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National Genealogical Society

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Faces of America

On the Cover:

**“OLD UNCLE DAVIE” DAVID TRUMAN
(about 1810–1903)**

David Truman was born about 1810 in Washington Township, Fayette County, Pennsylvania, to David Truman, who was formerly enslaved, and an unknown mother. He had an older brother, Samuel, and a younger sister, Lydia. David was known in Fayette County as “Old Uncle Davie.”

His enslaved ancestors had probably migrated from Prince George’s County, Maryland, in 1773 with Margaret Hutton. Widow Hutton, the largest slave owner in Fayette County, owned twenty-five enslaved people. Her 1795 will directed that David’s father, born in 1781, be freed when he turned twenty-five.

David claimed he was born on Captain William Elliott’s place, near Hutton’s farm. At age five he was bound out to David Wells. The Truman and Wells families were members of the Little Redstone Presbyterian Church. David’s mother likely helped support the family by cleaning the church. Later David joined the Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Elizabeth, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania.

David and his wife, Lucinda, had three children. Lucinda died at an early age. David was a farm worker and a laborer. He once drove a wagon on the old National Road. Later in life he was Reverend McGowan’s servant. David shared a small property near the Quaker meeting house in Pleasant Valley in Fayette County with his nephew, David Henry Truman. He lived all his life in Pleasant Valley except for a few teen years in Pittsburgh and with David Henry in Wilson near Elizabeth before he died.

Everyone who knew David said he walked everywhere. When Reverend McGowan died, he walked fifteen miles to the funeral. David died in 1903. His obituary claims he was 107, the oldest man in Pennsylvania. Mr. Burroughs takes issue in his article inside. The obituary attributes David’s advanced age to his excellent physical condition, itself a benefit of his lifelong habit of walking.

Credits: Documentation of David Truman’s life is in the files of Tony Burroughs; P.O. Box 53091; Chicago, Illinois, 60653; Tony@TonyBurroughs.com. The cover portrait, taken in the late nineteenth century, was owned by Mimm Campbell of Washington, Pennsylvania. Mr. Burroughs, David’s brother’s third great-grandson, obtained a copy from Mimm in 1976.