from unknown Bible; collection of Priscilla Offutt Winkler, Rushville, Ind.

b. 1810 U.S. census, Montgomery Co., Md., p. 952, Arch^d. Offutt; microfilm publication M252, roll 14, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

c. 1820 U.S. census, Scott Co., Ky., Georgetown, p. 124, Arch^d. Offutt; NARA microfilm M33, roll 27.

d. 1830 U.S. census, Harrison Co., Ky., Western Division, p. 147, Archibald Offutt; NARA microfilm M19, roll 37.

Note: Birth-year ranges are calculated from official ages designated for the respective census. See Anne Bruner Eales and Robert M. Kvasnicka, eds., *Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives of the United States* (Washington D.C.: NARA, 2000), 22–25. The calculations accommodate birthdays within the census year regardless of occurrence before or after the respective official census date.

Federal Censuses Support Birth Order

Although pre-1850 federal censuses name only household heads, comparisons to other sources can corroborate and reveal conflicts. Table 2 correlates birth dates in Sabret's Bible record with enumerations of Archibald Offutt's household.

The comparison reveals three mismatches for nine children in three censuses. Sabret's age range in 1820 differs from his birth year in the Bible record. Jane's and Lemuel's age ranges in 1830 appear consistent with their birth years, but a conflict appears when comparing the Bible record's exact birth dates with the official census date—1 June in 1830:¹⁷

17. For the date, see Ann Bruner Eales and Robert M. Kvasnicka, *Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2000), 23.

- Jane, born on 1 April 1815, would have been fifteen on the census date. That agrees with the 1815–20 range calculated for the “10 and under 15” age range when the birth month is unknown. Jane’s recorded birth date, however, shows she had turned fifteen before 1 June.
- Lemuel’s situation is similar. Reportedly born on 14 January 1820, he was ten, not “5 and under 10” on 1 June 1830.

The discrepancies do not change the conclusion. Whether Lemuel, Archibald’s youngest son, was born in 1820 or later, he was too young to marry in 1832.

Bible Death Records

The “Deaths” page in Sabret’s family Bible says Archibald, “Father & Grandfather of the foregoing,” died on 20 August 1833 and his son Lemuel died on 12 August 1838.¹⁸ Sabret, the probable scribe, knew those dates firsthand.

Independent records corroborate both deaths. Archibald’s probate records, which confirm information in a local history, document his passing.¹⁹ Original records of Lemuel’s siblings corroborate his death.

Land and Tax Records Offer Evidence of Death

Archibald died in 1833, when he owned 82½ acres in Harrison County. In 1835 his heirs began conveying to one another their respective one-ninth interests in the tract.²⁰ See table 3.

The deeds confirm Lemuel’s death in 1838. He made no deed conveying a share of his father’s estate.²¹ The August 1839 deed refers to “Lemuel Offutt Dec’d.” Subsequent transactions describe the heirs’ shares as eighths, not ninths.

Tax records also point to Lemuel’s death in 1838. That year Nathaniel Offutt paid tax on his own property and that inherited by his wards Lewis, Lemuel, and Louisa. Lewis, who owned a horse or mule, was also assessed separately, but only Nathaniel was over twenty-one.²² In 1839 Nathaniel appears for himself and as guardian for Louisa. Lewis B. is marked as over twenty-one, and Lemuel’s name

18. Sabret S. Offutt family Bible record, 1803–1859, “Deaths” page from an unknown Bible collection of Priscilla Offutt Winkler, Rushville, Ind. Winkler inherited the pages in 1982 from her father, Clark Offutt, who received them from Sabret’s grandson.

19. Perrin, *History of Bourbon, Scott, Harrison, and Nicholas Counties, Kentucky*, 607. Few issues of 1830s newspapers from Harrison’s county seat have survived. See Eric Nagle, “Introduction,” in *Vital Records from Newspapers of Harrison County, Kentucky, 1836–1900* (Dayton, Ohio: privately published, 1996).

20. Jane’s husband, William Barnett, eventually acquired the entire tract. See Harrison Co., Deed Book 17:378, Offutt to Offutt, 10 September 1839; County Court, Cynthiana; FHL microfilm 216,856. Also, *ibid.*, 22:18, Offutt to William Barnett, 14 January 1840, and Offutt to Barnett, 25 September 1843. Also, *ibid.*, 22:20, Offutt to Barnett, 1 January 1847; FHL microfilm 216,858.

