

LEONARD DAVIS bondsman for EMILY DAVIS and JOEL HILL of Surry County, North Carolina

PROBLEM

Emily Davis¹ (1816-1880) and Joel Hill^{2,3} (1812-1884) both of Surry County, NC married after a marriage bond⁴ was signed by **Leonard Davis** in that county on 03 Feb 1836.⁵ Emily Davis has been difficult to identify and link with parents because the marriage bond does not specify the relationship between Leonard and Emily. In addition, Emily does not appear in a Federal census until 1850 when she is listed as Emily Hill,⁶ the wife of Joel Hill. Further complicating research is that **Leonard Davis** does not appear in any other context regionally in the 26 years before the bond and not at all after it was signed.

This analysis describes two men, **Leonard Davis, Sr.**⁷ (abt 1750-aft 1830) and **Leonard Davis, Jr.** (1797-aft 1880) who were father and son. They both lived in Surry County, NC in the early decades of the 19th century. The available evidence suggests that the younger Davis is the signatory to the marriage bond. The precise familial relationship between Leonard Davis and Emily Davis, if any, remains unproven.

BACKGROUND

Leonard's relationship to Emily was presumably that of **father**, **grandfather**, or sibling. If her father, he would have been born about 1775-1800 and if her grandfather, about 1730-1760. It is, of course, possible that Leonard is of more distant relationship or even unrelated. There were other Davis families in Surry County at this time.⁸

Leonard Davis, Sr., born in Orange County, VA was the son of Matthew Davis (1722-1809) and Martha Ann McKinney (1722-1755). On 1 Jan 1776,⁹ Leonard married (Juda) Susanna Burris (1759-?)¹⁰ of Louisa County, VA. The ten children of the family are listed with some consistency in various sources as: Isaac, Jacob, Jonathan, Lemuel, Mary (Molly), Matthew, Nancy Davis, Sarah, Thomas, and William.¹¹

A son with the name of Leonard is generally *not* included in family listings¹²—this despite the fact that a Leonard Davis born in 1797 is found in various records and genealogies of Orange County, VA and Surry County, NC and follows the family migration described below.

Davis, Sr. moved to North Carolina before 1786¹³ and located in the Willesees District of Surry County.¹⁴ He appears as a slave holder in the Surry County deed book in 1808,¹⁵ listed along with Matthew Davis as the owner of 7 slaves.¹⁶ He moved again to Stokes County where he is listed in the federal census in 1810.^{17,18}

In 1809, **Davis** purchased land from Charles Hudspeth in Overton County, TN, described in the deed book as:

Indenture made 12 April 1809 between Charles Hudspeth of Overton County and Leonard Davis of Surry County NC. Hudspeth received \$2500 from Davis for 443 acres in Overton County on the lower side of Obeds River including the plantation and improvements where said Hudspeth now lives, being part of a preemption of 640 acres to Sampson Williams.¹⁹

After the 1810 census, Davis made the move to Tennessee and is listed in the 1820²⁰ and 1830²¹ U.S. censuses. Over a period of years, a number of his children followed him to Tennessee. Three of his children are known to have remained in Surry County: Molly Davis Roberts, Jonathan Davis, and Jacob

Davis. The family's move to Tennessee may explain the difficulty in identifying the signatory to the Surry County marriage bond from North Carolina records. Data from various censuses between 1786 and 1880 indirectly support this theory (*Table 1*).

A Leonard Davis appears in Overton County, TN in censuses from 1820 to 1880, with the exception of 1870. The 1850, 1860, and 1880 censuses state that he was born in North Carolina.

North Carolina				Tennessee					
Year	Name	Age on Census (# white males)	Calculated Age ²² L, Sr. L, Jr.		Name	Age on Census (# white males)	Birth Year	HOH	Birthplace Father Mother
1786	L Davis ²³	21-60 yrs: 1 > 60 yrs: 2	34						
1800	L Davis	> 45 yrs: 1 < 10 yrs: 2	50 3						
1810	L Davis	Data not clear	60 13						
1820			70 23		L Davis Unnamed	>45 1 26-44 1			
1830			80 33		L Davis	70-80 yrs: 1			
1836	Marriage Bond signed in Surry County			39					
1840 ²⁴			43		L Davis, Jun'r	40-50 yrs: 1			
1850 ²⁵			53		L Davis	53	Abt 1797	NC	
1860 ²⁶			63		L Davis	62	Abt 1798	NC	
1870					Leonard Davis does not appear in 1870 Overton County Census				
1880 ²⁷			83		L Davis	82	Abt 1798	NC	VA MD

Table 1: Census Data for Leonard Davis

Looking at the events on a timeline, (*Table 2*) several important points become apparent. Despite the fact that some researchers have accepted that the Leonard Davis found in the various Overton County, TN censuses is one person, this is not possible. In the context of the information from Virginia and North Carolina, there is a 130 year time span—more than one lifetime. Furthermore, in 1840 the calculated birth year for Leonard from census data changes from 1750 to 1797.

