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seems scarcely probable to me that the map in question had been completed long before it was sent away, and I therefore feel entirely justified in assigning it to the year 1721, as it is certainly not of later date.

*(To be Continued)*

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## AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JOHN DAVIS, 1770-1864.\*

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Hagerstown Maryland. 1849

*Whereas;* It has pleased my Heavenly Father, the Lord, Jesus, Christ, to lengthen and extend my Days, untill having arrived, at a greatly advanced age, and my present family which at this time, that are now living, consisting of Four Sons, Two Daughters, and Twenty Grand Children,—and likewise, being connected, to many Distant relatives, and also, an Extensive intercourse with great numbers of esteemed, and valuable members of Society,—Many of Whom, has frequently requested me, to furnish them, with a little Record, of the principle events, or Memorandum of my past Life.

More Especially, as they ocured at a Period, of many important, and well remembered transactions, and of sundry changes that took place, I may say, in nearly all parts of this country and in all the world.

I had the good fortune, to be an Inhabitant of Philadelphia, When General Washington lived there, and when he Delivered, the ever to be remembered, Imortal, Farewell address, to the people of the United States. I never could pass by this distinguished, and venerated person (as I frequently did) without turning myself about, to view, and admire, the stately, Errect, and dignified aspect, and bearing, of this truly great Man; I can at this moment, bring to recollection, in my mind's Eye,

\* From the original MSS. presented to the SOCIETY by John Gilman Paul, Esq., together with many plans and drawings by the author.

every feature of his face, and Figure, when at that time, I looked on and at him.

With these few introductory remarks, I will endeavour to comply, with the requisition, of those at whose Instance, Use, and amusement, if not instruction, they are by request presented unto and at the same time I would desire to be forgiven, for any Imperfections, or Inaccuracies, that may appear, in the perusal thereof.

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Being now an old man, approaching unto, Eighty Years of age,—and the Father of a numerous offspring; who are descended, and claims their Birthright, as citizens of the United States, This short Biographical memorandum will call to mind, and present the recollection, of a few incidents, relating too, and concerning my Family, which may not, be an unacceptable item, to them, and to many other individuals, who at this present day are permitted to view the vast and increasing numbers, of this favoured and Important, and widely extended Country, and Nation, more Especially, as my Children, may hereafter be desirous to know something of their parentage, and from whom, and whence, they claim their Title, as Citizens, of these United States.

By the Record, as stated of my own Birth, was Born in England, and Baptized in the Episcopal Church, the 30th day of April 1770, at Avebury, near the Town of Marlborough, in the county Wiltshire, was the oldest son, of Thomas, and Ann Davis, of the above named place, They had ten Children, Five sons, and Five Daughters. The family soon after my birth, resided near the town of Devizes, in Wiltshire near on the great Road or Thoroughfare between London, Bath and Bristol. I was chiefly educated in the Grammar School in Devizes. I well remember, one of my Intimate School, and playmates, named Thomas Lawrence (afterwards) better known as the late Sir Thomas Lawrence, the Eminent Portrait Painter so distinguished in his profession, he was about my age.

I formed an Early attachment, to a Daughter of Mr. Thomas Maris, of Wootten Bassett, near the Town of Caln, in Wiltshire, and near, and in the vicinity of the Extensive Seat, and Domains, of the late Lord Shelbourn afterwards called Landsdown in that County. I was married to Jane Maris, in the Episcople Church in Wootten Bassett on the 4th of June 1791 and afterwards resided near to Devizes, untill I imigrated to the United States in 1793. Sailed in the Ship Euphrasia, Charles Davison, Master, from Bristol. It was a long passage of between 60 and 70 Days with an agreeable company, consisting of the following passengers. Viz. Thomas Easton Randolph, Esq., and Benjamin Randolph a younger Brother who had been some time in London, from Va. Two Brothers named Allenby one an East Indian Sea Captain; the other and older Single Brother. A family of Six, Mr. and Mrs. Timbrell, two sons, and two Daughters, youngest half grown, the oldest, an intelligent young Lady; a single gentlemen, Mr. Christopher Minifie, an architect and builder, — with myself and wife, and our little Daughter, under 2 years old, — This small Community, enjoyed much social intercourse, during the voyage, Sundays was usually allotted, for reading the Episcople Church service. The oldest Mr. Randolph generally officiated.

During these proceedings, It was discovered that our little Daughter had not been Baptized and all appeared very desirious to have this ceremony performed at Sea on the next Sabath Day and thus solicited we agreed thereto and the following appointment was made "As Chaplain Thomas Easton Randolph, Clerk Benj. Randolph—God Fathers, Christopher Minifie and Capt. Charles Davidson, God Mother, Miss Hetty Timbrell and myself and Jane Davis (the Mother) and the child was named Eliza Davis.

These proceedings was performed with much solemnity and attended with pious, calm and kind feelings as the occasion could command and all appeared to be gratified thereby.

The Messrs. Randolph, more Especially the oldest, was anxious for me to accompany them, to Richmond, at or near

their residence or home. I believe that he was some time afterwards the Governor of Virginia.\*

The place of my contemplated sojourning unto, was Philadelphia, But, the Yellow Fever, so well remembered, had not entirely abated, and I remained in Baltimore, untill I pursued my original intention, of Residing in Philadelphia.

In the Spring of 1794, the Small Pox was very prevalent, in Baltimore, and by the advice of an intimate acquaintance, a Doct. Richardson, our little intelligent and interesting Daughter, Eliza, was inoculated for the Small Pox, it was of a very virulent character, and she died thereof. Soon after this, we removed and resided in Philadelphia.

The next important occurrence, that took place, was the Birth of our Daughter, Mary Ann on the 29th March, 1795. She was Baptized in St. Peters Church, Philadelphia. We was at this time beginning to feel, in agreeable, and pleasing circumstances, when it was discovered that my Dear Wife's health began to fail. She never suffered by much pain, and always sustained a fine bouyancy of cheerfulness and good Spirits But by an Increasing weakness and diarea which baffled the skill of the Physician, which removed her, almost, without pain, or suffering, and much resembling a calm and Quiet Sleep. How exceedingly uncertain is all things appertaining to this life.