21. Harrison Co., General [deed] indexes, 1794–1894, M–S; FHL microfilm 216,847.

22. Harrison Co., 1838 Tax Book, list 1, p. 26, N. E. Offutt and Lewis B. Offutt; Kentucky State Historical Society; FHL microfilm 8,023.

Table 3
Land Transactions of Archibald Offutt's Heirs

DATE	GRANTORS	GRANTEE	INTEREST CONVEYED
28 February 1835	Pleasant and Clarissa Lilly	Nathaniel Offutt	One undivided ninth part of 82½ acres ^a
14 September 1835	William and Malinda Ward and David and Lucinda Thompson	Nathaniel Offutt	Two undivided ninth parts of 82½ acres ^b
4 April 1836	William and Jane Barnett	Nathaniel Offutt	One undivided ninth part of 82½ acres ^c
27 August 1839	David and Lucinda Thompson	Lewis B. Offutt	One undivided eighth part of "Lemuel Offutt Dec'd intrest" in 82½ acres ^d
10 September 1839	Sabret S. and Mary Offutt	Nathaniel Offutt	One ninth of a tract containing 82½ acres ^e
14 January 1840	Lewis B. and Martha Offutt	William Barnett	One undivided ninth part and one fourth of an undivided ninth part of 82½ acres ^f
25 September 1843	N. E. and Rebecca S. Offutt	William Barnett	Six undivided ninth parts and one undivided eighth part of 82½ acres ^g
1 January 1847	Louisa Ann Offutt	William Barnett	One undivided eighth part of 82½ acres ^h

a. Harrison Co., Ky., Deed Book 14:419; Lilly to Offutt, 28 February 1835; County Court, Cynthiana, Ky.; microfilm 216,855, Family History Library (FHL), Salt Lake City.

b. Ibid., 15:244, Ward and Thompson to Offutt, 14 September 1835.

c. Ibid., 16:215, Barnett to Offutt, 4 April 1836; FHL microfilm 216,856. For Jane Offutt's relationship to William Barnett, see *ibid.*, 16:215, Barnett to Offutt, 4 April 1836. Jane Offutt married William Barnett on 9 February 1835, with permission from her guardian, N. E. Offutt. See "Kentucky Marriage Records, 1797–1954," *FamilySearch* (familysearch.org/search/collection/1804888 : accessed 29 October 2016), digital folder 004260366, image 45, Harrison Co., Marriage Register, 1832–1850, p. 32, Barnett-Offutt, 9 February 1835.

d. Harrison Co. Deed Book 20:163, Thompson to Offutt, 27 August 1839; FHL microfilm 216,857.

e. Ibid., 17:378, Offutt to Offutt, 10 September 1839; FHL microfilm 216,856.

f. Ibid., 22:18, Offutt to Barnett, 14 January 1840; FHL microfilm 216,858.

g. Ibid., 22:17, Offutt to Barnett, 25 September 1843.

h. Ibid., 22:20, Offutt to Barnett, 1 January 1847.

is gone.²³ Although no probate record is indexed for Lemuel, Nathaniel was taxed in 1845 as administrator of “L. Offutt’s estate,” a slave worth five hundred dollars. Lewis and Louisa appear on the same page, Louisa as Nathaniel’s ward.²⁴ Lemuel was the only “L. Offutt” for whom Nathaniel could have been administrator.²⁵

Further negative evidence supports information about Lemuel’s death. No one of his name and approximate age appears in the 1840, 1850, and 1860 federal censuses.²⁶

Bible, census, land, probate, and tax records—in agreement and independently of one another—collectively prove that Lemuel Offutt, Archibald’s youngest son, could not have married Maria Walters in 1832 and become a long-time resident of Baltimore County.

MAKING A CORRECT CONNECTION

Original Maryland records establish that Lemuel Offutt of Baltimore County was a son of James and Rebecca (Offutt) Offutt of Montgomery County. Their evidence connects James and Rebecca’s son Lemuel in Montgomery County with his adulthood in Baltimore County.

Early Life in Montgomery County

James Offutt died on 2 December 1819.²⁷ His widow, Rebecca, and son John

23. Harrison County, 1839 Tax Book, list 1, p. 26, N. E. Offutt and L. B. Offutt. Lemuel does not reappear through 1845.

24. *FamilySearch* > Kentucky Probate Records, 1727–1990 > Harrison County > Estate descendants index, 1794–1851, Vol. 1 > images 28–29, Harrison Co., General Index of Estates, alphabetically arranged, negative search for Lemuel Offutt. Also, Harrison Co., 1845 Tax Book, list 2, p. 23, entries for Lewis B. and N. E. Offutt.

