

The Davis-Trenckmann Family History

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This project began with curiosity about a 1975 family letter written by Jewell Andrew Davis Sr. From that letter, and working via AI deep research through verified court records, public databases, and published historical scholarship, with every link checked, we traced the family to direct blood descendants of a minimum of 48 separate kings and sovereigns across ten houses in eight modern countries and territories — the deepest of which reaches the court of the Merovingian kings, around the year 580, roughly forty-five generations and nearly 1,450 years of documented descent. Beyond the forty-eight crowned rulers, the line holds two Magna Carta barons, three canonized saints, three soldiers of the Revolutionary War, and a Mississippi music minister whose family lore a 1900 census document confirmed.

The American Story

The documented tree begins in Austin, where Will and Kari Boren Davis (married June 1, 2002) are raising Elia, Hannah, and Sarah Grace. Behind them stand two very different American families. The Davis-Morgan side (paternal) runs through Lubbock, Dallas, and Jacksonville back to the preachers and farmers of Pike County, Mississippi: Rev. Andrew Fuller Davis, and before him Rev. Hosea Alexander Davis, who came to the Mississippi frontier around 1820, patented 160 acres on Ten Mile Creek, ran a mill, and served his Baptist association for forty years.

The Trenckmann-Conway side (maternal) is a Texas immigration story: Andreas Friedrich Trenckmann, a Magdeburg schoolmaster who petitioned the King of Prussia during the 1848 revolution, gave up on Germany, sailed in 1853, and founded the oldest agricultural society in Texas at Cat Spring. His descendants include the Bellville physician Dr. Otto Trenckmann, alongside German-Bohemian Langhammers from Sadov and Czech Brethren families — Jancik, Skrivanek, Masik — from the villages of Moravia and eastern Bohemia.

The research also confirmed a story told by Grandmother Joy Morgan Davis — poet, fifty-year Dallas book reviewer — who often relayed that her father was embarrassed by his illegitimate birth. The records bear her out. William Claude Morgan, Mississippi's Baptist state music secretary, was one of eight children Sarah Phoebe Morgan raised alone under her own surname; their father, Joseph Buchanan Kennedy, never married her. Kennedy's own father died in the Civil War in 1864, leaving five-year-old "Joe" behind. The census, the missing marriage record, and Joy's memory all agree.

Three Revolutionary War patriots stand in the direct line, each marked with a gold star badge in the tree charts. Rev. James Smart Sr. of South Carolina is a certified DAR Patriot Ancestor, number A105556 — a proven, on-file service record. Charles Bullock of Robeson County, North Carolina, who aided the militia, carries DAR number A016861. And Jeremiah Coney I (1730–1782) of the newly traced Coney line is a third candidate. This matters for the living generation: with the generation-by-generation documentation this project has assembled, Elia, Hannah, and Sarah Grace are eligible to apply to the Daughters of the American Revolution, with James Smart Sr. being the most direct and easily documented direct blood descendant.

The Gateway

Every deep line in this tree passes through one seventeenth-century Virginian: Captain Hugh Bullock, a London merchant-planter who sat on the Virginia Council in 1631 and held 2,550 acres in York County. His granddaughter's descendants married down through colonial Virginia and Carolina into the Davis line at Esther Bullock, wife of Zabon Davis (Will's fourth great-grandfather). Above Hugh, the chain runs through the Bullocks of Arborfield in Berkshire to the marriage that opens everything above it: Gilbert Bullock wed Margaret Norreys, whose grandmother Joan de Vere was a daughter of the 12th Earl of Oxford. That single marriage — independently confirmed in Douglas Richardson's *Magna Carta Ancestry*, the standard scholarly reference — opens the de Vere Earls of Oxford, and through their wives, most of royal Europe. Genealogists call such a person a gateway ancestor. This tree has a genuine one.