Being now left, with my little Daughter, I had partly made an Engagement, and was about preparing to remove to Washington City, having been solicited to do so by the late Mr. Lenthall,† architect, who was at that time, engaged by Genl. Washington, in making some improvements for him, in that City. It was at this period that the project of the contemplated works for supplying the City of Phil. with water, was agitated, and about to be carried into effect, and Benj. Henry Latrobe Esq. had been Consulted, and had prepared his plans and

\* Probably Thomas Mann Randolph 1768-1828, who was Governor of Virginia, 1819-1822.

† John Linthall, Latrobe's superintendent in the building of the Capitol, who was killed September 19, 1808 by the fall of a vaulting in the North wing.

Estimates, which were adopted by the Incorporated authorities, of the City of Philadelphia, at this Interval, Saml. Mickel Fox, Esq. who at that time, was the President of the Bank of Pennsylvania, and was mostly instrumental in employing, and Engaging Mr. Latrobe in the building the New Bank of Penn. and was their Architect, and Mr. Fox, being also one of the watering Committee, he advised Mr. Latrobe to have an interview with me, Mr. Fox, observing that from his previous knowledge and intercourse with me he felt convinced that my services would be useful, in the Contemplated water works. The interview accordingly took place between me and Mr. Latrobe, and on finding, that I had been practically engaged in engineering, and architectural pursuits and employed by those Eminent and distinguished Gentlemen, Messrs. James and Sam. Wyatt of London, I at once entered into an Engagement, with Mr. Latrobe, and the City, Corporate authorities, to Superintend and aid therein, as Clerk of the works. In the situation aboved named, I continued connected with Mr. Latrobe about three years, untill sundry other engagements, required both the service and talents of Mr. Latrobe in other portions of the United States, more Especially at the Cross Cut Canal between the Chesapeake and Delaware Bays, and the water works in New Orleans. After this period, the entire direction and management and the Execution of the works, for watering the City, of Philadelphia, Devolved on me. In that capacity I continued untill the Spring of 1805.

In the autumn of 1804, I received an Invitation to proceed to the City of Baltimore, to give some advice and aid in an Examination that had been made in relation to the contemplated means as to the supplying that city with water. A company had been organized and a capital of 250,000 Dollars provided, A President and Managers, Chosen, water rights and water Power had been purchased, and various suggestions given as to the manner and plans to accomplish the object, and to appoint an Engineer, and Manager, to Execute the requisite works.

By the advice of some friends, and strong solicitations, I had received, — I repaired to Baltimore, to impart such views, and advise such measures, as appeared to me proper, for the furtherance, of the object this company had in view.

I spent two or three days on these Examinations and attended a meeting of their Board, who were at once quite unanimous in approving of the outlines of what I had suggested, and then they made the proposition that they wished me to engage and undertake and attend to the entire Management and to Execute the plans and works that was in contemplation they also proposed a Salary or Compensation that I considered liberal and satisfactory. To these measures and offers I could not consent as I considered that my engagements in Philadelphia, although not bound or limited by any particular contract Yet it appeared to me that my services in Phi<sup>a</sup> was then indispensable, as the water works in that city was the first of the kind on a large and efficient scale for supplying a large City with water. Consequently all its detail and operations was as it were New in nearly all of its Mechanical requirements as persued in these works. The workmen generally had acquired experience only by having been engaged in the various departments, of these works. Under these circumstances and considerations I could not comply and entertain a New engagement, But these Baltimore Gentlemen made strong appeals and almost insisting that I should be Employed by them they likewise desired me to endeavour to propose or point out some way or means to relieve them of their difficulty and it was agreed to adjourn the meeting untill the following evening and then to receive my views and see if I could suggest some manner or means to meet the Case.

At the Meeting of the Board on the next evening, — I submitted this proposition That I would still attend to the business and continue to direct the Superintendence of the Philadelphia works, endeavour to select and appoint a competent person to take my situation and place and Impart to such person, every necessary Instruction, and information that would enable and



render him capable to perform and attend to the duties that would be required in the water works at Phi<sup>a</sup> untill the managers of that concern were fully satisfied that my Successor was Qualified and efficient to the performance of the required duty and as soon as such assurance was by the watering Committee of Phi<sup>a</sup> agreed to Then I was willing to accept of the proposition of the Gentlemen in Baltimore. These conditions was accordingly agreed to—and strongly urging me to make all my arrangements as soon as the nature of the business would permit.

Now referring back to the circumstance relating to the water works in Phi<sup>a</sup> Having been employed and engaged in the water works in Philadelphia from the Commencement thereof and enjoying the friendship and confidence of all the Members of the watering Committee and the City Councils who were always disposed to embrace, and pursue, and adopt, all such measures as appeared to be proper and necessary in extending the works and System as laid down by the watering Committee and the City Corporation of Philadelphia I found some difficulty in reconciling my old and valued friends, to submit and agree to my leaving, and giving up my superintendence of the water works. To adjust and reconcile all parties, I proposed that I would endeavour to procure, provide and Instruct a suitable and competent person to take the charge and management and Superintendence of the Water Works, and to instruct him in all the Details thereof, furnish him with all the Drawings, plans and every Information that might be required untill he was fully initiated and Instructed to the entire satisfaction of the watering Committee and in pursuance of these arrangements Late in the fall of the year 1804, I had an Interview with Mr. Frederick Graff, a gentleman with whom I was intimately acquainted. He had been lately engaged as Engineer in the construction of the Santee Canal in Carolina and was at this time with his friends and relations in Phi<sup>a</sup>. I explained and made known my object which was that I wished him to succeed me as the Superintendent of the works for watering the City of Philadelphia. To this Mr. Graff seemed to have some Doubts

