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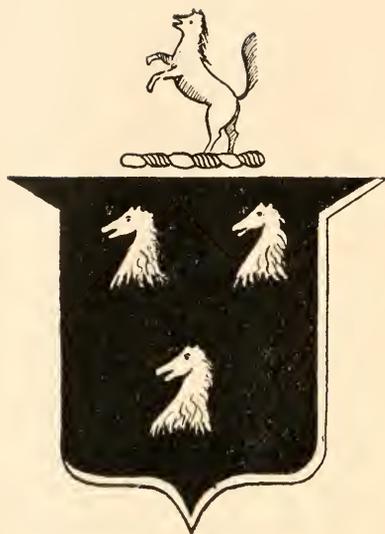


Side Lights of Maryland History

THE DAVIS FAMILY

AND COAT OF ARMS





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Wm. Davis Jones



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Arms — Sable, three nag's heads, heads erased arg.

Crest — A wolf salient arg.

THE Welsh Davises derive their descent, according to the best authorities, from the Prince of Powis, the opponent of Ethelfrid, King of Northumberland, at the battles of Chester and Bangor, about the commencement of the seventh century. Nineteenth in descent from Prince Brachwel of Powis was Meilir Gryg, direct ancestor of David, son of John ap David of Llivior, who, according to the Welsh custom, assumed the modern surname of Davies in the year 1637 when signing a deed of family settlement.

English authorities claim that this Welsh line can be traced back to those brave Britons who lined the coast of Kent to oppose the landing of

Julius Cæsar, but the record as given starts a few centuries before the Norman Conquest, beginning with Prince Rhodri "Molwynog," the cognomen meaning "Welsh blood being up." He settled on the north of the Severn after his removal from Cambrian Wessex, where many of the Britons who preferred liberty to the foreign yoke followed their chief.

His great-grandson, Rhodri Mawr, or "the great," divided Wales into three distinct royalties for his three eldest sons, Cadell, Avarawd and Mervyn,

The Davises of Welsh origin, of Hope and Marsh, in Shropshire, England, bear the following arms: A goat argent, horned or, standing on a child of the same, swaddled gules, and feeding on a tree eradicated vert, a crescent for difference.

Crest—On a mount vert a goat couchant argent, under a tree proper.

This line descends from David, whose son Hugh ap David (Davis) of Hope had a son William ap Hugh, whose heir Jeuan ap William of Hope married Alson, daughter of John Hewes.

He was succeeded by David ap Jeuan, of Marshe, in com. Salop, who married Eliun, daughter of John Williams.

Reynold Davys, the son and heir, married Ellen, daughter of James Morris, who had sons Edward and James Davis. Of these, James married Miss Martyn and had a son, John Davis.

Although the late George Lachlin Davis stated

in his account of the early emigrants that the Davises of Mount Hope did not leave the principality of Wales until after 1720, we find an early Davis, with the very suggestive Welsh name of Evan Davis, receiving a patent for 200 acres of land on the Severn in the year 1672.

The similarity of the names of their estates would suggest that the Davises of Hope in Great Britain were forebears of the Davises of Mount Hope in Maryland. This is an interesting point for further investigation.

Whether or not the various original settlers of this name came from Wales originally does not concern us.

The Davis name has been prominent in the annals of Maryland ever since the days of the first notable assembly whose records have been preserved to us, for in the year 1637 John Davis sat as a representative for St. Marie's Hundred, while the several successive years Thomas Davis contributed his services in molding the foundations of our government.

These early members of the Davis family in Maryland were from Virginia, and probably sons of James Davis, of Henrico, Gentleman, who came to Virginia in the good ship *George* in the year 1617. The records show that several of the Davises came from the Old Dominion into Maryland, and were perhaps kinsmen of Sir William Davis, of Bristol, England, to whom letters from Virginia are still extant.

After the resurvey between Maryland and Virginia, lands in Somerset county were granted these two brothers by the Lord Baltimore, their estates being previously on the Accomac side. His Lordship's rent rolls show that 7,000 acres in Somerset county alone were patented to members of the Davis family.

On both sides of the Chesapeake members of this distinguished name were large landholders and lived in the lavish way peculiar to the Colonial gentry. The Davis men were from earliest times conspicuous in the military affairs of the Province. In the year 1667 we find Capt. Hopkins Davis commanding a company of foote in Choptank and Miles river, Talbot county, and Capt. John Davis, of the same county, martialling his men against attack. Among the men of this name who were paid by the Assembly of Maryland for public services to the Province prior to 1685 were George Davis, Griffith Davis, John Davis, Thomas Davis, William Davis, Samuel Davis and Jonas Davis.