The Royal Lineages

Counting only rulers who are documented direct blood ancestors — grandmothers and grandfathers, not cousins — the tree holds forty-eight named sovereigns across ten royal houses in eight modern countries. House by house:

The Carolingians — Francia & Italy • 4 crowned rulers

The dynasty that rebuilt an empire in the West after Rome. The line enters the tree through Hawise de Quincy (branch point P9) and runs up the Counts of Vermandois to Charlemagne, Emperor of the Romans, crowned in Rome on Christmas Day 800; his father Pepin the Short, the first king anointed by a Pope; his son Pepin, King of Italy; and grandson Bernard, King of Italy. Behind them stand the dynasty's uncrowned builders — Charles Martel, victor of Tours in 732, Pepin of Herstal, and Pepin of Landen, mayors of the palace — the last of whom, born about 580, is the deepest documented ancestor in the entire tree.

The Capetians — France • 5 kings

The longest-reigning royal house in European history: from Hugh Capet's election in 987, his male line held the French throne for eight centuries. The family descends from it three separate ways — through Hugh Magnus of Vermandois, through Isabella of Angoulême, and through Eleanor of Castile — collecting Hugh Capet, Robert II the Pious, Henry I (who married Anne of Kiev), Louis VI, and Louis VII.

The House of Wessex — Anglo-Saxon England • 8 kings, probable 9th

The house that made England: from a regional West-Saxon kingship, Ecgberht's victory at Ellendun in 825 and Alfred the Great's defense against the Danes forged a single English crown. The line reaches the tree through St. Margaret of Scotland and Empress Matilda (branch point P10) and carries Ecgberht, Æthelwulf, Alfred the Great — the only English king ever called the Great — Edward the Elder, Edmund I, Edgar the Peaceful, whose 973 coronation rite is still the template used in 2023, Æthelred the Unready, and Edmund Ironside, with a probable ninth in Ealhmund of Kent, attested in a charter of 784.

The Normans & Plantagenets — England • 6 kings

The conquest dynasty of 1066 and the empire-builders who followed. Entering through Alice Sergeaux, mother of the 12th Earl of Oxford (branch point P7), the

line carries William the Conqueror, Henry I, Henry II — whose realm ran from Scotland to the Pyrenees — John, Henry III, and Edward I. With Wessex, that makes fourteen kings of England in the direct line. A detail worth noting: two other ancestors, Robert de Vere and Saer de Quincy, stood among the twenty-five surety barons who forced Magna Carta on King John — the family was on both sides at Runnymede.

The Houses of Alpin & Dunkeld — Scotland • 8 kings

Scotland's founding dynasty, from the union of Picts and Scots to the medieval kingdom. The line enters through Matilda of Scotland, wife of Henry I of England, and runs back through her father Malcolm III to Kenneth MacAlpin, the traditional first King of Scots (d. 858) — by way of Constantine I, Donald II, Malcolm I, Kenneth II, Malcolm II, and Duncan I, the real king Macbeth killed in battle in 1040, the event behind Shakespeare's play.

The Uí Cheinnselaig — Leinster, Ireland • 8 kings

The royal dynasty of south Leinster, ruling from Ferns and attested king by king in the Annals of Ulster. The line enters through Maud de Badlesmere (branch point P8), descends through William Marshal to Aoife of Leinster — whose 1170 marriage to Strongbow at Waterford sealed the Norman entry into Ireland — and runs from her father Diarmait Mac Murchada back to Cináed mac Cairpri (d. 935). One of the eight, Diarmait mac Máel na mBó, was also High King of Ireland.

The Dál gCais — Munster, Ireland • 3 rulers

The upstart Munster dynasty that produced Ireland's most famous king. Entering through Derbforgaill (branch point P12), the line carries Cennétig, King of Thomond; his son Brian Boru, High King of Ireland, who broke Viking power at Clontarf in 1014 and died in the victory; and Brian's son Donnchad, King of Munster, who ended his days on pilgrimage in Rome.

