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EARLY WASHINGTON, DC LAW & FAMILY PROJECT

The Davis Family

The Davis and Bentley families from Anne Arundel and Prince George's Counties, Maryland, and Washington, DC, sued for their freedom between 1779-1809, claiming they were descended from a free woman named Mary Davis. This case and the family who brought it was important in American history.

- ◆ *Rosamund Bentley v. Anthony Addison* (Prince George's County, 1779)
- ◆ *Eleanor Bentley v. John Hawkins* (Prince George's County, 1781)
- ◆ *Mary Bentley v. William Digges* (Prince George's County, 1781)
- ◆ *Elizabeth, Daniel, William, Susanna, Dennis, Johnson, Lee, Nelson, Nancy, Rebecca, Anne, & Eleanor Bentley v. Thomas Keen* (Washington, DC, 1809)
- ◆ *Susan & Airy Davis v. Caleb Swann* (Washington, DC, 1809)
- ◆ *Ann, David, Sarah, Frederick, & Hanson Davis v. Charles Miniffee* (Washington, DC, 1809)
- ◆ *John, Teresa, & Mary Ann Davis v. Hezekiah Wood* (Washington, DC, 1809)
- ◆ *Letitia, Rachel, & Henry Davis v. Rebecca Forrest* (Washington, DC, 1809)
- ◆ *George Davis v. Mary Young* (Washington, DC, 1809)

The Davis family tree is based on court records from the Maryland State Archives in Annapolis and the National Archives in Washington, DC.

- Mary Davis – an English woman
 - + Domingo
 - Thomas Davis – b. 1677
 - Rose Davis – b. 1684
 - Elizabeth Bentley (a.k.a. Indian Polly ?) – d. abt 1772
 - Margaret Bentley
 - William Bentley
 - Rosamond Bentley – filed freedom suit in 1779 against Anthony Addison
 - Nancy Barton
 - Ann Maria Barton
 - Charlotte Barton
 - Elizabeth Barton
 - James Richard Barton
 - Thomas Barton
 - William Barton
 - Eleanor Cooper
 - Mary Bentley – filed freedom suit in 1781 against William Digges



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- Eleanor "Nell" Bentley – filed freedom suit in 1781 against John Hawkins
 - Elizabeth Bentley – filed freedom suit in 1809 against Thomas Keen
 - Daniel Bentley – filed freedom suit in 1809 against Thomas Keen
 - William Bentley – filed freedom suit in 1809 against Thomas Keen
 - Susanna Bentley – filed freedom suit in 1809 against Thomas Keen
 - Dennis Bentley – filed freedom suit in 1809 against Thomas Keen
 - Johnson Bentley – filed freedom suit in 1809 against Thomas Keen
 - Lee Bentley – filed freedom suit in 1809 against Thomas Keen
 - Nelson Bentley – filed freedom suit in 1809 against Thomas Keen
 - Nancy Bentley – filed freedom suit in 1809 against Thomas Keen
 - Rebecca Bentley – filed freedom suit in 1809 against Thomas Keen
 - Anne Bentley – filed freedom suit in 1809 against Thomas Keen
 - Eleanor Bentley – filed freedom suit in 1809 against Thomas Keen

Descended from Mary Davis through unknown line:

- Susan Davis – filed freedom suit in 1809 against Caleb Swann
 - Airy Davis – filed freedom suit in 1809 against Caleb Swann
 - John Davis – filed freedom suit in 1809 against Hezekiah Wood
 - Teresa "Tracy" Davis – filed freedom suit in 1809 against Hezekiah Wood
 - Mary Ann Davis – filed freedom suit in 1809 against Hezekiah Wood
- Ann Davis – filed freedom suit in 1809 against Charles Miniffee
 - David Davis – filed freedom suit in 1809 against Hezekiah Wood
 - Sarah Davis – filed freedom suit in 1809 against Hezekiah Wood
 - Frederick Davis – filed freedom suit in 1809 against Hezekiah Wood
 - Hanson Davis – filed freedom suit in 1809 against Hezekiah Wood
- Letitia "Letty" Davis – filed freedom suit in 1809 against Rebecca Forrest
 - Rachel Davis – filed freedom suit in 1809 against Rebecca Forrest
 - Henry Davis – filed freedom suit in 1809 against Rebecca Forrest

If you have any information to contribute to the project about this family, please let us know.

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