

# The Taverns of Tolersville, Virginia

1790-1890

*Compiled by*  
**William H. Kiblinger**



Old Tolersville Tavern, present home of Ruth and Eleanor Tulloh

## **Abraham H. Davis 1795-1801**

It is not known who built the first tavern near Contrary Creek which a hundred years or so later became known as the "Old Tolersville Tavern."

The land on which this tavern stands passed through five owners from 1742 to 1793 before there was any mention of a tavern existing on the property.

The tract started out as a 185 acre tract which reached across the ridge on which the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad now runs and touching on the headwaters of both Contrary Creek on the east side and on the Northeast Creek on the west side of the ridge,

In 1742 one Moses Estes of Hanover County sold the 185 acre tract to John Cumpton of Amelia County. Six years later in 1748 Cumpton sold the tract to Robert Jones, a carpenter, of Essex County.<sup>1</sup> Jones in turn sold the tract to Benjamin Edmundson, a planter, also of Essex County.<sup>2</sup>

It would seem that all of these transactions were strictly land speculation in the newly-formed Louisa County. Edmundson was probably the only one who ever lived on the property. Benjamin Edmundson died and his son, William, inherited the land which had been in the family for some 38 years. Evidently, William had come by hard times, and some of the land was sold in 1793 to pay the delinquent taxes. In January of that year, fifty acres of the original 185 acre tract were sold at public auction by Sheriff William Phillips the purchaser being Thomas Merewether.<sup>3</sup> In a deed poll on 14 July 1795,<sup>4</sup> Merewether sold the fifty acres with its appurtenances to Abraham H. Davis, a veteran of the Revolutionary War. It seems from the wording of this deed

that the tavern had been built by an earlier owner.

Abraham H. Davis was a soldier in the Revolution. In 1775 he enlisted in Capt. Lee's Company of Col. George Weedon's Third Virginia Regiment. He served in this unit for three years, fighting in the battles of Trenton, Princeton, Brandywine and Germantown. In 1779, he reenlisted and served in Capt. Hughes Company of Col. Buford's Virginia Regiment. He was severely wounded in the battle of "Buford's Defeat" and there taken prisoner and paroled. He continued on parole until the declaration of peace at which time he was exchanged and discharged.

Abraham was allotted a pension of eight dollars per month on the 19th of May 1818. At that time he was 68 years old and living on Little River in Louisa County. He received his mail at Pottsville or in care of Reuben B. Davis at Tolersville.<sup>5</sup>

Abraham Davis and Ann Johnson were married on the 23rd of September 1779.<sup>6</sup> In December of 1783, James Johnson deeded half of his farm to Abraham Davis and the other half to Ann's brother, George Johnson.<sup>7</sup> Abraham and Ann probably lived at the Johnson homeplace until the summer of 1795 when Abraham bought the tavern property from Thomas Meriwether.<sup>8</sup> The tavern still stands on the west side of the Old Tolersville Road (Virginia Route 667) leading from Hanover Court House to Louisa Court House about one half mile north of the middle branch of Contrary Creek.

There was probably a fair amount of traffic moving past the Davis Tavern at that time since it was one of the main routes westward from Hanover County.

Abraham and Ann raised at least four children. The oldest, Nancy, was born in 1781, Mary "Polly" was born in 1782,<sup>9</sup> another daughter, Louisa Ann, birth date unknown, and a son, George Washington Davis, are their known children. It is not known when Ann died. In 1818 Abraham, then a widower, married Mary "Polly" Talley.<sup>10</sup>

Evidently the times were not the best for Abraham. During his "tavern years" he and his son-in-law, James Breedlove, who was Nancy's husband, had several "run-ins" with the law. In one case, it seems one of his neighbors, Maj. James Hendricks, got a tavern license in 1798 and built a tavern near the top of the hill just south of Contrary Creek about a mile from the Davis Tavern. Evidently, this didn't seem such a good idea to Davis and he threatened Hendrick's life. The end result was that the court put Davis on his good behavior for a time.<sup>11</sup>

Shortly after this confrontation with Davis, Major Hendrick sold his farm to Lewis H. Johnson and moved to Kentucky.

