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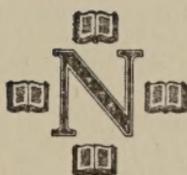
Genealogy of Jefferson Davis
and of Samuel Davies

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GENEALOGY OF JEFFERSON DAVIS
AND OF SAMUEL DAVIES



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GENEALOGY OF JEFFERSON DAVIS AND OF SAMUEL DAVIES

BY

WILLIAM H. WHITSITT, A.M., D.D., LL.D.

CONNECTED AS PROFESSOR AND PRESIDENT WITH THE SOUTHERN
BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY FOR TWENTY-SEVEN
YEARS, AND LATER AS PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY
FOR NINE YEARS WITH RICHMOND COL-
LEGE, RICHMOND, VIRGINIA



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EX HUMILI POTENS

—*Hor. III. iii, 12*

FOREWORD.

I lately published an *Address on the Genealogy of Jefferson Davis*, which I had delivered before Lee Camp, No. 1, of Confederate Veterans. Attention was thereby called to the subject, and additional valuable information has since been imparted through the kindness of Dr. Douglas S. Freeman, of Richmond; the Rev. Dr. B. B. Warfield, of Princeton University, and the Hon. Levin Irving Handy, of Wilmington, Del. The following discussion is founded largely upon documents which these gentlemen were kind enough to convey to me.

The investigation is not yet closed, but it has been somewhat advanced. These pages are offered first as a report of progress made, and second as an invitation to other students to assist in the work.

WILLIAM H. WHITSITT.

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA,
July 17, 1910.

I.

“Three brothers came to America from Wales in the early part of the eighteenth century. They settled in Philadelphia. The youngest of the brothers, Evan Davis, removed to Georgia, then a colony of Great Britain. He was the grandfather of Jefferson Davis.” (*Jefferson Davis: A Memoir*. By His Wife. Vol. I, p. 3.)

The above citation contains the facts as President Davis understood them regarding his ancestry. But it is now known that he was mistaken in supposing that his grandfather, Evan Davis, was born in Wales and had come as an emigrant to this country. The point seems now to be established that Evan Davis first saw the light in Philadelphia. Dr. Douglas S. Freeman, of Richmond, Va., has the honor of first calling attention to the proof upon which this statement rests. Heartly thanks are due to him for the valuable contribution that he has made to the investigation. The following correspondence will bring the subject before the reader:

MY DEAR DOCTOR:

A few days ago Mr. S. S. P. Patterson of this city brought a letter to the Library from Samuel Davis to Jefferson Davis, June 25, 1823. This letter he procured from Mr. Byron A. Nevins, of Albany, N. Y. As it seems to me to be extremely interesting, and as it throws some light on Davis' ancestry, I make bold to send you an exact type-written copy of it. The handwriting of the original is legible and careful.

The chief point settled by the letter is the fact that Jefferson Davis' grandfather was born in Philadelphia.

I trust the letter may be of some service to you.

Very truly yours,

DOUGLAS S. FREEMAN.

RICHMOND, VA.,

THE RALEIGH,

25 Feb. 1909.

PHILADELPHIA June 25 1823

MY DEAR SON JEFFERSON

I have a few minutes past taken your letter out of the Post Office which has afforded me inexpressible satisfaction it being the only information which I have received since I left the Mississippi Country 'tho I have wrote often and from various places. my Journey has been unpleasant and ex-

pensive I have been delayed of necessity about seven Weeks only arrived here last Thursday noon in bad health and continue much the same I have left James & my horses at a little Village called Harford in Maryland seventy two miles from here from there I came in Mail Stages to Wilmington where I took I took [sic] passage in a Steam boat to this place which is the most beautiful City I ever saw the place where my father drew his first breath & the place if I had applied some thirty years ago I might now have been immensely rich but I fear all is lost here by the lapse of time yet I shall continue to search everything to the extent before I leave here which will likely be late in Aug or early in Sept^r as such you can write me again before I leave here. I am much pleased to find that you are at College perhaps on my return Voyage I may come thro [Page 2] Kentucky if so I shall call and see you but if otherways I know where you are and shall frequently write to you while my hand can hold a pen let me be where I may which is very uncertain I had frequently applyed at this Post Office got Nothing before your letter and got that broke open which had been done by a man of my name Whenever I leave here or before I shall write you that you that you [sic] may not send any thing to be broken open after I am gone if any discovery should be

made favorable to my interest I shall be sure to let you know in due time & should I never return or see you any more your fathers pra [sic] I have notified you where I have left your boy James he is in the care of a David Malsby in the Village aforenamed I have also Written the same to David Bradford—Remember the short lessons of instruction offered you before our parting use every possible means to acquire usefull knowledge as knowledge is power the want of which has brought mischief and misery on your father in old age—That you may be happy & shine in society when your father is beyond the reach of harm is the most ardent wish of his heart—

Adieu my Son Jefferson
your father

SAM^L DAVIS

(*Addressed*) MR. JEFFERSON DAVIS
LEXINGTON
K.

(*Postmarked*) PHILA Pd.
25
JUN

(*Endorsed*) FATHER
[*on end*] FATHER

(*Wafered*: 2 pp.)

The following letter may be of interest as referring to the death of Samuel Davis a few months later. It is taken from the *Memoir of Jefferson Davis*, by his wife, vol. I, pp. 33-4:

LEXINGTON, August 2, 1824.

DEAR SISTER: It is gratifying to hear from a friend, especially one from whom I had not heard so long as yourself, but the intelligence contained in yours was more than sufficient to mar the satisfaction of hearing from any one. You must imagine I cannot describe the shock my feelings sustained at the sad intelligence. In my father I lost a parent ever dear to me, but rendered more so (if possible) by the disasters that attended his declining years.

When I saw him last he told me we would probably never see each other again. Yet I still hoped to meet him once more, but heaven has refused my wish. This is the second time I have been doomed to receive the heart-rending intelligence of the *Death of a Friend*. God only knows whether or not it will be the last. If all the dear friends of my childhood are to be torn from me, I care not how soon I may follow.

I leave in a short time for West Point, State of New York, where it will always give me pleasure to hear from you.

