

Ozark County Missouri, Davis Cemetery

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A SURVEY OF OZARK COUNTY CEMETERIES

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Prepared by Shirley M. Hassell Henry from the original publication.  
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History - Headstone Information Compiled  
For Davis Cemetery in the Noble Area  
By Genelle Feemster Stevens

PART I

Many customs and traditions have been built around cemeteries. The ancient Saxons called their burial ground God's Acre and Chief Joseph of the Nez Percés said he loved the land where he buried his father more than all the rest of the world.

Zenas E. Feemster, who organized a Congregational Church in Noble in Ozark county around 1869-1871, in his book The Traveling Refugee, published in 1865, wrote of the footsteps of time erasing from the earth the visible signs of the resting places of former inhabitants thereby making them unknown to the living.

While footsteps are erased in time, it also has been truly said that though our footsteps take us far from the places of our birth, there is a tie to the old land and home that hearts never leave. Even if it is a home where one has never lived! My parents, Everett and Florence James Feemster, of Noble and Almartha respectively, endowed me with such a love for Ozark county, that I now think of it as a second home. Therefore, it was easy to consider cataloguing the graves in Davis Cemetery.

A discussion of this project in 1972, with the editor of the Ozark County Times, led me first to Claude Rogers, who was employed with a local abstract company; and next to the records in the office of Billy Hambelton, the circuit clerk and recorder. From there, the search led through nine states, countless libraries and archives, courthouses, newspaper offices, stacks of correspondence and 60 years of microfilmed censuses for Ozark and other counties in Missouri and other counties in other states. All because, to paraphrase the words of Sir Walter Raleigh, I was not going to let the dark and silent grave shut up the story of those who had wandered all their ways.

For wander they did, those buried here, or their ancestors. Their migrations led from north and south, Pennsylvania, Georgia and Virginia to merge in North and South Carolina, where they lingered for a period in time, then branched apart - north and south again - to Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, and Mississippi. There they lingered for another while, then turned again and merged in Ozark County. Thus were family histories crossed and re-crossed.

In a woodland pasture, fenced in with metal wire and gate, Davis Cemetery is located one and two tenths of a mile west and none tenths of a mile south of Noble.

The cemetery possibly gets its name from Joseph S. and Charlena (Lena) Stanley Davis who on May 2, 1921, for the sum of \$25 sold the land, encompassing 224 square rods to Noble Township. The warranty deed was signed by Joseph and Lena Davis and James C. Feemster, then justice of the peace.

The original owner had been Alonza Herndon whose patent for Homestead Certificate 9798 from the General Land office at Springfield was dated Nov. 30, 1894. The patent was for 80 acres. Alonzo and his wife, Margaret E. Jane, on March 4, 1899, for the sum of \$120 sold to Joseph S. Davis a part of the homestead. Jane Herndon was the daughter of James Gaston and the granddaughter of James and Tirzah Margaret (Feemster) Robinson, all buried in Davis Cemetery.

There were other Davises in that immediate vicinity long before Joe and Lena, however. Deeds were recorded for his father, William Davis, in 1860, 1872, and 1879, and his grandfather, Robert W. Davis, in 1860. Robert Davis died in 1867 and his land, in that same area, was deeded to his several heirs. Possibly his was the first burial in what was to become a family cemetery for it already contained a number of graves when it was deeded to Noble Township, although there is no marker to indicate his grave, nor that of his son, William, who died between 1872 and 1879.

The cemetery is seasonally maintained and a checking account has been established at the Bank of Gainesville for that purpose. Contributions for the cemetery's upkeep can be deposited there or mailed to me at 1439 S. Elm, Ottawa, Kan., 66067. Emily Frazier of Noble presently sees to the maintenance of the cemetery, having "inherited" the job from her sister, Kathy. Prior to that it was cared for by Lee Frazier, their uncle, and their father, Jeff.