All was not to be peace and quiet on Contrary Creek. Problems now developed between Davis and his new neighbors. This time it was even more serious, involving both Davis and his son-in-law, James Breedlove.<sup>12</sup>

In 1801 trustees for Abraham Davis offered the Davis property for sale.<sup>13</sup>

### **Nathan Harris Tavern 1802-1829**

At the sale of Abraham Davis' property in January 1801, Nathan Harris became the new owner with a high bid of £82-3-6. Nathan Harris is something of a mystery man due to the loss of the Hanover County records during the Civil War. He first appears in the records of Louisa County in 1772 when he bought a 200 acre tract of land on Franks Run from William Garrett.<sup>14</sup> Most historians agree he is of the same lineage as Frederick, Benjamin, William, Edward, Robert, and Job Harris - all out of Hanover County.

In 1773 Nathan traded his tract on Franks Run with Benjamin Lewis for a 391 acre tract on Blackwater Creek and on both sides of the north branch of Contrary Creek.<sup>15</sup>

He and his wife, Sarah "Sally" Knight, lived on this farm for the next twenty-nine years. Here they raised a large family of five daughters and three sons. Most of his children were still unmarried at the time Nathan bought the Davis Ordinary. The family probably attended Scarrott's Meeting House which was less than a mile away.

Children of Nathan Harris & Sarah Knight:

Elizabeth m. Dudley Ware 1806  
 Nancy m. Armistead Cole 1798  
 Susan  
 George  
 Catharine m. William Mallory 1803  
 Samuel m. Lydia Cole 1809  
 Jane m. George Tisdale 1816  
 Edward m. Ann L. Vest 1824

Nathan ran the Harris Tavern from 1802 until his death in 1829. His son, Edward, helped him, and for several years the tavern license was issued in Edward's name. Edward was married in 1824, and within a year he was killed in a brawl over the payment of a bond in 1825.<sup>16</sup> After this, the tavern license was again issued in Nathan's name until his death in 1829.

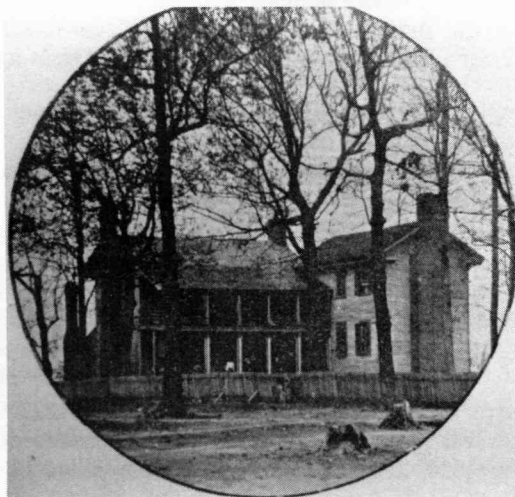
The settlement of Nathan Harris' estate in 1831 offers some interesting information for the reader as a comparison with present day prices.<sup>17</sup>

Paid Wilson Ware for making coffin	\$21.00
Paid John Sims to help make coffin	\$2.00
Paid William Y. Hiter for preaching funeral	\$3.00
Paid William Armstrong for plank for coffin	.56
Paid Wm. F. Toler for crying property at sale	\$9.50
Paid William Walton for appraising estate & blacksmith service	
Cash in house	\$101.00
Cash received due estate on Tavern Books	\$126.35½
Cash received of Wm. F. Toler, in part, for sale of land and other property	\$510.77¼
	(S) W. Waddy.

Samuel Harris, only acting executor of his father, Nathan Harris, offered for sale the lands of his testator divided into two separate tracts. Tract number one was the Harris homeplace located on Blackwater and North Contrary Creeks containing 240 acres. Tract number two was the tavern tract. At a public sale, Samuel Harris was the high bidder for the "homeplace" at \$672.<sup>18</sup> At the same sale, William F. Toler became the owner of the Tavern tract with the high bid of \$997.81 and a half penny<sup>19</sup> with a reservation of one-quarter acre for the Harris cemetery. Evidently Nathan, his Salley, and son, Edward, are buried on the tavern tract.

William F. Toler 1829-1848

A public sale of the Nathan Harris estate was held at his tavern on September 8, 1829. Col. William F. Toler was the highest bidder for the tavern tract for the sum of



Toler's Tavern, Tolersville P. O.  
(Addition on right added by R. B. Davis)

\$997.81½. The tavern tract, according to the deed contained by late survey 331 3/4 acres "but one-fourth acre is reserved where the graveyard is."

