

# The “Quaker” Ancestry and “Mormon” Legacy of

## **Nathan Davis** and **Sarah Woolley**

(1814–1894)

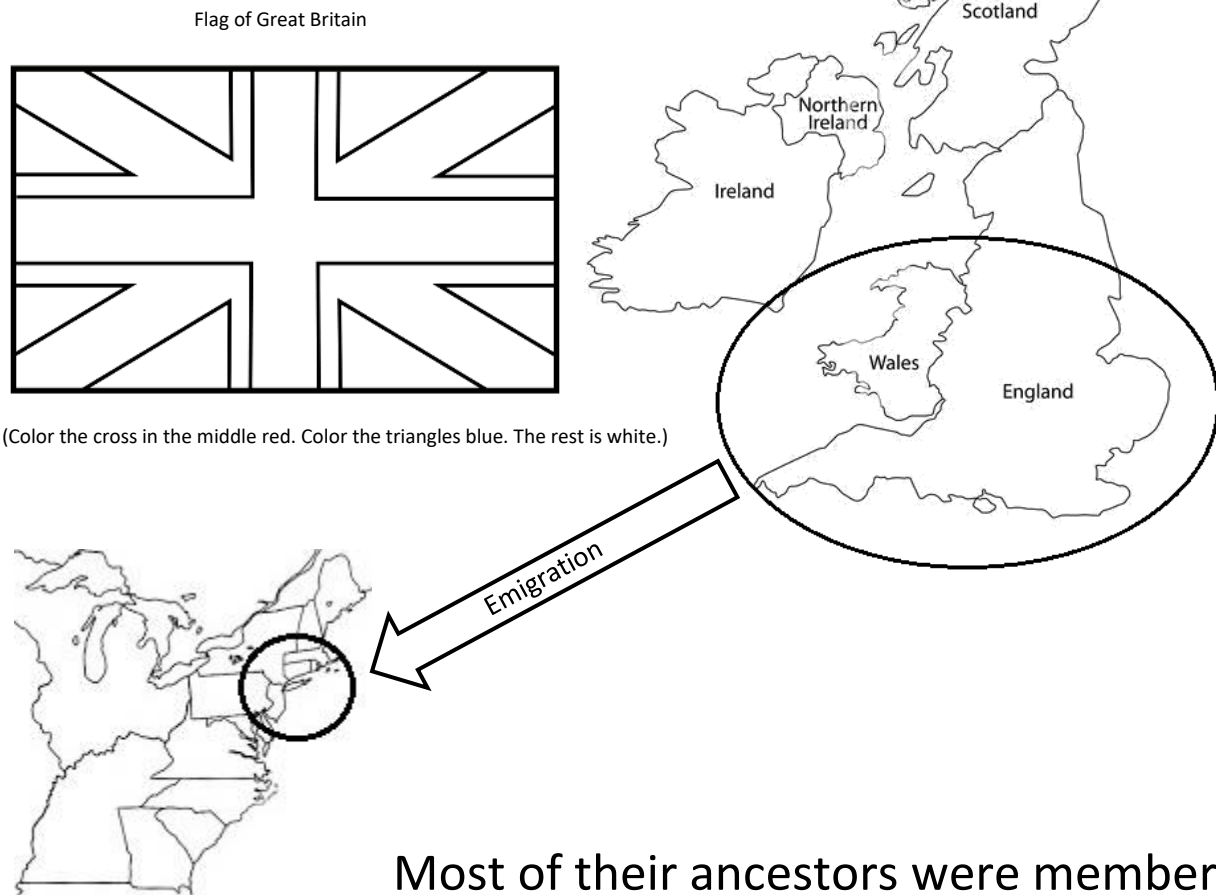
(1815–1895)



## **A Family History Coloring Book**

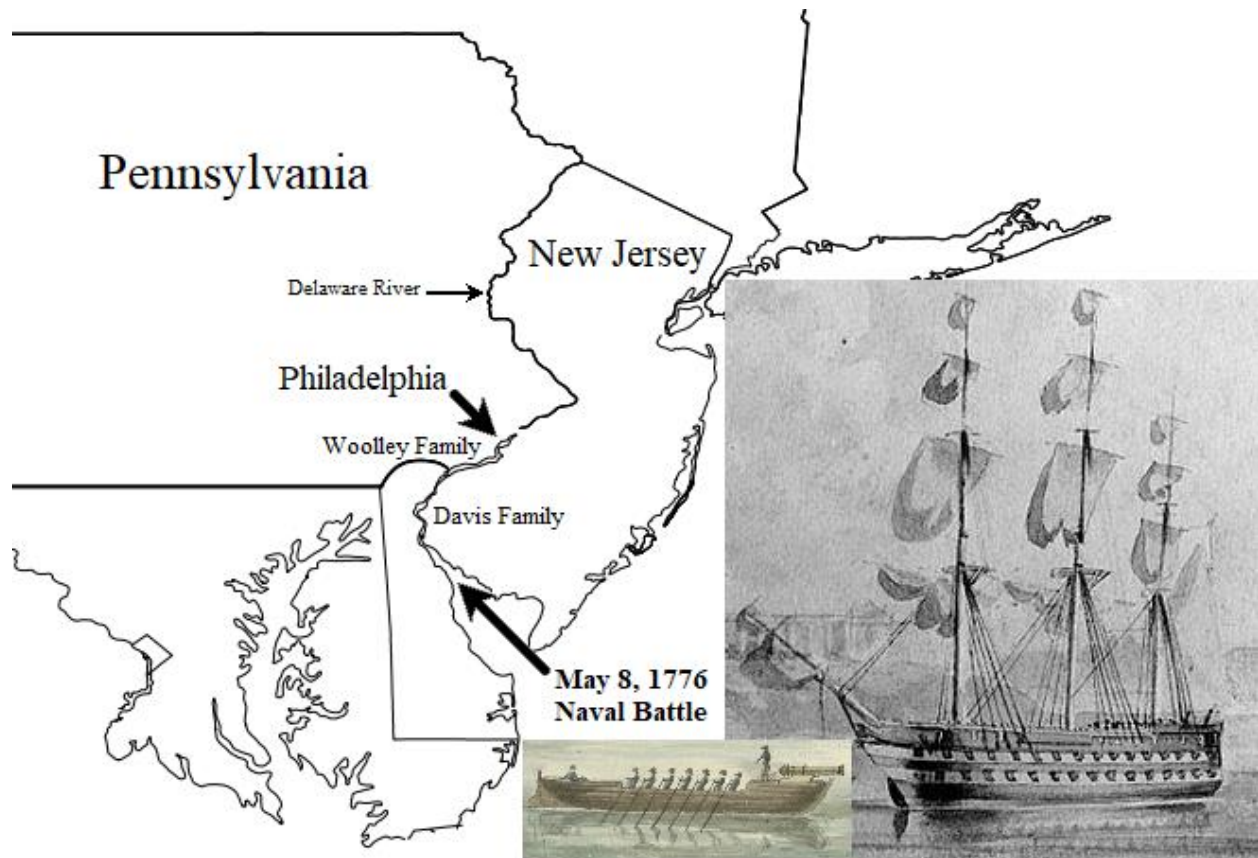
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**Nathan Davis** and **Sarah Woolley** had about 50 direct ancestors emigrate from England and Wales to the American Colonies, starting in the early 1600s.



Most of their ancestors were members of the *Religious Society of Friends*, which were also called “Quakers.” They began settling on farmland in New Jersey and Pennsylvania before the American Revolution in 1776.