In the year 1694 John Davis was appointed commissioner and justice of the peace for trial and cause for Talbot county, of which he was also a military officer.

While it has been claimed that the Western Shore Davises did not arrive in Maryland until much later than those on the Eastern Shore, the Colonial records disprove this, as above shown. As early as 1694 John Davis was a justice of Prince George's county. The names of Samuel

and John Davis appear in a list of loyal subjects in Somerset county in 1689, in which year a petition for a Protestant government was addressed to the King. While the Davis men filled with fidelity many civil offices of importance and served their government on the Colonial field, including the French and Indian wars, it is especially notable for the large number of commissioned officers in the Revolutionary service. Among these were Col. Richard Davis, 1778 ; Capt. John Davis, Snow Hill Battalion 1777 ; Capt. Phillip Davis, Thirteenth Battalion, Kent county, 1778 ; Capt. Richard Davis, of Washington county ; Capt. John Davis, of Wicomico Battalion ; First Lieutenant Nixon Davis, First Lieutenant Jesse Davis, of Worcester county, 1776 ; First Lieutenant Amos Davis, of Washington county, 1778 ; First Lieutenant Lodowich Davis and Second Lieutenant Griffith Davis, Middle Battalion, Montgomery county ; First Lieutenant James Davis, of Dorchester county ; Philemon Davis, a sergeant in the mounted company that marched from Queen Anne's county February 3, 1776 ; Lieut.-Col. Richard Davis, of Frederick county troops, 1776 ; Ensign Rezin Davis, of Frederick, 1776 ; Second Lieutenant Richard Davis, Baltimore county, 1776 ; Ensign Alexander Davis, commissioned second lieutenant August, 1777 ; Ensign William Davis, Baltimore Battalion, 1777 ; Richard Davis, of Washington county, appointed to purchase provisions for the United States Army, 1778 ;

✓ Robert Paine Davis, ensign of Capt. Thomas Watkins' company, on West river, in Anne Arundel county, 1779. There were other officers and no less than 50 privates by the name of Davis who served in the Maryland troops during the War of Independence.

While from the foregoing we can have no doubt as to the patriotic blood of the Davis men, yet more than once the name is enrolled among those who held the scales of justice, and while so many of the family were giving their lives to their country's service Samuel Davis, of Kent, and Richard Davis, of Washington county, were filling the honorable and important office of justice of the county courts in the year 1778.

In the journal of the Council of safety reference is made to Captain Davis as "sea commander." While one of the early rectors of William and Mary Parish was Thos. Davis, we find Rev. Samuel Davis preaching to the early Presbyterian flock in Somerset county, where his name is still revered as one who helped to plant the vine in the virgin soil of the New World.

The various branches of the Davis family in Maryland intermarried with the other representative Colonial families, and particularly is this the case in the branch in Anne Arundel county. Here we find Richard Davis marrying Ruth Warfield, daughter of John Warfield and his wife, Ruth Gaither, whose ancestors first settled in Virginia and took part in the affairs of that colony. The

children of this marriage of Richard Davis and Ruth Warfield were Richard, John, Thomas, Caleb, Elizabeth and Ruth Davis. Caleb Davis arrived at man's estate, like others of his family, in time to fight in the Revolutionary War. He married Lucretia Griffith, daughter of Orlando Griffith and his wife, Katharine Howard, daughter of Capt. John Howard, Jr., and Katharine Greenbury. Ruth Davis, sister of Caleb Davis, married Joshua Warfield, the son of Benjamin. Elizabeth Davis married John Marriott.

Other marriages of Davises with well-known families was that of Ephraim Davis to Elizabeth Howard ; Allen Bowie Davis and Rebecca Comfort Dorsey, daughter of Chief Justice Thomas Beadle Dorsey and his wife Milcah Goodwin.

As in so many old Maryland families, the Davises of the present generation find their paternal and maternal ancestors allied by kinship. In the case of the Democratic nominee for the Vice-Presidency we find his Davis forebears intermarrying with the same blood that descends to him through his mother, Louisa Brown, the daughter of John Riggs Brown and Sarah Gassaway. This Sarah Gassaway was the daughter of Brice J. Gassaway and Katharine Warfield, Brice J. Gassaway was a son of Nicholas Gassaway and brother of Capt. John Henry Gassaway and Lieut. Nicholas Gassaway, all officers in the Maryland Line. Through his Gassaway ancestry Hon. Henry G. Davis and his children, as well as Gov.