Kiss the children for Uncle Jeff. Present me affectionately to Brother Isaac; tell him I would be happy to hear from him; and to yourself the sincere regard of

Your Brother,

JEFFERSON.

MRS. SUSANNAH DAVIS,
Warrenton, Warren County, Miss.

Jefferson had closed his sixteenth year on the third of June preceding. The letter is not an ill performance for a lad of that age.

Mr. Davis says that his father "died on July 4, 1824, at the age of sixty-eight" (*Memoir*, vol. I, 33).

II.

It might seem preposterous for another person to attempt to identify the first American ancestor of Mr. Davis when he himself failed to accomplish the task. There are many chances of error in such an effort. I trust that I am duly sensible of the difficulties of the enterprise. The name Davis, in particular, is one of the most common names in the country. It is easily possible to confound one tribe of them with another and one family with another. But after due deliberation I have reached the conclusion (with respectful submission to better judgments) that the earliest progenitor of President Jefferson Davis in America was not Evan Davis, as he supposed, but the John Davis who is mentioned in the following document preserved in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for New Castle County, Delaware.

The Rev. Dr. B. B. Warfield, of Princeton Theological Seminary, from the beginning took interest in these researches, and at his request the Hon. Levin Irving Handy, of Wilmington,

Del., made a careful search among the records of New Castle County. This labor was rewarded by the recovery of two papers that appear to be of high significance. Professor Warfield forwarded them to me on the 23d of December, 1908, and I had them under consideration the rest of the winter, without being able to make up my mind.

In the month of June, 1909, however, I was enabled to visit Wilmington in person, and to spend a day in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds, where I was very kindly treated. I desire to return special thanks to the Recorder of Deeds and to the gentlemen about him for the courtesies they showed me. They were very busy indeed, but never too busy to be considerate and respectful, and there I found additional information that was of service to me.

*(Recorder's Office, Wilmington, New Castle
County, Delaware. Deed Record Q,
Vol. I, Page 34.)*

To all Christian People to whome these presents shall come Know ye that of John Davis of Pencader Hundred in the County of New Castle

upon Delaware Turner and Ann Davis his Wife for divers good reasons and Considerations them moveing have remised Released and forever Quit Claimed and by these presents for themselves and their heirs Doth fully clearly and absolutely remise release and forever quit Claim unto David Davies of the hundred and County afsd. Turner in his full and peaceable Possession and Seizin and to his heirs and assigns forever all that Tract or parcel of Land Scituate and being in Pencader Hundred and Coty of New Castle afsd being one moiety of four hundred acres of Land sold and made over to the abovesaid John Davis and said David Davies jointly from William Davis as appears by one Deed under his hand & Seal bearing date the Twenty first day of May Anno Dom 1717 Beginning at a corner Black Oak from thence East one Hundred and thirty-eight Perches, to a corner maple thence South Two Hundred Perches, to a corner White Oak thence West one Hundred and fourteen perches to a Corner Gum thence North forty-one deg: West one hundred and thirty-two Perches, to a corner black oak Standing by the Great Road from Christiana Bridge to the head of Elk River thence North thirty-eight deg: East one Hundred and eighteen Perches to the

place of Beginning Containing Two Hundred acres of Land be the same more or less within the said bounds together with all Houses barns buildings Gardens orchards meadows pastures feedings Woods Soil Ways waters Water courses Issues rents profits Improvements Liberties Easements advantages and appurtenances with Reversion and Reversions Remainder and Remainders whatsoever to the same belonging or anywise appertaining. To Have and To Hold the abovesaid Land and Premises unto the said David Davies his heirs and assigns to the only Use and Behoof of the said David Davis his Heirs and Assigns forever so that neither they the said John Davies and Ann Davies nor their Heirs nor any other person or persons for them or any of them or in their or either of their names or in the Name right or Stead of any of them shall or will by any Way or means hereafter have Claim Challenge or demand any Estate right Title or Interest of in or to the said Land and Premises or any part or parcel thereof, but from all & every Action Right Estate Title Interest Demand of in or to the Premises or any part or parcel thereof they and every of them shall be utterly excluded and barred forever by these Presents. And also the said John Davies and Ann Davies and their heirs the said Land and Premises

with the appurtenances to the said David Davies his heirs and Assigns to his and their own proper use and uses in manner and form afore specified; against them the said John Davies and Ann Davis and their heirs Executors and Administrators and every of them shall warrant and forever Defend by these Presents. In Witness whereof they the said John Davies and Ann Davis have hereunto set their hands and Affixed their seals the Sixteenth day of May Anno Dom. 1743

Signed Sealed and Delivered in Presence of

John Thomas William Moore.

New Castle County Ss May the 1743

his

JOHN I DAVIS (seal)

mark

her

ANN C DAVIS (seal)

mark

Then the above Ann Davis acknowledged her free Will and Consent in Signing Sealing & Delivering of the Above written Deed to the use Intent and purposes therein mentioned without the Least Compulsion from her husband or any other person

or Persons whatsoever. Acknowledged before me
one of his Majesties Justices of the Peace for sd
County

THOMAS JAMES.

[County Acknowledged in the Court of
Seal] Comon Pleas held for the County
 of New Castle in May Term, 1748.
 Witness my hand and Seal of the
 Coty afs^d

I

RICH^d M: WILLIAM D. Pron: ibm.

Recorded 27th April 1749

p. RICH^d M: WILLIAM

Recorder Deeds.

Attention is requested to the fact that in the
above deed the date in the month of May, 1743,
has been left blank.

III.

A casual examination of this instrument will show that no emphasis can be placed upon the manner of spelling the name Davis. By actual count the name John Davis appears without an "e" twice, and with an "e" four times. The name Ann Davis is spelled without an "e" four times, and with an "e" twice. The name David Davis is written with an "e" thrice, and without an "e" twice. It is idle to insist upon the method of spelling the name, since it is spelled both ways in the case of each of the families.