25. In 1830 Archibald is the only Offutt household head in Harrison County. In 1840 Nathaniel E. is the only Offutt. In 1850, when all household members were enumerated, the only Offutts (or variants) indexed are members of this same family and their offspring. See “U.S. Federal Census Collection,” database, *Ancestry* (search.ancestry.com/search/group/usfedcen), searches for “Offutt” and variants in 1830 and 1840. Also, 1850 U.S. census, Harrison Co., Ky., pop. sch., District 2, fol. 160v, dwell. 621, fam. 626, N. E. Offut household, and fol. 157v, dwell. 636, fam. 642, Lewis Offut.

26. Searching for *Lemuel Offutt* and variants, born between 1815 and 1825, in the 1840, 1850, and 1860 U.S. censuses, the author used “U.S. Federal Census Collection,” *Ancestry* (search.ancestry.com/search/group/usfedcen); and *FamilySearch*, “United States Census, 1840” (familysearch.org/search/collection/1786457), “United States Census, 1850” (/familysearch.org/search/collection/1401638), and “United States Census, 1860” (/familysearch.org/search/collection/1473181). She also searched *HeritageQuest* (www.ancestryheritagequest.com) for 1860.

27. James and Rebecca Offutt family Bible record, 1784–1857, in *The Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments: Newly translated out of the original tongues, and with the former translations diligently compared and revised; By His Majesty’s special command; Appointed to be read in churches* (Edinburgh, Scotland: His Majesty’s Printer, 1762), record page; collection of James Hucorn Offutt III, North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina; photocopy and transcription by author, Offutt vertical file, Montgomery County Historical Society, Rockville, Md. The deaths entered on this page appear to be contemporaneous to the events. On 13 November 1810 James (of William)

administered his estate.²⁸ Rebecca also was guardian of minor sons James and Lemuel.²⁹ James and Rebecca also had three daughters, including Rebecca, wife of Perry Wade.³⁰

Widow Rebecca Offutt died on 26 March 1824.³¹ John then became guardian to his youngest brother, Lemuel. Their brother James, then twenty-one, cosigned the bond.³² A few months later Perry and Rebecca Wade petitioned Montgomery County to appoint a commission to divide her parents' land. The commission decided that equitable partition was impossible and divided the six-hundred acres into four tracts for sale at public auction.³³

Lemuel took steps to gain a financial foothold while a minor. In January 1826 John, his guardian, petitioned Maryland's legislature on Lemuel's behalf for relief in a slave transaction.³⁴ The next month Lemuel paid \$187 for the

paid \$2.65 for "1 Big Bible" from the estate of his father-in-law, James Offutt (1725–1802). See *FamilySearch* (familysearch.org/search/collection/1803986) > Maryland Register of Wills Records, 1629–1999 > Montgomery > Accounts, inventories, wills 1809–1811 vol G > image 139, Montgomery Co., Estate Record G:229, "A list of sales of the personal property of James Offutt, late of Montgomery County, November 13th 1810." William's widow, Rebecca, purchased it at the estate sale of her husband in 1820, and her son James Offutt, 1805–1857, purchased it at her estate sale in 1824. See *ibid.* > Accounts, inventories, wills 1818–1821 vol M > image 111, M:216, "A list of Sales of the Personal Estate of James Offutt of William late of Montgomery County deceased, made by John Offutt Acting Administrator on the 19th & 20th of April 1820." Also, *ibid.* > Accounts, inventories, wills 1821–1829 vol O > image 191, O:329, "A list of Sales of the Personal Estate of Rebecca Offutt late of Montgomery County deceased as made on the 24th day of May 1824 by Perry Wade, administrator." Felisa (Stauffer) Nicodemus, 1805–1857, James Offutt's granddaughter, probably acquired the Bible when her mother, Courtney Offutt Stauffer, died in 1937. Nicodemus passed it to James Hucorn Offutt Jr., the oldest grandson of Dr. Lemuel Offutt of Greensburg, Pa., by 27 February 1968, who in turn passed it to his oldest son, James Hucorn Offutt III. According to family correspondence, the Bible was rebound in the 1940s.

28. Montgomery Co., Estate Record M:136, Rebecca Offutt, John Offutt, Colmore Offutt, and Barton Duley, bond on estate of James of William Offutt, 18 January 1820; series C1138-14, MSA.

29. *Ibid.*, M:144, Rebekah Offutt, John Offutt, and Colmore Offutt, guardian's bond, 22 August 1820.