Monuments range from marble and granite stones to concrete or nail-scratched pieces of sandstone or rocks. The elements have been harsh and some of the inscriptions on the old stones are beyond legibility. There are many unknowns here, perhaps telling of a time when grave markers were not commonly used or tombstones were not easily obtained.

On the plat used to illustrate this article numbered blocks represent grave locations, marked and unmarked, corresponding to the number in the listing, and the unnumbered blocks are for the unknown. Information for unmarked graves was furnished by relatives or gathered from research.

In the following listing, birthplaces will be Ozark County unless otherwise noted:

1. Davis, Julia Rae, Budded on earth to bloom in Heaven. Born April 9, 1890; Died February 26m 1891. Daughter of J. R. and Julia E. Davis.
2. Davis, Julia E. Born July 19, 1857 Lowndes County, Miss; Died March 7, 1945. Wife of James R. Davis; daughter of Margaret Ann Robinson and her first husband, Oliver Stanley; granddaughter of the James H. Robinsons.
3. Davis, Dr. James R. Born October 8, 1856; Died September 7, 1933, Son of William and Mary Jane Piland Davis.
4. Davis, Luther E. Born August 1, 1898; Died March 8, 1959. Son of J. R. and Julia Davis.

5. "In Memory of Maurice E. Davis". Born August 20, 1919; Died by drowning 1945 in Ocean Springs, Miss., where he was a pilot instructor in the U.S.A.F. He had seen overseas duty in Italy. He was buried in California where he and his wife planned to live. His parents were Luther and Hattie Davis.
6. Davis, Hattie G. Born March 24, 1900; Died December 11, 1977 (Not buried in Davis Cemetery, however.) Wife of Luther; maiden name was Bennett.
7. Davis, Oma (Frye). Born July 4, 1898; Died September 14, 1915. Wife of Loy Lee Davis who was the son of James and Julia.
8. Hitchcock, Ninnie May, Born August 19, 1924; Died September 3, 1924. Daughter of Carl and Gertie Davis Hitchcock, granddaughter of Henry and Ninnie Frazier Davis; great-granddaughter of James and Julia Davis.
9. Robinson, James Harvey (erroneously spelled Robison). Born February 10, 1805 in Lincoln Co., N. C.; Died in April 1888. His parents were James and Ann Robinson; he was the uncle of Frances Sophia Robinson Feemster.
10. Robinson, Tirzah Margaret Jane, Born April 16, 1816 in Chester County, S. C.; Died October 12, 1901. Wife of J. H.; daughter of William D. and Margaret Kolb Feemster; sister of Zenas Feemster.
11. Payne, Frances E. Born November 3, 1844 in Lowndes Co., Miss.; Died January 5, 1911. Daughter of J. H. and T. J. Robinson; married 1886 James Payne, a Civil War veteran from Illinois. He died circa 1891-99.
12. Clark, S. Born April 29, 1826; Died February 17, 1917. Son-in-law of the Robinson's
13. Clark, Margaret Ann. Born June 10, 1836, in Lowndes Co., Miss.; Died November 13, 1923. Daughter of the Robinson's; married 1) Oliver Stanley; 2) S. Clark.
14. Gaston, James W. Born March 21 1839 in Lowndes Co., Miss.; Died July 21, 1925. Married Mary Elizabeth Robinson, daughter of James & Tirzah in 1861 in Mississippi. They moved to Ozark County, Mo. Before 1880. His wife Mary Elizabeth was born June 19, 1840 and died in Oklahoma January 5, 1911. She is buried near Vinita.
15. Unmarked grave. Believed to be infant daughter of Harley and Macy Fletcher Moore. She was the great-granddaughter of William & Mary Piland Davis.
16. Fletcher, Thomas E. Born February 7, 1884; Died October 10, 1915, Never married. Son of William and Mary P. Davis Fletcher; grandson of William & Mary Davis.
17. Willard, Nancy Ann. Born December 1858; Died 1945. Wife of Nathan P. Willard; daughter of William & Mary Davis.
18. Davis, Mary Jane, Weep not, she is not dead but sleepeth. Born October 14, 1826 in N. C.; Died December 19, 1909 (or 1908). Wife of William; daughter of John and Nancy Piland.
19. Davis, Joseph S. Born June 8, 1864; Died April 30, 1945. Son of William & Mary Davis.
20. Davis, Charlena A. (Lena) Born April 12, 1859 in Lowndes Co., Miss.; Died August 9, 1939. Wife of Joseph; daughter of Margaret Robinson & Oliver Stanley.
21. Kyle, Carra L. "Carrie". She has left us, Her spirit has fled. Her body now slumbers. Alone with the dead. Born February 2, 1885; Died February 19, 1912. Daughter of Joseph & Lena Davis. Husband's name unknown.
22. Davis, Luther E. Born December 30, 1883; Died February 12, 1884. Son of Joseph & Lena Davis.