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
1750	Birth	VA—Orange County
1786	State census	NC—Surry County
1800	Federal census	NC—Surry County
1808	Slaves registered	NC—Surry County
1809	Overton Co. land purchase	NC—Surry County
1810	Federal census	NC—Stokes County
1820	Federal census	TN—Overton County
1830	Federal census	TN—Overton County
1836	Surry County marriage bond	NC—Surry County
1840	Federal census, <i>described as Jun'r</i>	TN—Overton County
1850	Federal census	TN—Overton County
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentions wife Elizabeth. Mentions Juda Davis, a 74 year old female born in Virginia; presumably his mother, (Juda) Susanna Burris Davis. 	
1860	Federal census	TN—Overton County.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentions wife Elizabeth. 	
1880	Federal census	TN—Overton County
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Widower living in home of son, Jesse Davis. 	

Table 2: Leonard Davis Timeline

CONCLUSIONS:

The absence of a Leonard Davis, Jr. from most family descriptions of Leonard Davis and Susanna Burris notwithstanding, the question of who signed the Emily Davis-Joel Hill marriage bond is resolved if the

census appearances of Leonard Davis are interpreted to document a **Leonard Davis, Sr.** (abt 1751-aft 1830) as well as a **Leonard Davis, Jr.** (1791-aft 1880).

This leads to the following conclusions:

- Each lived for a time in Surry County, NC.
- They moved to Overton County, TN at different times.
- Evidence for two Leonard Davises.
 - Discontinuous age: **1830 Leonard** is age 70-80 while **1840 Leonard** is age 40 to 50.
 - 1840 Leonard is described as “Leonard Davis *Jun’r*.”
 - No suffix appended to Leonard Davis before or after 1840 census.
 - Consistency of calculated age with census dates after 1840 census suggests it is the same person despite the lack of a suffix.
- Evidence for migration from Virginia to North Carolina to Tennessee.
 - (Juda) Susanna Davis appears in this family in both Orange County, VA and Overton County, TN.
 - Land purchase in Tennessee by Leonard Davis of Surry County, NC in 1809.
 - 1850, 1860, and 1880 censuses each record that Leonard Davis was born in NC, while Leonard Davis, Sr. was born in Orange County, VA.

Assigning the events of the timeline to the two Leonard Davises, the following profiles emerge:

Leonard Davis, Sr. (1750-aft 1830) Born in Orange County, VA:

- Husband of (Juda) Susanna Burris.
- Father of **Leonard Davis, Jr.**
- Grandfather of Emily Davis.
- Head of household in 1786, 1800, 1810, 1820, and 1830 censuses.
- Purchased land in Overton County, TN in 1809 prior to moving there.
- Relocated from Surry County, NC to Overton County, TN between 1810 and 1820.
- Died between 1830 and 1840.

Leonard Davis, Jr. (1797- aft 1880):

- Son of **Leonard Davis, Sr.**
- Son of (Justina or Juda) Susanna Burris who appears in the 1850 census as Juda Davis.
- Father of Emily Davis.
- 1800 census: father’s household; an enumerated, unnamed white male aged <10 years.
- 1820 census: father’s household; the enumerated, unnamed white male aged 26-44 years.
- Signatory to the 1836 marriage bond for the marriage of Emily Davis and Joel Hill.
 - Based on the dates and migration patterns, I believe, but cannot yet prove, that **Leonard Davis, Jr.** was the father of Emily Davis.
- Relocated from Surry County, NC to Overton County, TN between 1830 and 1840.
 - Presumably after 1836 when he signed the marriage bond; Travel distance (400 miles) from Overton County to Surry County makes it unlikely that he returned to sign the bond.
 - His married daughter, Emily Davis, remained in North Carolina with her husband. Joel Hill.
- Head of household in 1840, 1850, and 1860 censuses of Overton County, TN.
- Husband of Elizabeth LKU in 1850 and 1860 in Overton County.
- Living in son’s household in the 1880 census, described as a widower.
- Died after 1880 census.