Allusion is made to a deed for four hundred acres that was given by William Davis, on the 21st of May, 1717, to John and David Davis. Great effort was employed to find that particular deed, but altogether without success. The country was occupied by the British army during the war of the Revolution, and it is asserted that the offices of New Castle County were looted by the troops, who in sheer wantonness carried away divers volumes of the records. The gaps that were by that means produced have never been filled up again.

The deed of 1717, if it could be recovered,

might be of service in giving the price of the purchase and the estate of the purchasers. William Davis, the grantor, belonged to the estate of gentleman. In other similar deeds of conveyance made by William Davis and David Evans it seems to be invariably declared that they were both gentlemen, but that was an unlikely distinction in the case of the two Davis purchasers. On the contrary, there is good reason to believe that they belonged to the estate of yeomen.

Following is a specimen of the formula commonly employed by Davis and Evans in conveying land within the limits of Welsh Tract:

"This Indenture made the tenth Day of November in the year of our Lord God one Thousand Seven Hundred and Twenty Nine Between Wm. Davies of the Township of Radnor in the County of Chester in the Province of Pennsylvania Gent & David Evans of Pencader Hundred in ye County of New Castle Delaware Gent of the one part and Thomas John of the Hundred of Pencader & County of New Castle afsd. Yeom of the other part." (*Record Book I. i, p. 179.*) Manifestly great attention was given to the business of maintaining the distinctions of social station at that time so firmly established in Pennsylvania and Delaware.

David Davis, who is mentioned in the document, was the father of President Samuel Davies, of Princeton College. The year 1680 was the year of his birth. That fact appears from an entry made in his own hand by Samuel Davies in his family Bible: "Lost my Father, aged 79, August 11, 1759." David Davis was therefore thirty-seven years of age in 1717, when the deed to a tract of 400 acres in Welsh Tract, New Castle County, was made to himself and John Davis. John must have been several years older than David. Evan Davis, who seems to have been the son of John, was born in Philadelphia. The Welsh Tract party, to which John and David belonged, landed at Philadelphia in the year 1701. (*Records of the Welsh Tract Baptist Meeting*, Wilmington, 1904, Pt. I., p. 7.) The Tract was opened to settlement in 1702, and in 1703 "they began to get their living out of it" (*Records Bapt. Meeting*, Pt. I., p. 8). John Davis had a son David, who seems to have been older than Evan, and must have been born in Wales. John Davis may have been as much as ten years older than his brother David.

The deed of 1717, conveying four hundred acres to John and David Davis jointly, was made fifteen years after the establishment of Welsh

Tract Settlement. That was no large body of real estate when one remembers that land was then one of the cheapest commodities in America. The worldly circumstances of the two brothers must have been of an humble sort.

The family of William Davis, Gentleman, to whom Penn granted the Welsh Tract, was not an humble family, and as they belonged to a different estate, it is hardly likely that any blood relationship existed between the parties.

The 16th of May, 1743, on which the above document was dated, was a dark day in the history of John Davis and his family. They had been living on their capital, and now their farm had to be sold to pay the reckoning. They had not been extravagant or wasteful. It was twenty-six years, lacking five days, since they had first purchased the land. Possibly they had done their best, but they may have been indifferent economists. The chief creditor was David, the brother of John. It was apparently a long score, running through almost a generation of years. If there was any calculation of the exact amount of the assistance rendered, John and Ann Davis did not care to set it down in the instruments of sale. They were content to make a general statement: "for divers good reasons and Considerations them moveing [they]

have remised Released and Quit Claimed." In brief words, David Davis was now the owner of the entire farm of four hundred acres.

The document declares that John Davis and David Davis were both turners. Possibly John Davis may have been less frugal than David, or he may have experienced disasters from which David had been delivered. Here are the simple annals of the poor. Yet out of material such as these our first divines and statesmen are made. They stood below William Davis, Gentleman, in the order of society, but they possessed an aristocracy of which he and his appear to have had no share.

But there was some kind of hitch in the proceedings. The deed had been made out in due form, and Ann Davis had appeared before Thomas James, "one of his Majesties Justices of the Peace for s^d County" of New Castle, and had "acknowledged her free Will and Consent in Signing Sealing & Delivering of the Above-written Deed to the use Intent and purposes therein mentioned without the Least Compulsion from her husband or any other person or Persons Whatsoever." It was a pathetic spectacle. But incidents of that kind are being enacted in our palaces of justice every day. It would have been a solace

to Ann Davis in that trying hour if she could have lifted the curtain which hides the future from our gaze long enough to behold the greatness that was one day to rise to her descendants.

Perhaps David Davis could not bear to turn his brother out of doors; and so, apparently by the sufferance of David, John was permitted to retain the property for another five years.

IV.

I am not making any claims to certainty of knowledge. On the contrary, I am seeking to find the right way among a mass of details, and shall be glad, as I said before, to bow to the authority of any who may be better informed; but to my thinking it appears that John and David Davis were Baptist people and belonged to the party who established the Welsh Tract Baptist Meeting. Richard, Shonnet (Jennet) and James David were three of the constituent members (*Records*, Pt. I., pp. 11-12), and Morgan Edwards, who was also a Welshman and a fair scholar, in his *Materials Towards a History of the Baptists in Pennsylvania*, p. 19, and with the *Welsh Tract Records* before his eyes, writes down these same persons as Richard, James and Jennet Davis. Likewise, the name of Martha Davis is given twice in the form of David on p. 26 of Part I. of the *Records of Welsh Tract Baptist Meeting*. The difference between the form David and Davis would seem to have been of the flowing sort; less marked in that period than is the case at the present time.

Martha Davis seems to have joined Welsh Tract Church under the name of Martha Thomas in the year 1711 (*Records*, Pt. I., p. 16). David Davis seems to have become a member in 1716 (*Records*, Pt. I., p. 17). It is supposed that they had been united in marriage between those two dates. On the 4th of February, 1716, she seems to have subscribed to the Baptist Century Confession of Faith, under the name of Martha DAVIS (*Records*, Pt. I., p. 20.) *So did David Davis sign it*

In the course of time she became dissatisfied with the doctrines of the church, and the following action was taken in reference to her: *Page 25*

“THE CASE OF MARTHA DAVID

“The rebellion of Martha David against the church appeared

“(1) In opposing the truth which she once professed to the church according to the commandment of Christ and the practice of the Apostles under the ministry of the New Testament.