Samuel Harris, son of Nathan and Sarah, was the highest bidder for the homeplace tract located on the north branch of Contrary Creek and Blackwater Branch. This tract contained 240 acres and brought \$672 or \$2.80 per acre. William F. Toler was the auctioneer at this sale.

Col. Toler was probably born in King William County. His father, William Toler, Sr., had lived on a farm near the court house of King William County until he moved his family to Louisa County about 1800 settling near the present day community of Bumpass Depot. Mr. Toler, Sr. had five children: Adam, John, William F., Sarah, Martha, who moved to Wythe County, and Mary "Polly", who married Jesse Toler, a cousin. Adam Toler has been erroneously connected with the Tolersville Tavern by various writers.

William F. Toler and Miss Polly Walton Smith were married 12 December 1807. They had one child, a daughter, named Martha Sarah, probably named after his sister. There seems to be no record of Polly Smith's death.

On September 11, 1826, Wm. F. Toler and Miss Elizabeth C. Barrett were married. No children were born of this marriage.

William F. Toler received his first tavern license at a court for Louisa County held on May 11, 1829. He renewed his tavern license each year until 1843.<sup>20</sup> He was also the local auctioneer.

Mr. Toler was first appointed as constable in Louisa County on the 9th of August 1824.<sup>21</sup> He served in that capacity for the next twenty-three years. Toler's last appointment was at a court on July 12th 1847. On the 9th of August 1847, Toler requested the court to annul that appointment. This points to the possibility of Toler's failing health, which was indeed the case. At a court on the 15th of August 1848, Robert T. Gooch was appointed administrator of the estate of William F. Toler,

deceased.<sup>22</sup>

William F. Toler had lived during some very exciting times in Louisa County, especially the area around Tolersville.

Gold had been found along the branches of Contrary Creek giving everyone a bad case of "Gold Fever." Most every family had at least one "gold washing pan," and they spent many hours in the spring branches washing sand in search of the evasive yellow metal.

In their search for gold, some of them discovered other minerals as well. The Triple Fork Gold Mine didn't find much gold, but they did find a sizeable deposit of iron ore. Out of this discovery came the Rough and Ready Iron Furnace which operated for the next twenty years or so under the ownership of Stephen Dunnington.

Several years later, other iron deposits were discovered on the north branch of Contrary Creek about four miles to the northeast of Tolersville. Out of this discovery came the Victoria Iron Furnace and Foundry built by Thomas Mayburry in 1839. This furnace continued to operate into the 1870s.

These furnaces used great amounts of wood for fuel. Much of the great forests around Tolersville were stripped of their hardwoods during Mr. Toler's lifetime to keep these furnaces operating. One positive aspect to all this was there were no unemployed woodchoppers to be found in the area!

The Louisa Railroad came into being in 1835 and by 1837-38 had reached Tolersville. It, too, used wood for its engines. The wood rails and cross ties used the best grade of hardwood (oak) or heart pine.

Mr. Toler gave the right-of-way for the Louisa Railroad as it crossed his lands in this county. The arrival of "the cars" (pronounced key-yars), as it was called, must have brought some real excitement to Tolersville. Just imagine seeing and hearing for the first time this odd looking machine, loudly puffing away and blowing clouds of smoke and steam not to mention the hot clouds of sparks as it raced along on the wooden rails at the unheard of speed of fifteen miles per hour. The fiery cloud of hot sparks from the smokestack regularly started fires along the right-of-way as well as in peoples' clothing creating considerable excitement as it moved through the countryside.

The arrival of "the cars" at Tolersville reduced the stage coach business very drastically and not without loud complaints from the stage operators.

Toler's daughter, Martha Sarah Toler, was married to Robert T. Gooch on Oct. 25, 1833.<sup>23</sup> It is not known what his occupation was at that time, but he was probably working for his father-in-law at Toler's leather tannery on Tanyard Branch near the present day home of Milton and Mae Pettit on Richmond Avenue in Mineral. Coming events however would change all this.

There is still evidence of an old dam across the stream. Upstream is a flat stone where the hides were soaked, scraped and cleaned. Recent generations who were unaware of its earlier tannery use gave it the exotic name of "the Indian Bathtub." It is very doubtful if any Indian ever took a bath here!

Reuben B. Davis, a later owner of the Tolersville Farm, continued to operate a tannery at this site.

The arrival of the Louisa Railroad in the county in 1836 brought about many changes.

Mr. Toler for \$1 gave the Louisa Railroad Company an eighty foot right-of-way across all his lands in the county.