Northeast Corner: 5-7 unmarked graves known to be there. Research indicates the following would number among them:

Davis, William. Born Ca. 1826 in Tenn.; Died between 1872-79. He married

Mary Jane Piland; her grave is # 18; son of Robert and Sarah Davis. He served as a private in Co. 1 46th Mo. Infantry during the Civil War.

Davis, Robert W. Born ca. 1799 in Tenn.; Died in 1867.

Davis, Sarah Mary. Born ca. 1804 in S. Carolina; Died 1868. Wife of Robert

23. Kay, Homer Alfred. Gone but not forgotten. (Oldest marker in the cemetery) Born September 21, 1878; /died November 28, 1878. Son of Thomas A. & Carra "Carrie" Herndon Kay. Carrie was a sister of Alonzo Herndon.

24. Garner, Captain James B. In my Father's house are many mansions. Born October 15, 1838 in Alabama; Died March 9, 1908. 70 years. His parents were born in South Carolina.

## PART II

(Editor's note: This installment concludes Mrs. Stevens history of Davis Cemetery and compilation of headstone information. In Part II, Mrs. Stevens gives a brief history of family names found in the cemetery and concludes the numbered listings of burials and inscriptions. The numbers refer to locations on a cemetery map which accompanied Part I and is repeated with Part II. The cemetery is located near Nobel in north central Ozark county.)

Davis is one of the oldest Welsh family names. In the first U.S. census, taken in 1790, it was the fourth most common name, ranking after Smith, Brown and Johnson. It is believed the ancestors of the Davis' in Davis Cemetery came from Pennsylvania to Maryland, then to South Carolina. It is even possible they were among the 300 families who removed from Wales to Pennsylvania between 1682 and 1700, as indicated by this writer's research, which represented about 2000 individuals, many bearing the name Davis, Cooper, James or Moore.

Garner probably is Scotch-Irish. This family was in South Carolina early.

Gaston of French Huguenot descent. Ancestors of this line in Ozark and Douglas Counties were among those thousands of French Protestants, the Huguenots, expelled from France in 1685. They went first to Scotland, then County Antrim in Ireland, which they left for Pennsylvania when William Penn declared that state a haven for all religions. From Pennlylvania they went to Chester District, South Carolina. Many played importanat roles in the Revolutionary War and one was the ancestress of President James Knox Polk. From South Carolina, like other ancestors of those buried here, some went north to Illinois, some south to Mississippi, but eventually meeting again in Ozark County.

The ancestor of the Feemster line arrived in Georgia in February, 1736 on the ship "Symond" which also carried the founders of Methodism, John and Charles Wesly. The Symond and another vessel, the London Merchant, carried 300 immigrants to Georgia in James Oglethorpe's second group of colonists for that settlement. Among the passengers were Swiss, twenty-six Moravians, and Jews from Spain and Portugal. Also Scottish Highlanders (John Feemster was one of them) whom Oglethorpe settled at Frederica, well toward Florida, to act as a "buffer" between the Spainards there and Georgia, as they were considered good fighting men.

