

Biography of Rev. Samuel Wesley Davis
A CENTURY AND A HALF OF PITTSBURGH AND HER PEOPLE
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The Lewis Publishing Company, 1908
Volume IV, Pages 172-174

REV. SAMUEL WESLEY DAVIS, a clergyman of the Methodist Episcopal denomination, and well known in the mission work among the foreign population in the great coke regions of western Pennsylvania, was born November 9, 1839, in Somerset county, Pennsylvania.

(I) John Davis, great-grandfather of Rev. Samuel W. Davis, was a resident of Bensalem township, Bucks county, Pennsylvania, from whence, after several changes, he removed to Somerset county, Pennsylvania, near Salisbury where he died and was buried. He married Rebecca Davenport, September 24, 1769, and among their children were: Betsy, Benjamin, of whom later; John, a soldier of the war of 1812; William, a blacksmith in Chester county, Pennsylvania; Reese; Abner, went to Freeport, Ohio, and became a local Methodist preacher; a daughter who married a Mr. Flick; a daughter who married a Mr. Heaton; Lorena, who married and moved to Chester county, Pennsylvania; Olivia, who also married and moved to Chester county.

(II) Benjamin Davis, second child and eldest son of John and Rebecca (Davenport) Davis, was born in Bucks county, Pennsylvania, August 14, 1770. He was reared in that part of the country. He learned the trade of millwright and also conducted furnaces. He was married by the Rev. N. Greer, in Chester county, Pennsylvania, to Elizabeth Barker, born April 15, 1774, daughter of Henry and Eleanor (Caldwell) Barker. Henry Barker was a resident of Chester county, Pennsylvania, was a captain in the Revolutionary war and served at the battle of Brandywine, and is buried at the Brandywine Manor meeting house. His wife, Eleanor (Caldwell) Barker, was the daughter of Joseph Caldwell. Benjamin and Elizabeth (Barker) Davis were the parents of the following children:

1. Rebecca, born December 22, 1800, married, July 15, 1817, Matthew P. Brown, and their children were: Nancy J., born July 25, 1818; Elizabeth, September 26, 1819; John W., November 4, 1821; Benjamin, March 7, 1823; Joseph, July 9, 1825; Olivia, March 9, 1828; Henry, October 24, 1830; Rebecca, August 15, 1833; Mary K., November 11, 1835; William P., February 4, 1837; Francis M., February 5, 1841.

2. Benjamin, born 1806, died in North Carolina, July 20, 1838.

3. Joseph B., of whom later.

4. John, born January 13, 1810, married (first) Catharine Shehee, children: George and Margaret; married (second) Margaret Brallier, children: Augustus C., a soldier in the Civil war; Almira, Joseph, Elizabeth, Nora, Ellen and Jennie.

5. Eliza, died young.

6. Nancy, died young.

(III) Joseph B. Davis, second son of Benjamin Davis, was born in Dauphin county, Pennsylvania, February 22, 1808. He removed to Somerset county, where he engaged in farming and was a cattle merchant, sending stock over the mountains to eastern Pennsylvania. He owned land in Upper Turkeyfoot township, Somerset county, and was a prominent man in the community in which he resided. In the spring of 1861 he removed to Maryland, where he purchased a grazing farm near Oakland, Garrett county, whereon he resided up to his death, which occurred in Oakland, September 14, 1890. He was a devoted member of the Methodist Episcopal church, and a Whig and Republican in politics. He married, June 5, 1830, Sarah McMillen, born October 4, 1810, died November 28, 1905, at Oakland, Maryland, daughter of John and Nancy (Patrick) McMillen. John McMillen was born in Dauphin county, Pennsylvania, July 19, 1764. He located in Somerset county in 1790, was a prosperous farmer, a justice of the peace, and an official member of the Methodist Episcopal church. He and his wife were the parents of children: John K., born May 26, 1795; James, December 19, 1798; Jane, December 30, 1800; Eleanor, July 23, 1802; William, December 24, 1804; Samuel E., November 12, 1807; Sarah, October 4, 1810. mentioned above: Margaret,

November 25, 1813; Mary, April 15, 1820. John McMillen died February 1, 1856, and his wife March 25, 1854, aged seventy-seven years. The parents of Joseph B. and Sarah (McMillen) Davis were all professing Christians and members of the Methodist Episcopal church. Children of Mr. and Mrs. Davis:

1. Ann, born 1831, married John Harned. had one son, Joseph, a pharmacist.
2. Simon, born October 4, 1832, died in childhood.
3. John M., born January 26, 1835, a merchant in Oakland, Maryland, a local Methodist preacher, and one of the founders of Mountain Lake Park, a noted Christian summer resort near Oakland. He married Eleanor Philson, of Somerset county, Pennsylvania, and had children: Charles S., a merchant; William C., deceased, who was a minister of the Methodist Episcopal church; John Wesley, a merchant.
4. Elizabeth, born February 8, 1837, died in childhood.
5. Samuel Wesley, of whom later.
6. Sarah Jane, married M. L. Scott, now deceased.

