



Haverford Township Historical Society



MORGAN REESE DAVIS (1830-19xx)

Compiled by Richard D. Kerr

[The following is excerpted from Historic Homes and Institutions and Genealogical and Personal Memoirs of Chester and Delaware Counties, Pennsylvania, by Gilbert Cope and Henry Graham Ashmead, published by The Lewis Company, New York and Chicago in 1904.]

MORGAN REESE DAVIS, a successful and progressive citizen of Haverford, Delaware county, Pennsylvania, was born in the county of Philadelphia, December 7, 1830. He is of Welsh descent, his grandfather, a native of Wales, being the first of the family to come to the United States. He [the grandfather] married and had sons, among whom was Err, who presumably was born in the State of Maryland, from whence he came and took up his abode in the vicinity of Philadelphia. He [Err Davis, Sr.] was married at Downingtown, Chester county, Pennsylvania, to Mary Pawling, a daughter of Isaac and Barbara (Wampole) Pawling, and of this marriage were born twelve children as follows:

1. Elijah P. Davis, who married Ellen Young;
2. Morgan Reese Davis, to be further referred to in this narrative;
3. Barbara Davis (Mrs. William Morgan);
4. Mersey A. Davis (Mrs. Daniel Shupert);
5. Isaac Davis, who settled in Arkansas, where he married;
6. Emily Davis, who did not marry;
7. John Davis, who died in childhood;
8. Rebecca Davis, (Mrs. Wesley Smith);
9. Annie Davis, who did not marry;
10. Err Davis, Jr., who went West and has not been heard of for many years;
11. Joseph L. Davis, who died in childhood;
12. one not named, who died in infancy.

Both the parents of this family died in West Chester, Chester county, Pennsylvania, the father in January, 1885, and the mother two years later.

Morgan Reese Davis acquired his educational training in the schools of the neighborhood of his birth place, and when he attained young manhood set out to make his own way in the world and took up the tilling of the soil for his life work: By industry and frugality he accumulated sufficient capital to purchase a farm for himself and in 1867 he came to Haverford township, and here purchased the old Squire Samuel Davis farm near Llanerch, where he has since resided, and has by his thrift and enterprise contributed materially to the progress and advancement of the neighborhood.

Mr. Davis was married in Philadelphia county, November 22, 1860, to Eliza B. Roberts, who was born April 11, 1841, a daughter of William and Hannah (Wilson) Roberts. Of this marriage have been born the following children:

1. Irwin Davis, born August 15, 1862, died March 8, 1863;
2. Clara L. Davis, born August 16, 1864; died September 12, 1897;
3. William R. Davis, born April 22, 1866; he married Elizabeth Jones, a daughter of William and Elizabeth (Davis) Jones;
4. Harry M. Davis, of whom a sketch appears in this work;
5. Sarah Davis, born June 4, 1869;
6. Nellie Davis, born June 15, 1874 (Mrs. Dr. Francis Clemens) of Philadelphia;
7. Cresson R. Davis, born October 14, 1877; he married Margaret Johnson, daughter of Alexander and Sophia (Moore) Johnson;
8. John H. Davis, born August 6, 1879;
9. Morgan Reese Davis, Jr., born June 3, 1881.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Davis are highly esteemed and respected for their genuine worth and excellent neighborly qualities.

[The following is excerpted from Rural Pennsylvania in the Vicinity of Philadelphia by Rev. Samuel Fitch Hotchkin, published by George W. Jacobs & Co., Philadelphia in 1897.]

Davilla Farm. This name is derived from the owner's name, Davis, with a termination adapted for the purpose of an appellation. Morgan Reese Davis is the present proprietor. He purchased it from the estate of Samuel Davis, Esq., in A. D. 1867. It comprises about eighty-eight acres, lying on the Coopertown Road [now called Darby Road], and touching the new village of Llanerch. The first-named Davis family held the place for two generations. Morgan R. Davis enlarged and remodeled the house in 1874, placing a cozy piazza around two sides of the building, and enlarged the barn and other outbuildings, and erected a new tenant house near the mansion for the use of the farmer. The beautiful trees of the lawn were nearly all planted by the present proprietor, though an old cherry tree tries to assert its antiquity, but it is yielding to the gnawing tooth of time. The bright row of pine trees which enliven the avenue under the summer sun and the winter snow were planted by Morgan R. Davis. Mr. Davis was born in Downingtown, Chester County, Pennsylvania. His father was E. Davis, and his mother's maiden name was Mary Pauling. Mrs. Davis is the daughter of William Roberts, and was born in Philadelphia. Her father had been a resident of Gwynedd, in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. His wife was Hannah W. Wilson, of Chester County, Pennsylvania, being a descendant of the well-known Maris family. The children of the present family are Clara L., William R., Harry M., Sarah, Nellie, Cresson R., John H., and Morgan R. Davis, Jr.

[The following is excerpted from the Historical Resources Survey for Haverford Township by the Delaware County (Pennsylvania) Planning Department, 1994, under resource survey code 045-HA-074.]

July 1793 a house and farm was sold to Samuel Davis by Dr. Benjamin Smith. It has not been determined if any portion of this house ["Davilla Farm," now 11 E. Mercer Ave] is part of the original structure. The present c. 1860s house originally faced south with the entry surrounded by a small open porch. The house and farm was sold to Morgan Davis (no relation) in 1866. The house, excluding wings, was enlarged in 1874 to its present configuration. This entailed the front rooms along Mercer Avenue, present central hall, and stairway except for an original kitchen that existed on the first floor. The front entrance was changed to face Darby Road as is seen today. The Davis Farm was named Davilla, an acronym of Davis Villa. The "Davilla Farm" contained 33 acres by 1913.

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