Toler built a new tavern on the ridge near the County Road and the new railroad track. This is the present day site of the Mineral Fire Department lot.

At a court on May 9th 1836, Robert T. Gooch applied for and received his first

tavern license on the 9th of May 1836. This would indicate that the tavern was completed with Gooch as inn keeper. Gooch was appointed as the first postmaster at Tolersville on October 27, 1837.

Old maps show the new tavern located by the railroad as Tolersville P. O. and the original tavern on the Hanover Courthouse to Louisa Courthouse Road as "Old Tolersville". At this point both Toler and Gooch were licensed tavern keepers.

In February of 1841, Toler and his wife deeded a 61½ acre tract on the headwaters of Contrary Creek to his son-in-law, Robert T. Gooch.<sup>24</sup> This appears to have been part of the 109 acre tract Toler had bought of Lewis Willis Johnson in 1831.<sup>25</sup> The deed states that Johnson and his wife, Nancy, had lived there - it being part of the old "Woodlawn Plantation." This place is known today as the "old Grubbs place", and part of the original house still exists as part of the present day home.

Evidently, Gooch was not too happy with his job as tavern keeper and postmaster of Tolersville. He failed to renew his tavern license in 1843<sup>26</sup> but continued on as postmaster at Tolersville until a replacement was appointed on June 23rd 1845. It appears that Gooch had decided to return to his leather business.

Reuben B. Davis had probably rented the store at the new Tolersville Tavern for the year 1845. The court had issued Davis a license on the 10th of February in 1845 to sell wine and other ardent spirits at his store.<sup>27</sup> On May 12th 1845, the court issued Davis a full tavern license indicating that Gooch had moved out, and Davis was now in full charge of the tavern. On June 23rd 1845, Reuben B. Davis was appointed postmaster at Tolersville.<sup>28</sup>

In May 1846, Gooch sold his "home tract" of 61½ acres to Reuben B. Davis.<sup>29</sup>

In July of that same year, Gooch bought a one acre lot in the Town of Louisa from William and Letitia Stout and moved his family there.<sup>30</sup>

In December he bought a one-half acre lot on the road from Louisa Courthouse to Yanceyville where it crosses Beaver Creek and erected a tanyard.<sup>31</sup> This stream is still known today as Tanyard Branch. The fact that Gooch went directly from his tavern-postmaster job at Tolersville into the leather business would indicate that he already was well acquainted with that business from earlier experience. This was a very important business as it supplied leather for shoes and other leather goods for man as well as harness, saddles, etc. for the many teams of horses and oxen in use at the time.

### The Davis Turnout 1847-1870

In November of 1847, Reuben B. Davis bought a 39 acres tract of land adjoining the Rough and Ready Iron Furnace lands and the north end of the Tolersville Farm.<sup>32</sup> On this land he had built a combination depot-warehouse between the county road and the railroad. A well was dug nearby to furnish water for the railroad engines as well as the men and teams that hauled the iron ore and pig iron from the Victoria Furnace. This siding and depot was known as "Davis Turnout" and was the first depot at Tolersville. The Virginia Central Railroad built their first depot at Tolersville in 1851, and that depot was burned during the Civil War in 1864.

During this time Davis also had a blacksmith shop on his 61½ acre tract at a cross roads near his home known as "Davis' Shop."

At a public sale held at the Tolersville Tavern on September 20th 1848, a tract of 17 acres of Toler's land was sold to Reuben B. Davis.<sup>33</sup> This land adjoined the 61½ acre tract Davis had bought of Robert T. Gooch in 1846. This was a wedge shaped

tract located on the west side of the railroad tract opposite Davis's shop. Several buildings and a well were located on this tract. In later years, a chair factory was operated here.

At the same sale the remainder of the Tolersville Farm tract was sold to Mr. George W. Fisher, Sr.,<sup>34</sup> a prospector and miner from Goochland County. Mr. Fisher lived at the "Old Tolersville Tavern" for about five years while he was exploring for gold on various tracts of land along the branches of Contrary Creek.

Evidently, Reuben B. Davis had continued to rent and operate the new Tolersville Tavern-postoffice during the time Mr. Fisher owned the farm.

It seems that Mr. Fisher just used the "Old Tolersville Tavern" as a residence during the time he owned the farm.<sup>35</sup> No tavern license for Mr. Fisher has been found.