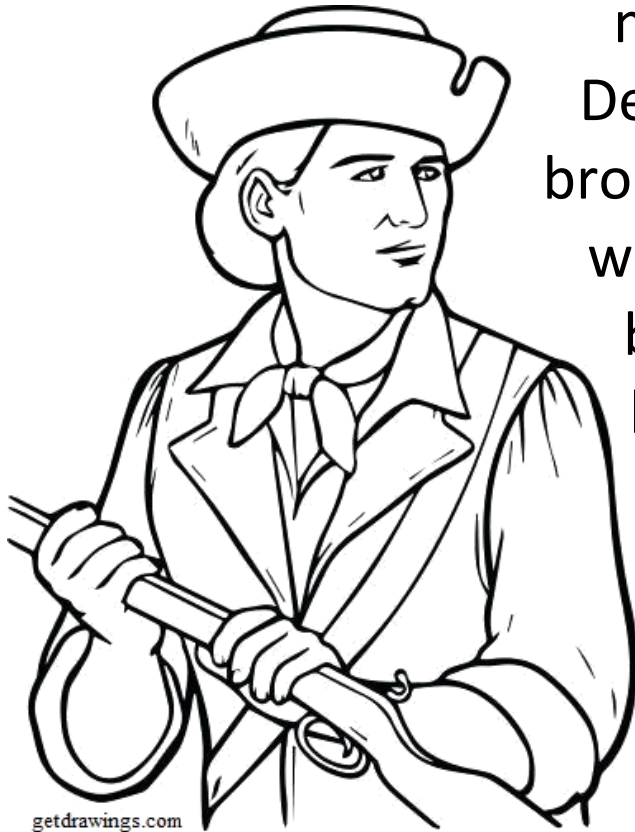
The Revolutionary War came close to their homes when British warships sailed toward Philadelphia on the Delaware River. Nathan and Sarah's grandfathers joined local militias to fight the invaders.



Two large British warships entered the Delaware River on May 5, 1776. They were repulsed by a dozen Pennsylvania row galleys (each with one gun) assisted by three small American warships. The battle lasted two full days on the Delaware River off Salem County, New Jersey where the Davis family lived. It caused every able-bodied citizen to flock to the riverbanks to watch the unique and unequal struggle. The invasion of the enemy stimulated enlistments of the militia.<sup>1</sup>

The news of the battle spread quickly upriver to Philadelphia where the Second Continental Congress was in session considering whether to break away from Great Britain. Only a few weeks later, on July 4, 1776, Congress issued the **Declaration of Independence**.

Nathan's grandfather, **Isaac Davis**, was about 23 years old when he joined the New Jersey militia as a wagoneer on December 2, 1776. He brought a four-horse team with him to cart the baggage of his militia's battalion.<sup>2</sup>

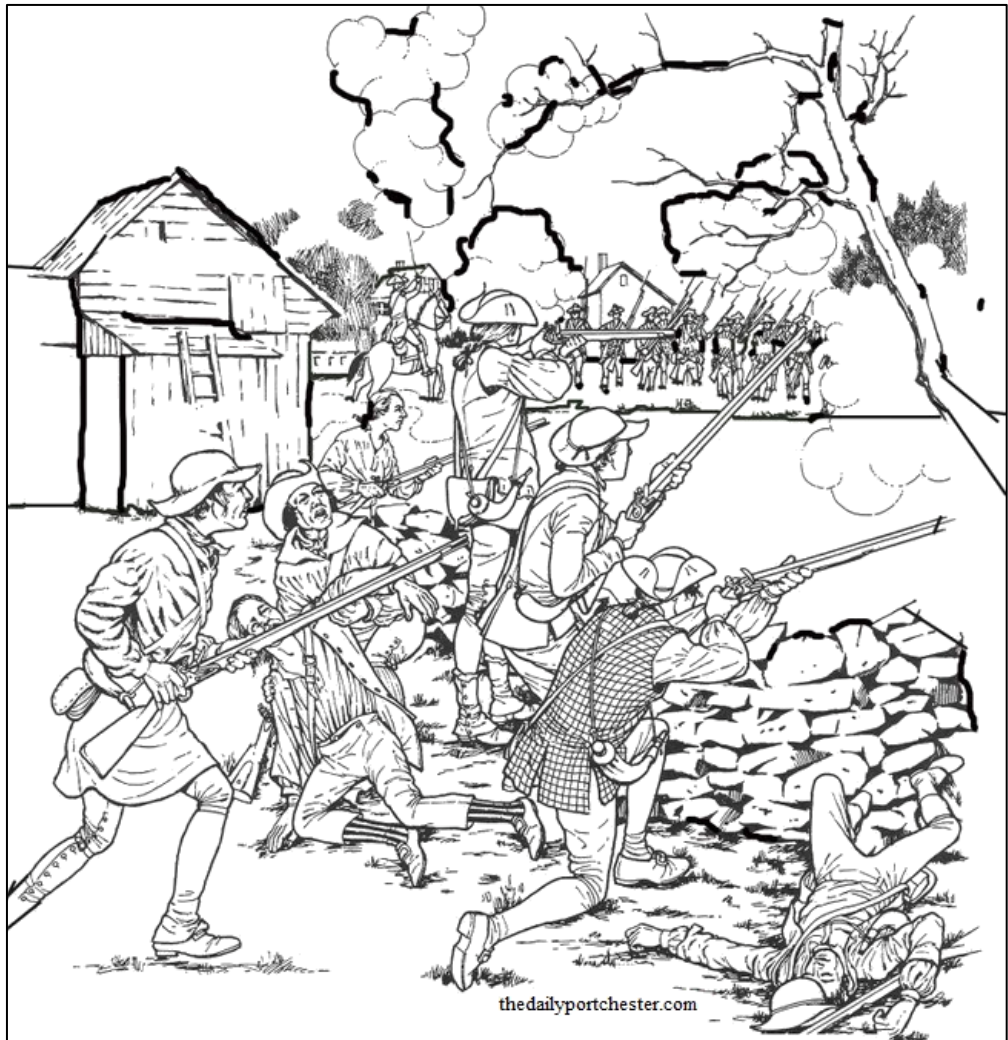


Militias were emergency soldiers, summoned from home on short notice. The militia lacked confidence on the battlefield, but General George Washington eventually concluded that if they had a regular army to support them and “look the enemy in the face,” some of these amateurs were willing to fight and could inflict significant damage on the enemy.<sup>3, 4, 5</sup>



The rich farmland of Salem County, where the Davis family lived, was raided by both American and British soldiers.<sup>6</sup> Washington's army was saved from starvation by a large herd of cattle that was driven from Salem to Valley Forge.

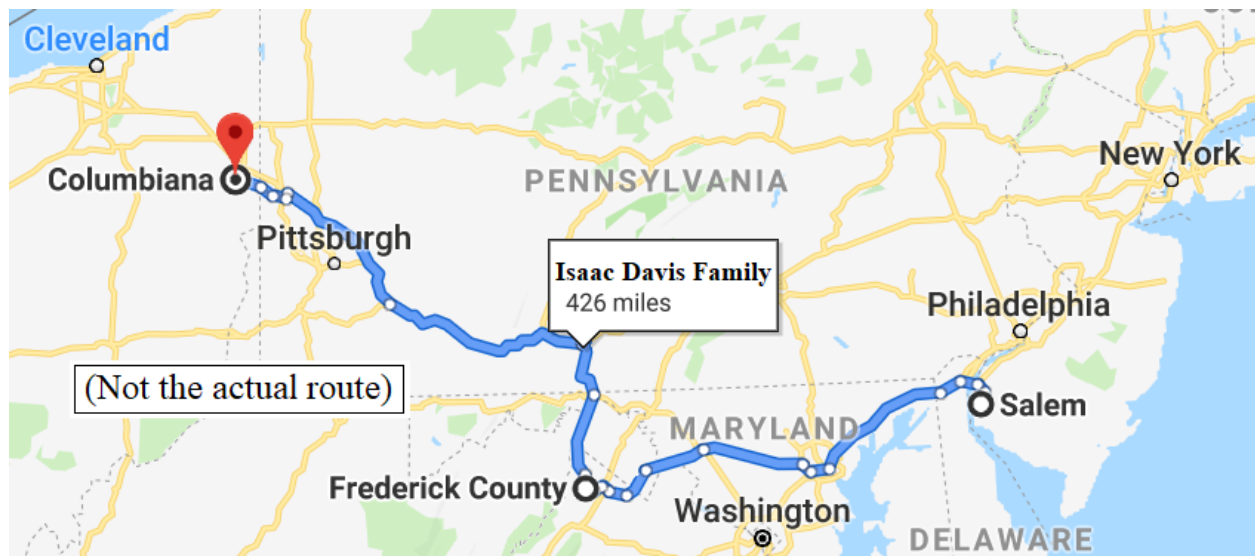
When British soldiers occupied Salem County in 1778, they took food, fodder, and anything else they wanted from farms.



The local militias fought the British fiercely during skirmishes when their homes and farms were being raided.<sup>7</sup> The war did significant damage in their towns.