as to his being capable of attending to this business. The works at this period, being entirely of a New Character and the first of so great magnitude that had been introduced into the United States and that both the operatives and the Mechanicks were the only persons that had acquired any practical experience in this business, during the Construction of the present works then in operation. But I assured him, and also remarked That I made provision That I would accompany him, and aid and assist him in all the various Departments of the business and the works, untill the time arrived, that he should feel qualified and competent to take charge of the whole concern and also that the committee would retain me in their employ and services untill they were fully satisfied with Mr. Graff's competency as to supplying my place. With this explanation and understanding Mr. Graff agreed to enter on a trial and on the latter part of the fall, or near the end of the winter of 1804 I introduced and recommended Mr. Graff to the president and managers of the Philadelphia water works as my successor on the conditions as heretofore stated and in accordance thereto we both diligently and assiduously devoted all our time and every opportunity to place Mr. Graff in his new situation, and an apt and intelligent assistant he proved to be as the result testified for after a few months close attention and dilligent application I received the cordial thanks and a kindly parting dismissal from the managers of the water company, and Mr. Graff commenced his services on May 1st 1805 and he continued in the same situation of Superintendent of the Phi<sup>a</sup> water workes untill his Death in 1848, a period of 43 years, having acquired the pleasing Reputation of an unsullied name and one of the most scientifick, correct, and practicable Engineers in his line in the United States. He rendered considerable aid and advice in the Croton water works at New York and had the Direction and entire management in all its parts of the Fair Mount water works in Philadelphia. These works are well known and celebrated throughout the whole Country and a statute is now placed to his memory near the building containing the pumping

machinery or Reservoir of these works and as this scite or Location is a long remembered spot and was very famillier to my memory in by gone Days. I feel some desire to call to my recollection and refer to some of the past incidents that still remains on my mind and memory that perhaps no other living person is familiar or acquainted with. I am aware that these incidents are of no use or value to any one, having occured many years since and my pursuits was then and always have been as it were of a quiet and unobstrusive character and these notices and Memorandoms are now more occasioned by my occupying a little vacant leisure that have been granted unto me in these late declining days of my Life, and perhaps they may afford a little amusement to some one of my numerous family, who may be inclined to know something of the History, occupation and the Employment both of the Body and the Mind and also the standing and the Connection that subsisted between me and many valued, Eminent and esteemed friends in Public life, as also Individuals and relatives in my own family and distant connections among by old Frankford and Phi<sup>a</sup> acquaintances were many that was very fond of relating annecdotes and of recuring to the sayings and events that was well remembered by those, who moved in life, and was known as early Members of Society and conspicuous individuals, and even in my Day, could remember many of those recorded events and Items as were published in Watson's Annals of Philadelphia. My respected Brotherinlaw, Isaac Whitelock, late of Frankford was on friendly Intimacy with Watson, and often entertained and amused me with relating many incidents and occurrences of almost forgotten remarkable events that were familiar at that period to many old and aged persons. And not a great while since some of my friends who are a little curious and very fond of noting and refering to old times and former doings requested me to prepare some notes or memorandoms of those transactions that I had been engaged in during the early portion of my life and more particularly when I resided in Philadelphia and other parts of the United States, and thereby bring to remembrance

some of the past subjects, and in What manner and how my time and attention was occupied and engaged in those days that are now passed away and gone.

From these motives and for the amusement and gratification of these friends I will endeavour to give an uninteresting detail of some of those things as they then occurred, But I think is scarcely worth the trouble of either recording or of Reading:

First then as relating to the works for watering the City of Philadelphia, I feel Inclined to enter a little minutely into a description of the first or originall plan and Execution of these as will be remembered by Many persons now living.

The works erected by Mr. Latrobe were these (first) a Basin or Excavation taken from the Schuylkill River. In the front part thereof a massive waterproof wall wherein floodgates was erected. It received the water within this first reservoir or Basin, from thence into a Tunnel, that were Excavated from the solid Rock untill it entered a large well upwards of 40 feet Deep, wherein a large Cast Iron pump was fixed to elevate the water by the means of a powerful steam Engine from thence to the Tunnel in Chesnut Street into and along the same which was constructed of Brick about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile long and six feet diameter untill it arrived to the Middle of Centre Square situate at the Intersection of Centre and Broad Streets, Phi<sup>a</sup>. where the second steam Engine was erected, a beautiful marble Building 60 feet square with a circular Routonda about the same height, wherein was placed the upper Reservoir, for the water to supply the pipes for the distribution thereof through which water was conveyed all of which is still remembered.

My object in referring to these matters is to notice some facts, that but few individuals at this time ever understood, after these two steam engines were a few years in operation for supplying the city, It was found to be attended with heavy expense for Fuel and other Expenditures But the worse feature was the frequent stopages in the regular supply when any slight repairs required the least attention thereto from either of the steam Engines And as these Inconveniences was Daily

Increasing I was led to reflect thereon and calmly to consider that finally a more permanent and Economical plan must be pursued and adopted.

Under these Impressions I endeavoured to obtain all the Information I possibly could as to the localities of the surrounding country as to streams of water and a site for Reservoirs &c. &c.

At this period the Building of what then was called the permanent Bridge over the Schuylkill river was commenced, and stone for the foundation and abutments was required to be taken from Rocks called Morris's Hill, belonging to the late Robt. Morris, At this time owned by the Bank of North America in Phi<sup>a</sup>. and a Mr. Henry Drinker (who was a Member of the watering committee) was the Cashier of said Bank and he appointed me a agent to look after and take charge of the Bank property on Morris Hill and to make contracts with the Bridge Company for such stone as was required by them. In order to the fulfilling these contracts for stone, I found it necessary to take a profile of the face of the Rock's as it was at that time presented, Both as to the Length, Breadth's and its altitude so that after the excavation of the Rock was made the Quantity of stone that was removed could be ascertained by a similar process. The Bridge Company having agreed to pay at the rate of 25 cubic feet as being equivalent to one perch of stone for all that was quarried from the Hill, While attending ascertaining these measurements from time to time I frequently took some refreshments with me to dispose of them in the old Fort or Embankment on Morris's Hill, which still remains undisturbed since the Revolutionary war. From the top of this Hill, on this fine elevation the surrounding country presented an extensive view of Centre Square distance about 2 miles especially the Highest ground around the City, at this time having my Surveying and leveling Instruments with me on the spot, The idea of a Reservoir came across my mind, and I concluded at once to commence a course of leveling from the surface of the water in the Schuylkill River up to the Top of the Hill in the old Fort

and I found the ground sufficiently elevated and a most Excellent scite and Location for a Reservoir that would command all parts in the vicinity. This appeared to me a pleasing Discovery and after reflecting and pondering thereon I came to the conclusion in my own mind That if ever any alteration of the water works should take place This point would be found to be a suitable Location. After these Examinations, I frequently advanced and expressed my views and opinion to the watering committee and more especially to Mr. Drinker whose good judgment I always respected and these suggestions was made a long time before I had the least expectation that I should retire from my superintendency of the Phil<sup>a</sup>. water works.