UNRESOLVED ISSUES

- There are several inferential conclusions in this analysis drawn on coincidental information found in the relevant names, dates, and locales.
 - The familial link between Emily Davis and Leonard Davis has not been established.
 - Does not address the fact that Leonard might be a brother, a more distant relative, or even an unrelated Davis.
- **Leonard Davis, Jr.** remains a frustrating enigma.
 - Leonard Davis (1797- aft 1880) is found in genealogical records, but is usually not attached to the family of Leonard Davis and (Juda) Susanna Burris. Why do most researchers omit a son named Leonard from this family with 12 children?
 - Is it due to the fact that father and son had the same Christian name resulting in the distinction between the two being missed by researchers?
 - **Leonard Davis, Sr.** moved to NC before 1786, which means **Leonard Davis, Jr.**, must have been born in VA.
 - However, **Leonard Davis, Jr.** is listed with a NC birthplace in 1850, 1860, and 1880.
 - Why doesn't **Leonard Davis, Jr.** appear in the 1830 NC Federal census if he was in Surry County until 1836 when he signed the marriage bond?
 - Was he living in Surry County in a household where he was not the head of household?
 - If **Leonard Davis, Jr.** was in Overton County, TN in 1830, why does he not appear in the 1830 census there as head of an independent household?
 - He would have been about 35 years old at the time, married with children.
 - He was not living with his father because the census records only one white male (age 70 to 80) and two white females (ages 30-40 and 70-80) in that household.
 - Why is the marriage of **Leonard Davis, Jr.** to wife Elizabeth LNU not found in North Carolina records?
 - Why is there no Leonard Davis at all in Overton County, TN in the 1870 Federal census? Where was he living at the time?
- The 1850 census gives a calculated birth year for Juda Davis of 1771—a discrepancy of 12 years from the generally available birth date of 1759.

REFERENCES

NB: Citation format based on LaMarca, Jeff. (2013). *Simple Citations: Making Life Easier for Family Historians*. Accessed: 9 April 2014. REF: <http://www.simplecitations.com/overview.html>.

¹ United States, Bureau of the Census. (1880). *U.S. Census*: North Carolina, Surry County, Pilot District, Dwelling 62, Family 62, Line 31, pp. 7, Sheet 135b: 8 Jun 1880. (Joel Hill family: Joel Hill).
LOC: Ancestry.com. Accessed: 31 Mar 2014. [Image].
URL: <http://interactive.ancestry.com/6742/4243417-00181/19876990?>

² United States, Bureau of the Census. (1880). *U.S. Census*: North Carolina, Surry County, Pilot District, Dwelling 62, Family 62, Line 32, pp. 7, Sheet 135b: 8 Jun 1880. (Joel Hill family: Emily Hill).
LOC: Ancestry.com. Accessed: 3 Apr 2014. [Image].
URL: <http://interactive.ancestry.com/6742/4243417-00181/19876990?>

³ Joel Hill was the son of Robert Hill, Jr. B: 30 Dec 1785 in Stokes County, NC; D: 8 Sep 1844 in Stokes County, NC and Elizabeth Vest, B: 09 May 1787 in Stokes County, NC; D: 30 Jan 1869 in Stokes County, NC.

⁴ State of North Carolina, Surry County. *Marriage bond*. (3 Feb 1836; Joel Hill and Emily Davis).
LOC: FamilySearch.org. Accessed: 03 Apr 2014. [Image].
URL: <https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/XF9G-LHC>

TEXT: State of North Carolina, Surry County, Know all Men by these Presents, that we, Joel Hill and Leonard Davis in the State aforesaid, are held and firmly bound unto the governor of the state of North-Carolina for the time being, in the just and for some of 500 pounds, current money of the State, to be paid to the said governor or his successor or assigns: To the which payment well and truly to be made and done, we bind ourselves, our heirs, executors and administrators. Sealed with our seals, and dated this third day of July Anno Domini 1836. THE CONDITION OF THE ABOVE OBLIGATION IS SUCH, That whereas the above bounden Joel Hill hath made application for a License for a Marriage, to be celebrated between him and Emily Davis of the county aforesaid: Now in case it shall not appear hereafter that there is any lawful caused to obstruct the said marriage, then the above obligations to be void—otherwise to remain in full force and virtue. SEALED AND DELIVERED, IN THE PRESENCE OF F. K. A (illegible) Seal Joel Hill Seal Leonard Davis.