(IV) Rev. Samuel Wesley Davis was reared in Somerset county, Pennsylvania, and obtained his primary education at the common and select schools in that county, and received instruction in advanced studies from the Rev. T. H. Wilkenson. In 1856-57-58, during the regular school terms of four months, he served as teacher of adjacent public schools, and in 1859 was teacher for a term of five months in Bruceton, Preston county, Virginia. In 1861 he was a student for two terms at Allegheny College, Meadville, Pennsylvania. Favored with the instruction and influence of Christian parents and ministers of the gospel who were frequent visitors at his home, and impressed by the services of the sanctuary, he was converted in early youth and began to realize his call from God to the ministry. At the solicitation of the church he made application and July 19, 1862, received license as a local preacher in the Methodist Episcopal church. November 9, 1862, he became assistant of the Rev. Franklin Ball, preacher in charge of the Kingwood circuit, West Virginia conference, Methodist Episcopal church. In 1863 he became a member of the conference and was returned as junior to the same circuit with the Rev. Ashford Hall as preacher in charge. The circuit included Kingwood, the county seat, and other appointments, seventeen in all, which were increased to twenty, and during this period there were two hundred and seventy-five additions to the membership.

His next appointment was in Marshall county, West Virginia, among the hills at Fish Creek. After one year at that place he was sent to Weston, county seat of Lewis county, and after two years was removed to Clarksburg, county seat of Harrison county, West Virginia. He remained there three years and was appointed at Wheeling, West Virginia, and stationed at the Thomson church, Wheeling Island. He was next transferred to the Pittsburg conference and stationed at Myersdale, Somerset county, Pennsylvania. In the economy of the church after three years he was transferred and made pastor of the congregation in Uniontown. At the close of the pastoral term in Uniontown, in 1878, he accompanied Mr. E. J. Stone, his father-in-law, and sons, J. T. and E. L. Stone, and J. C. Thomas in a seven-months' tour in the east, which included various countries of Europe, also Egypt and the Holy Land. His next charge was Bellevernon, in Fayette county, then Mount Pleasant, in Westmoreland county. Succeeding these he was pastor for two years at Homestead, five years at the Coursin Street appointment, McKeesport, two years at the Walton church, Pittsburg, and two years at the Jefferson Avenue church in Washington, Pennsylvania.

He was then assigned to the Coke Mission in the interest of the foreign population in the coke regions of western Pennsylvania, of which he has been successful as pastor and superintendent for the last thirteen years. Property for the Mission was purchased in Mount Pleasant, Westmoreland county, March 28, 1900, at a cost of \$2.500. The building is a substantial brick of two stories, containing four large rooms. The location of this property is most favorable, on a fine elevation on a thoroughfare, near the railroad depots and adjacent to the Standard Coke Works. One room on the first floor is occupied by Mrs. Anna Navratil, the first Bohemian convert, with her son and grandson, and her four orphan grandchildren, and thus under the care of this intelligent and worthy Christian woman there is already the germ of a self-supporting orphanage, suggesting an institution which in that place would surely accomplish great and lasting good. Another room, tastefully decorated, seated with chairs and

supplied with a vocation by Andrew Carnegie, is devoted to public worship. It has an increasing and spiritual membership, and with more than one hundred adherents among adult men and women foreign born. The Sunday-school, organized in August, 1898, with an attendance now of one hundred, largely Bohemian, Slav and Polish, the girl's sewing school, devoted also to religious instruction, the Saturday Evening Bible class, and the class on Monday evening for instruction by the pastor, are all well provided for. It is free from debt. A comfortable parsonage also has been provided in the same locality and is the residence of the Bohemian pastor, Joseph Donat. A Home for Missionaries and young women of foreign nationality in training for mission work is located in Uniontown, county seat of Fayette county. It was purchased October 13, 1906, for \$5,500, A. J. Cochran contributing \$500, Mrs. Sarah B. Cochran \$500, and A. (Jaddis) \$150, after which Lloyd G. McCrum assumed the mortgage indebtedness of \$4,000.

In spite of his advancing years and arduous labors during forty-five years. Rev. Mr. Davis is still earnestly at work and enjoys the prosecution of his noble Christian undertaking, saving the foreigners. During his terms of pastoral service churches have been erected in Clarksburg and Wheeling, West Virginia, and in Myersdale, Ursina, Uniontown, McKeesport and in several other towns in the coke region in Pennsylvania. The self-sacrificing labors of this truly noble man have extended over nearly half a century, and the influence for good cannot be estimated this side of the eternal world.

Mr. Davis married, March 12, 1872, Mary C. Stone, daughter of E. J. and Elizabeth C. (Thomas) Stone, of Wheeling, West Virginia. They have been blessed with the following children: Anna May, who died young; Alfred Cookman, an official of the Pennsylvania railroad lines west of Pittsburg; Elizabeth Stone, a home missionary; James Edward, died young; Wilbur M., died young; Mary Eleanor; Sarah Blanche.

Reformatted: 22 March 2022

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