30. Montgomery Co., Judgment Record BS1:55, Perry Wade and Rebecca Wade, Petition to Divide Lands, 29 July 1824; series T3683-6, MSA. Montgomery County issued a marriage license to Perry Wade and Rebecca Offutt on 21 November 1820. See Montgomery Co., Marriage Licenses, 1798–1839, p. 65, Wade-Offutt, 21 November 1820; County Court, Rockville.

31. James and Rebecca Offutt family Bible record, 1784–1857.

32. *FamilySearch* > Maryland Register of Wills Records, 1629–1999 > Montgomery > Accounts, inventories, wills 1823–1826 vol P > image 105, Montgomery Co., Estate Record P:159, guardianship of Lemuel Offutt, 11 May 1824.

33. Montgomery Co., Judgment Record BS1:58, Perry Wade and Rebecca Wade, Petition to Divide Lands and Report of the Commission, 7 March 1825.

34. Maryland, *Index to the Journals of the Senate and House of Delegates of the State of Maryland, as Prepared under Resolution 50, of 1849, and the Act of 1854, Chapter 146, vol. 3* (Annapolis: Requa and Wilson, 1857), 1304. For the bill's fate, see Maryland, *Journal of the Senate of Maryland, December 1825 Session* (Annapolis: The State, 1826), 66. For its subject, see *ibid.*, 11.

smallest division of his parents' land, *Cupid's Bower*, a 12½-acre island in the Potomac River. He paid twenty dollars in cash, promising to pay the balance to his parents' other heirs over three years. His brother James Offutt and brother-in-law Perry Wade were sureties.³⁵ Although Lemuel was a minor, his family supported this arrangement.³⁶

Lemuel soon attained legal age. He served as a court witness in 1827 and 1829.³⁷ In 1828 he negotiated agreements with two cousins in Kentucky, descendants of his mother's sister, Elizabeth (Offutt) Jones. Also in 1828 Lemuel acquired the interests of Elizabeth's son and grandson, Charles O. Jones and William Edmunson, in the estate of Zadok Jones, Elizabeth's unmarried son.³⁸ This investment's outcome is unknown.³⁹

Although Montgomery County's 1830 census is lost, Lemuel's presence there is documented.⁴⁰ Late that year he cosigned a bond to ensure James's performance as executor of Perry Wade's estate.⁴¹ He also worked in construction with John Offutt and Francis Stone, an arrangement they dissolved on 1 June 1832.⁴²

35. Montgomery Co., Judgment Record BS1:61, Perry Wade and Rebecca, his wife, Petition to Divide Lands, Report of the Commission, 23 November 1827.

36. Nothing in the law prevented minors from purchasing property, although they could void a transaction after reaching majority. See William Draper Lewis, ed., *Blackstone's Commentaries on The Laws of England in Four Books, Book II: Of the Rights of Things* (Philadelphia: Geo. T. Bisel, 1922), 466.

37. Montgomery Co., Court Minutes Book, November Term, 1827, Lemuel Offutt, witness, in *Negro Henry v. Saml. M. Beall*; and March Term, 1829, Lemuel Offutt, witness, in *Saml. M. Beall v. Robert F. Scott*; series C3114-1, MSA.

38. Montgomery Co., Land Records, Liber BS2:88, Jones to Offutt, bill of sale, 17 August 1828; and BS2:89, Edmunson to Offutt, indenture, 10 November 1828; digital images, Maryland State Archives, *MdLandRec.Net* (<http://www.mdlandrec.net>). Charles O. Jones was Zadok's brother, and William Edmunson, son of Elizabeth Jones Edmunson, was his nephew. They executed these indentures by power of attorney in Scott Co., Ky. For Lemuel's mother and her sister, see Montgomery Co., Register of Wills, original wills, roughly arranged by date and thereunder by surname, for James Offutt, 20 July 1802, proved on 11 August 1802; series C1142-4, MSA. Prior box numbers for the folders do not apply to their present arrangement.

39. Zadok Jones, who died intestate in 1822 with a personal estate valued at \$383, apparently owned no real property at the time. See Montgomery Co., Estate Record N:424, Inventory of the personal estate of Zadok Jones, late of Montgomery County, 21 December 1822; series C1138-15, MSA. Also, Montgomery Co., Land Records Liber P:142, Offutt to Wade, indenture, 1 December 1810; and P:617, Offutt to Wade, indenture, 11 December 1811.

40. No 1830 census for Montgomery County survives. See Alice Eichholz, ed., *Red Book: American State, County, and Town Sources*, 3rd ed. (Provo, Utah: Ancestry, 2004), 299.

