Tolersville P. O. to Mineral, Virginia 1870 - present

Compiled by

Janice L. Abercrombie

After the death of Reuben B. Davis in June 1870,¹ his son, John W., and his widow, Ann Moss Davis,² were the executors of his will. The family stayed together at their home on the Davis farm. At the time of his death, Reuben B. was engaged in farming, merchandising and a tannery. John and his mother managed the estate carrying on some of the branches of the business and discontinued others which they

were satisfied were unprofitable and not of the interest to the estate.

Shortly after his mother's death on 17 June 1874, John W. Davis³ petitioned the court of Louisa to help him wind up the affairs of his parents' estate.⁴ At this time his sisters, Anna B., Ella M.,⁵ and Mary C. were over 21 years, and Anna B. had married William C. Moody shortly before her mother's death.⁶ His brother, R. Frank Davis, was to be 21 years in December of 1874 and was completing his studies to become a doctor.⁷ Sister, Willie P., was 17 years old and her education had been completed. Brother, George W. Davis, was 14 years and brother, Henry Clay Davis, was 10 years and would require years of schooling. John W. requested the court to decide if these younger brothers were to be educated out of the estate as a whole before a division or from their portion after a division.

There were a number of questions pertaining to the execution of his father's will he needed clarified due to the fact some of the children were of age, some were not; some were married and some were not; and the widow of Reuben B. was now deceased. Some of these questions pertained to bonds of the Virginia Central Railroad; the liabilities of his father whether as principal or as surety; a tract of land containing altogether 1,014 81/100 acres known as "Tolersville" which had been the residence of his late father. "The depot of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad is located on this tract and not over 75 yards from the dwelling house. The dwelling house is quite a large two story framed house with rooms sufficient to accommodate a very large family or if converted into a hotel or boarding house, has the capacity to accommodate quite a number of guest or boarders. Under the same roof is a store house which has been used for a great number of years for that purpose as well as a post office. Reuben B. Davis merchandised in this house for a number of years with great success. Being located at the depot and the post office quite a number of persons are necessarily drawn there on business. It is immediately in the mineral region of this county and is the depot for all persons engaged in that business. This makes it a desirable stand as a store and if the mineral resources of that section of the county should ever be fully developed it will be a very desirable stand as a hotel. There is also attached to it a shoe shop and tannery which at one time were quite profitable and perhaps can be made so again in the hands of someone who thoroughly understands the business. A large portion of the land is of inferior quality. Your orator is of opinion that this tract of land cannot be divided in kind without irreparable injury to the estate and the parties. ... He believes that an advantageous sale of the property can be made either as a whole or cut up in parcels." Previous to the death of his late mother, they were attempting to negotiate a sale with some prospects of success and desires the court's opinion for such a sale.8

"A second tract of land is lying on the waters of the South Anna River about eight miles from Tolersville on which is a comfortable dwelling house with the usual out

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houses which was rented out by his father during his lifetime and by his executors. There is woodland upon this place to support it as a whole and he believes this land cannot be divided in kind among the testator's eight children. A sale is therefore absolutely necessary.

"A third tract of 54½ acres about 2½ miles from Tolersville is poor land and the quality forbids a division in kind. There is another tract of 90 acres about 31/4 miles

from Tolersville unsuitable for division."

At the time of Reuben B. Davis' death, his brother-in-law, Francis O. Moss, was indebted to him in a large amount which was secured by a deed of trust by which said Moss had conveyed to Henry W. Murray, trustee. This \$2,000 plus interest had never been paid, and the executor saw no prospects whatsoever of realizing this money except by a sale of the property conveyed in the deed of trust so he brought the matter before the court due to the wording of his father's will and for the purpose of having the deed of trust executed.

John W. Davis prayed the court would appoint guardians ad litem for the under age children and determine the true intent of his father's will. This suit appeared on the docket of the Louisa Court about 27 times from 1874 until the final entry in 1897.

With this description by the son of Reuben B. Davis of the situation of Reuben's property at the time of his death, we can now begin to see how the property was settled, especially the tract that was to become what is now called Mineral, Virginia.