Near the end of the war, **Isaac Davis** married **Hannah Hildebrand** and began a family. Their 5 children were born in **New Jersey**, but about 1790 the family moved with other Quakers to **Frederick County, Virginia**.<sup>8</sup>

Then in 1806 Isaac Davis moved his family to settle on wilderness-land in West Township of **Columbiana, Ohio**, in a place that would become known as East Rochester.<sup>9</sup>



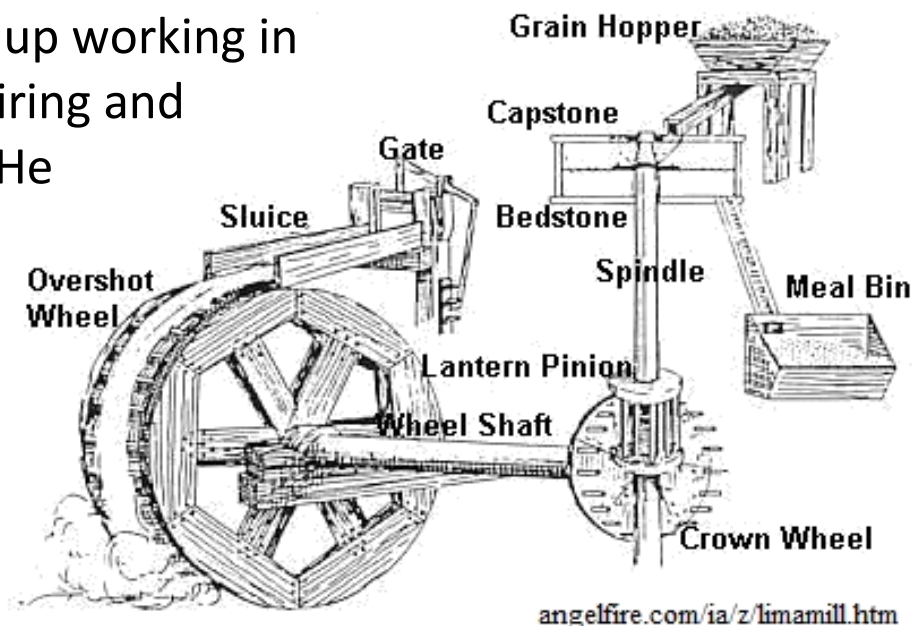
Isaac's family included himself (53) and his wife Hannah (51); their married daughter Mary (25) and her husband Thomas Edmonds (25) and baby Davis Edmonds (2); the unmarried children: Isaac Jr. (23), Elizabeth (21), Eleanor (20), and **David** (17). They were pioneers on unsettled, frontier lands.

Enough other Quaker families settled in Columbiana county for them to organize a monthly meeting. Each of Isaac's children found mates among the other Quakers and were married. They built homes and farmed.

Isaac's youngest son, **David**, was 24 years old in 1813 when he married **Rachel John** (22). About 1820, when their oldest child, **Nathan**, was 7 years old, David built one of the best water-powered mills in the county.<sup>10, 11</sup>

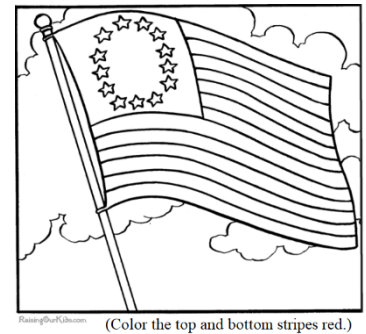


**Nathan** grew up working in the mill, repairing and upgrading it. He learned valuable mechanical skills for his life's occupation.

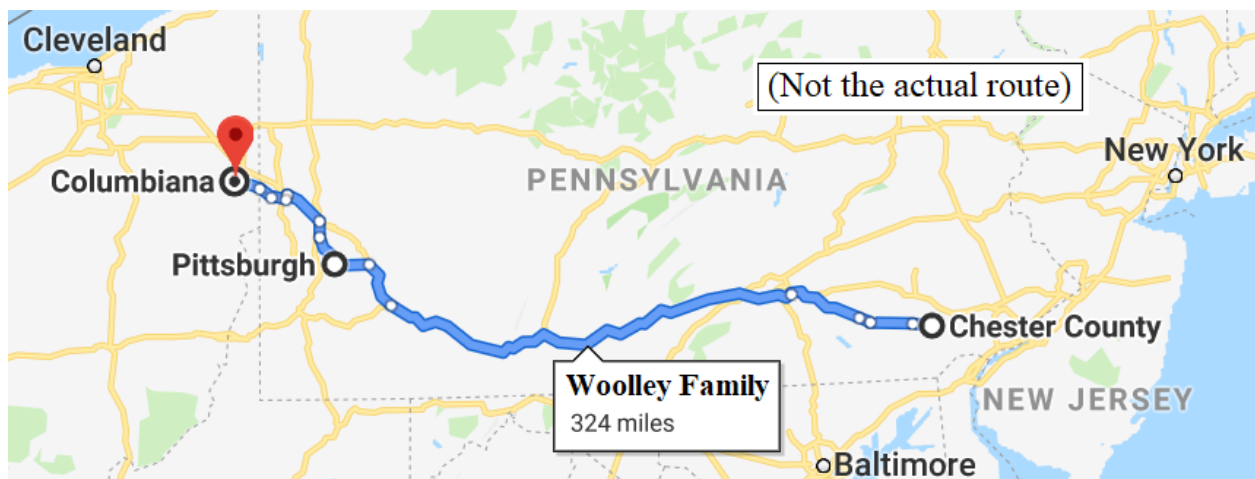


Nathan became an expert with waterwheel-powered machinery, which was a principal source of industrial energy during his lifetime.

Nathan's future wife, **Sarah Woolley**, lived in Chester County, Pennsylvania, where the Revolutionary War's Battle of Brandywine took place in 1777. The British won that battle and occupied Philadelphia for 9 months. Both of Sarah's grandfathers served in the Pennsylvania militias during the war.



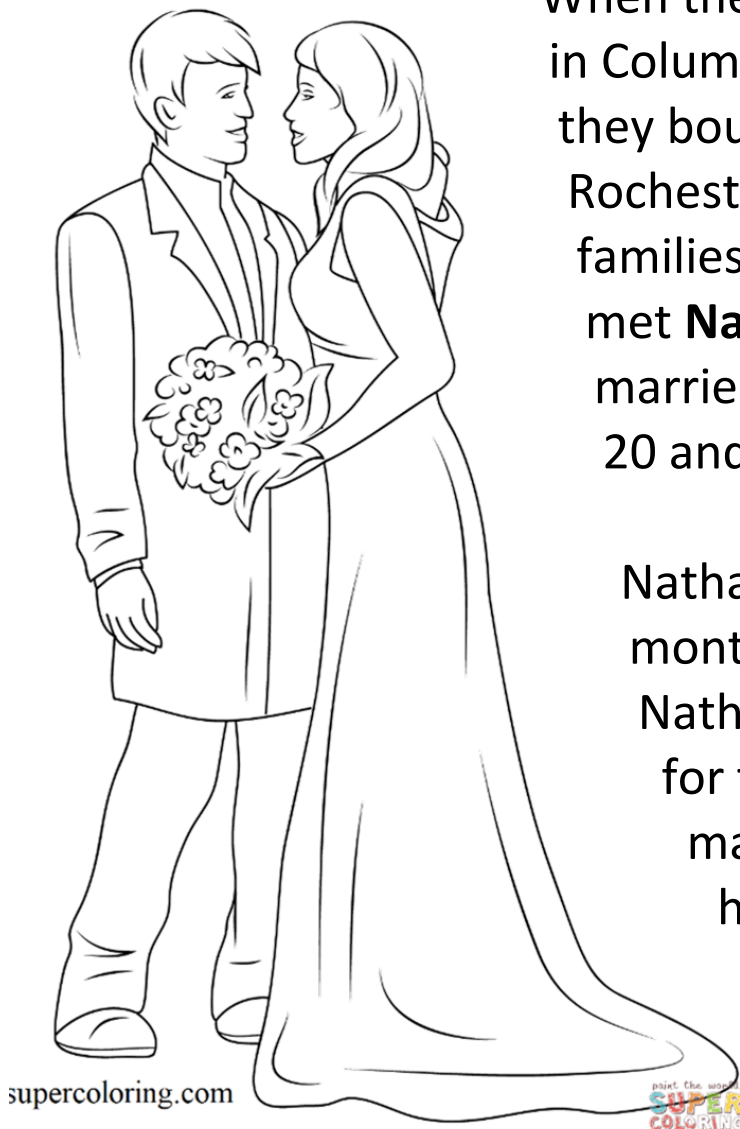
Sarah's mother died in 1826 when she was only 11 years old. When several families of her friends and neighbors decided to move to Ohio in 1830, her oldest brother, **Edwin**, went after them to marry one of their daughters. After he brought his bride back to Chester County, the Woolley family made plans to move to Ohio themselves, but then Sarah's father got sick and died!