Edwin Warfield, Hon. Arthur Pue Gorman, Mr. William H. Gorman and others, trace back to the Dorseys, Howards, Ridgelys, Worthingtons and Greenburys. Contemporary with these and the eldest living representatives of the John Riggs Brown line are Mr. Vachel Brown and Mr. J. Frank Brown, of Baltimore.

The various Colonial progenitors of the Davis family of Maryland include those who filled every important office in the gift of Lord Baltimore or of the people, hence it is only history repeating itself when we find in our own generation the representatives of the old governing families of the Province continuing to maintain the precedent set them by their worthy forebears. Every man or woman who is representative is as sure to have strong, notable ancestors as that like produces like.

Among the other distinguished sons of Maryland of this name that of Henry Winter Davis will always shine forth as a bright particular star. This eminent scholar, statesman and orator has always been marked as one of the greatest of Marylanders. His father was Rev. Henry Lyon Davis, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and president of St. John's College, at Annapolis. His mother was Jane Brown Winter. Henry Winter Davis married Miss Nancy Morris, daughter of Mr. John B. Morris, of Baltimore, by whom he had two daughters. Ephraim Davis, who settled at Greenwood in the year 1755, had a son Thomas,

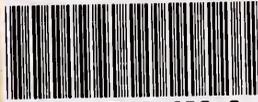
who, during Washington's administration, raised a company and marched to Pennsylvania in 1794 to assist in suppressing the whisky insurrection. During his absence he was elected a member of the Legislature, and was also an elector of the Senate under the old Constitution. He was a member of the Governor's Council and a most important man in his day, being, among other things, Associate Judge of the County Court. His son, Allen Bowie Davis, like his father, was a man conspicuous in the official life of his generation. He was president of the State Board of Public Works, member of the constitutional convention and one of the first trustees and later president of the State Agricultural Society. The Hon. David Davis, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, is another distinguished son of Maryland. He was born in Cecil county, Maryland, and in early manhood removed to Illinois. He was a member of the constitutional convention and a delegate to the National Republican Convention in Chicago in 1860. Judge Davis was appointed by President Lincoln Judge of the Supreme Court of the United States in 1862. He was elected United States Senator to succeed John A. Logan. While, as we have seen, the name of Davis has been distinguished in the legislative hall and on the field, the Hon. Henry Gassaway Davis is the first son of Maryland to attain the high distinction of being nominated for the Vice-Presidency of the United States. He was born on the family estate,

Goodfellowship, located in Howard county, but which originally lay in Anne Arundel county. This estate had been patented to Joshua Brown and Alexander Randall early in 1700 — about 1720. Later Caleb Davis, father of the Hon. Henry G. Davis, bought the part which had belonged to Randall and which adjoined the lands of his wife's family, the Browns. On this ancestral estate our distinguished Marylander was born and lived until the panic of 1835 swept independence from his father, who sold his home and everything he possessed that others might not lose through him.

With a heritage of cultured and distinguished ancestry on both sides and the high standards of life set him by a worthy father our new candidate for the Vice-Presidency faced the change of circumstances bravely and went to work as many a gentlemen's son had done before him and because of the superior blood that was in him he soon attained the success which comes of earnest effort. From one post of honor to another he has been chosen to the second highest nomination in in this country, and it is with pleasure that Maryland claims him as her own son and the representative of some of her most distinguished families. Among the distinguished forebears of Hon. Henry Gassaway Davis are Col. Nicholas Greenberry, Deputy Governor of the Province, 1692, Keeper of the Great Seal and Member of his Lordship's Council ; Col. Edward Dorsey, Keeper of the Great

Seal, Judge in the High Court of Chancery, etc.; Capt. John Howard, of the Colonial Militia; Col. Nicholas Gassaway, Capt. John Worthington, Capt. John Brice and others of equal distinction. Among the descendants of the early Davises of Maryland are Hon. Henry Gassaway Davis, of Maryland and West Virginia; Mrs. Stephen B. Elkins, Miss Katharine Davis Elkins, Messrs. Elkins, Mrs. Arthur Lee, Miss Katharine Grace Davis Brown, daughter of Lieutenant-Com. R. M. G. Brown, United States Navy; Mrs. F. S. Landstreet, of New York; Mr. John T. Davis, of Elkins, W. Va.; Miss Mary Winter Davis, Miss Mary Dorsey Davis and Miss Davis, of Greenwood, Montgomery county; Miss Maria Trimble Davis, Mr. George A. Kirby, Miss Mary Hanson Kirby, Miss Mallonee, Mrs. George R. A. Hiss, Mr. George William Kirby, of New York.

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