“(2) In refusing instruction, and despising advice tho’ offered many a time by the brethren in particular, and by the church, in general.

“(3) In breaking covenant with the church by carrying unconnected pieces of what was talked

in the church to the Presbyterians to have their opinion upon them, tho' the church charged her beforehand not to do so.

“(4) In being so false and unfaithful in carrying her tales so that she has curtailed the truth and increased her falsehoods; and thereby hath wronged the church by her change of opinion, and putting a false gloss on what was said to her—and putting it in the power of the enemies to blaspheme—also to renew the variance between us and the Presbyterians, for which causes she was put out of the church Mar. 4, 1732.

“N. B.—She was President Davis's mother”
(*Records*, Pt. I., p. 26).

The above citation appears to demonstrate the fact that the Rev. Samuel Davies, President of Princeton College, was the son of our David and Martha Davis, and that the latter was excluded on doctrinal grounds from Welsh Tract Church on the 4th of March, 1732.

V.

The Church has opened a career to many a man who could never have found it in the state, or in business, or elsewhere. Hildebrand, the greatest of the Popes of Rome, and for a season the foremost man for genius and power in the world, was the son of plebeian parents. The same has been true in many another case. From the earliest period it has been said in the Church that "not many mighty, not many noble, are called."

Samuel, the son of David and Martha Davis, had small chance to obtain fame and power in the state, but the Church opened her arms to welcome him. If the Church had not cherished him and nourished him, it might have been his fortune to "waste his sweetness on the desert air." His parents could not write their own names, but they had set great expectations upon the promise of their son, and hoped that he might one day write his name high on the scroll of fame. Their concern was noble and pathetic. It was rewarded with results that were a joy forever.

He was sent to famous schools, where he found

the best kind of learning in the classics and the sciences, especially in the science of theology. He was a devoted student; but, best of all, during the progress of his education he fell under the inspiration of the saintly William Robinson. Upon a journey in Virginia a sum of money was forced upon Robinson by certain congregations that had heard his message with uncommon sympathy. He declined to accept it for any uses of his own, but undertook to apply it to the necessities of a young man of promising talents and piety whose circumstances were embarrassing, and who was studying for the ministry. "He has not funds," said good Mr. Robinson, "to support and carry him on without much difficulty; this money will relieve him from his pecuniary difficulties. I will take charge of it and appropriate it to his use; and as soon as he is licensed we will send him to visit you; it may be that your liberality may now be educating a minister for yourselves" (Foote, *Sketches*, p. 129).

It was Samuel Davies that he had in mind. He was licensed to the ministry July 30, 1746; ordained Evangelist for the congregations in Virginia February 19, 1747; obtained license from the Governor and Council of Virginia to preach in

Hanover April 14, 1747; departed from Welsh Tract, to make his home in Virginia, April, 1748.

Here was, perhaps, the foremost young minister at that time in America. Jonathan Edwards got a glimpse of him at a meeting of the Synod four years later, and thus describes him: "I then had the comfort of a short interview with Mr. Davies of Virginia, and was much pleased with him and his conversation. He appears to be a man of very solid understanding, discreet in his behavior, and polished and gentlemanly in his manners, as well as fervent and zealous in religion" (Foote, p. 216).

There was not, perhaps, a more acute and competent judge of men on this side of the ocean than Jonathan Edwards in his day.

VI.

The health of Samuel Davies was seriously impaired in the years 1747 and 1748. After obtaining his license from the General Court of Virginia in April, 1747, he had preached with industry and success in Hanover and adjacent counties, but during the summer he returned to Welsh Tract to minister to the necessities of his young wife, who was shortly to be removed from him. The following lines of family history recorded in his interleaved quarto Bible signify much of joy and sorrow:

“Married to Sarah Kirkpatrick Oct. 23, 1746.

“Separated from her by Death & bereaved of an abortive Son Sep. 15, 1747.

“After I returned from Virginia,” says Mr. Davies, “I spent near a year under melancholy and consumptive languishments, expecting death” (Foote, *Sketches*, p. 162).

His father and mother were apparently alarmed on account of his situation, and when he left for Hanover in April, 1748, they decided to follow him to Virginia, and devote themselves for the

rest of their lives to the care of his health and interests.

The journey before them seemed much longer than it would appear at the present day, and it was essential that they should make special arrangements in preparation for it. They were not wealthy, but they had always been careful in the management of the little that they possessed. Business is business, and it seemed indispensable that matters of business which had been hitherto deferred or neglected should now be closed up finally. Five years ago there had been a hindrance of some kind in the process of conveying their estate of two hundred acres of land by John and Ann Davis. The deed had never been formally acknowledged in the open court. It was accordingly arranged under the pressure of extraordinary emergency that this defect should now be cured.

Therefore John and Ann Davis, after a delay of five years, were induced to come into court once more. John is supposed to have been near the eightieth year of his age, and as it seemed likely that he might pass away at any time the transaction was entered of record in the terms recited above and "acknowledged in the Court of Comon Pleas held for the County of New Castle in May Term 1748."

The deed was thus completed, and the defeat of John and Ann Davis, after years of patient exertion, was clearly established. But David Davis was a kind brother. His gentleness and religion are worthy of applause. He has commended himself to the respect of mankind.

It was now the 2d of May. Their son had departed during the month of April, and the parents shortly took the road to join him in Hanover, where it seems likely that David Davis died and was buried.

*Tombstone is in White Clay Creek
Church Cemetery, New Castle County,
Delaware. nevertheless reading,*

*"David Davis, died Aug 11, 1759
aged 79 years."*

VII.

It will now be in order to examine the second of the deeds which I had the honor to receive from the Rev. Dr. Warfield and the Hon. Levin Irving Handy. It is printed from the copy that was made in the Recorder's Office, with the exception of the last two paragraphs, which I have added from a personal inspection of the original:

(Recorder's Office, New Castle County, Delaware. Deed Record Q, Vol. I., Page 14.)