The aforesaid subject appeared to remain quite at rest, untill the period arrived that caused me to be separated from my esteemed Friends in Phi<sup>a</sup>. and also when my successor Graff was permanently and efectually Located and engaged in conducting the opperation of the water works in Philadelphia, There was an understanding between myself, Mr. Graff and the watering Committee, That if at any time my assistance and services should be required I would attend thereto by receiving such notices. It began to be proved as I had anticipated, The time had now arrived that an Examination would have to be made to place the water works in a more Eligable and permanent situation. In order thereto, The City Councils of Phi<sup>a</sup>. made an appropriation for that purpose and directed the watering committee to engage suitable persons, to make Surveys and ascertain the probable cost that would be required to place the water works in a more Eligable and permanent situation. In accordance thereto It was about two years after I had removed from Baltimore That I received an invitation to accept an appointment in connection with Mr. Graff to make an Examination into the state of the water works in the City of Phi<sup>a</sup>.

This business was with much care & labour performed. It occupied about two weeks and was accompanied by Estimates and a full Report, to the Councils and Reccomending the alteration of the scite, and the works for watering the City unto the

present points now so celebrated and well known by the name of Fair Mount water works which name it has acquired since the period to which these observations and remarks are referred to. This Report was presented and signed by John Davis and Frederick Graff and the old Fortification that I so well remember is now occupied and constitutes the Large and Extensive Reservoirs that contains several acres in Capacity, commanding a fine Elevation, and the adjoining grounds improved by the beautiful Buildings, Pumping Machinery, Walks, pleasure grounds and Improvements that makes Fair Mount, the Boast and pride of Philadelphians.

It is thus that I look back and bring to my mind and memory all these things and also contemplate on the great and vast changes that I have been permitted to see, and also, in many instances, to bear a very conspicuous part in and like wise to notice, the amazing, rapid and growing Improvements of this Immense Country. At the period that the water works was commenced, in Philadelphia, it contained, not over 60,000 Inhabitants, and when I removed from thence to Balto. in 1805, there was, but little over 30,000 in Baltimore. Then it was that I found that shortly after this period, the spirit of enterprise and Improvement was rapidly Increasing and extending itself in almost every direction and as the works for the supply of Baltimore, with water was in successful operation, my services was also frequently in demand in the Engineering department, and other Publick improvements and a continual calling for my labours and attention to various objects that was required of me in sundry places whereunto I was so called was almost to oppressive and laborious perhaps in consequence of there being but few individuals at this time who had been engaged in; and had practical experience and knowledge in Hydrolick and Civil Engineering, was the cause of this pressure on Me, in order to obtain some relief I entered into a new arrangement with the Baltimore water company. Their works being then in successful operation and not requiring all my time and attention, I was appointed President, of the Company, at a reduced compensa-



tion and devoting only such portion of my time as their services demanded. In this capacity, I resided and continued during the whole period that I lived in Baltimore and untill I removed to the Country in Washington County, Md.

I will now proceed to give a little diversified statement of some of the objects, engagements and employments in which I may say I was almost incessantly occupied; Say at the Susquehanna Canal, from Tide water unto peach Bottom; a distance of about 10 miles, pulling down and rebuilding the Locks, Both widening and Deepening the Canal and other improvements there occupying a period of about 2 years; Surveyed and Leveled and attended the Improvements of Gwynns Falls by a mill Race of about 3 miles, in length terminated, by the building in succession, 4 large Merchant Mills, each carrying 4 Pair of Millstones; aided, and assisted in the erecting, Large Cotton manufactory; and a large Merchant Mill on Jones Falls, 6 miles north of Baltimore, Superintended the erection, and other Improvements, a little South of Havre de Grasse, Leveled the water & aided in building a Large Mill on Elkridge about 15 Miles west of Balt., Leveled and surveyed several streams and Located many Cotton Manufactories and other improvements that was either designed or Executed by my Direction. There is one Improvement kept in fine order and is still a favourite spot and frequented by many persons, called the City Spring, situate on North Calvert Street city of Baltimore about 2 squares south [North] of the Battle Monument near Barnums Hotel.

But there was a work that I was engaged in, and Executed, under some serious anxieties and difficulties that I must own I feel some little pride and ambition in mentioning and therefore have given it a little more in detail than perhaps it may be thought to deserve yet still I think it is entitled to a little notice. It was like a Pilot or Pioneer calculated so as to point out the way that but few had travelled or pursued before.