In May of 1880, Henry Oliver was sold 16 acres of the "Old Tolersville Tract" on the east side of the public road.9 This was the same 16 acres Reuben B. Davis had sold to Thomas Ennis in 1868 and which Ennis had sold to Ann M. and John W. Davis as executors of Reuben B. in 1870. As executor of his father's estate, John W. Davis sold Mary C. Young 15 acres near Tolersville adjoining the lands of Frederick Hemmer, the Main County Road and the road leaving Tolersville to Victoria Furnace. He also sold 200 acres of the "Tolersville Tract" to James E. Jones which was on the south side of the tract near Pendleton. In June of 1881, William A. Estis bought 20 acres of Reuben's land adjoining Thomas Young.¹¹

By a decree of the Louisa Circuit Court in March 1881, H. W. Murray and W. E. Bibb, Special Commissioners, at a public auction held in August of that year sold the "Old Tolersville Tract" which had been designated as 521 acres to W. C. Moody and J. E. Smith who were the highest bidders at \$3,712.25. This was the tract where Reuben Davis lived and died. Two tracts of 20 and 22 acres to the north and south had been sold to Estes and Temple. Wm. C. Moody had married Reuben's daughter,

Annie B., and J. E. Smith had married another daughter, Mary C.

It is not known if the Smiths and Moodys lived for any time on this property. In March of 1890 they were of Alleghany County, Virginia when they sold the "Old Tolersville tract" of 477 22/100 acres to Weir R. Goodwin of Louisa for \$4,500. This deed excepted a tract of 1 3/4 acres which had been sold to the C. & O. Rail Road for their depot, rail bed, and water tank and excepted the "Davis Burying Ground" of 3,600 square feet including the present graves.13

On 6 August 1890, W. R. Goodwin sold this 477 22/100 acres on the C. & O. Railroad formerly known as "Tolersville" but now Mineral City to Mineral City Mining. Manufacturing and Land Company. Reference was made for a more accurate description of this land to a recent survey drawn by Walter Leonard Bishop 15 May 1890, which cuts the tract into blocks and town lots. This survey was to be recorded by Mineral City Mining, Manufacturing in accordance with the acts of the Assembly The tract was conveyed subject to a deed of trust dated 5 March 1890, executed by W. R. Goodwin to J. J. Porter, trustee, payable to secure three negotiable notes payable it a recutors. this land herefore

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to Moody and Smith at the Bank of Clifton Forge, Virginia.

Also conveyed in this deed to Mineral City Mining, Manufacturing and Land Company was 80 acres known as Slate Hill Gold Mine near Pendleton's Station adjoining Luce Gold Mine which had been acquired by W. R. Goodwin from G. K. Anderson, Special Commissioner, of the Louisa Circuit Court in the chancery cause in the style of Howard vs. Slate Hill Gold Mine and others. This tract also was conveyed subject to a deed of trust. The purchase price for these two tracts was \$36,000, and \$1,658.33 was paid to Goodwin in cash; \$3,375 to Moody and Smith, \$1,067.67 to the Special Commissioner, 300 shares representing \$15,000 dollars of the capitol stock of Mineral City Mining, Manufacturing and Land Company and the residue of \$14,899 payable in ten notes payable at the Citizens Bank of Roanoke, Virginia, to be paid by February 1891. This deed was signed by W. R. Goodwin and R. P. Talley, president of Mineral City Mining, Manufacturing and Land Company and attested by A. G. Hill, the secretary of the company.

In the Corporations Book of the Louisa County Court is the following: Mineral City Mining, Manufacturing and Land Company 21 April 1890. Purpose to purchase, hold and sell real estate and lay the same out into town sites, to mine for all kinds and character of metals or stones, to manufacture all kinds of articles of commerce and generally do business as an individual can do. Capitol stock \$200,000 in shares of par \$100. Amount of real estate not to exceed 5,000 acres. Office to be in Mineral City, Louisa County, Virginia. Chief business to be dealing in real estate, mining and manufacturing. Officers:

R. P. Talley, President, Louisa Court House

W. H. Lee, 1st Vice President, Washington, D. C.

W. R. Goodwin, 2nd Vice President & General Manager, Louisa Court House

P. B. Porter, Secretary and Treasurer, Louisa Court House Directors: R. P. Talley, W. H. Lee, P. B. Porter, W. E. Bibb, W. O. Smith, J. F. Bickers, J. W. Flanagan, W. R. Goodwin. Signed. W. S. Barton Judge 10th Circuit.

With the exception of W. H. Lee, these were all Louisa County locals.

Almost as soon as Mineral City Mining, Manufacturing and Land Company was deeded the "Old Tolersville Tract" and divided it into town blocks and lots known as Mineral City they began deeding lots. Deed Book 11 of the Louisa County Clerks Office contains a large number of these deeds and they are reflected in the tax list of 1890-1893. Most of these buyers of lots in Mineral City were stockholders in Mineral City Mining, Manufacturing, and Land Company and probably received their lots through the drawing amongst the stockholders. Few of these purchasers actually took up residence in Mineral City, nor were many of them citizens of Louisa County.