Edwin assumed leadership of the Woolley family and they all moved to Columbiana County, Ohio in 1833.



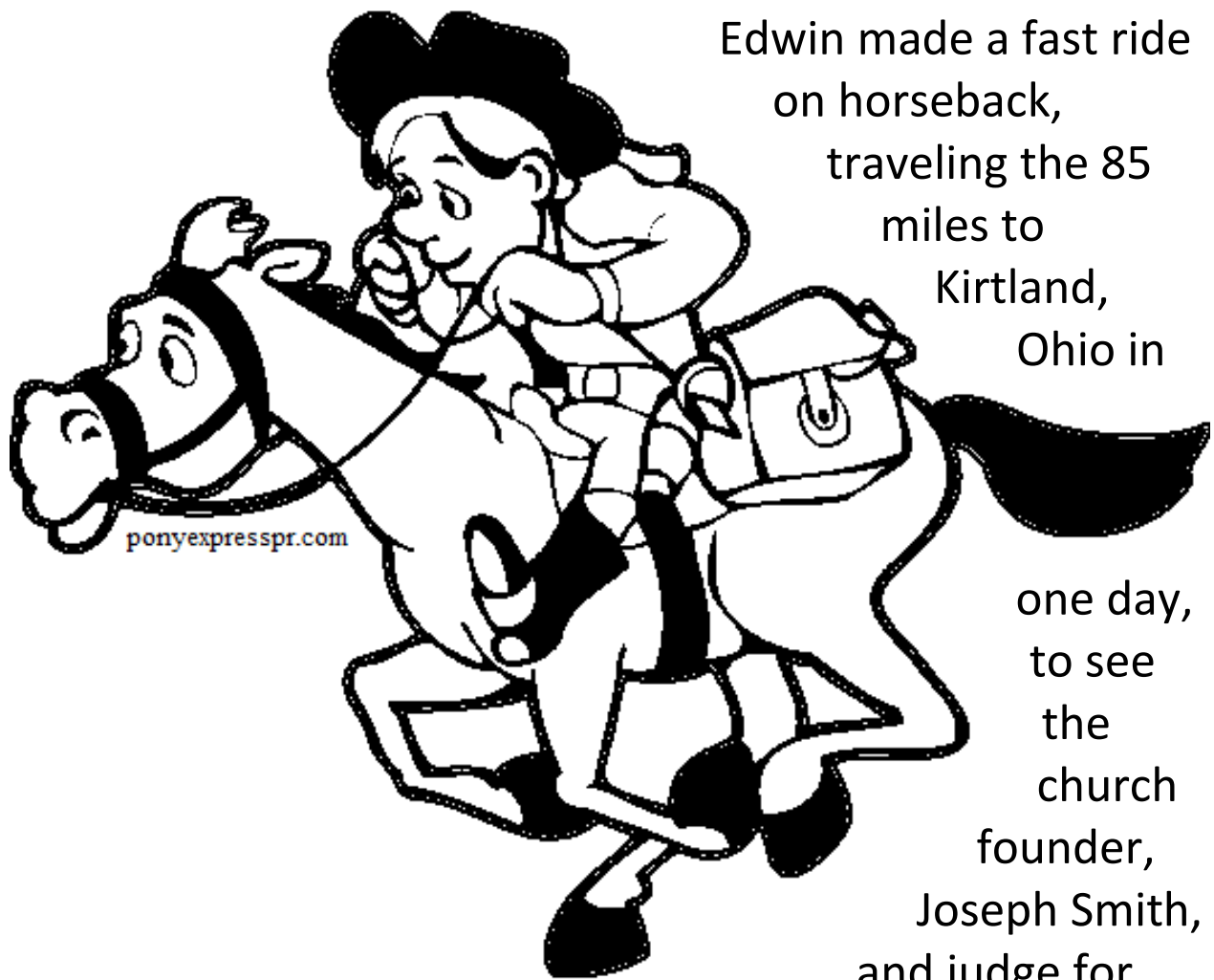
The traveling family included: **Edwin Dilworth Woolley** (26), his wife **Mary Wickersham** (25) with their baby John W. (1); Taylor Hoopes Woolley (23) and his wife Mary Edwards (23) with their two babies, Rachel (2) and George (3 months); **Sarah Woolley** (18), Susan Woolley (14), the twins John Mills Woolley (10) and Phebe Ann Woolley (10), Samuel Amos Woolley (8), and a black boy named John (14).<sup>12</sup>



When the Woolley family arrived in Columbiana County, Ohio, they bought land near East Rochester, where the Davis families lived. **Sarah Woolley** met **Nathan Davis**. They married in 1836, when she was 20 and he was 21.

Nathan's father died 5 months after they married. Nathan became responsible for the family estate. They made their home in a log house that Nathan built for them, probably near the mill where he worked.

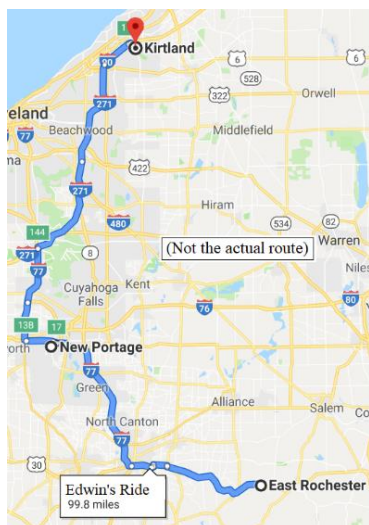
Nathan and Sarah began hearing about a new religion in nearby Kirtland, Ohio with the nickname “**Mormons**.”<sup>13</sup> In the spring of 1837, Nathan’s uncle, Isaac Davis, Jr., and his family joined that new Church. Later that same year, Sarah’s brother, Edwin, and his wife, Mary, investigated the Mormons. Mary was baptized into the Church, which caused much soul-searching for Edwin.



Edwin made a fast ride  
on horseback,  
traveling the 85  
miles to  
Kirtland,  
Ohio in

one day,  
to see  
the  
church  
founder,  
Joseph Smith,  
and judge for

himself, whether Joseph could possibly be a prophet of God as he claimed to be.



When Edwin got to Kirtland, he discovered hostility that made it unsafe for Joseph Smith to be there. However, he learned that the prophet's father had fled to New Portage with Egyptian mummies and some papyrus scrolls that contained sacred writings.

Edwin went to New Portage and persuaded the prophet's father to come to the safety of his home in East Rochester. They transported the mummies and scrolls to Edwin's home, where the elder Smith remained for part of that winter.<sup>14</sup>

Edwin received the answers to his many questions about Joseph Smith and the Church from his guest, so he too was baptized a member.

The Woolleys helped get the mummies and scrolls to Joseph Smith in Missouri.<sup>15</sup>



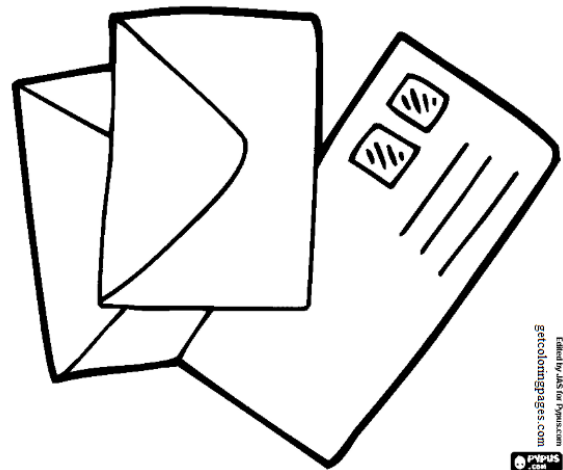
getcoloringpages.com

Sarah's brother, Edwin, was chosen to lead the **East Rochester branch of the Church**. In the fall of 1839, the branch decided to move to Quincy, Illinois to be with other Mormons who were gathering there. Edwin finely met Joseph Smith there. He went with Joseph to select land for a new Mormon settlement to be called Nauvoo.