41. Montgomery Co., Estate Record R:233, administrator's bond in the estate of Perry Wade, 2 November 1830; series C1138-20, MSA.

42. "Notice [of dissolution of Offutt, Stone & Company]," *Frederick Herald*, Frederick, Md., 4 August 1832, page 4, col. 5.

Adulthood in Baltimore County

Three months after dissolving “Offutt, Stone & Company,” Lemuel married Maria Walters of Waltersville, Baltimore County, about forty miles northeast of Montgomery.⁴³ In 1834 Maria and Lemuel sold *Cupid’s Bower* to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company. The transaction definitively merges the identity of young Lemuel of Montgomery County with that of adult Lemuel of Baltimore County.⁴⁴

Lemuel’s father-in-law, Alexander Walters, was a prosperous quarry owner, for whom Waltersville was named.⁴⁵ In 1835, as Alexander neared death, he conveyed *Norwood’s Delight* and *Peddicourt’s Banter* to Lemuel and Maria in consideration of “natural love and affection.”⁴⁶ The granite residence was designed in the Federal style of architecture that the “wealthy American mercantile class” favored.⁴⁷ Walters’ widow, Elizabeth, daughter Maria, and the Offutt grandchildren shared income from the quarry. Maria and the grandchildren received it all after Elizabeth died.⁴⁸

Back in Montgomery County, John and James Offutt struggled financially. In 1841, along with James’s wife Rosanna, they bought 231 acres in Darnestown, part of a tract called *Springfield*. They borrowed thirteen hundred dollars to finance the purchase.⁴⁹ James, living with his family in a log cabin on the

43. Baltimore Co., Marriage Licenses, 1832–1839, fifteenth page, no. 358, Offutt-Walters, 3 September 1832. For the distance between Potomac, Md., formerly known as Offutt’s Crossroads, and Granite, Md., formerly Waltersville, see *Google Maps* (<https://www.google.com/maps/dir/>).

44. Lemuel Offutt and wife to Ingle, Bradley, and Cox, deed in trust for the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, 15 January 1834, file 319, Deeds and records concerning land title records, 1828–78; Records of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company; Records of the National Park Service, Record Group 79; National Archives, College Park, Md.

45. Members of Johns Hopkins University, *Maryland: Its Resources, Industries and Institutions; Prepared for the Board of World’s Fair Managers of Maryland* (Baltimore: [Sun printing office], 1893), 126.

46. Baltimore Co., Land Records Liber TK255:215, Walters to Offutt, 24 September 1835; digital images, Maryland State Archives, *MdLandRec.Net*. Also, Baltimore Co., Wills 15:415–17, Alexander Walters will, 12 August 1835, proved on 8 December 1835; series CM188-15, MSA.

47. “Mount Welcome Retreat (Norwood’s Delight),” inventory BA-0009,” PDF, sect. 8, p. 3.

48. Baltimore Co., Wills 15:415–17, Alexander Walters will, 12 August 1835. For Elizabeth’s death, see See Walters-Offutt family Bible, *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Newly Translated out of the Original Greek: And With the Former Translations Diligently Compared and Revised*, By His Majesty’s Special Command; Appointed to Be Read in Churches (Oxford, U.K.: Printers to Oxford University, 1784), unpaginated record of deaths, “Mrs. Elizabeth Walters, wife of Capt. A. Walters,” 14 July 1850; files of Beverly M. Griffith, Granite, Md.

49. Montgomery Co., Land Records, Liber BS10:465, Offutt to Kurtz, deed of trust, 24 July 1841.

property, was unable to pay the debt. He eventually sought protection under insolvency law.⁵⁰ Lemuel helped pay taxes on the land in 1853.⁵¹

In 1856 the bank sued John, James, and his second wife, Mary Ann. The Montgomery County Circuit Court, ruling in the bank's favor, authorized selling the land. James had died ten days before of a "protracted illness." On 30 July 1857 Lemuel paid off the mortgage.⁵² James's widow and children remained on the property, relying on Lemuel to pay the taxes again in 1860.⁵³

From that chronology and network of relationships emerge four indicators of Lemuel's parentage:

- James (of William) and Rebecca Offutt had a son Lemuel born in 1805 at the earliest, the same year that Lemuel of Baltimore County was born.
- Lemuel, a minor in Montgomery County, bought land from James and Rebecca's estate and sold it after marrying Maria Walters in Baltimore County.
- Lemuel left sequential records in Montgomery County until his 1832 marriage and then left records in Baltimore County.
- Lemuel associated with James and John Offutt, also sons of James and Rebecca, for more than forty years. Lemuel's financial support of James and his widow and children indicates a close relationship.