- ⁵ Holcomb, Brent H. (compiler). (2001). *Marriages of Surry County 1779-1868*. Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc. p. 93. (North Carolina, Surry County, Pilot Mountain; Joel Hill and Emily Davis, 3 Feb 1836).
LOC: Ancestry.com. Accessed: 31 Mar 2014. [Index].
URL: http://interactive.ancestry.com/49255/FLHG_MarrSurryCntyNC-0099/
- ⁶ United States, Bureau of the Census. (1850). *U.S. Census*: North Carolina, Surry County, Westfield, North Division, Dwelling 140, Family 140, Line 32. pp. 277b: 10 Aug 1850. (Joel Hill Family; Emily Davis).
LOC: Ancestry.com. Accessed: 31 Mar 2014. [Image].
URL: http://interactive.ancestry.com/8054/4204425_00239/13026549?
- ⁷ The suffixes, “Sr.” and “Jr.” have been added by the author for clarity. With the exception of the 1840 Federal census entry for Leonard Davis, Jun’r., these two apparently did not use generational suffixes.
- ⁸ North Carolina, Surry County (1808). *Index of Slave Owners recorded in Deed Books A-11 (1771-1867)*. (Leonard W. Davis).
LOC: Surry County Register of Deeds website. Accessed: 10 April 2014. [Index].
URL: http://www.co.surry.nc.us/departments/%28k%20through%20z%29/register_of_deeds/genealogy/index.php
- ⁹ Orange County, Virginia. County Clerk. (n.d.). *Marriage Records, 1757-1938*. (Marriage bond, 1 Jan 1776; Leonard Davis and Burrows, Susanna).
LOC: Familysearch.org. Accessed: 31 Mar 2014. [Index].
URL: <https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-1942-20613-13564-0?cc=1883379>
- ¹⁰ Variant name spellings for Susanna Burrows: *Christian name*: Susannah *Surname*: Burrus, Burris. She also appears as Justina or Juda Susanna Burrows in numerous records.
- ¹¹ Whiteside, Billie Jean (1994). Leonard Davis Family. In Hester Bartlett Jackson (Ed.), *The Heritage of Surry County, Vol. 2*. (n.p.). Winston-Salem, NC: Surry County Genealogical Association. (Leonard Davis family). Accessed: 10 Apr 2014.
LOC: Surry Community College Library Genealogical Collection, Dobson, NC. [OCR of scanned image].
- ¹² One Ancestry.com member has posted a family list for Leonard Davis and Susanna Burris (Burrows) that includes a son Leonard (unsourced). Another Ancestry.com member has independently concluded that Leonard Davis, of Overton County, TN is the father of Emily Davis of Surry County, NC. (unsourced).
- ¹³ Register, Alvaretta K., compiler. (2001). *State Census of North Carolina, 1784-1787*. Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc. pp. 144: n.d. (Surry County; Leonard Davis).
LOC: Ancestry.com. Accessed: 31 Mar 2014. [Index].
URL: http://interactive.ancestry.com/3005/gpc_statecensusnc-0148/10244?
- ¹⁴ United States, Bureau of the Census. (1800). *U.S. Census*: North Carolina, Surry County, Salisbury pp. 648: n.d. (Leonard Davis household: Leonard Davis).
LOC: Ancestry.com. Accessed: 3 Apr 2014. [Image].
URL: http://interactive.ancestry.com/7590/4440904_00654/331859?
- ¹⁵ North Carolina, Surry County (1808). *Index of Slave Owners recorded in Deed Books A-11, (1771-1867)*. (Matthew Davis, Leonard Davis).
LOC: Surry County Register of Deeds website. Accessed: 10 April 2014. [Index].
URL: http://www.co.surry.nc.us/departments/%28k%20through%20z%29/register_of_deeds/genealogy/index.php
- ¹⁶ North Carolina, Surry County (1808). *Index of Slaves recorded in Deed Books A-11, (1771-1867)*. (Matthew Davis, Leonard Davis; Slaves: Benjamin, Ezekiel, Elizabeth, Fanny, Joshua, Lucy, Patsy).
LOC: Surry County Register of Deeds website. Accessed: 10 April 2014. [Index].
URL: http://www.co.surry.nc.us/departments/%28k%20through%20z%29/register_of_deeds/genealogy/index.php

Name	Age	Book	Page	Year	Other names in deed
Benjamin	--	M	18	1808	Matthew Davis, Leonard Davis
Ezekiel	--	M	18	1808	Matthew Davis, Leonard Davis
Elizabeth	--	M	18	1808	Matthew Davis, Leonard Davis
Fanny	--	M	18	1808	Matthew Davis, Leonard Davis
Joshua	--	M	18	1808	Matthew Davis, Leonard Davis
Lucy	--	M	18	1808	Matthew Davis, Leonard Davis
Patsy	--	M	18	1808	Matthew Davis, Leonard Davis

