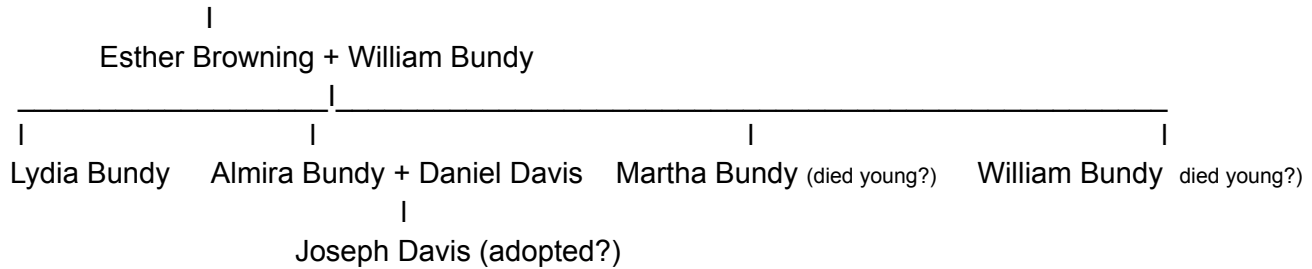


## THE STORY OF DANIEL DAVIS

- Born in Baltimore, MD in 1834. At age 10 he was separated from his parents (Rose and Daniel Davis) and sold to a farm where Edward Covey was the overseer. Covey was called “the snake” because of his extreme cruelty. [Frederick Douglass](#) wrote extensively about Covey.
- Around age 26 (1860), Davis escaped and found his way to RI.
- In 1865, he enrolled in the Wilberforce Collegiate Institute in Carolina, RI. This was located at the Carolina Mills and led by the Rev. Joseph Sherwin. The school burned in 1866.
- Davis only stayed in RI for 3 months and then went to Hartford, CT. He attended night school and worked as a porter.
- While there, he met Almira Bundy. She was a housekeeper for a family who lived in Hartford.
- Almira was the daughter of the Rev. William Bundy and his wife, Esther Browning Bundy. Esther’s parents were Harry and Jane Rodman Browning. Harry had been taken from Africa and brought to Rhode Island. He was enslaved until he was 30 years old and then freed. His wife, Jane Rodman, had been enslaved by a family who had a farm in Tomaquaq Valley. In 1805, Harry and Jane bought land about 1 mile behind St. Thomas’. They built a house and had one child—a daughter named Esther.
- Esther married the Rev. William Bundy. He was an ordained minister in the Seventh Day Baptist Church. They had 4 children, one of whom was Almira. They lived on the Browning farm.
- In May 1867, Daniel Davis and Almira Bundy were married on the farm by The Rev. A. N. Burdick
- In 1875, Daniel was ordained in the [African Methodist Episcopal \(AME\) Zion Church](#) and became pastor of a church in New London, CT. He later served as pastor at churches in Norwich, CT and Providence, RI.
- In the 1890’s, he served as an itinerant preacher at several churches including: St. Thomas’ (it was a non-denominational church at that time), Third Baptist Church in Stonington, CT, a church in Canonchet, and probably churches in Westerly.
- Records are conflicted as to whether Daniel and Almira had any children. The census from 1880 lists an adopted son named Joseph. There is no mention of him in Davis’ obituary.
- There are newspaper articles that tell that Davis presided at the funeral of another formerly enslaved man by the name of Amos Augustus. He was a member of the 1st Baptist Church in Hopkinton and there is some historical information about him available
- Almira and Daniel both became seriously ill in 1904. Friends brought a small organ to their house to cheer them with some singing. People came from Westerly and adjacent towns. It is said that Davis gave one of his most inspiring sermons that day. Sitting in his chair, he spoke in short, slow sentences. He had one wish—to have some sweet juicy watermelon before he died and his friends made that happen.
- Just days before his death, he gave one of his friends a manuscript which his wife had prepared. It told the history of her life and their married life together. Despite searching for many decades, no one has found that manuscript.
- Almira died on October 1, 1904, and Daniel died four weeks later on Oct. 28. A long obituary was written about him and it is believed that much of that information was taken from that mysterious manuscript. He had a large funeral that was well attended. There were 5 clergymen who spoke at the service and gave impressive eulogies.
- He willed his farm to the Town of Richmond, and it was sold.
- In 1906, a group of people from Richmond, Westerly and CT collected money to build the cemetery monument. The Smith Granite Company donated the stone. Records suggest that Davis was well-loved and had a reputation as an excellent preacher.

- His gravestone has the following inscription, *Rev. Daniel Davis, born 1834, a southern slave, died 1904, an honored minister of the Gospel.*
- Elder Davis and his wife, Almira, are buried in a cemetery on the site of the original Browning/Bundy farm. Other members of her family are buried there as well. That farm, on Bucknam Road, is now private property. The cemetery is designated as Rhode Island Historical Cemetery- Richmond 89.
- In 2025, the [Westerly Anti-Racism Coalition](#) posthumously awarded Davis a Community Spirit Award.
- [The Witness Stone Project](#) honored Daniel Davis with a marker that was given to St. Thomas' in June 2025. It will be placed in the front yard of the church.

Jane Rodman + Harry Browning (purchased the farm in 1805)



The sources for the information on this handout came from

Kelly Sullivan-several articles written for the Chariho Times in 2019, 2020

Krystyna Kasman- article written for the Wood River Press, Nov. 17, 2005

*Driftways into the Past*-local history of the Town of Richmond, 1977



REV. AND MRS. DANIEL DAVIS

Photo taken from unidentified newspaper

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