Naming patterns reinforce the intimate nature of the bond. James honored both brothers in 1826, naming his first child John Lemuel, who lived to age six. Twenty-five years later, James named his sixth-born son Lemuel, a sign of continuing affection.⁵⁴

50. For the residence, see "Offutt/Woodbyrne," property M:24-30, PDF, sect. 8; Maryland Department of Planning, *Maryland Historical Trust* (<http://mht.maryland.gov/mihp/MIHPCard.aspx?MIHPNo=M%3a+24-30>). James filed for protection under Insolvency Laws in 1850. See Montgomery Co., Insolvency Record ST S1:182-85, James Offutt, 9 April 1850; series T939-2, MSA.

51. Montgomery Co., Assessment Record, 1841-1857, Election District 4, p. 370, Offutt/Springfield; series CM684-2 and microfilm scan CR 34357-2, MSA. Lemuel's name appears with James's in the "Springfield" entry.

52. For the circumstances of his death, see "Obituary [Mr. James Offutt]," *Montgomery Sentinel*, Rockville, 7 August 1857, third page, col. 5. Per a court order in a later case, the *Sentinel* detailed the facts of Farmers and Mechanics Bank of Georgetown v. John Offutt, James Offutt, and Mary Ann Offutt for four successive weeks through 16 August 1879. The two cases' petitions and exhibits are filed together. See Montgomery Co., equity papers, case 128, James W. Offutt and William M. Isaacs, administrators of Lemuel Offutt v. John Offutt, Mary A. Offutt and others, proof of Order of Publication to defendants to appear, undated; MSA T415-54.

53. Montgomery Co., Assessment Record, 1858-1863, Election District 4, p. 248, Offutt/Springfield; series CM684-3 and microfilm scan CR 34258-1, MSA.

54. *The Comprehensive Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments, according to the Authorized Version, with the Various Readings and Marginal Notes Usually Printed Therewith; A General Introduction . . .* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1856), "Births [of children of James Offutt and Rosanna Offutt and James Offutt and Mary Ann Offutt, 1826-1857]", and "Deaths [1833]," family record pages; collection of Rebecca West Offutt, Darnestown, Md. Offutt was the widow of James Reverdy Offutt, son of James H. Offutt, Jr. An informant with firsthand information entered events before 1856, the Bible's publication year.

ROOTS OF THE MODERN ERROR

Copying errors and a “perfect storm” of research mishaps have perpetuated the inaccurate identity of Lemuel’s parents. First, although two county histories seem to agree, one offers incorrect direct evidence of Lemuel’s origin. Another compilation, more influential than the county histories, included both versions of Lemuel’s parentage. It, however, emphasized the claim built upon shallow research and faulty analysis.

Mug Books Muddy the Waters

An 1882 Kentucky county history lists Lemuel Offutt as one of nine children born to Archibald and Jane Offutt who had migrated from Maryland: “Nathaniel E., Sabert [sic], Lewis, Lemuel, Jane, Clarissa, Louisa A., Polly and Mrs. Thompson.” The account says that all “came to the years of maturity,” suggesting that they lived into adulthood.⁵⁵ It makes no further mention of Lemuel, leaving an open question about his fate.

A genealogical history of Baltimore City and County, published in 1897, seems to answer that question:

- Its profile of Lemuel’s son, James W. Offutt, describes Lemuel as a Kentuckian who “came to Maryland in early manhood and settled in Baltimore County.”⁵⁶ The information was secondary: Lemuel’s settlement predated the account by sixty-five years and was recorded two years after James’s death.⁵⁷
- The profile of Lemuel’s son-in-law, Dr. Thomas Z. Offutt, characterizes the elder Lemuel’s origins differently. It says the “two families were not related, one [Thomas’s family] being an old Montgomery County family, while the other [Lemuel’s] dates its history in Baltimore County back for many generations.”⁵⁸ Just six years earlier, Thomas had asserted that his father-in-law was born in Montgomery County to James and Rebecca Offutt.⁵⁹

Thus, the Baltimore history distances Lemuel from his Montgomery County roots with two pieces of erroneous direct evidence.

55. Perrin, *History of Bourbon, Scott, Harrison, and Nicholas Counties, Kentucky*, 484. If the Indiana Bible record is correct, Lemuel lived to age eighteen.

56. *Genealogy and Biography of Leading Families of the City of Baltimore and Baltimore County* (New York: Chapman, 1897), 649.