This Indenture made the Second Day of May in the Twenty first year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord George the second by the Grace of God King of great Brittain &c and in the year of our God one Thousand seven Hundred and forty eight Between David Davis and Martha Davis his Wife of the Hundred of Pencader in the County of New Castle upon Delaware of the one part & David Davis & Evan Davis both of the Hundred and County afsd Yeomⁿ of the other part, Witnesseth that the said David Davis and Martha his wife

for the Consideration of the sum of One Hundred and Two pounds Ten shillings Currency of this County of New Castle to them in hand paid by the said David Davies and Evan Davies before sealing and Delivering of these presents the receipt whereof they the said David Davies and Martha Davies Do hereby acknowledge and themselves fully satisfied and paid and from every part and parcel thereof do fully aquit exonerate and discharge David Davies and Evan Davies their executors administrators and assigns forever by these presents the said David Davies and Martha his Wife have granted bargained aliened released and confirmed and by these presents do grant bargain sell release and confirm unto the said David Davies and Evan Davies joint partners in the whole of these presents their heirs executors administrators and assigns forever all the right title interest property claim and demand whatsoever of them the said David Davies and Martha his wife their heirs executors administrators and assigns of in and to all that piece and parcel of land scituate lying and being in pencader Hundred and County of New Castle Beginning at a corner black oak extending thence East seventy-eight perches to a corner Live Oak thence East fifteen perches to a corner stake fixed by a large stone thence

South thirty-five and one half perches to a corner stake and a long stone fixed in the Ground thence East forty-five perches to a corner Ling thence South seventy-seven and one half perches to a corner White Oak thence West one hundred and fourteen perches to a corner Gum thence North forty-one degrees West one hundred and thirty-two perches to a Corner Black Oak standing by the Great Road leading to the Head of Elk River thence North thirty-eight degrees East one hundred and eighteen perches to the first mentioned place of Beginning containing one hundred and fifty-six acres and twenty-five perches of Land being part of a larger Tract of four hundred acres of land made over by William Davis to John Davies and the aforesaid David Davies joint partners in the Whole as it appears by a deed of Conveyance under the hand and seal of the said Wm. Davis bearing date the 21 day of May Anno Dom 1717 and the said part above mentioned was released by the said John Davies unto the said David Davies his heirs and assigns forever as it appears by a release under his hand and sealing bearing date the 16 Day of May Anno Dom 1743 relation being thereunto had Doth and may more at large appear. Together with all houses edifices building gardens orchards meadows swamps cripples

woods underwoods ways waters water courses profits commodities privileges emoluments and appurtenances whatsoever thereunto belonging or in anywise appertaining to have and to hold the said one hundred and fifty-six acres and twenty-five perches of Land and premises hereby granted and every part and parcel thereof with the appurtenances unto the said David Davies and Evan Davies their heirs and assigns forever in a common and Divisible Right And the said David Davies and Martha his Wife and their Heirs and assigns & all manner of person and persons lawfully claiming or to claim by from or under them or any or either of them shall & will warrant and forever Defend by these presents provided allways and upon condition that the said David Davies and Evan Davies their Heirs and assigns do and shall well and truly pay or cause to be paid all such sum or sums of money which now or hereafter shall become due as well for the purchase of the hereby granted Land and premises and also all the Quit-rents already due and to become due to the proprietor or Lord of the Soil pursuant to an article of agreement made Between the proprietor and William Davies and David Evans Dated the 15 day of October Anno Dom 1701 In Witness whereof the said David Davies and Martha Da-

vies his wife have hereunto set their Hands and seals the Day & year first above written

his
 DAVID D. D. DAVIS (seal)
 mark

her
 MARTHA M. DAVIS (seal)
 mark

Signed sealed and delivered
 in the presence of

his
 WILLIAM W. T. THOMAS
 mark

THOMAS JAMES.
 ANNE JAMES.

New Castle County, ss May the 2^d 1748

Then the within Martha Davis on her private Examination, before me one of his Majesties Justices of the Peace for said County Declareth that she did Sign Seal and Deliver the within Deed for the Use within mentioned of her own Free Will and consent without the Least Compulsion from

her Husband or any other person or Persons whatsoever.

THOS JAMES.

[SEAL] Acknowledged in the Court of Comon Pleas held for the County of New Castle in May Term 1748. Witness my hand and Seal of the County afs^d

I

RICH^d M. WILLIAM D. Proton: ibm.

VIII.

The previous document was five years in the making; this last document was begun and finished on the 2d day of May, 1748.

There is still an amount of confusion regarding the orthography of the name Davis. Referring to the grantors above, it appears that the name of David Davis is written thrice as Davis and five times as Davies, and the name of Martha Davis thrice as Davis and twice as Davies. Referring to the grantees, the names of both David and Evan Davis are written once each as Davis and five times as Davies.

David and Evan Davis seem to be nephews of David and Martha Davis, and sons of John and Ann Davis. The latter pair appear to have been left homeless in their age by the settlement of the affairs of David and Martha Davis, and in particular by the acknowledgment of the deed of 1743 in open court on the 2d of May, 1748.

David and Evan Davis apparently unite on the same day to purchase a home for their father and mother, and the rest of the family, in case there

were other members of it. It is expressly declared in the deed that David and Evan were yeomen. Their father, John Davis, must have been of that estate likewise, and there is no proof that their uncle David had ever risen above it. It seems unlikely that any of them could have been connected by blood relation with William Davis, Gentleman.

This purchase embraced 156 acres and 25 perches of the 200 acres that John Davis had just now released to his brother David, and which had been obtained from William Davis through the deed of May 21, 1717. There was no removal from the farm which the family had occupied for thirty-one years, but the size of their holding was curtailed by a number of acres.

The new deed was witnessed by William Thomas, who seems to have united with Welsh Tract Meeting about the same time as Martha Thomas (*Records*, Pt. I., p. 16), and may have been of some blood relation to her. It was also witnessed by Thomas and Anne James, the former of whom may have been the person of that name who, at the age of sixteen years, had united with the Baptist Meeting in the year 1715 (*Records*, Pt. I., p. 17).