- ¹⁷ United States, Bureau of the Census. (1810). *U.S. Census*: North Carolina, Stokes County. pp. 512: n.d. (Leonard Davis household: Leonard Davis).
 LOC: Ancestry.com. Accessed: 3 Apr 2014. [Image].
 URL: http://interactive.ancestry.com/7613/4433312_00197/780511?
- ¹⁸ This was an actual change in residence and not due to a county division because Stokes County because was formed in 1789 from Surry County.
- ¹⁹ Munnerlyn, Vonnie Looper, compiler (2000). *Overton County, TN Abstracts of Register of Deeds Book B, Aug 1809-July 1817*. Published by the author. pp. 14. Cited by: Avila, Brenda (2002). *Hudspeth: Charles Hudspeth*. (Leonard Davis indenture with Charles Hudspeth, 29 May 1809, Overton County, Tennessee).
 LOC: Hudspeth: Charles Hudspeth web page. Accessed 8 Apr 2014. [Abstracted transcription].
 URL: <http://www.ba044ancestry.com/HUDSPETH/CharlesHudspethsonofGilesHudspeth.html>
TEXT: Overton County TN (1800-1817). Abstracts of Register of Deeds Book B, Aug 1809-July 1817 1809 Pg 16. Indenture made 12 April 1809 between Charles Hudspeth of Overton County and Leonard Davis of Surry County NC. Hudspeth received \$2500 from Davis for 443 acres in Overton County on the lower side of Obeds River including the plantation and improvements where said Hudspeth now lives, being part of a preemption of 640 acres to Sampson Williams. Signed: Charles Hudspeth Witness: John Chisum and S Williams. Proven in open court at the May Term, 1809 Overton County. Registered in Overton County on 29 May 1809. B Totten, Clerk.
- ²⁰ United States, Bureau of the Census. (1820.) *U.S. Census*: Tennessee, Overton County. pp. 298a: n.d. (Leonard Davis household: Leonard Davis).
 LOC: Ancestry.com. Accessed: 3 Apr 2014. [Image].
 URL: http://interactive.ancestry.com/7734/4433434_00212/996758?
- ²¹ United States, Bureau of the Census. (1830). *U.S. Census*: Tennessee, Overton County. pp. 173: n.d. (Leonard Davis household: Leonard Davis).
 LOC: Ancestry.com. Accessed: 3 Apr 2014. [Image].
 URL: http://interactive.ancestry.com/8058/4410825_00339/735098?
- ²² Calculations made using assumed birth year 1750 for **Leonard, Sr.** and 1797 for **Leonard, Jr.**
- ²³ For space considerations "Leonard Davis," the actual text found in each census entry has been shortened to "L. Davis."
- ²⁴ United States, Bureau of the Census. (1840). *U.S. Census*: Tennessee, Overton County. pp. 10: n.d. (Leonard Davis, Jun'r. household: Leonard Davis, Jun'r.).
 LOC: Ancestry.com. Accessed: 3 Apr 2014. [Image].
 URL: http://interactive.ancestry.com/8057/4410645_00026/3022062?
- ²⁵ United States, Bureau of the Census. (1850). *U.S. Census*: Tennessee, Overton County, 8th District, Dwelling 270, Family 270, Line 21. pp. 87a: 4 Sep 1850. (Leonard Davis household: Leonard Davis).
 LOC: Ancestry.com. Accessed: 3 Apr 2014. [Image].
 URL: http://interactive.ancestry.com/8054/4206050_00179/6468902?
- ²⁶ United States, Bureau of the Census. *1860 U.S. Census*: Tennessee, Overton County, 4th District, Dwelling 1695, Family 1695, Line 40. pp. 236: 13 Jul 1860. (Davis, Leonard household: Leonard Davis).
 Repository: Ancestry.com. Accessed: 3 Apr 2014. [Image].
 URL: http://interactive.ancestry.com/7667/4297409_00390/19437945?
- ²⁷ United States, Bureau of the Census. (1880). *U.S. Census*: Tennessee, Overton County, 4th District, Dwelling 67, Family 97, Line 49. pp. 10: 1 Jun 1880. (Jesse Davis household: Leonard Davis).
 LOC: Ancestry.com. Accessed: 3 Apr 2014. [Image].
 URL: <http://interactive.ancestry.com/6742/4244654-00326/41801809?>