57. “Death of Judge Offutt,” *Sun*, 7 January 1895, page 7, col. 7.

58. *Genealogy and Biography of Leading Families*, 986. For their relationship, see “Dr. Thomas Z. Offutt Dies At His Home Near Granite,” *Sun*, 1 February 1911, page 4, col. 7.

59. Thomas Z. Offutt, filled-in questionnaire, 6 January 1889; Biographical Dictionary of Maryland research files; J. Thomas Scharf Collection, 1730s–1892, MS 1999; Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore. Scharf never published the dictionary. Thomas’s knowledge of his father-in-law’s parentage could be secondary but seems well-founded. His father, Zadok Offutt, and Lemuel apparently were first cousins.

Baltimore County provides no evidence of an Offutt living there before Lemuel, who testified he arrived there in 1832.⁶⁰ In 1840 he was the first of that surname enumerated in Baltimore County in a federal census.⁶¹ The first land record indexed for an Offutt in Baltimore County is the deed from Alexander Walters to Lemuel Offutt, his son-in-law.⁶²

Shallow Research Begets Faulty Analysis

“The Offutt Family,” a compilation produced between 1977 and 1981, is unique.⁶³ The first volume includes lineages contributed by thirty-nine family researchers, and the compilers made limited attempts to “interrelate” them.⁶⁴ As the typescript expanded to seven binders, the authors welcomed feedback and corrections. The work contains numerous citations—complete and incomplete—to myriad sources. It includes photocopies of records, but its abstracts, extracts, transcriptions, and “Misc. Research Notes” are more prevalent. Numerous interfamily marriages caused the compilers to duplicate and cross-reference information. Most of the information now appears online.⁶⁵

“The Offutt Family” includes both claims of Lemuel’s parentage:

- J. Fred Offutt correctly identified Lemuel of Baltimore County as James and Rebecca’s youngest child.⁶⁶

60. *Evidence of the Contested Election in the Case of Ridgely vs. Grason to the General Assembly* (Annapolis: Maryland House of Delegates, 1865), 185. This direct evidence from firsthand knowledge was given under oath in court.

61. “U.S. Federal Census Collection,” database, *Ancestry*, searches for *Offutt* and variants in Baltimore County in 1790–1840. Also, *HeritageQuest*, searches for *Offutt* and variants in Baltimore County in 1790–1820.

62. Baltimore Co., land records indexes; series CE34 (1659–1800), CE32 (1798–1835), and CE33 (1798–1835), MSA. Also, Baltimore Co., Land Records, Liber TK255:215, Walters to Offutt, 24 September 1835.

63. Nelle Offutt Chesley and Edward P. Offutt, “The Offutt Family,” typescript, 8 loose-leaf binders, 1977–81; FHL microfilms 1,597,651, items 5–7, and 1,597,652, items 1–5. “The Offutt Family” is a major work for which every Offutt researcher owes a debt of gratitude. This correction is offered in the spirit in which the authors asked readers for constructive criticism, corrections, and amendments. Its citations, with contemporaneous Bible ownership, made it possible to locate and examine original records.

64. Chesley and Offutt, “The Offutt Family,” 1:2.

65. David Offutt, in *Our Family History: Offutt Family Genealogy* (dwomyfam.byethost8.com/index.htm), acknowledges “The Offutt Family” as his database’s underpinning. For his information on the two Lemuels, see “Lemuel Offutt, M, b. May 15, 1805, d. May 19, 1865” (dwomyfam.byethost8.com/p14.htm#i457) and “Lemuel Offutt, M, b. November 15, 1805,” (dwomyfam.byethost8.com/p41.htm#i1583).

66. Chesley and Offutt, “The Offutt Family,” 1:23–24. The assertion was part of the lineage of J. Fred Offutt, a descendant of Lemuel. Another contributor provided his information. The lineage includes the phrase “my great grandfather” next to Lemuel’s name.

- Contributor Eleanor O. Blank incorrectly placed Lemuel with Archibald and Jane. In three places she warned that he was “not to be confused with Lemuel [son of James and Rebecca].”⁶⁷

A chart depicting Lemuel as James and Rebecca’s son, “thought to be wrong,” was excluded from a later volume “to avoid confusion.”⁶⁸ The Archibald-Kentucky assertion emerged as dominant.

Minor Discrepancy Overemphasized

Blank’s conclusion apparently relied on a discrepancy regarding Lemuel’s birth month.⁶⁹ His cemetery marker gives May, but a Bible record, contributed by Felisa Stauffer Nicodemus, shows November. Compiler Chesley did not include a copy, transcription, or analysis of that record.