The land does not seem to have been paid for

altogether in cash, but rather by means of notes of hand for certain deferred payments. David and Martha Davis engage to warrant and defend the title, "provided allways and upon condition that the said David Davies and Evan Davies their heirs and assigns do and shall well and truly pay or cause to be paid all such sum or sums of money which now or hereafter shall become due as well for the hereby granted Land and premises and also all the Quit-rents already due and to become due to the proprietor or Lord of the Soil."

Was it ever in the power of the brothers David and Evan to meet the deferred payments and obtain a clear title to the property? It seems impossible to answer that question. The materials in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds are incomplete. Nobody has yet been able to discover how the transaction was terminated. Moreover, David and Martha Davis soon went down to Hanover, leaving a body of nearly 244 acres of land behind them in Welsh Tract, and up to this time it has not been possible to determine whether they ever sold this estate or what disposition was finally made of it.

IX.

The Evan Davis who was one of the partners to the above transaction seems to be the grandfather of Jefferson Davis. He was forty-six years of age, and fortune had probably been unkind to him. He would have compared very ill with his first cousin, the young preacher, who had lately established himself in Virginia. Neither the Church, nor the state, nor the estate of business and commerce had opened its arms to welcome and cherish him.

The aged father and mother must have passed away in a few years. Possibly they survived till 1752 or 1753. Was John Davis a member of the Welsh Tract Baptist Meeting? The name Shion Dafydd appears next above that of David Davis among the subscribers to the Century Confession of Faith (*Records*, Pt. I., p. 21). Could that have been only a more primitive way of writing the name John Davis?

Morgan Edwards supplies a list of the members of Welsh Tract Church for the year 1770, and records among the rest the names of Thomas Da-

vis, John Davis, Abel Davis, Daniel Davis, Rachel Davis, Elenor Davis and Esther Davis (*Materials*, p. 19). It seems possible that some of these may have descended from John Davis.

In case David and Evan Davis were unable to meet the deferred payments on the land, it would revert in due season to their uncle David Davis, in Virginia. Samuel Davis, the father of Jefferson, seems to have been persuaded that he possessed some right in equity to a certain piece of property in this section of the country, and he devoted the energies of the last year of his life to a vain effort to discover it. If he had found this particular deed, it would have been of small service to him, since in and of itself it supplies no proof that his father had suffered any special loss.

X.

Evan was perhaps a bachelor of fifty years when he was released from the bonds that had connected him with the Welsh Tract. He decided to seek his fortune in the South. Welsh Tract Baptist Meeting had sent forth a large colony in the year 1735 that had settled on the Peedee River in South Carolina, and organized the Welsh Neck Baptist Church (*Records*, Pt. I., pp. 83-4). It was a flourishing organization, and continued for a number of years to obtain accessions from the mother church in Delaware. It is possible that Evan Davis went to visit his old friends at Welsh Neck, and that there he found a wife, the Widow Williams, who had formerly been Miss Emory. Margaret Williams was one of the original members of the Welsh Neck body (*Records*, Pt. I., p. 84). It is conceivable that one of her sons may have married a Miss Emory, and that after his death she may have bestowed her hand upon Evan Davis. The marriage seems to have occurred in 1754 or 1755.

It was the opinion of Mr. Davis that Evan Da-

vis removed to Georgia rather than to South Carolina (*Memoir*, Vol. I., p. 3); but it seems more probable that he went first to South Carolina and afterwards to Georgia. The latter colony was scarcely a suitable place to find a wife as early as the year 1755.

Evan Davis possessed the potent blood of the Davis line, but he does not appear to have been himself an admirable individual. Perhaps he lacked the energy of his race, or he may have possessed very little of education and training, or his spirit may have been broken by misfortune. He waited long, but he was fortunate in choosing a wife in the end. The Widow Williams was an incomparable blessing to Evan Davis. She shored up the fortunes of the house of John Davis in a brave and honorable fashion. She illustrated the power and the worth of woman. Her memory appears to have been venerated among her descendants. She deserved every tribute that has been paid to her virtue and charms.

She bore to Evan Davis one son, named Samuel, in memory, perhaps, of his first cousin, the great preacher, who was just then enacting such marvels in England and America. The boy was born in the year 1756. There were two half-brothers by the former marriage, Daniel and Isaac Williams.

Samuel Davis appears to have cherished a warm affection for them. In subsequent years, when he was himself a man of family, he called one of his own sons by the name of Isaac, apparently in honor of his half-brother Isaac Williams.

Evan Davis would have been seventy-two years of age if he had survived until the Declaration of American Independence, but it is likely that he had passed away before that event. He is supposed to have died before Samuel Davis was old enough to remember and appreciate him. Samuel Davis might have learned more about his own family, and especially about his near kinsman, President Davies, of Princeton, if his father had been spared to instruct him.

The Widow Davis was careful to provide that her son Samuel should obtain a competent education. He was able to read and write, and at the close of the War of the Revolution was chosen to occupy the position of County Clerk (*Memoir*, Vol. I, p. 4). He took some part in the war, and in particular raised a company that went to Savannah to assist General Lincoln in his effort to drive the British away on the 9th of October, 1779. His mother passed away during the progress of the war.

XI.

But the greatest mother that has entered the Davis family seems to have been Jane Cook, the Scotch-Irish lassie who became the wife of Samuel and the mother of Jefferson Davis (*Memoir*, p. 4). Her chief rival is Martha Davis, the mother of President Samuel Davies. Some people may be disposed to conclude that the son of Martha was a greater man than his kinsman, Jefferson Davis, but I am of a different opinion. I am glad to pay homage to Samuel Davies. He was a genius and a great character. I rejoice in his achievements, too; but, all things considered, Jefferson Davis belonged to a type that was distinctly above him. Both of them stood among the great men of our country, but Jefferson seems to have been the superior person. A family that could produce two such masterful men need not care for the poor distinctions of heraldry. The fact that they were both mere yeomen seems to be a just addition to their fame.