Some time after the commencement of the last war in 1812, It was thought proper to place Fort McHenry in a good state



of Defence. It was known that the water for the use of the Garrison was bad and unwholesome. The attending Physician condemned it as unfit for the men. There had been several trials and attempts made there to obtain good water by the Engineers and others by sinking wells at the Enclosure within the Fort. But when the Excavations was continued to the depth between 40 to 50 feet or to about the Level of Soundings in the River opposite the Fort, the Strata, where the water proceeded from, was a soft, Black, slippery offensive soil, and mud, Extending to about 6 feet Deep and where the water flowed in abundently and it appeared to defy any attempt of its being sunk deeper and all the water for the Fort had to be carted or conveyed about the distance of 3 miles from the watering place for the shipping at the Basin. It seemed so indispensably necessary that good water should be obtained, That Major Paul Bentalow called on me to consult with me on the subject, he being well acquainted with me and on terms of considerable Intimacy and he strongly insisted on it that I should undertake to procure a good Supply of water for the Fort. After examining the difficulties and the failure of the attempts that had been heretofore made I remarked to him that it could be accomplished but most probably at a heavy Expense. With these views, Major Bentalow, who was a Government officer, proceeded to Washington to see Genl. Armstrong, the Secretary of War, who directed Major Bentalow to engage me, and requested me to furnish an Estimate of the probable expense thereof. On the Majors return to Balt. he desired me to state my views which was that I was willing to undertake the work, under the conviction, that water could be obtained but under no consideration would submit an Estimate, It might cost some 4 or 5,000 Dollars and it might amount to three or four times that sum. I was willing to use my best Exertions and judgement, make, and prepare contracts, and procure workmen and attend to the general superintendence and receive for my own compensation at the rate of ten per cent on the whole expenditure, be it more or less, this being the amount that I was paid for all the works

I was engaged in. With this understanding the Major repaired again to Washington and he received an order from the Secretary of war to engage me at once!

I then consulted with Col. Armistead, the Commander of the Fort, and Major Bentelow to fix on the spot for the Excavations; in the preparations were Two strong main sills, each 40 feet long by about 24 by 20 inches square, was so placed in order to sustain any super-incumbent weight that might be required, and a regular mineing shaft of 12 feet in Diameter was dug and excavated and such carpentry and fixtures as was likely to be wanted was prepared. The Excavation and the Carpentry was regularly sunk unto near the Depth of 40 feet, untill it arrived, to the soft Strata, of mud, and water, where the former Difficulties heretofore had been experienced; then was commenced a system of sheet piling, prepared sufficiently long, to pass through the soft strata into a more firm soil that was found to extend downward from 8 to 10 feet; this sheet piling was shod with Iron, formed of staves from 8 to 10 Inches broad by 4 Inches thick, correctly worked and grooved and tongued so that when Driven they formed a compleat hoop something like the interior of a large Cask. This was a very difficult work to execute but it was done in the most perfect Manner and when the mud and water and the soft soil was taken out very few leaks from the interior of what may be termed, this large (Cask or vessel) was presented, and it took the workmen but a short period, with their Oakum to cork the leaks; to make it literally water tight, all the materials & carpentry had been suspended by the carpentry untill this vessel, I may call it a Tub, or Cask, stood on, or in the firm solid ground, or clay, found at this Depth now about 60 feet, from the top. The solidity of this ground or strata of clay as it was found to be, suggested a different course of continuing the Excavation, it may not be improper to describe the intended dimensions, designed to finish this well say 6 feet diameter in the clear; Bricks to form this Circle 11 inches long 1" 10; The body of prepared Clay or Puddle to sorround the well, the whole hight, to

Exclude all Impurities, admitting water only from the Springs, from the Bottom, thickness of Clay around each, 2" 1. This thickness Double 2" 1. The Diameter Excavated being 12 feet. The ground or Clay proving very solid and compact, it was deemed unnecessary to continue the Excavation larger than the space required for the Brick work making the whole 7" 10 Diameter. The Strata of very hard blue Clay now penetrated permitted it to be dug and shaped to form a perfect Cylinder to fit it up unto the Bricks which assumed the form of a wedge making a true Circle of Six feet Diameter. In order to ascertain if any change in the soil took place, a large auger was prepared to pierce the clay to the depth of 6 or 7 feet deep, to provide against any obstacle that might present itself. After each Boring, the Excavation was continued until another boring was required, and thus alternately untill it passed down to a Depth of about 40 feet without the least change, the whole being of the most perfect, solid, blue Clay imaginable. During the process of the last boring the auger suddenly dropped down a few inches, it had penetrated to the depth of about 5 feet and water suddenly rushed up by the side of the auger which was quickly stoped by driving a plug into the hole. I happened to be there at this fortunate moment, went down into the well and found the water to exert itself by a considerable force and immediately had a hole prepared, through an upright piece of timber and a Spigot placed therein, to tap the well and draw off some water, to have its Quality tested. After these preparations was made, the water was drawn, and discharged with great force and for some time assumed nearly to the colour of milk but soon grew clearer. A person was immediately dispatched to Major Bente-low who soon returned exceedingly elated and some of the water was sent to the celebrated Chemist Doct. De Butts, in Balto. to have it annalized, and after he had carefully made the Examinations, he gave a Certificate that the water was of the purest character, not inferior to any in the Country. During these proceedings all things was in progress to discharge the water by pumps, Buckets, &c. &c. to have all the materials ready, Puddle,

Clay and Bricks, and everything to facilitate a proper finish to this important work. After the last of the Clay, in the Bottom of the well was taken out, the water came in from the bottom through a stratum of remarkably fine, white sand and gravel about 2 feet Deep. The ground below this appeared solid, and firm of a Dark Red character. The water flowed regularly through this bed of sand, the whole time the work of the well was on hand, at the rate of about 18 Gallons per minute by actual measurement and the water so discharged was continually taken regularly out but both Night and Day until it ceased to come in which was found to be at a point in the well which stood about 4 Inches higher, or above, the usual high water mark, in the River at the Fort, opposite the well. The Brick work was now carefully carried up, and leveled off at the termination of the Clay Stratum. At this offset the puddle clay commenced and was carefully placed arround the Bricks on the outside all the timber work, sheet piling and every substance whatever was taken up and removed and replaced by the prepared Clay and Puddlings so that not the least quantity of water or any impure substance could enter the well from the outside. And viewing and looking down this well, a more perfect Cylinder or Tube could not be easily conceived or any work more perfectly accomplished and what makes this subject more Interesting is that Early in the summer of 1814, this work was finally finished whereby at the Bombardment at Fort McHenry all the Troops at the Fort and those in the vicinity of the Encampment was fortunately supplied by the water of this well and Col. Armistead justly remarked that it was a most invaluable appendage to the Fort. I believe the whole cost and Expenditure was under \$6,000.