Examination of the Bible record that Nicodemus contributed confirms 15 November as the day and month of James and Rebecca’s eleventh and last child’s birth.⁷⁰ A patch obscuring the first name and the scratched-out birth year make the entry illegible, but “Lemuel” and “1805” are penciled on the far-right margin. Except for those markings and similar ones for James, born in 1803, the list of children apparently was made at one sitting. James (of William) probably entered his family data in 1810, when he acquired the Bible.⁷¹

Evidence for both May and November is questionable:

- Someone, probably Lemuel’s father, entered November in the Bible about five years after Lemuel’s birth. Believing the entry inaccurate, someone subsequently obscured it.
- Birth information on the grave marker did not come from an eyewitness, even if Lemuel himself recorded it. Further, the marker’s data are questionable. It gives Lemuel’s age at death as sixty, but if the dates are correct, he was six days short of that age.

Federal censuses yield indirect evidence of Lemuel’s birth month. In 1850 and 1860, respectively, unknown informants gave forty-four and fifty-four as

67. Ibid., 3:40, 3:168, and 4:233. Contributor Blank made the same connection in her section on the Beall Family, in *ibid.*, 1:127–28. Blank spent years gathering Offutt information and intended to write a book. She “generously” shared much of her research with Chesley. See Chesley and Offutt, “Offutt Family,” vol. 2, introductory page.

68. Ibid., 4:34.

69. Blank did not mention the Baltimore genealogical history that identifies Lemuel as a Kentuckian, but Chesley and an online tree based on her work cite it. See Offutt, *Our Family History*, “Lemuel Offutt, M, b. May 15, 1805, d. May 19, 1865.”

70. James and Rebecca Offutt family Bible record, 1784–1857.

71. Montgomery Co., Estate Record G:229, “A list of sales of the personal property of James Offutt, late of Montgomery County, November 13th 1810.”

Lemuel's age.⁷² Given the 1 June enumeration date for both censuses, the ages consistently support a November birth month, not May.⁷³

A discrepancy in a single element of a birth date is insignificant when compared to evidence in court, land, and probate records. Whether Lemuel was born in May, November, or another month, the conclusion of kinship to James and Rebecca remains.

Incomplete Bible Information

"The Offutt Family" also cites Sabret Offutt's family Bible record.⁷⁴ It offers substantial indirect evidence to contradict the claim that Lemuel of Kentucky married Maria Walters in Baltimore County in 1832. The manuscript's abstract of that record, however, is incomplete and disordered.⁷⁵

The abstract re-orders names and omits dates. Thus it misleads, lending credence to the mistaken theory that Lemuel was born in 1805 in Maryland before Archibald and Jane migrated to Kentucky. "The Offutt Family" omits data from the Bible record's "Deaths" page. Had it included either entry for Lemuel's birth on 14 January 1820 and death on 12 August 1838—the error might never have taken hold.

CONCLUSION

County histories first muddled the waters. Subsequent analysis relied too heavily on one Bible record and an incomplete transcription of another. Early and modern researchers who noted the conflict did not consult court, land, probate, and tax records—staples of thorough genealogical research. When those sources are given their due, the conclusion is secure: The parents of Lemuel Offutt of Baltimore County were James and Rebecca Offutt, not Archibald and Jane.

72. 1850 U.S. census, Baltimore Co., Md., pop. sch., 1st District, fol. 330v, dwell. 4452, fam. 1531, Lemuel Offutt; NARA microfilm M432, roll 280. Also, 1860 U.S. census, Baltimore Co., Md., pop. sch., 2nd District, p. 99, dwell. 707, fam. 676, Lemuel Offutt; NARA microfilm M653, roll 467.

73. For the enumeration dates, see Eales and Kvasnicka, *Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives*, 26.

74. Chesley and Offutt, "The Offutt Family," 3:41. Frances Kennedy Offutt—wife of Clark Offutt and mother of Priscilla (Offutt) Winkler, the Bible records' current owner—was a contributor.

75. The omission probably occurred before the research notes were sent rather than after their receipt. The appearance of just Sabret's dates suggests the contributor focused more on direct ancestors than collateral lines. An ambiguous note accompanies the partial transcription: "The above is copied verbatim from an 'old Offutt Bible' sent by Mrs. Clark Offutt. NOC [Nelle Offutt Chesley]." See Chesley and Offutt, "The Offutt Family," 1:29. Chesley likely saw only the transcription, not the Bible record itself.