Mr. Davis intimates that his father met Jane Cook upon one of his military expeditions, and went back to claim her as his bride after the close

of the war (*Memoir*, p. 4). That is possible, but it is also possible that their first meeting had a different occasion. Both Samuel and Jane were Christian believers of the Baptist persuasion. They must have been constituents of the Georgia Baptist Association, which, according to the representations of Asplund's *Annual Register of the Baptist Denomination for the Year 1790*, had six churches on the Carolina side of Savannah River, three of them being in Abbeville and three in Edgefield County (Asplund's *Register*, pp. 38-9). It is likely that the Association may have held its annual session after the war in one or the other of those two counties, and that Samuel Davis may have met Jane Cook first on an occasion of that sort.

Our studies have received a decided impulse through the assistance of the Rev. Dr. Warfield and the Hon. Mr. Handy in Delaware. If other friends would undertake to search the county records in Darlington County, South Carolina, it is possible that some traces of the Williams and Emory families might be discovered there. Likewise good results might be obtained in the case of Jane Cook by an investigation in Edgefield and Abbeville counties.

Asplund represents that the Rev. Mark Cook

was a pastor of a large church named Powel's Creek in Greene County, Georgia, which was one of the members of the Georgia Association. It is conceivable that he may have removed from South Carolina at an earlier date to establish a home in Georgia, and that he may have been a relative of Jane Cook. He died in February, 1791 (Asplund's *Register*, p. 41, note).

Mr. Davis says that his mother was "noted for her beauty and sprightliness of mind," and emphasizes the fact that "she had a graceful, poetic mind" (*Memoir*, p. 4). These qualities have often been observed in his own address; but there was a certain strength and majesty in his mental composition that I am apt to attribute to the Davis side of the family.

He also says, "My father's family consisted of ten children, of whom I was the youngest. There were five sons and five daughters, and all of them arrived at maturity excepting one daughter" (*Memoir*, Vol. I, p. 6). Through the kindness of Mrs. J. Addison Hayes I obtained the following list of the names: Joseph Davis, Samuel Davis, Isaac Davis, Benjamin Davis, Anne Davis, Lucinda Davis, Mary (Pollie) Davis, Jefferson Davis.

The list is incomplete as yet, lacking the names

of two of the daughters. Joseph Emory Davis, the eldest son and child, seems to have been named in honor of the maternal grandfather of Samuel Davis. The second son, Samuel, perhaps was named in honor of his father. Isaac Davis seems to have been named in honor of Isaac Williams, the half-brother of his father. Jefferson Davis was named in honor of Thomas Jefferson, who at the time was President of the United States. Possibly Benjamin was a family name brought over from Wales. Anne Davis may have been named in honor of Ann, the wife of John Davis, the emigrant founder of the family in America.

XII.

The childhood of Jefferson Davis seems to have produced a marked impression. Great expectations were set upon his future career—greater than were aroused by any of the other nine children of the family of Samuel Davis. It also seems to have been the scheme of the household, or of some certain member of the same, that the best advantages should be given to Jefferson. The *res angusta domi* was doubtless well known in that circle, but the youngest son was commonly spared the apprehensions caused by the apparition.

It seems to have been recognized that Jefferson should receive the best education that could be had. In his person, in fact, was exhibited one of the most singular experiments in education that have been displayed in the history of our country. He has supplied the following account of it:

“In the summer when I was seven years old I was sent on horseback through what was then called ‘the Wilderness,’—past the country of the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations,—to Kentucky, and was placed in a Catholic institution then known

as St. Thomas, in Washington County, near the town of Springfield.

“In that day (1815) there were no steamboats, nor were there stage-coaches traversing the country. The river trade was conducted on flat- and keel-boats. Only the last named could be taken up the river. Commerce between the Western States and the Lower Mississippi was confined to water routes. The usual mode of travel was on horseback or afoot. Many persons who had gone down the river in flatboats walked back through ‘the Wilderness’ to Kentucky, Ohio, and elsewhere. We passed many of these daily on the road.

“There were at that time places known as stands, where the sick and weary oftentimes remained for relief, and many of these weary ones never went away. These stands were log-cabins, three of them occupied by white men, who had intermarried with the Indians. The first, situated in the Choctaw nation, was named Folsom; then came the Le Flores, known as the first and second French camps. The fourth was that of a half-breed Chickasaw, at the crossing of the Tennessee River. When the traveler could not reach the house at which he had intended to stop, he found it entirely safe to sleep, wrapped in blankets, in

the open air. It was the boast of the Choctaws that they had never shed the blood of a white man, and as a proof of their friendship they furnished a contingent to the war against the Creek Indians who had been allies of the British.

“The party with which I was sent to Kentucky consisted of Major Hinds (who had commanded the famous battalion of Mississippi Dragoons at the Battle of New Orleans), his wife, his sister-in-law, a niece, a maid-servant, and his son Howell, who was near my own age, and like myself mounted on a pony. A servant had a sumpter mule with some supplies, besides bed and blankets for camping out. The journey to Kentucky occupied several weeks” (*Memoir*, Vol. I, pp. 9-11).

It seems likely that this experiment in education was devised by the eldest brother, Joseph Emory Davis. He was a lawyer, and had been in successful practice for several years at Natchez. He had perhaps contrived to rescue a portion of his ready cash from the exactions of the war of 1812-1815, and may have felt that he could sustain the expense of his youngest brother at the convent in Kentucky. The Protestant convictions of Samuel Davis probably rose up somewhat in opposition to the project, but these seem to have been quelled by the hope of advantage to his son Jefferson.

It would have been an impossible task, however,

to persuade the mother. Mr. Davis says, "I had been sent so young to school, and so far from home, without my mother's knowledge or consent" (*Memoir*, Vol. I, p. 15). It seems to have been felt that the perils of the wide, wide Wilderness, the perils of Indians, the perils of waters, the perils of disease and still other perils would appall her spirit. The enterprise was so strenuous as to be almost uncanny. Apparently it was not mentioned to Jane Cook. Perhaps Jefferson was invited to visit his lawyer brother in Natchez, whence the expedition was fitted out, and whence he departed "without his mother's knowledge or consent." The two years that passed over her head, with her precious child in a convent so far away, must have been a tremendous trial to his mother in Mississippi.