I must say that the success of this undertaking gave me some gratification, especially as it was stated by some Engineer's impossible to be done But Major Bentelow still insisted on it that "John Davis" should pursue his own views, and the Exulting Major said to the Secretary of War "Did not I tell you, Genl. Armstrong that Mr. Davis would succeed and we would have good water at the Fort, uttered in his broken french language.

I do not know that I have occasion to refer to several other incidents that fell under my observation at various times, but there is one other notice that may not be improper to state. It occurred at the time I was engaged in improving and widening the Locks, &c. on the Susquehanna Canal.

There was a deputation of the members of the Lake Erie and Hudson Canal, who then was visiting the works that were in progress on the Susquehanna Canal. After being Introduced to me They desired to have an Interview with me, and proposed an offer and made a request that I should be engaged in their services and Employment and render my assistance in aiding in the Execution of the contemplated Canal. In answer to this proposition I had to state the utter impossibility of my being able to Devote any of my time to other objects, I was then employed on viz:—which was in the Construction of the water works in Balt. including all its Details and it was by the courtesy of the water Co. that I was enabled to render a portion of my time in attending the work on the Susq. Canal, where the gentlemen at that moment then found me. I had therefore to tender them a respectful apology and to decline their kind offer. I would further remark that a long time after this I received the following Letter on the same subject, a copy thereof I herewith insert—to this request also I was unable to comply, although many of my friends strongly advised me to do so. It always appeared to me that by faithfully fulfilling all those duties and engagements that are honourable and consistent and governed by a course of pure morality regardless of all pecuniary Interest whatever is the sure way to satisfy and promote peace and friendship and prevent unpleasant Envious feelings.

Copy—"This Letter was thus addressed" "To John Davis, No. 74 Charles St., Baltimore, Maryland."

"New York, 3<sup>rd</sup>, Mo. 4<sup>th</sup>, 1814"

"Respected Friend

The commissioners appointed by our Legislature for the consideration of all matters relating to the internal navigation of

the state are desirous of employing an Engineer to determine the line of the proposed Canal, from Lake Erie. When I had the pleasure of seeing thee in Baltimore about 2 years ago, thee stated having made some engagements in the line of thy Profession in your state, it would not be in thy Power to undertake performing the work proposed by us. I have full confidence in thy abilities being equal to the task and if it is now in thy power to accept this Employment, I trust thou wilt find thyself perfectly able to accomplish it to thy own and our satisfaction. I have spoken to Poppleton who is willing to act under thy Direction as Surveyor, to take levels and make out a map accompanied by notes &c. of the whole Route, he will be aided by Benjamin Wright, who has been employed as a Surveyor and taking Levels for two years past by order of the Commissioners, he is well acquainted with the Country, and a very ingenious man, we mean him as an assistant to Poppleton. He is very capable of aiding him in every branch of his profession and particularly in makeing Estimates &c. I expect thy Duty will be to take a Bird's Eye view of the Country generally and to direct the Surveyor where to Run his line &c. If thou wilt agree to undertake the business there will be no difficulty as to the Compensation to be allowed. I should suppose it would require this season and the next to compleat the work, and as it is possible the whole of thy time would not be necessary, it may be convenient for thee to devote only a portion of it. However of this I confess myself not competent to form a correct judgment, I should be glad to hear from thee as soon as convenient.

I am very respectfully  
Thy assured friend,  
Thomas Eddy "

Recurring to the contents of this letter it reminds me of the laborious and incessant duties that devolved on me during a great portion of my life. But the consolation of Receiving the Thank's and approbation I may say of all who employed me, in the varied occupations that I was engaged in and also in the

accountability of the Disbursements of a vast amount of money that was expended under my direction both in Pennsylvania and Maryland there was never any disapproval or the least dissatisfaction in a single Instance during the whole period that I was thus occupied and even up to this day. Is not this a reflection worthy the consideration of my numerous family and also of all my former Friends and those esteemed Individuals with whom I had for so many years transacted business of varied denominations and extensive concerns. To me it is truly a pleasing reflection now recalling these times, and in continuance thereof I have to notice that my Baltimore engagements continued as heretofore, it was in attending the water company's work and such other incidental pursuits as at times was presented to my consideration and one of my latest engagements was the surveying and locating a Rout for the Extension and continuance of the Cumberland Turnpike Road, from the western bank of the Conacacheague Creek in Washington County, Md. unto the Town of Cumberland Allegany Maryland, a distance of forty miles, nearly the whole being through almost an untraveled dense wilderness. The origen of this improvement was the necessity of uniting & connecting the great National Road that began at Cumberland and extended westwardly unto Wheeling in Virginia on the Eastern Bank of the Ohio River. To accomplish this object the Legislature of Maryland submitted a proposition to sundry Banking Institutions, whose charters was about to expire that their Charters should be continued for a period of 20 years and a Charter granted constituting them the privilege of a Turnpike Road Company provided they would pay for the cost and expense of making said Road.

In consideration of the above three commissions was appointed to lay out, locate and prepare an estimate of the probable cost of said Road. This was performed by the following persons viz.—Messrs. John Ellicot, William Jessop, and John Davis. The Board of the Bank Director's adopted Report and the Road was advertized to be made by contract and by the advice of many Friends, I presented a proposal embracing every



Expense and its contingencies in detail, and the Banks accepted the proposition agreeing to pay the sum of Four Hundred and sixty Thousand Dollars when compleated. This contract or work was commenced in the fall 1816, and early in the spring of 1821, the contract and road was taken of my hands by my employers and those members from the various Banks who constituted and named the Cumberland Turnpike Road Company, elected me their Superintendent, general Manager. In whose services and employment I continued untill the year 1839 as the date of letter will testify—viz:—

(copy)

“Cumberland Turnpike Road  
Company's office May 21st, 1839.

“Extract from the minutes and proceedings of a special meeting of the President and Managers of the Cumberland Turnpike Road Company.

A letter from John Davis Esq. dated the 15th of April 1839 resigning his situation of Superintendent of said road was received and accepted.