Besides **Edwin's** family, the **Isaac Davis, Jr.** family (Nathan's uncle) made the move. Sarah's cousins from Chester, Pennsylvania (**children of uncle Caleb Dilworth**) also joined the Mormons and moved to Nauvoo, Illinois. In 1844, Nathan and Sarah took their family and traveled to Nauvoo to visit their Mormon relatives.<sup>16</sup> They may have been there when Joseph Smith was martyred.

**Nathan and Sarah** returned to East Rochester to raise their growing family:

Rachel Hannah Davis born 5 March 1837  
Edwin Woolley Davis born 16 August 1838  
Albert Westley Davis born 25 Apr 1841  
Milton Herbert Davis born 4 May 1846



They got news about their Mormon relatives; how they escaped from Nauvoo in 1846 and were led by Brigham Young to the Great Salt Lake Valley. They learned that uncle Isaac Davis, Jr. had died on his journey west.



In the spring of 1850, Sarah's brother, Edwin, traveled east from Salt Lake City to buy merchandise that was unavailable in the Salt Lake Valley. He stopped at their home in East Rochester for a visit and to preach the gospel to them. Edwin continued east to do his buying, but on his return trip he stopped at their home again.

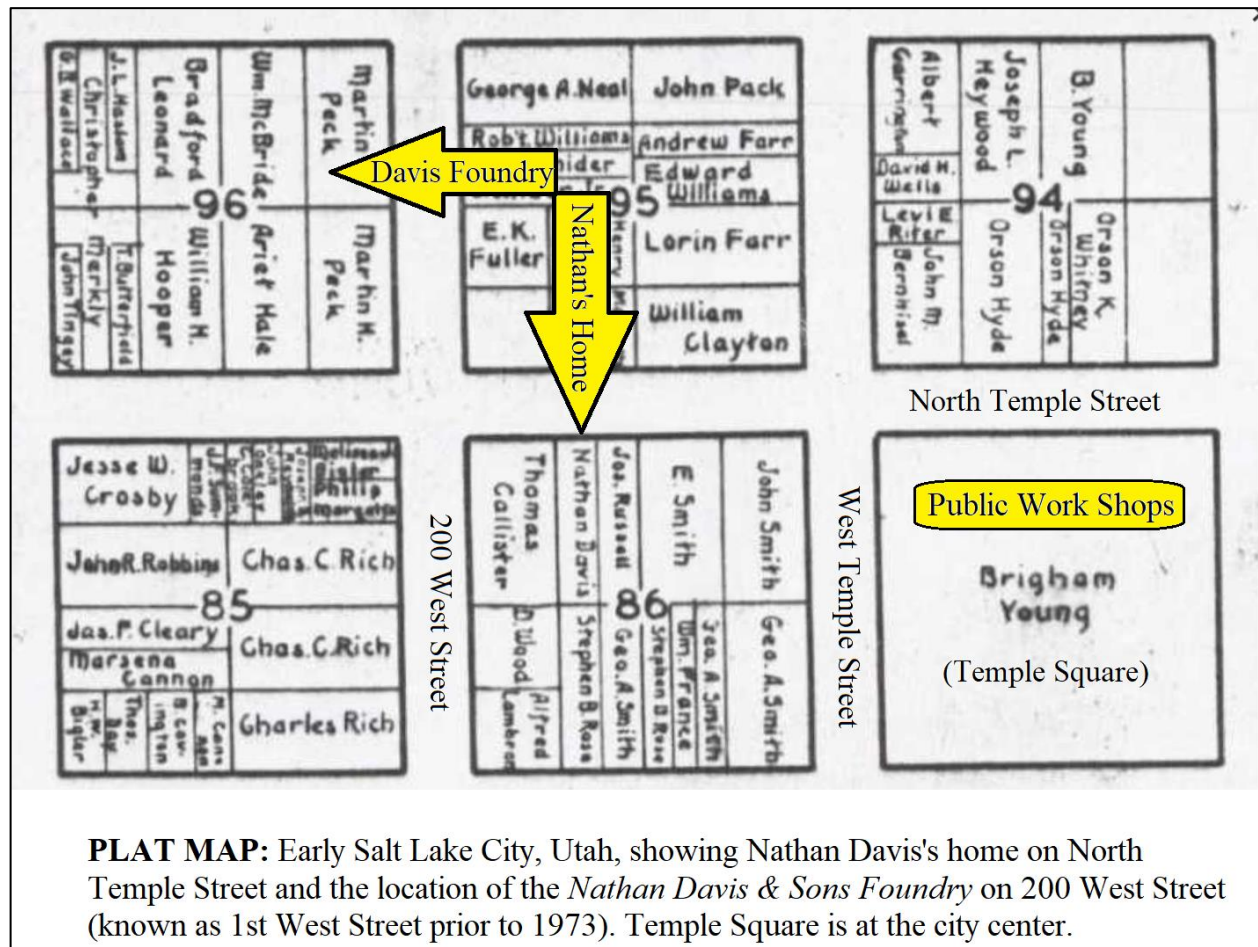
This time, **Sarah told Nathan** she wanted to be baptized. Nathan gave his consent, so they went down to a small stream near the house where Edwin baptized his sister, Sarah. As soon as they came out of the water, Nathan took off his coat and vest and asked to be baptized too. Edwin went back into the stream and baptized his brother-in-law. <sup>17, 18</sup>



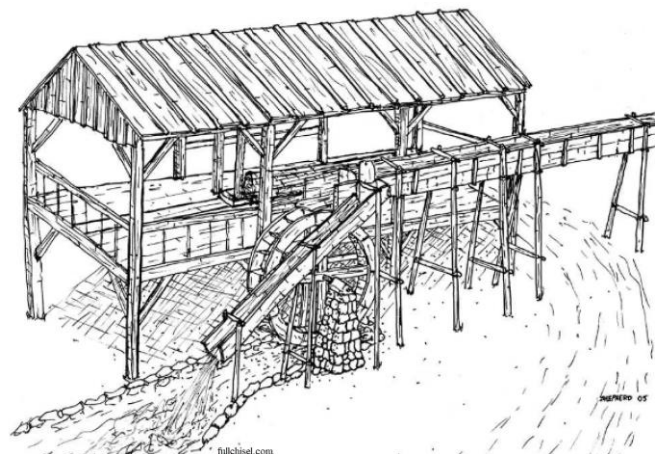
The next year, Nathan and Sarah moved to Utah with their children; Rachel (14), Edwin (12), Albert (10), and Milton (5). The first thousand miles of their trip was by steamboat, the last thousand was by covered wagon.



They arrived in Salt Lake City in late September 1851. Nathan chose a central place for their home, just one city block west of the temple lot on North Temple Street.



Nathan built and operated a sawmill in Little Cottonwood Canyon.<sup>19</sup> His older sons worked with him to get logs and saw lumber.



Nathan's mechanical skills were noticed. In 1853, Brigham Young appointed him to be over the **machine shops** of the public works.<sup>20</sup> The shops were located near his home and he served there for several years.

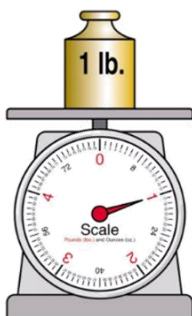


**Public Works Shops:** When early immigrants arrived in the Salt Lake Valley, they needed employment and a place to make things they needed, so the Church set up "public works" facilities within the walls of the temple block (before temple construction began).

There was a carpenter shop, a large blacksmith shop, a machine shop, where they **manufactured mill parts and other machinery**, and a paint shop. People could be employed in the public works shops until they found other jobs, or they could use the shop facilities to manufacture items they needed for their homes or businesses.<sup>21</sup>

City Creek flowed through the Public Works area and a 16-foot diameter waterwheel provided power for lathes in Nathan's machine shop and the carpentry shop. It also pumped air through a 297-foot-long duct to operate air blasts needed for the blacksmith shop.<sup>22</sup>

For almost 20 years, Nathan served as the Territorial **sealer of weights and measures**. He was the government official who checked commercial scales to be sure they were accurate. If the scale showed the honest weight, he would put a seal or sticker on the scale to show that it weighed things accurately.



