

The Story of Rachel Martin Davis
by Patsy Edgar

Note: One of several families allowed to remain in Georgia on his "Reservation" of 640 acres, when the Cherokee people were removed in 1838, to the west, Cherokee Nation (Oklahoma).

Our ancestor matriarch is Rachel Sabra Martin Davis, also known as Sootyhead.

She was born on March 1, 1788 and died on September 23, 1843. Hers was an impressive family history. Her great grandmother was Eughioote, "Mary Cherokee," of the Long Hair Clan. Eughioote was the granddaughter of Corn Tassel--Tegahneyeskee--who was born about 1670 at Chota and the daughter of First to Kill--Kanyanteehee--. Her brother, Old Tassel or "The Tassel" succeeded Oconostota as Chief in 1783 and was killed in 1788 under a flag of truce. Eughioote married Ludovic Grant in 1726. He was a Scotsman stripped of his titles and removed from his homeland for his participation in the Jacobite Rebellion. He was an Indian Trader respected by both Indians and whites and friend and advisor to Governor Glenn of South Carolina. Rachel's father was Colonel John Martin. Her mother was Susannah Emory. Susannah is recognized as the "mother of numerous Cherokee leaders." One of Susannah's sons, John Martin, was Treasurer and Chief Justice of the Cherokee Nation.

He drew up the plans for New Echota, the new capital commissioned by the Tsalagi Tinilawigi (the Cherokee National Committee and Council).

Rachel married Daniel Davis, known as Taweeseh, on November 1, 1808 in South Carolina. He was born on February 8, 1785. His parents were John and Hannah Pierce Davis. Little is known of his origins. It is thought he was born in Albermarle County, Virginia. There is speculation that he was related to Jefferson Davis. (At one time Lee Davis was said to have a letter from Jefferson Davis expressing his enjoyment of a visit to Daniel.)

Rachel and Daniel are thought to have immigrated first to Little River (Wilkes County, Ga), then to what was later defined as the Hickory

Log (fifth) District of the Cherokee Nation when the Tsalagi Tinilawigi divided the remaining Cherokee Territory into eight districts in 1820 (and is now known as Lumpkin County, Ga). Through Rachel's negotiations, Daniel claimed land in Indian Territory from Larmon Forks to what is now Dahlonega - an area five miles wide and six miles deep. By the February 27, 1819 Treaty between the United States Government and the Cherokee, Daniel claimed a "reservation" of 640 acres in "the right" of Rachel. John Martin, as National Treasurer and present delegate to Congress; Jeter Lynch, Rachel's sister's husband; George Parris; and Walter S. Adair also received reservations in Georgia by this same Treaty.

Georgia laws became increasingly hostile to Cherokees as the Georgians became more and more desirous of Cherokee lands. Gold was discovered near Dahlonega in 1828. The lottery of Cherokee lands began in Lumpkin County and incorporated in 1832 on land won in the lottery from Daniel. Daniel retained 160 acres through an 1833 Georgia law which provided for white men heading Indian families to retain property rights on behalf of their families.

Daniel fought bitter but fruitless legal battles to retain the balance of his land and bought much of it back. The Treaty of New Echota was signed in 1835 and the Trail of Tears began in 1838. Many of Rachel's family and friends were removed. It is speculated that she escaped removal through the influence of prominent white friends, perhaps the same white friends who influenced Daniel's appointment as Justice of the Peace in the 830th District Company of Militia in 1835.

Rachel lived only five years after the removal. Daniel's prominence in Cherokee affairs continued. He was one of the administrators dispensing claim funds associated with the Siler Roll of 1851. Seven of his children were paid under the roll number 84. In 1852, Daniel helped with other claims to the Chapman Roll and many of his children and grandchildren were listed.

It was also recorded as follows:

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