The George W. Fisher, Sr. and Company consisted of George W. Fisher, Sr., George W. Fisher, Jr., Dunlap Fisher, James Fisher, Charles W. Dabney, and William L. Richardson.

Fisher and Company worked the old Morrison Gold Mine located on the south branch of Contrary Creek near present day Routes 618 and 703. This was part of the "old Charles Chiswell Iron Patents" issued in the early 1700s. Another of his "projects" was the Tender Flat Gold Mine on the north branch of Contrary Creek down stream from the Route 522 bridge.

In 1854 Mr. Fisher sold the Tolersville Farm to Mr. Jesse Caswell Whitlock,<sup>36</sup> a local farmer whose homeplace was just north of the "Chopping Road" now known as Route 623. Mr. Whitlock was the son of Thomas and Polley Warren Whitlock. His brother, Bartholomew Whitlock, was the local Methodist minister.

There were no records found of a tavern license having been issued to Whitlock at anytime. As in the case of Mr. Fisher, it seems that Reuben B. Davis continued to rent the "new tavern" and operate same as well as being the Tolersville postmaster.

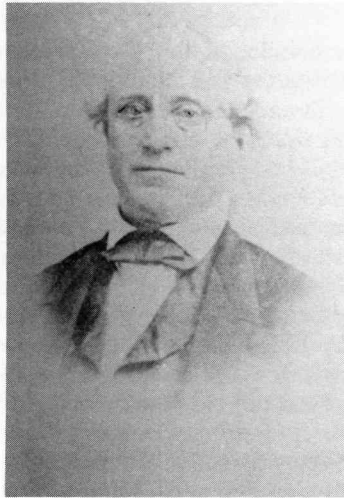
In October of 1857, Whitlock sold Reuben B. Davis a 15½ acre tract of land running north along the east side of the Virginia Central Railroad.<sup>37</sup> This tract took in the "New Tolersville Tavern" and postoffice and connected his 61½ acre "Davis Shop tract" to his 39 acre tract on the north edge of the farm.<sup>38</sup> Davis now owned several miles of frontage on the east side of the railroad.

In 1858 Mr. Whitlock gave Reuben B. Davis a deed of trust on his Tolersville farm "on which he is presently living" to secure a loan.<sup>39</sup> Davis became the new owner of the Tolersville farm by default in the repayment of the loan by Mr. Whitlock.

### **Tolersville P. O. Tavern Reuben B. Davis 1845-1870**

Reuben B. Davis, the last of the Tolersville Tavern operators, was also a man of mystery. We do not know who his parents or his brothers and sisters were. Much time and effort has been spent by many researchers trying to solve this mystery. In one instance his birthplace was given as Caroline County and in another as Hanover County. The latter is probably correct.

Davis first appears in the records of Louisa County in 1843. It seems that he may have been working for William F. Toler at the "Old Tolersville Tavern" as the store keeper even earlier.<sup>40</sup> William F. Toler was a constable in the county for many years. This job required considerable travel about the two districts assigned to him.<sup>41</sup> This being the case, it is reasonable to assume that he had to hire a clerk to run his store-tavern. The name of this clerk was never mentioned but due to the pattern of events that were to follow over the next five years or so, it seems very likely that "our man"



Reuben B. Davis

was Reuben B. Davis.

Reuben B. Davis and Ann M. Moss were married on 9 December 1844 by the Rev. James M. Bagby.<sup>42</sup>

Reuben surfaces again in the county records in February of 1845 when he was issued a license to sell "wine and other ardent drinks" at his store.<sup>43</sup> This implies that he had experience in this business. In this case he was taking over the New Tolersville Tavern which Toler's son-in-law, Robert T. Gooch, had been running since 1836. Gooch was in the process of leaving the tavern and Tolersville to go into the leather manufacturing business at Louisa Courthouse.

Three months later Davis was issued a full tavern license which he continued to renew each year for the rest of his life.<sup>44</sup>

Reuben B. Davis was appointed as postmaster at Tolersville in 1845 to replace Robert T. Gooch.<sup>45</sup>

Davis continued to rent and operate the tavern and store at Tolersville P. O. after William F. Toler's death in 1848 as well as through the ownership of Mr. Fisher (1848-1854) and Mr. Jesse C. Whitlock (1854-1858).