On 16 September 1890, Mineral City Mining, Manufacturing, and Land Company entered into a contract with the Staunton Building Company of Augusta County¹⁴ in which they agreed to give the building company block number 136 [sic]¹⁵ and 1 business lot on the opposite side of Mineral Avenue and to guarantee subscriptions of capitol stock of the Staunton Building Company amounting to \$15,000. The Staunton Building Company agreed to erect at Mineral City "a house building and wood working establishment and equip the same with all necessary and improved machinery...making it a duplicate of their Staunton and Bedford plants and to guarantee the capacity of the

Smith at the Bank of Clifton Forge, Virginia.

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plant equal to manufacturing and erecting 1,500 houses per year." The agreement further said that if the work ceased for a period of 6 consecutive months in the first 5 years, then block 136 would revert back to Mineral City Mining, Manufacturing, and Land Company. It is believed that this building and property was the same property that J. S. Harlow later built his planing mill and shops.

In February of 1891, M. V. Baughan of Augusta County brought suit against the Staunton Building Company. Mr. Baughan was a carpenter employed by this company and in his bill said he had not been paid and the company was now insolvent.

In July of 1891, Harry W. Quarles, A. G. Hill, and Dr. W. J. Coleman all residents of Mineral City made affidavits stating that the Staunton Building Company had erected the building. The machinery for operating a house building and wood working factory was in place. Due to the suit brought by Mr. Baughan in Augusta County, the court had appointed T. R. N. Speck, the sheriff of Augusta County, to be the receiver of the properties belonging to the Staunton Building Company in their various locations. Their facility in Mineral was represented as being in danger of being depreciated due to lack of supervision. The three gentlemen who made the affidavits said they had secured the building and could supervise it.

In their bill entered as co-plaintiffs in the case in Augusta County, Mineral City Mining, Manufacturing, and Land Company said the Staunton Building Company did not have ample capitol which they fraudulently had said they had. They said the building in Mineral was not equipped to have large enough operations as promised, operations had never commenced, and nothing had been done in the way of building houses. Since this had not happened, and they had never bought the capitol stock in the building company, nor had they deeded lot 136 to them they, therefore, could not be construed to be stockholders in the building company. They asked the court to refrain the receiver from selling the manufacturing building in Mineral.

Mr. Speck, the receiver in this case, brought a suit in the Louisa Courts¹⁶ suing as a creditor of Mineral City Mining, Manufacturing, and Land Company. In his bill he stated that Mineral City Mining, Manufacturing, and Land Company was chartered with a capitol stock of \$200,000 and authorized to sell at 50¢ on the dollar which made the capitol stock only \$100,000. The stock was sold at \$2 per share in subscription and \$8 on call of the board of directors. All of the stock was sold and the books closed on June 7, 1890 when an assessment of \$8 per share was ordered and notices of same sent to the stockholders or should have been sent. He said the repayment of the contributions of the promoters of the Mineral City Mining, Manufacturing, and Land Company out of the stock sale was legitimate but not considered to be good business practice by the creditors. A large number of the stockholders paid up in full and others only partially until the depression.¹⁷ He believed that 9 out of 10 of them were then insolvent. Included in this bill was a list of almost 300 delinquent stockholders. This list also contains the names of just about all of the people who had lots deeded to them from the drawing.

Mr. Speck said Mineral City Mining, Manufacturing, and Land Company had large expenses having the town surveyed and divided into lots. Also at the time the stock was placed on the market it was understood the owner of every 2 shares of stock should have a lot assigned to them ascertained by a public drawing. The drawing took place, and it was not acceptable on the part of the creditors of the company who needed to be paid before any dividend could be distributed. He said the company was insolvent and their only asset was the town block with the manufacturing building which was "going to destruction." He charged that the stockholders refused to continue to pay assessments and being insolvent, various schemes were devised for

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relief. Finally the promoters or several of them and some of the stockholders chartered what was known as the Equitable Investment Company. There were two payments due on the original purchase money for the land which was put up by the trustee, J. J. Porter, and sold at public auction for just enough to pay the balance of the purchase money and costs. This was the Slate Hill Gold Mine property. This property was later reconveyed to Mineral City Mining, Manufacturing and Land Company by a special commissioner in a decree of a suit Mineral City Mining, Manufacturing and Land Company versus Weicher and others. The Slate Hill Gold Mine property had been sold to J. J. Wiecher, R. H. Field, D. C. King, and A. M. Button in 1891 with the understanding that they would put \$50,000 worth of improvements into Mineral City, which they never did. 19