Whereupon it was resolved that John Davis Esq. be and he is hereby granted the privilege of Travelling this Road free of Tolls, as an acknowledgement of his long and Faithfull services as Superintendent

True extract from the minutes

J Pinkney Sec'y.”

These memorandoms now brings me nearly to the conclusion of the Business transactions of the past pursuits of my life. The remaining portion now left has been generally occupied in attending pretty much to the Domestick concerns of my Family and that portion of our children in Hagerstown where we have resided for a considerable time.

Our oldest son is located and living on a Farm east of Cumberland in Allegany county. My other three sons, reside in Baltimore, two in the Merchantile line, the other is in the medical profession in Balt.



In concluding these narratives and memorandums, I must go a little back to retrace some family notices and occurrences relating to my late Beloved companion who was a native of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania (as I am informed) The family for many years past belonged to the Quakers or Friends Society. Her name was Mary Whitelock. The Family removed to Frankford five miles north of Philadelphia. . . . Her mother was named Elizabeth, her husband died, leaving her with two sons and three daughters all quite young. After some years, and the children being nearly all grown, the mother again married to a respectable Quaker Friend named Benjamin Love who resided in Frankford.

It was at the commencement of the Phil<sup>a</sup>. water works that I found that there was many of the Friends society managers of the water company and of course I was in contact and also in friendly association with many esteemed individuals of that Society, one of the gentlemen thereof was the Secretary to the watering committee with whom I formed a lasting intimacy and continued friendship. At this time I was a widower and my only child, a little Daughter, was boarding with me, having given up housekeeping. This gentleman whose name was Tod advised me to take my little Daughter to Frankford, as Friend Love being a distant relation of his, he had no doubt that by his request, she would agree to take both the charge and care of her. This arrangement was finally agreed to and so fortunately commenced, seemed to be providentially intended, to fix my destiny forever thereafter.

The oldest of Friend Love's Daughters named Martha was married to a young man, named Harper. Their only son, then living named Isaac was in business and connected with his Fatherinlaw Love. The youngest Daughter Sarah lived at home with the family, the other Daughter named Mary was in due time married to myself. This occurrence I will notice viz:— After I took my little Daughter to what was called her new home the old people both Benjamin and Elizabeth Love, his wife, became very much attached to my little daughter and I

also perceived that Mary was the general manager and attendant on my Daughter. She was a very particular, sedate and exemplary young person and after my being acquainted some time I discovered that my Daughter was under her Direction and care.

At this time my business in Phi<sup>a</sup>. was exceedingly heavy and pressing and I frequently found it exceedingly inconvenient to pay either the Family or my Daughter a short visit to Frankford. A month would pass away before I could at times do so. However as time rolled on I gradually began to grow more Intimate and familiar with my new friends and my Daughter always called the old Lady Grandmother which gave me a little pleasure, and appeared to me like filling up a gap in my desolate state. Upwards of a Year had now passed by, and I was almost considered as one of the Family. My friend Tod frequently accompanied to Frankford, and in a conversation with him one day, I observed to him that I had succeeded so well from his advice in finding so good a home for my child, what would he say and advise if I was to make a proposition to offer myself for acceptance to his Cousin Mary Whitelock. To this he directly replied—I know my Cousin Mary well, a more discreet, kind and affectionate young Lady cannot be found and if thee succeeds, thee will do well and my advice to thee is that at a proper time thee can judge for thyself and make the attempt and both myself and my wife Elsey will aid thee in this matter. This is a true and correct statement of these well remembered circumstances. After I had far proceeded, I began to pay a little more attention to the object of my choice and I frequently accompanied Mary in my gig taking a ride into the Country, sometimes to Philadelphia to see her relations as several of them resided there, our interviews and intercourse thus advancing, I embraced a favourable opportunity when we were taking a ride together and told her that I had placed my affection on her and desired to have her consent to accept of my addresses. This disclosure seemed a little to startle her and a dead silence ensued and after a little explanation and intreaty on my part, she

merely replied that she was not prepared to answer me but she would consider thereon. This was the commencement of my second engagement and continued my attention as usual and nothing further was said on the subject for some time thereafter. But when I referred to this subject it was desired that our views should not be submitted to any one but ourselves. Thus we continued our intercourse and made preparations and in about a Year thereafter we were married in Phil<sup>a</sup>. and truly there never was a more kind affectionate, consistent and worthy woman to be found. During the whole period that we were united, being nearly forty four years my not being an acknowledged member of Friends Society, of course my wife was deprived of her membership. But this matter being adjusted according to the Rules thereof she was reinstated and continued a member untill she was removed from this world. But it was only at those times as we visited our Family connections and friends, either in Frankford, Phi<sup>a</sup>. or Balt. that she had an opportunity of attending the meeting of Friends Society as our place of Residence was for upwards of 30 years in Allegany and Washington Counties, Maryland and during the whole period on all opportunities that presented, she attended her religious Duties, and was considered, a Regular, consistent member of the Quaker Society.

After what has heretofore been noticed, and after I had entered into the engagement of superintending, making the collections of Tolls and attending to the general business and interest of the Cumberland Turnpike Road Company, I had quite sufficient occupation for the Employment of all my time and a great portion thereof was of a laborious and troublesome character. My regular monthly traveling extended from Cumberland in Allegany unto Washington County, and Hagerstown, Maryland making a Distance, Back and forwards monthly 136 miles transmitting once a month, a Report of all Receipts and Expenditures and all occurrences that transpired requisite to be understood by the Board of Managers and Directors for their Information at their Monthly Meetings and this was performed

during a period of 18 years untill the Date of my resignation of the Road Co. business; and also my retiring from nearly all other Publick concerns.