Nathan was soon called to be bishop of the 17<sup>th</sup> Ward in Salt Lake City. While bishop, he married a plural wife,



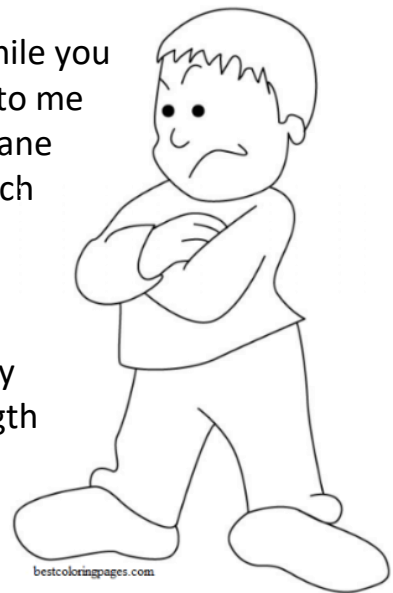
**Lavina Newberry Morris**, who was 30 years younger than he. She and her children lived in the same Davis household with his first wife, Sarah, and her children.<sup>23, 24, 25</sup> Lavina died at age 35 while trying to give birth to their 8<sup>th</sup> child in 1879.<sup>26</sup>

During the 14 years that Nathan served as bishop of the 17<sup>th</sup> Ward, his brother-in-law, Edwin D. Woolley (who baptized him) was bishop of the adjacent 13<sup>th</sup> Ward in Salt Lake City. As bishop, Nathan sometimes had to give counsel to his ward members, such as these words written to certain persons by letters:

"...in regard to the conduct of some of your children. While you were away last winter, complaint after complaint came to me about their insulting and abusive conduct and their profane language.... Something must be done to put a stop to such conduct...."

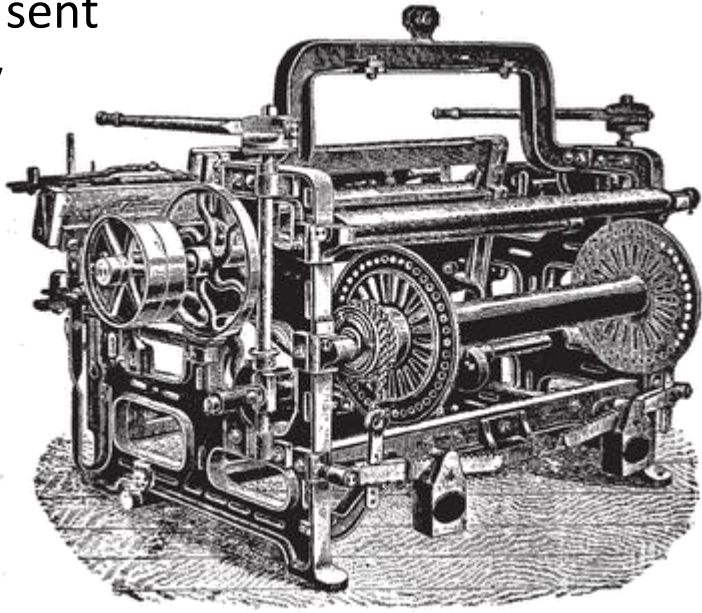


"It becomes my duty as your Bishop to try to settle a difficulty that has for a considerable length of time existed between you and your first wife. ...kind words and kind treatment will do wonders in allaying hard feelings." <sup>27</sup>



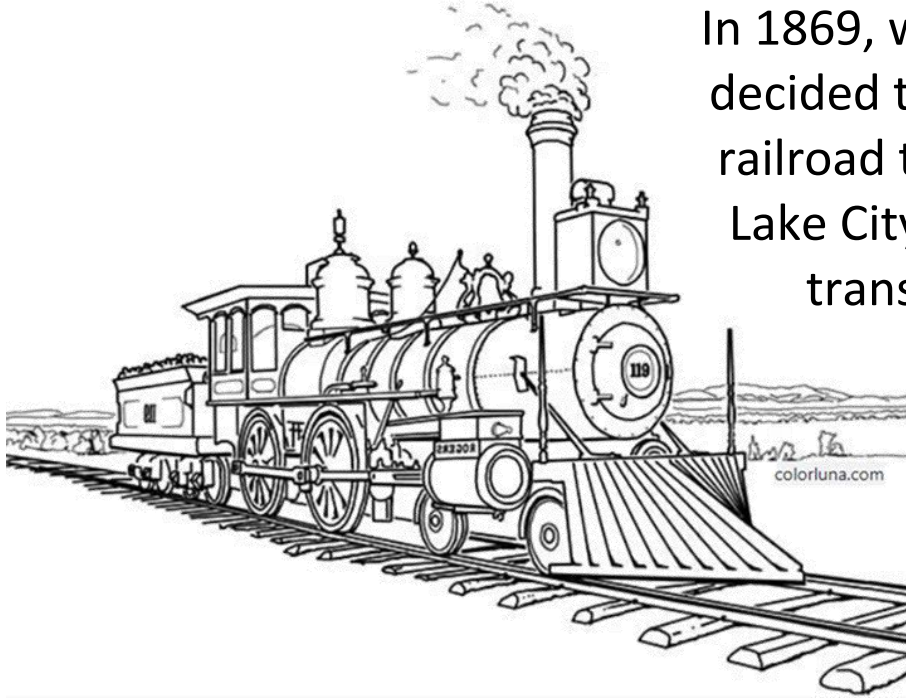


In 1867, Brigham Young sent Nathan back east to buy machinery for the manufacture of woolen goods in Utah. Nathan shipped \$30,000 worth of equipment by railroad to Julesburg, Colorado and then by ox-train to the Salt Lake Valley. The machinery was used for woolen mills in Salt Lake and Ogden. They were powered by creek water flowing over waterwheels.



*S. L. City Dec 28<sup>th</sup> 1870  
 To Pres B. Young  
 St. George  
 Shafting for Provo woolen factory  
 Shipped 10<sup>th</sup> inst. Cost sixteen hundred  
 eighty Dollars thirty three cents (\$1680.<sup>33</sup>).  
 Be Smoot informed me a few  
 days ago that the Buildings  
 would be ready for machinery  
 in May.  
 Do you wish me to do anything  
 about ordering it  
 Nathan Davis*

Brigham Young continued to use Nathan to help build the factories that Utah needed to grow economically. They corresponded about the machinery and waterwheel power-shafting needed for the new woolen factory being built in Provo.<sup>27</sup>



In 1869, when Utah decided to build its own railroad to connect Salt Lake City with the transcontinental railroad at Ogden, Nathan became a master mechanic in

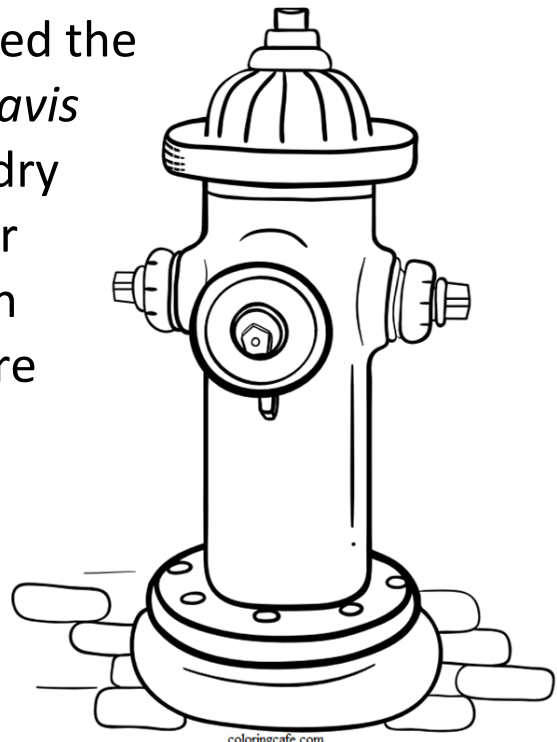
the Utah Central Railway's maintenance shop.

A **foundry** uses molds to make metal casts of objects. Hot molten metal is poured into the molds.

