

## **Who Were the Parents of Jacob Davis (Born 1813) of Sennett, Cayuga County, New York?**

Jacob Davis, together with various family members, appears on censuses for Sennett, Cayuga County, New York, in 1850, 1860, and 1865; on the census for Niles, Cayuga County, in 1880; and on the census for Semphronius, Cayuga County, in 1892. Jacob's family was shown on the 1855 census for Sennett, but for some reason Jacob was not listed with them, and his wife Zilpha was shown as the head of the household on that census. According to the 1850, 1855, 1860, and 1865 censuses, the oldest child of Jacob Davis and his wife Zilpha was a daughter Abigail B., whose stated age calculates to a birth in 1843 or 1844. If Jacob had married Zilpha a year or two before Abigail's birth – in 1841 or 1842 – then he would likely still have been living with his parents in 1840.

Jacob's age as given in the various censuses calculates to a birth in 1812 or 1813. The various censuses indicate that he had been born in the State of New York. The 1865 census states more precisely that he had been born in Columbia County, New York. The 1880 census states more fully that each of his parents was likewise born in New York. The corresponding entries for his wife Zilpha in the 1880 census state that she had been born in New York, that her father had been born in Vermont, and that her mother had been born in Connecticut. These data are accurate. Zilpha's father Joseph Bacon was indeed born in Vermont on 30 August 1780, and Zilpha's mother Abigail Bugbee was born in Woodstock, Connecticut, on 9 December 1782. This indicates that Jacob and Zilpha were careful in answering the census-taker's questions about where they and their parents had been born, so that we would expect the data pertaining to Jacob's parents also to be correct.

In Sennett, during the time when Jacob Davis and his family were living there, there were two other Davis families in the town. One of them was headed by Solomon Davis, who according to the 1865 census was 68 years old and had been born in Massachusetts; whose wife Almira, age 65, had been born in Washington County, New York; and whose son Emmet B., age 25, had been born in Cayuga County. This family had no previous associations with Columbia County. The other Davis family in Sennett was headed by the widow Chloe Davis, who according to the 1865 census was 67 years old and had been born in Columbia County. She was living with her daughter Lucy C., age 47 and also born in Columbia County, and with Lucy's husband John Foster and their children. Chloe Davis appears also on censuses for Sennett in 1850, 1855, 1860, and 1870. Her age as given in the various censuses calculates to a birth in 1797 or 1798. Chloe's maiden surname and parentage are not known. Her husband Reuben Davis, who had been born in Canaan, Columbia County, was the son of Lemuel Davis and his wife Bethier Lord.

The Reuben Davis family was in New Lebanon, Columbia County, on the 1820 and 1830 censuses. This family was in Lysander, Onondaga County, New York, on the 1840 census. Reuben died in Lysander on 30 August 1841. His stated age at death, as inscribed on his gravestone in the Jacksonville Rural Cemetery in Lysander, calculates to a birth on 5 December 1793. Reuben died intestate, and in keeping with the request of his widow Chloe their son Lemuel was appointed as executor of his father's estate by the Onondaga County surrogate. Additional children or heirs were not named in the probate records, but we know from other sources that Reuben and Chloe's children included Lucy C. (born 1818 or 1820), Lemuel (born

1819), Heman C. (born 1823), Kenneth Morrison (born 1824), Betsey (born 1829), George L. (born 1834), Joseph E. (born 1836), and Ann A. (born 1838).

In 1820, most of Reuben and Chloe's children as named above had not yet been born. Their household in the census for that year consisted of 2 males under 10, 1 male between 26 and 45, 1 female under 10, 1 female between 10 and 16, and 1 female between 16 and 26. Reuben himself, born in 1793, was the male between 26 and 45; and his wife Chloe, born in 1797, was the female between 16 and 26. The female between 10 and 16 was too old to be a daughter. She was probably a sister of Reuben or Chloe or an unrelated boarder. The female under 10 would have been their daughter Lucy. One of the two males under 10 would have been their son Lemuel. But who was the other male under 10? Jacob Davis, born in 1813, would be a good fit. Of course, Chloe would have been only 16 years old in 1813, and Reuben would have been only 20. But people often got married and started having children at an early age at this time in history.

In 1848 Chloe Davis acquired land in Sennett, and by the time of the 1850 census she was living there. In 1850 her son Lemuel was still living in Lysander. When Chloe died on 28 November 1872, she was buried next to her husband Reuben in the Jacksonville Rural Cemetery. Her stated age at death, as inscribed on her gravestone, calculates to a birth on 12 February 1797.

There is no documentation that directly links Jacob Davis to Chloe Davis or to her husband Reuben Davis. But Jacob and Chloe bore the same surname, lived in the same relatively small town, and hailed originally from the same distant county elsewhere in the state. We also know from the 1820 census that there was an additional son in Chloe and Reuben's family, born within the time frame of Jacob's birth, who has not otherwise been accounted for. So, circumstantially, it is much more likely than not that Jacob Davis, of Columbia County and of Sennett, is that heretofore unaccounted-for son of Chloe Davis, also of Columbia County and of Sennett.

Perhaps in time a contemporaneous ecclesiastical, civil, or family record will come to light, to solidify this identification. If that does ever happen, then the descendants of Jacob Davis – who include my wife, children, and grandchildren – could apply for membership in the General Society of Mayflower Descendants. This is because Jacob's probable father Reuben Davis was a descendant of Mayflower passenger Edward Doty, according to the following line of descent:

Edward Doty, married Faith Clarke; parents of  
Joseph Doty, married Deborah Ellis; parents of  
Mary Doty, married Samuel Waterman; parents of  
Bethia Waterman, married Ephraim Lord; parents of  
Bethier Lord, married Lemuel Davis; parents of  
Reuben Davis, married Chloe –.

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