The purchase of the 15½ acre tract showed that Davis was a shrewd businessman. He now owned the new Tolersville Tavern and probably the tannery as well, and this tract connects with his 61½ acre tract on the south end where he was operating a blacksmith shop at the "Y" in the county road where the Hanover and Goochland Roads met.

The north end of this tract connected with the 39 acre tract he had bought from Charles Thompson in 1847.<sup>46</sup> This tract on both sides of the Louisa Railroad had been part of the Rough and Ready Iron Furnace property. The Louisa Railroad had run a sidetrack from the mainline across this 39 acre tract to the Rough and Ready Furnace. Several years later the Louisa Railroad had built a tramroad for the benefit of the Victoria Iron Furnace at the request of Thomas Mayburry.<sup>47</sup> This tramroad ran along side Route 522 North for about four and a half miles and terminated at the railroad on Davis's 39 acre tract. Reuben built a depot-warehouse here between the railroad



siding and the County Road which ran parallel to the railroad at this point. He also dug a well nearby for the benefit of the men and teams that hauled ore and pig iron to the depot and to supply water for the railroad engines. This depot was known as "The Davis Turnout."<sup>48</sup>

The Virginia Central Railroad, as the Louisa Railroad had been known since about 1850, built their first company owned depot at Tolersville in 1851 where the present day depot stands. The 1851 depot was destroyed by a Yankee raiding party in 1864.

Soon after Reuben bought the Tolersville Tavern he added a new four room wing on the south end of the original "Toler" building. The addition had a porch which faced the south.<sup>49</sup>

In 1858 Mr. Jesse C. Whitlock gave Reuben B. Davis a deed of trust on the remaining 200 acres of his Tolersville Farm "on which he is presently living," to secure a loan of about \$1,200. Reuben B. Davis became the new owner of all the Tolersville Farm by default in the repayment of the loan by Mr. Whitlock.<sup>50</sup>

Mr. Davis was involved in many business ventures. He had continued to operate the tannery on what is still known as the Tanyard Branch. He also operated a shoe shop in connection with this operation. Reuben and Mr. Robert Bibb ran a distillery on Little River for a time.<sup>51</sup> He also had a tobacco factory in partnership with Edwin J. Baker - location unknown.<sup>52</sup>

The Tavern, located on a county road as well as by the new railroad track, was probably doing a good business especially since Reuben had also a store and a postoffice in the building. It is very evident that Reuben B. Davis was a very good businessman as all of his projects prospered.

Federal Census 1860

Davis, Reuben B.	age 48	merchant
Anna Maria	age 48	landlady
Thomas Nelson	age 13	
John W.	age 12	
Anna Bella	age 11	
Ella M.	age 9	
Mary C.	age 8	
Reuben Frank	age 6	
Maria Overton	age 3	
George W.	age 1	
Brinkehoff, Kate R.	age 23	school teacher b. New York City

The 1860 census gives the Davis family as having nine children ranging in age from one year to thirteen years. The school teacher living with them at the time probably taught at the Davis' private school.

Mr. Davis had a private school for the benefit of his own children as well as those children of the neighborhood who were near enough to attend. The writer's grandparents attended the Davis school during the Civil War period. The teacher at that time was Miss Kate R. Brinkehoff, age 23 of New York City. They also told the writer about the Yankee raiders; who marched their troops across the local wheat and corn fields to destroy the crops. The children drove all the farm animals into the woods to hide them from the raiders - even so, several hundred were killed by the troops who also burned the depot.

After this depot was destroyed, the railroad used a converted boxcar as a depot.

Later they rented a building from Davis and converted it into a temporary depot which served until the present depot was built.<sup>53</sup>

Mr. Davis bankrolled many of the early mining companies and extended them credit at his store as well. Quite often he had to take them to court in order to recover his investments, and in so doing he provided future generations with much historical information about the mines and the people who worked them.<sup>54</sup> Many of the early mining companies were poorly financed and working on the proverbial shoestring.

One such case involved the operators of the Victoria Furnace c1850 when they were having money problems. In a deed of trust given to Reuben Davis, some of the workers who had not been paid were listed - Henry Rankin Kennedy, the great-grandfather of the writer, who had just recently come over from Ireland, being one of these workers and his brother-in-law, Hugh Alexander Moore.<sup>55</sup>

#### Federal Census 1870

Davis, Reuben B.	age 60	farmer
Anna Maria	age 50	
John W.	age 22	Depot agent C. & O.
Annie Bella	age 21	
Ella M.	age 19	
Mary C.	age 18	
(Reuben) Frank	age 16	
Willie P.	age 13	daughter
George W.	age 11	
Henry Clay	age 6	

*(note Reuben aged 12 years since the last census and his wife aged only 2 years)*

The decade of the 1860s had been a difficult one for Reuben and his family. He probably lost much of his material wealth such as livestock and other property due to his being close to the railroad and the depot which were military targets and were destroyed during the Civil War. He was probably thankful that his home and family were spared.

