

The Wife of Solomon Davis

By Dwayne Wrightsman

Solomon Davis was one of the earliest settlers in Macoupin County, Illinois. He and his family settled in North Palmyra in 1828, prior to the formation of Macoupin County. (Back then North Palmyra was located in Greene County.) The Davis family came to North Palmyra to be with the John Cummings family. The Cummings family is said to have been the first family that settled in North Palmyra. Both families came from Scott County, Kentucky. Both families had quite a history prior to moving to Macoupin County.

The wives of Solomon Davis and John Cummings were originally from Maryland, but the husbands were born in Virginia.

Our story thus starts with the 1790 Federal Census for Queen Anne's County, Maryland. Page 102 of the Census listed a William Holding and a number of Elliott's as heads of households. William Holding himself was married to an Elliott woman named Anna. Soon after the 1790 Census, William Holding and Anna, along with other Elliott relations, moved from Queen Anne's County in Maryland to Scott County in Kentucky. It was in Kentucky, where the unmarried Elliott girls would meet their future husbands.

In February 1792, William Holding signed the certificate for the marriage of John Cummings and Lucy Elliott. William Holding would not have known John Cummings, but he must have known the bride, Lucy Elliott, as Lucy was apparently the sister of Anna (Elliott) Holding, William's wife.

Lucy (nee Elliott) Cummings became the mother of William Cummings, who later would become the husband of Julia Ann (nee Davis) Cummings. Julia Ann Cummings was the daughter of Solomon Davis and Elizabeth Elliott.

The Solomon Davis family lived in Scott County, Kentucky, during the early 1800s. According to court house records, Solomon Davis and his wife Eliza (short for Elizabeth) lived in Scott County from 1817 to 1828, sharing a 100-acre-farm with William Holding and his wife Anna. Legally, the Davis's owned only 36 of the 100 acres, and the Holdings, the larger share of 64 acres.

In short, the three Elliott women (Anna, Lucy, and Eliza) were the wives of William Holding, John Cummings, and Solomon Davis, respectively. It is highly likely that the three wives were sisters. The wives were bearing children in Kentucky, while at the same time their husbands farmed, went hunting, and joined the army in the frontier war. In 1794, John Cummings and Solomon Davis served for 116 continuous days as mounted volunteers in the Kentucky Militia.

In 1828, the Davis family left the Holding family in Kentucky and moved to North Palmyra, Illinois, next to the Cummings family. Both families owned 80 acres. John Cummings bought his 80 acres in what was then Greene County on February 12, 1828. Solomon Davis bought his 80 acres kitty-corner from Cummings on October 24, 1828. On March 12, 1829, William Cummings (son of John) married Julia Davis (daughter of Solomon)

Elizabeth Davis is known to have been the mother of 11 children based on the April 1846 Will of Solomon Davis. Elizabeth predeceased her husband and was not mentioned in Solomon's Will. When and where Elizabeth (nee Elliott) Davis actually died is unknown. Where she was buried is also unknown. Perhaps she was buried on one of the family farms.

Seven of Elizabeth's eleven children were listed in Solomon's Will to inherit their father's farm lands. These included Greenup Davis, Jane Brackenridge, Sally Munteer, Julia Cummings, Polly

McCulley, John D. Davis, and Garret Davis. Garret Davis received his share of his father's estate, plus an extra twenty acres in return for taking care of his mother during her later years.

In addition to the seven children who inherited lands, Solomon left various amounts of money to the remaining four children who did not inherit land. One bequest was to his oldest child, Maria Tavis (born 1793, wife of John Tavis). She received one dollar as her father had already given her and her husband 80 acres of land for taking care of him during his lifetime. The second child was Nancy (Davis) Davidson, deceased. One dollar was given to her heirs. The third child was Harriet Stone. She was left one dollar, given that she and her husband (Francis Stone) had already been given two hundred dollars at a previous time. Finally, the fourth child, Elizabeth (married to Lewis McWain), was left one dollar.

Although Elizabeth (Elliott) Davis died prior to her husband's death in 1846, she was still alive in 1840, living with her son Garret Davis and family according to the 1840 Macoupin County Census. Based on the census, Elizabeth was age 60-70. Next door to the Garret Davis family was the William Cummings family. William Cummings and wife Julia Ann (nee Davis) Cummings were both age 30-40. The mother, Elizabeth (Elliott) Davis, was fortunate in her final years to live close to and to be taken care of by her two children, Garret Davis and Julia Ann (Davis) Cummings.

Forty years later, when Garret Davis and his sister Julia Ann Cummings were themselves in their declining years, they moved from Macoupin County, Illinois, to Marian County, Oregon. Garret moved in 1879, and Julia Ann moved sometime after the 1880 census. When Julia Ann moved to Oregon she gave her bed to her granddaughter, Lillia Melva (Gibson) Wrightsman. Lillia Melva was my grandmother, and when she herself was getting old, she handed down Julia Ann's bed to me, which I still have and treasure in my guest room.