Equitable Investment Company with an office in Mineral City, Virginia. Purpose to acquire mineral properties and rights and other real estate at and near Mineral City and other places. Capitol stock minimum \$10,000 and maximum \$200,000 at \$100 each. Real estate not to exceed 5,000 acres. Officers:

W. E. Leake, President, Richmond, Virginia

W. R. Goodwin, Secretary and Treasurer, Louisa, Virginia

Directors: W. R. Leake, W. R. Goodwin, R. S. Gordon, P. B. Porter

and D. F. Earnest. 8 April 1892.20

Geo. K. Anderson, substitute trustee, for J. J. Porter, trustee, due to default of the deed of trust from W. R. Goodwin in 1890, sold at public auction in July 1892 all the land of Mineral City Mining, Manufacturing, and Land Company they had not reviously deeded to purchasers to Equitable Investment Company. Also in July Mineral City Mining, Manufacturing and Land Company sold to W. J. Coleman as trustee the personal property of what appears to be the hotel, as there were a dozen beds and bedding, 2 dozen or more chairs, wash stands, mirrors, lamps, towels and office furniture. Included in this deed of trust was the office furniture, the printing ress and equipment belonging to the Pilot Newspaper. This property was sold in trust in secure to Mrs. S. W. Wilson the payment of \$112.50 which had been borrowed from the for the purpose of paying the taxes on their property for the year 1891. As with most deeds of trust, in event of default, the terms for a sale of the property were utilized. Several months later, the sale of the personal property was held due to default of the deed of trust to Mrs. Wilson, and she was the highest bidder and autreaser.

Mrs. Sarah W. Wilson became the assignee of T. R. N. Speck and placed a lien coinst Mineral City Mining, Manufacturing, and Land Company and Equitable mestment Company. The object of this suit was to enforce a judgment by decree in the favor for \$9,849.61 with interest from May 1892. Among other property subjected the lien was all the property of Equitable Investment Company in Mineral City. Wilson was the daughter of Harry W. Quarles and the widow of Walter Willard Wilson. She had trained as a nurse at John Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland, and evidently married Mr. Wilson, who was from Texas, there. Their son, Clarence was Wilson, was born in Baltimore. After her husband's death, she returned to the line was a from the husband's estate. Her father at one time owned the line and Hotel which had been the home of Reuben B. Davis.

The sales of the Equitable Investment Company according to the deeds recorded

in Louisa County were four in number.

Equitable Investment sold lot 28 in lot 28 to Miss Kate O'Neil on 6 December 1892. ²⁴ They sold John H. Kennedy 2 lots on Louisa Avenue being lots 4 and 5 in block 12 on 16 May 1894.²⁵ To Thomas Ennis, they sold lots 1 and 2 in block 6 in consideration that Ennis was to erect within a year a substantial and attractive residence. If the house was not built by the end of the year's time the deed was to void.²⁶ This home must have been built and is now known as the "Jarrett house." This was evidently to encourage homes and permanent residents in the town. Mr. H. W. Quarles bought the hotel tract for \$600 in October of 1893.²⁷ In December of 1893 Equitable sold to W. J. Coleman, W. L. Bishop and A. G. Hill as trustees for Lodg #21 of the IOOF two lots being #22 and #23 in block 39 on Mineral Avenue. The condition of this deed, also, was that they would have to erect a building within a year or the deed would be void. This building was erected and is now the Masonic Lodg Hall in Mineral.

In May of 1894, Equitable Investment Company sold to M. M. Gillum of Richmond as trustee for the Title and Trust Company of Richmond, the "trace conveyed to Weir Goodwin by Moody and Smith" excepting the four lots they had sold as listed above. In May 1896 the Equitable Investment Company sold to W. J. Coleman trustee for \$5,000 all the lots in Mineral City not previously conveyed by them. In turn that same day, Coleman as trustee sold to John G. May, as trustee for Equitable Investments Company, all those same lots in trust. In August 1896, Dr. Coleman and Lizzie E., his wife, as trustees, sold to The Virginia Reduction Work and Mining Company. For \$5,000 and \$4,800 in notes with interest from May 1894 covered by obligations by Dr. Coleman as trustee to Equitable Investment Co. all those same lots in Mineral excepting the lots belonging to Walter L. Bishop.

At this time, it is not evident just what happened to The Virginia Reduction Work and Mining Company. This is the only deed of conveyance indexed under their name

as grantors or grantees in the deed books of Louisa.