Piland. James Piland undoubtedly the ancestor of this line, was of the group loyal to the king of England in the seventeenth century known as "cavaliers." He was in Isle of Wight County, Virginia by 1634 or 1635. Some

of his descendants went from there to North Carona, then Kentucky and eventually to Ozark County.

Robinson is one of the most popular names in English useage derived from the pet name for Robert and means "son of Robert." This has been a hard line to research. North Carolina is the farthest back this writer can go with certainty. James Harvey Robinson and his brother, Zenas, father of Frances Sophia Feemster, were born in Lincoln County, N. C. This is in an area settled by Robinsons of Scotch ancestry but is also in the area where the line ends for descendants of John Robinson. He was the minister of that colony of "Separatists" that left England for Holland. They later were to become known as Pilgrims and many came to America on the Mayflower. However, (neither) Rev. Robinson, nor any of his family, were on that voyage. His son, Isaac, later came to Massachusetts and descendants of his went from there to North Carolina. "Zenas" is a name very common among his descendants as is "Harvey."

Willard is English and a surname found early in Connecticut.

Here are the headstone inscriptions continued from Part I

25. Garner, Roxie A. Born July 7, 1845 in Mississippi; Died August 6, 1886. 41 years. First wife of James Garner; sister of James W. Gaston.
26. Garner, Mertie (or Margaret, James' second wife?) Large rock marker. Children of Samuel & Frances Feemster (27-29)
27. Feemster, Laura Minnie. Born October 29, 1881; Died December 24, 1965.
28. Feemster, Elam Daniel. Asleep in Jesus. Born November 3, 1883; Died October 29, 1963. Never married.
29. Feemsster, James Clark. Died as he lived - a Christian. Born Jul 29, 1869 in Macon County, Illinois; Died March 28, 1953 in a fire while burning pasture. The same fire cost his brother, Elam a leg and indirectly caused his death ten years later.
30. Feemster, Frances Sophia. Born January 3, 1846 in Lowndes Co., Miss.; Died March 3, 1925. Wife of Samuel Birder Feemster; daughter of Zenas and Margaret Jane Love Murphy Robinson.
31. Feemster, Samuel Birder. Born May 9, 1840 in Lowndes Co., Miss.; Died November 26, 1923. Served as a Private during the Civil War in Co. G. 8th Illinois Infantry. Son of Zenas and Margaret Malloy Feemster.
32. Feemster, George F. Born August 2, 1878; Died August 15, 1886. Age 8 yrs, 13 days. Son of Samuel & Frances Feemster.
33. Feemster, twin daughters of Samuel & Frances Feemster. Born & Died Apr. 23, 1877.
34. Feemster, John Samuel. Born November 26, 1872; Died December 21, 1952. Son of Samuel & Frances Feemster.
35. Feemster, Lyddia May. Born February 12, 1880; Died December 25, 1959. Wife of John S. Feemster; daughter of Noah Nicholas & Jane Merritt Piland.
36. Feemster, Roscoe. Born 1918; Died 1919. Son of John & Lyddia Feemster.
37. Feemster, Pearl. Born 1916; Died 1918. Daughter of John and Lyddia Feemster.
38. Feemster, Danial Everett. Born August 27, 1927 in Cowley County Kansas. Died June 18, 1941 of an accidental gunshot wound to the lower abdomen. Son of Everett & Florence James Feemster; grandson of John & Lyddia Feemster.
39. Feemster, Alonzo Earnest. Born September 19, 1920; Died March 22, 1922. Son of Earl & Pearl Ford Feemster; grandson of John & Lyddia Feemster.

40. Robinson, Walter. Born 1880; Died 1882. Firstborn child of William Webster and Iva Cowan Robinson.
41. (nothing listed under this number)
42. Feemster, Silas Byington. Born September 1848 in Lownders Co., Miss.; Died March 8, 1868. (Believed to be buried here, but it could be at Franklin Grove Cemetery); cousin of Zenas Feemster, son of William and Elizabeth Davis Feemster.