Being about this time pretty well advanced in Life and both myself and Mary Davis being in the enjoyment of reasonable good health, we had fixed on a period to pay a visit to our oldest son, John Davis, Jun. and his little Family, who resided on a Farm in Allegany County about 14 miles East of Cumberland. It was here that it was the will of the Almighty that I should be visited with those unfortunate and afflicting calamities that it has been my Destiny to Record. We left Hagerstown on the morning of Sept. 6th, 1839 and arrived at my sons Farm the next day in the evening; after breakfast on the following morning, Sunday the 8th, my wife stepped to the back Door of the Dwelling to take a little survey of the surrounding country. The House standing on a high hill, or elevation, the ground, at a short distance is of considerable Decent, and the grass being rather slippery from the Dew thereon, and she being a large, heavy woman, made a slip and in endeavouring to save herself, fell partly Backward, in such position, as to all appearances, produced a dislocation of the Hip. It was attended with the most intense pain and agony. She was immediately assisted and conveyed to her Room. The nearest Physician being 4 miles from Cumberland, lost no time, and was in attendance, as soon as possible, and everything that could be done to assuage the suffering was applied; after severall weeks had passed, there being no hopes of a speedy recovery, an omnibus, properly prepared, for the purpose with suitable Bedding and assistance, she was conveyed to her Home in Hagerstown, a Distance, 56 miles, occupying 5 Days and nights, under the suffering of much severe pain, and from the Day that the accident occurred, untill the arrival Home, made it 83 Days. It was about a Year before she could be removed from the Bed and enabled to sit up, at intervals. After a considerable period, she gradually mended a little, in strength, and by the Use of Crutches, was enabled at times, to proceed, from one room to another, but being a very

Heavy and Weighty person, could be but seldom removed, to command as much exercise as desired. At last, the long continued confinement and the tedious inactivity, brought on, and produced, the Dropsey in the chest. These observations I will close, by quoting and refering to a Memorandum I have heretofore made on the aforesaid occasion and expressed to my Friends, viz.—

“After having the assistance of many eminent Physicians and embracing all possible aid, and receiving every attention, that could be devised, during a period of 5 years and 7½ months, she was, by the will and decree of our Heavenly Father, consigned to her last resting place in the silent Tomb; on the 26th of April, 1845: in the 71st year of her age.”

Thus has passed, the principle Incidents, and Recollections of an Individual who during a Long period of time, was occupied, and employed, at sundry intervals, in numerous, important undertakings and pursuits, and not, with any view of obtaining celebrity, or the least applause, of any particular community, although, with many of whom, he had formerly associated and frequently been, in close intimacy, and friendly intercourse; Being fully aware, that the simply calling or recalling, to memory, these unimportant considerations, is now, of little or no value whatever. To those who were present with me, during the period, that most of these transactions, above referred to transpired and is now as it were, like a dream, that has dissapeared, But as there are, a considerable number, of my own family, and Friends, that may be impelled, either by curiosity or by a fond desire, and inclination; to bring, both myself, and my former services, to their remembrance and view, although no published reccord, of such transactions has been deemed, of any importance, to the community whatever; yet to many of my relations and family, these memorandums, I have no doubt, will be acceptable and may perhaps prevent and delay the time, and period when the name, of John Davis, and his former acts, and doings, will be entirely forgotten.

Let me now state, that since the record that has heretofore

been referred to, which was, the Death of my Dear wife, Mary Davis, on the 26th April 1845; there has been no incident, or event, but those of the usual, family occurrences, my time has been chiefly spent, and occupied, in walking exercise and occasionally correspondence, with my children and Relatives.

About, say a few years since, I paid a visit, accompanied by my youngest son Charles, and my Granddaughter, Mary Jane Watson. We went to Baltimore; Philadelphia, and Frankford, occupying a few weeks among my friends.

About a year thereafter, I visited once more Baltimore, to see my three sons, who Reside there, two in the Mercantile business, the other, in the Medical profession. But on the 6th of March, 1848, I had a very sudden attack producing a failure in my memory and quite unconscious of passing events, something of a paralitick. I also find that my hearing is much impaired and at times my memory is so defective I cannot remember the names of those I converse with. But this occurs only at intervals and comes on without any previous intimation thereof.

I am truly thankful that my general health continues good and my eyesight much as it has been for several years past. And thereby I am enabled to commit to writing those ideas and thoughts that gives occupation to the mind and now when I consider the advanced period of my life being in the 81st. year of my age and as well in Bodily Health as I could almost wish or desire, however it may not be improper to state and remark that since the aforesaid memorandum's was committed to paper. My intercourse and correspondence with the various members of my family has been in the same regular manner as heretofore stated and another year nearly has been added to my already advanced period of Life.

And may I not with great propriety ask myself From whence have these daily and long continued mercies been received? By whom? And by what source have they been administered unto me, And thereby enabled me to take my pen, and answer these solemn, and important questions? Let me truly, and faithfully Answer, From my Saviour and my God. And most grate-

fully do I acknowledge his goodness for every Blessing granted unto me; humbly praying, that every error, that I may have committed or incurred, in my passed life may be blotted out and forgiven and that the few remaining days that may yet be allotted unto me, may be passed in preparing to appear in the presence of my Saviour and my God.

John Davis

Hagerstown, Washington Co., Md. Month January 1851.

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## THOMAS DEYE OWINGS OF MARYLAND:

SOLDIER AND PIONEER OF THE WEST

A RECORD OF HIS LIFE.

By FERDINAND B. FOCKE.

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Thomas Deye Owings, son of Captain John Cockey Owings and his wife, Colgate Deye Colgate, was born at "John and Thomas Forest," Baltimore County, Maryland, March 7, 1776, and died at Brenham, Texas, October 6, 1853.

At an early age he was sent to Kentucky to manage the large holdings of his father, which consisted of the Slate Iron furnace, grist mills, and real estate. The Slate Iron furnace was owned in 1787 by a company composed of John Cockey Owings, President, Jacob Meyers, builder, Willis Green, Christopher Greenup. It came into blast about 1790. In 1795, John Cockey Owings became the owner by purchase. His son, Thomas, was manager until his father's death in 1810, when by inheritance, he became the sole owner. In 1822 because of the panic it failed, and was operated for a few years by the Owings Trustees who were appointed by the court.

Most of the malleable and cast iron used in the West and South came from this foundry. Articles made at the furnace were hauled to the Kentucky and Licking Rivers, loaded on flat boats, and shipped to Louisville, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and New