The Virginia Reduction Works and Mining Company had their main office in Mineral City with a branch in New York City. The purpose of this corporation was to purchase, lease, hold real estate in Virginia and elsewhere; to lay out into town site and lots; and to mine for all kinds of ore, mineral, stones on or under the land, is erect manufactories for reduction of the ore. Their officers were some of the same people who had been involved with the previous companies: Walter L. Bishop was via president, and Dr. Coleman was on the board of directors. The other officers were R. H. Rose of Richmond, president, H. B. Kirkwood, secretary, Wm. R. Keese, treasurer and members of the board were Henry Froehling of Richmond, Wm. R. Keese, Win Flay, and W. F. Roberts of New York and Arthur Gray of London, England. 32

In July of 1898, J. G. May, as trustee, sold all these same lots [a listing of whid comprises over seven pages in the deed books] in Mineral which Coleman had conveyed to May as trustee to secure Equitable Investment Company. There was a default in the terms of the deed of trust, and the land was exposed for sale on 5 July

1898 and Mrs. Sarah W. Wilson was the highest bidder at \$1,660.33

In February of 1899, Mrs. Sarah W. Wilson, a widow woman, signed an articled agreement with Robert P. Orr of Newport News, Virginia, to sell him all those parcel in Mineral City which she had bought at auction and those assigned to her in her su against Mineral City Mining, Manufacturing and Land Company³⁴ by decree 1898, in a later instrument she conveyed this land with a deed.³⁵ All of these transactions of this tract of land now known as Mineral City, Virginia, are very confusing, and some of the suit papers concerning these transactions have not been found. It is very evident

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Louisa County Chancery Suit, file box 78.

17. Panic of 1893: There were many factors leading up to the Panic of 1893. British investors, heavily into railroads, had early sensed a weakness in the American economic system and had been unloading American securities. A failure two years earlier of a British banking house had merely accelerated the process. In February 1893 a major railroad, the Philadelphia and Reading, had gone bankrupt with debts of \$125 million. Stocks kept falling, trusts collapsed, and thousands of farm mortgages were foreclosed. The Silver Purchase Act had badly drained gold reserves. By April 1893, even with mammoth bail-outs by Eastern bankers, the nation's reserve had fallen below the magic \$100 million mark and it was apparent to almost everyone that disaster loomed; however, Cleveland could not get Congress to make a move the decisive crash of June 27. He then called for a special session of Congress to convene August 1. The dangerous delay of over a month was due to the need for Cleveland to have a cancer removed from his mouth. This operation had to be kept secret for fear of precipitating an even worse crisis. In August, Cleveland forced the repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act and stemmed the tide. Even so, the end of the year, gold reserves had fallen to \$80 million and the country was in the throes of one of the worst depressions of its history. p. 376 The Almanac of American History, A. M. Schlesinger, Jr., New York (1983).

III. Louisa County Deed Book 12, p. 392.

Louisa County Deed Book 11, p. 512. Louisa County Corporations Book, p. 23.

Louisa County Deed Book 12, p. 374.

Louisa County Deed Book 12, p. 319.

Louisa County Deed Book 12, p. 469. Louisa County Deed Book 14, p. 64.

Louisa County Deed Book 13, p. 443.

26. Louisa County Deed Book 13, p. 398.

27. Louisa County Deed Book 13, p. 178.

Louisa County Deed Book 13, p. 503. Louisa County Deed Book 15, p. 100.

30. Louisa County Deed Book 15, p. 101.

31. See The Louisa County Historical Society Magazine Vol. 15 No. 1, pp. 3-10. This is a copy of the prospectus this company prepared to attract investors.

Louisa County Corporations Book, p. 45.

33. Louisa County Deed Book 17, p. 113.

34. Louisa County Deed Book 17, p. 212. 35. Louisa County Deed Book 17, p. 227.

Louisa County Deed Book 18, p. 325.

37. Louisa County Deed Book 21, p. 113. 38. Louisa County Deed Book 38, p. 342.

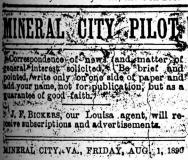
Chancery Suits, file box 176, January 1920.

Louisa County Deed Book 39, p. 498.

41. Louisa County Chancery suits, File Book 176.

42 Louisa County Deed Book 42, p. 86.

43. Louisa County Chancery suits, file box 206.



MINERAL CITY LOUISA CO., VA. Agency for the Lease, Sale and

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H. W. QUARLES, Mineral City, Louisa Co., Va

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