Another boy was playing on the banks of Nolin Creek, three miles west of Hodgenville, and thirty miles west of the convent at Springfield. He was younger than Jefferson by seven months and nine days. They lived thus side by side for a whole year in Kentucky before Abraham Lincoln went away to Indiana to prepare for the dreadful conflict which they were one day to wage together. We may wonder whether touches of that tremendous day ever entered their dreams or stirred their thoughts during those quiet months in Kentucky.

XIII.

Perhaps the best educational apparatus that the boy Jefferson found upon his lengthy journey came to view in Tennessee. He says:

“When we reached Nashville we went to the Hermitage. Major Hinds wished to visit his friend and companion-in-arms, General Jackson. The whole party was so kindly received that we remained there for several weeks. During that period I had the opportunity a boy has to observe a great man,—a standpoint of no small advantage,—and I have always remembered with warm affection the kind and tender wife who then presided over his house.

“General Jackson’s house at that time was a roomy log-house. In front of it was a grove of fine forest trees, and behind it were his cotton and grain fields. I have never forgotten the unaffected and well-bred courtesy which caused him to be remarked by court-trained diplomats, when President of the United States, by reason of his very impressive bearing and manner” (*Memoir*, Vol. I, p. 11).

Probably there was more in this incident to incite the lad to high endeavor than he was able to find among the good fathers at the convent of St. Thomas. They were kind and faithful men, no doubt, but they were less striking than the master of the Hermitage, who on the 8th of January preceding had gained a notable victory at New Orleans, and was now resting from the toils of battle, the most admired and honored man in America.

His brother, Joseph Emory, had strong faith in Jefferson's future, and was always his good genius. A few years later, when he was prepared to enter college, it was Joseph Emory who must have sent him back to Kentucky to study at Transylvania University, an institution then very famous under the management of Dr. Horace Holly. Young Davis was always proud of his *alma mater* and loyal to her good name. He boasted of it many years later: "When I was serving my first term as United States Senator I was one of six graduates of Transylvania who held seats in that chamber" (*Memoir*, Vol. I, p. 26).

But Mr. Davis was not a graduate of Transylvania. Joseph Emory found an opportunity to obtain for Jefferson a cadetship at the West Point Military Academy. The honor was bestowed by President Monroe in November, 1823 (*Memoir*,

p. 28), and Joseph was, of course, the first to hear of it (*Memoir*, p. 34). If Jefferson had remained at Transylvania until his graduation in June, 1825, he would have lost his cadetship, and the most valuable opportunity of his life. Joseph therefore insisted that he should break off his course at Transylvania and proceed to West Point, in June, 1824. Moreover, it was not considered desirable that he should graduate at Transylvania or elsewhere as early as his seventeenth year (*Memoir*, p. 34).

Washington's Birthday was celebrated at Lexington in February, 1825, with orations and a banquet in Matthew Giron's establishment, "a place since made famous by James Lane Allen. There President Holley, Robert J. Breckinridge, Judge Bledsoe, Theodore W. Clay, and others responded to toasts. W. B. Redd offered the following, which was drunk with much pleasure: 'To the health and prosperity of Jefferson Davis, late a student of Transylvania University, now a cadet at West Point. May he become the pride of our country, and the idol of our army'" (*Register Kentucky State Historical Society*, Vol. VII, No. 21, p. 40).

Of more significance than the above was the fact that during his career at Lexington he had won the favorable regard of Henry Clay. The following incidental reference to the fact was later recited

by Mr. Davis: "While the Compromise Measures of 1850 were pending, and the excitement concerning them was at its highest pitch, I one day overtook Mr. Clay, of Kentucky, and Mr. Berrien, of Georgia, in the Capitol grounds. They were in earnest conversation. It was on March 7th, the day on which Mr. Webster had delivered his great speech. Mr. Clay, addressing me in the friendly manner which he had always employed since I was a schoolboy in Lexington, asked me what I thought of the speech" (*Memoir*, Vol. I, p. 447). For a schoolboy to enjoy the friendship of both Jackson and Clay was indeed a valuable privilege.

XIV.

In describing their beginning as a church, the Welsh Tract Church say: "In the year 1701 some of us (who were members of the churches of Jesus Christ in the countys of Pembroke and Caermarthen, South Wales in Great Britain, professing believers baptism, laying on of hands, elections and final perseverance in grace) were moved and encouraged to come to these parts, viz. Pennsylvania" (*Records*, Pt. I, p. 7).

Notices of those Welsh churches occur in the Addenda to the *Broadmead Baptist Church Records*, published by the Hanserd Knollys Society, London, 1847. The document referred to is entitled *A Catalogue of All the Congregated Churches in the General Counties of Wales, Made Out by Mr. Henry Morris, Minister of the Gospel in Wales*, and dated 1675. Concerning Pembroke-shire Mr. Morris says: "What baptists be in this country do join with Mr. William Jones's people, who meet in the borders of Carmarthen-shire" (*Broadmead Records*, p. 517). Concerning Carmarthen-shire, the *Catalogue* reports as fol-

lows: "There is also a church of later standing here, whereof Mr. William Jones, aforesaid, is pastor, Gryffyth Howells and Thomas [David Rees] elders. Their other officers I cannot name. As for their judgment, see Cardiganshire. Their meeting place is at Llanfair upon the borders of Pembrokeshire, sometimes also in Cardiganshire, and sometimes hard by Narberth in Pembrokeshire" (*Broadmead Records*, p. 512).

The statement regarding Cardiganshire is as follows: "There are also here a party of baptists under imposition of hands, that are joined to Mr. William Jones's church in Carmarthenshire, whereof hereafter" (*Broadmead Records*, p. 512).

Perhaps it would be of little use to guess from which of the three counties mentioned the Davis family may have come. If the name is allied with that of David, of which there seems to be little doubt, it would be more natural to trace the Davis family to Pembroke. The bishopric of St. David has been established for ages in that county, and the promontory of St. David is a feature of the landscape there. In the year 1790 the names of Henry Davis, Benjamin Davis and Daniel Davis occur in a list of the ministers of Particular Baptist Churches in Pembrokeshire (Rippon's *Annual Register Baptist Denomination*, 1790-3, p. 15).

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