He lost two of his children to typhoid fever in 1865; his oldest child, Thomas Nelson Davis, age 18, and a daughter, Maria Overton Davis, age 9 years. These children were buried in the family burial ground near Second Street and the railroad in lots 11, 12, and 13 of block 41.

Reuben B. Davis was a member of the Masonic Lodge #58 at Louisa Courthouse. It is through the generosity of his lodge that we have a picture of Mr. Davis.

Mr. Davis died of a heart attack on the 20th of June 1870 at the age of 59 years. A Masonic service was held for him the following day on the 21st of June 1870 at his home with burial in the family burial ground nearby.<sup>56</sup>

His son, John W. Davis, and his widow, Ann Maria Moss Davis, were the executors of his will. Theirs was indeed a very difficult task because Reuben had been involved in so many business operations. It took many years to "wind down" Reuben's business affairs as well as to take care of the other provisions of his will.

On 20 January 1874, Reuben's oldest daughter, Anna Bella, age 23, married William C. Moody age 27, a railroad conductor who worked for the C. & O. Railway.<sup>57</sup> They lived at Covington, Virginia.

Ann Moss Davis died on 17 June 1874, leaving John W. to shoulder the whole load of his father's estate and his siblings' care. At this time he petitioned the court

to help him wind up the affairs of his parents estates.

On February 5, 1878, another daughter, Ella M., age 26, married Madison W. Pendleton, age 28, a merchant and son of Philip B. Pendleton. John W. Davis, age 29, married Susan M. Phillips, age 22, daughter of Joseph N. and Deen Phillips. These weddings were conducted by the Rev. L. A. Cutler.

Federal Census 1880

Davis, John W. age 32 farmer-depot agent  
Mary Susan age 26  
Joseph W. age 1 son  
Mary C. age 24 sister  
Willie P. age 20 sister  
George W. age 19 brother  
Henry Clay age 15 brother merchant

The 1880 census shows that John W. and his wife, Susan, were still living at the home place with his two sisters and two brothers. They also had one child of their own who was born November 21, 1878. A daughter, Ann M. Davis was born in October of 1880. A son, Reuben C. Davis, was born April 1885.<sup>58</sup>

In September of 1881, John W. and Susan bought 5 4/5 acres adjoining the Tolersville Farm from John Hunter and built a house there. This is the site of the present day Coleman Hotel.<sup>59</sup> John continued as the depot agent until being transferred to Richmond about 1890. He was replaced at Tolersville by Mr. Lewis A. Keller, Sr. as agent and telegraph operator.<sup>60</sup> When John W. and his wife left Tolersville Tavern in 1881, his sisters, Mary C. and Willie P., went to live with their sister, Anna Bella Moody, in Covington, Virginia. Mary C. married J. E. Smith of Covington. Willie P. had not married as of the 1900 census. George W. Davis died sometime before 1896.

John W. continued to operate the store at Tolersville until he was transferred to Richmond in 1890. Reuben B. Davis had been postmaster at Tolersville from 1861 when Ann M. Davis, his wife, was appointed postmistress and she served the next five years. On 6 June 1870, a son, Reuben Frank Davis, was appointed postmaster and served until 7 December 1875. John W. Davis was appointed on 7 December 1875, and served until 22 August 1882. Peter Johnson was appointed 22 August 1882, and served until 24 March 1884 when John W. was reappointed. Davis served as postmaster until 6 December 1888, when Henry W. Bancroft was appointed and served until 29 July 1889. Then John F. Dickinson was appointed, and he served as postmaster until 12 April 1893 into the "Mineral City Era."

1. Louisa County Deed Book B, p. 308, 24 May 1748.
2. Louisa County Deed Book B, p. 87 17 January 1755.
3. Louisa County Deed Book G, p. 274, 9 January 1793.
4. Louisa County Deed Book I, p. 60, 14 July 1795.
5. Microfilm National Archives- Revolutionary War pension applications.
6. *The Douglas Register*
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