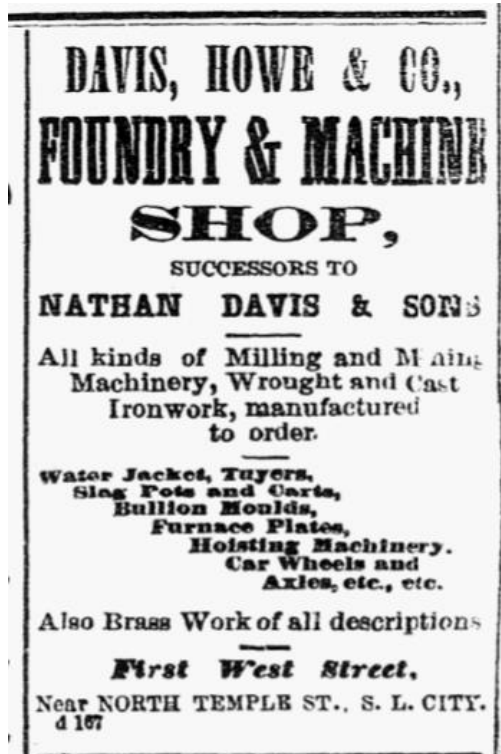
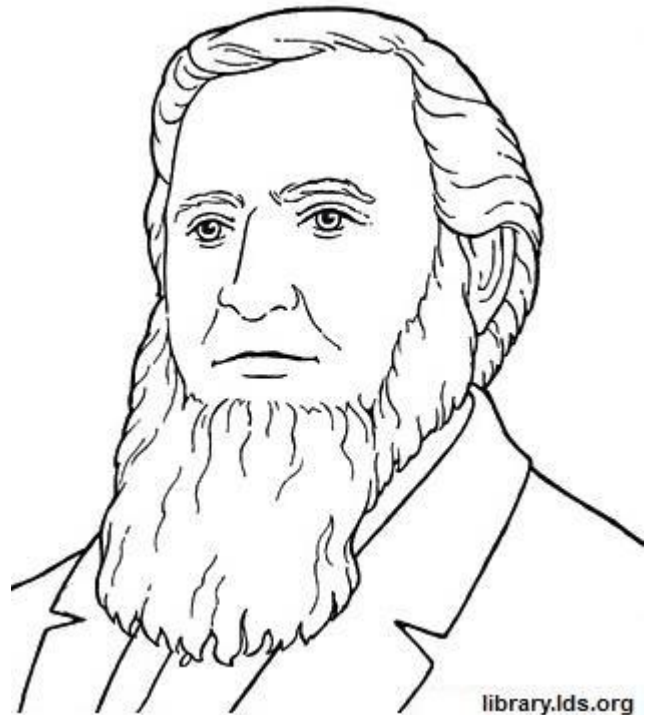
In 1873, Nathan established a **foundry** near his home called the *Nathan Davis*

*& Sons Foundry*. Nathan's foundry made metal machinery parts for milling and mining companies in Utah. Later, they made many fire hydrants for Salt Lake City.<sup>28</sup>

Nathan helped build a silk factory<sup>29</sup> and did professional weaving on his looms.<sup>30, 31</sup>



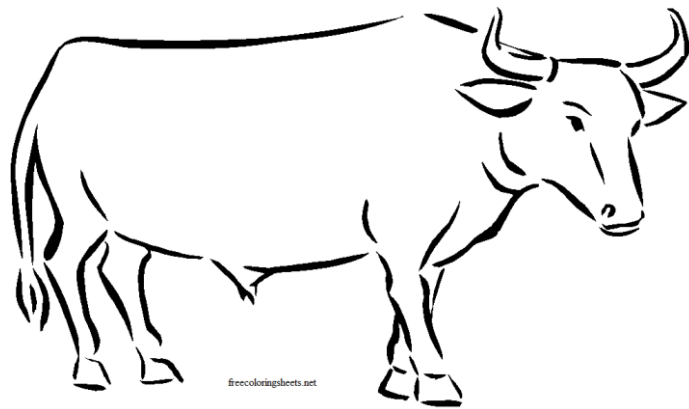
In the spring of 1873, Brigham Young came to Nathan with a special request. The St. George Temple was under construction and would need a baptismal font. Brigham proposed that Nathan should build the baptismal font, including casting twelve, life-size, iron oxen that would support the font on their backs.<sup>32</sup>



Nathan knew he didn't have the skill to make molds for life-size oxen, but he knew a young man in his ward who had such training. Amos Howe accepted the invitation to work on the font and oxen project on condition that he be made a partner in the foundry. Nathan agreed and the foundry was renamed the *Davis, Howe & Company*.



A search was made to find the “perfect ox” to be used as

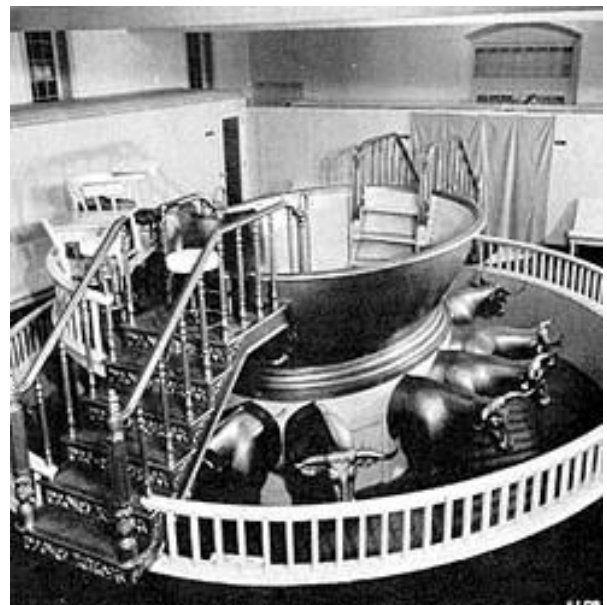


a model for a carved, wooden ox-sculpture.

The wood carving was then used to make moist-sand molds for the various parts of the

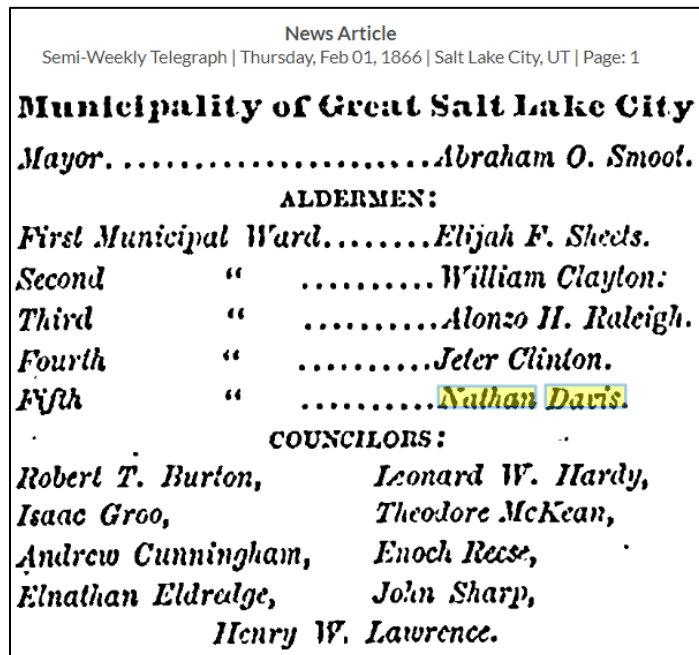
iron oxen. It took many castings to get all the iron-ox parts needed and they had to fit together perfectly to make the finished font.

In July 1875, Nathan freighted the finished font-parts to St. George, first by



rail and then by special wagons. The parts were taken directly into the temple basement, where Nathan bolted and welded the font together. The temple was not finished and ready for dedication until April 1877.



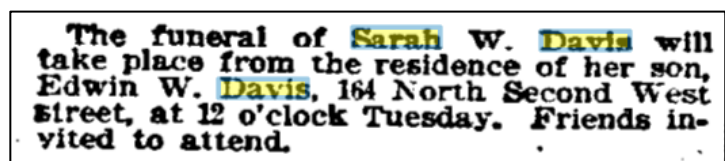


Nathan served in numerous positions of trust and honor in the Salt Lake City area. He was a school trustee.

He was elected to the city council as an alderman, which is like being a “mini-mayor” over part of the city.<sup>33</sup>

Nathan was serving as a stake patriarch when he died 29 December 1894 in Salt Lake City.<sup>34</sup> His wife, Sarah Woolley, died about four months later, on 10 May 1895 in Salt Lake City.<sup>35</sup>

It was Sarah who made their house on



North Temple Street into the stable home that the family needed. Sarah accepted Nathan’s second wife, Lavina N. Morris, into her household and when Lavina died in childbirth, Sarah cared for Lavina’s surviving children until they were adults. Sarah took care of the essential things, like the children’s nutrition, health, education, and welfare. Thank you, Sarah.

Which child is your ancestor?<sup>36</sup> Check the box:

<b>Children of Nathan Davis and Sarah Woolley</b>				
Name	Birth	Death	Married	Children
<input type="checkbox"/> Rachel Hannah Davis	5 Mar 1837	17 Jan 1882	John Bethewel Thatcher Sr	11
<input type="checkbox"/> Edwin Woolley Davis	16 Aug 1838	2 Dec 1916	Elizabeth Shepherd Derrick	12
<input type="checkbox"/> " "	" "	" "	Matilda Eleanora Egbert	7
Marvin Taylor Davis	28 Feb 1840	16 Aug 1840		
<input type="checkbox"/> Albert Westley Davis	25 Apr 1841	3 Dec 1928	Melissa Jane Lambson	9
<input type="checkbox"/> " "	" "	" "	Anne Lois Bacon	5
Charles Lewis Davis	19 Apr 1843	21 Sep 1843		
<input type="checkbox"/> Milton Herbert Davis	4 May 1846	28 Aug 1890	Evelyn Louise Young	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Sarah Maria Davis	14 Oct 1852	1 Oct 1935	John Bethewel Thatcher Sr	9
John Nathan Davis	7 Nov 1854	3 Mar 1855		
<input type="checkbox"/> David Franklin Davis Sr	7 Jun 1857	12 Aug 1917	Martha Musser Sheets	4
<b>Children of Nathan Davis and Lavina Newberry Morris</b>				
Name	Birth	Death	Married	Children
<input type="checkbox"/> Hannah Maria Davis	4 Mar 1864	22 Nov 1934	Osmond Nicholas LeCheminant	12
Lavina Ann Davis	7 Dec 1865	22 Apr 1895	Benjamin Hatton Hollingworth	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Nathan Davis	30 Aug 1868	2 Jan 1923	Sarah Wakeman Willimott	6
Abigail Davis	23 Oct 1870	23 Oct 1870		
<input type="checkbox"/> William Baylis Davis	20 Nov 1871	11 Dec 1948	Hannah Adeline Larson	8
Eli Davis	22 Sep 1873	28 Oct 1890		
<input type="checkbox"/> Harriet Davis	24 Jan 1876	1 Feb 1954	John William Jenkins	10

## References:

<sup>1</sup> The history of Salem County, New Jersey by Joseph S. Sickler. 1937. pages 147 – 148.

<sup>2</sup> Muster Roll - N.J. Militia, 2 Battalion, D, -- Muster Roll of Cap. Peter D. Vroom's Company of Malitia [sic] (Revolutionary War.) Roll dated Newark, Nov 21, 1776. Remarks: "Monday Dec 2, 1776 Isaac Davis joined us with a four horse team to cart the baggage of our Battalion."

<sup>3</sup> Militias: <https://allthingsliberty.com/2013/12/militia-continentals/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://hartnation.com/the-colonial-militia-during-the-revolutionary-war/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-ushistory/chapter/american-life-during-the-revolution/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://visitsalemcountynj.com/about-salem-county/our-history/>

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<sup>7</sup> <https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/salem-county-new-jersey/>

<sup>8</sup> Isaac Davis Family History - Isaac Davis, Jr. - by Carol Buchmiller. Contributed to Family Search memory LTLC-MQY by Carol H Nielson 19 April 2015

<sup>9</sup> P.W. Parkinson, The Utah Woolley Family. Deseret News Press, Salt Lake City, Utah. p. 143

<sup>10</sup> William B. McCord. 1905. History of Columbiana County, Ohio and Representative Citizens. Biographical Publishing Co. Chicago, Illinois. p. 118. "The Davis mill north of East Rochester was built about 1820 by David Davis, whose father, Isaac Davis was one of the pioneers of the county. This was considered for many years one of the best saw and grist-mills in the county, and for long time supplied a large proportion of people of West and adjoining townships with flour, mill-feed, and manufactured lumber."

<sup>11</sup> **Overshot mill drawing:** A Sectional Model for Slone's Grist Mill's New Water Wheel. The sectional model for the new water wheel was constructed by Master Craftsman Perry L. Forbes, Inventor and Master Woodworker. Seen at: [angelfire.com/journal/millrestoration/model.html](http://angelfire.com/journal/millrestoration/model.html)

<sup>12</sup> L. J. Arrington. 1976. From Quaker to Latter-day Saint - Bishop Edwin Woolley. Deseret Book Company, Salt Lake City. Utah. 592 p.

<sup>13</sup> The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Church members were sometimes called "Mormons" after their new book of scripture, named the Book of Mormon.

<sup>14</sup> P.W. Parkinson, The Utah Woolley Family. Deseret News Press, Salt Lake City, Utah. p. 89

<sup>15</sup> Ray L. Huntington and Keith J. Wilson, "From Kirtland, Ohio, to Far West, Missouri: Following the Trail of the Mormon Mummies," *Religious Educator* 2, no. 1 (2001): 94–103.

<sup>16</sup> P.W. Parkinson, The Utah Woolley Family. Deseret News Press, Salt Lake City, Utah. p. 268

<sup>17</sup> L. J. Arrington. 1976. From Quaker to Latter-day Saint - Bishop Edwin Woolley. Deseret Book Company, Salt Lake City. Utah. Pp 265-266.

<sup>18</sup> P.W. Parkinson, The Utah Woolley Family. Deseret News Press, Salt Lake City, Utah. p. 145

<sup>19</sup> Mecham, Nola Saville Davis. 1968. *Life Story of Edwin Woolley Davis*. Contributed to FamilySearch memories (KWCC-K69) by Karen Coopridge 2 Nov 2018.

<sup>20</sup> P.W. Parkinson, The Utah Woolley Family. Deseret News Press, Salt Lake City, Utah. p. 146

<sup>21</sup> Anon. 1918. *Early Industries*. The Children's Friend. The Deseret News, Salt Lake City, Utah. Vol XVII. p.155.

<sup>22</sup> Raynor, Wallace Alan. 1961. *HISTORY OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SALT LAKE TEMPLE*. Master's Thesis, Department of History, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. pp 29-32.

<sup>23</sup> United States Census, 1870," database with images, FamilySearch. (shows Levina and 3 children living in the same household with Sarah and 2 children).

<sup>24</sup> United States Census, 1880," database with images, FamilySearch. (shows "Lenna N Davis" [even though Levina N Davis died nine months before the census was taken] and Levina's 6 living children, dwelling in the same household with Sarah W. Davis and her youngest child).

<sup>25</sup> Davis, L. L. . *Family History of William Baylis Davis* [Levina's son]. In FamilySearch Memories of William Baylis Davis KWCH-51S contributed by LDINSE2 on 18 October 2017.

<sup>26</sup> Lavina Newberry Morris was born 13 July 1844 in Nauvoo, Illinois and died 2 September 1879 in Brigham City, Utah. Buried in Salt Lake City Cemetery, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>27</sup> Nathan Davis papers, Accn 275, Box [ ]. Special Collections and Archives. University of Utah, J. Willard Marriott Library. Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>28</sup> Blog. 1990. *Davis, Howe & Co.* Leaves and Nuts. <http://leavesandnuts.blogspot.com/>

<sup>29</sup> Salt Lake Herald. Thursday, Jun 03, 1880. Salt Lake City, UT. Vol: 10. Page: 4

<sup>30</sup> Deseret News. Wednesday, Sep 10, 1856. Salt Lake City, UT. Page: 10

<sup>31</sup> Salt Lake Herald. Thursday, Dec 25, 1891. Salt Lake City, UT. Page: 27

<sup>32</sup> Yorgason, B. M., R. A. Schmutz, D. D. Alder. 2013. *All that was promised – The St. George Temple and the Unfolding of the Restoration*. Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, Utah. p. 197 – 204.

<sup>33</sup> Email correspondence with Nicole Smedley of the Salt Lake City Recorder's office on July 23, 2019.

<sup>34</sup> Deseret Evening News. Saturday, Dec 29, 1894. Nathan Davis Obituary. Salt Lake City, UT. Vol: 28. Page: 2

<sup>35</sup> Salt Lake Herald. Monday, May 13, 1895. Sarah W. Davis Obituary. Salt Lake City, UT. Page: 9

<sup>36</sup> The list of Nathan Davis's children and the numbers of their children came from FamilySearch on July 19, 2019.