The Rurikids — Kievan Rus • 4 grand princes

The ruling house of the first East Slavic state, centered on Kiev. Arriving through Anne of Kiev, Queen of France (branch point P11), the line carries Igor, attested in the treaty of 944; Sviatoslav I, the great campaigner; Vladimir the Great, who converted Rus to Christianity in 988 and was sainted for it; and Yaroslav the Wise, the law-giver whose daughters married into half the courts of Europe.

Castile-León & Navarre — Iberia • 2 named kings (count will grow)

The crusading monarchies of the Spanish Reconquista. Entering through Eleanor of Castile, wife of Edward I, the line carries her father St. Ferdinand III, King of Castile and León, who took Córdoba and Seville and was canonized in 1671, and reaches back to Sancho Garcés I of Navarre, crowned in 905. The documented chain of Castilian kings between them has not yet been drawn out person by person; the count of forty-eight grows when it is.

The Royal Women • 9 queens, empresses, and princesses

Alongside the kings stand royal women who are equally direct ancestors — and who carried most of these lines into the tree: Eleanor of Aquitaine, queen of both France and England; Anne of Kiev; Empress Matilda; St. Margaret of Scotland; Eleanor of Castile; Eleanor of Provence; Isabella of Angoulême; Joan of Acre; and Aoife of Leinster.

Two caveats, for honesty: the entire royal superstructure flows through the Norreys-Bullock gateway marriage — itself now confirmed by the 1566 heraldic Visitation of Berkshire — and the Brian Boru line carries one flagged soft link, Derbforgaill's motherhood, which rests on medieval genealogical tradition rather than the annals.

The tree also carries three canonized saints in the direct line — St. Arnulf of Metz, St. Margaret of Scotland, and St. Ferdinand III — with St. Vladimir of Kiev making arguably a fourth, plus figures history remembers without crowns: William Marshal, called the greatest knight who ever lived; Empress Matilda, who escaped a besieged castle across the frozen Thames; William IX of Aquitaine, the first troubadour; and battle commanders at Tours, Hastings-era Normandy, Crécy, Poitiers, and Agincourt.

How Far Back, Line by Line

The deepest documented ancestor in the entire tree is Pepin of Landen, mayor of the palace of Austrasia, born around 580 and attested by the contemporary Chronicle of Fredegar — with St. Arnulf of Metz, born about 582, at the same horizon. From Will's daughters, that is about 1,450 years and forty-five generations of documented descent.

The other lines reach: the Wessex kings to 839 (probably 784); Scotland to 858; Aquitaine to 841; the counts of Barcelona to the early 800s; Navarre to 905; Kiev to about 945, attested in a treaty of 944; the Irish kings to 935 and 951 in the Annals of Ulster; the Norman dukes to Rollo the Viking, who died between 928 and 933; and the de Vere earls to Aubrey the Chamberlain of the Domesday Book, about 1040.

On the modern side: the Davis paper trail to 1725 in Virginia (1602 by DNA inference, through records that burned in three courthouse fires); the Ledbetters to about 1625 in England; the Trenckmanns to 1680 in the village of Wefensleben, Germany; the Morgans to 1772 and the Polks to 1785, both in South Carolina.

Beyond each terminus the tree records — clearly labeled as legend — what the medieval sources themselves claimed: pedigrees running to Woden, to Míl of Spain, to King Priam of Troy, and finally to Noah and Adam, because medieval genealogists finished every royal tree at the beginning of the world (even though they never tied directly to Biblical scripture).

How Rare Is This, Honestly

By the mathematics of ancestry, it may be surprising that nearly everyone with European roots descends from Charlemagne. Go back 1,200 years and family trees collapse into one another; blood descent from kings is, statistically, close to universal.

What is genuinely rare is being able to prove it via verified records. It is estimated that only 1/10,000 individuals with European ancestry could document back to so rich a family history. Most family trees hit a wall in the 1700s or 1800s, where records thin out and surnames blur. A documented, generation-by-generation chain from a living American through a verified gateway ancestor into medieval royalty is something only a small fraction of families can produce — it requires an unbroken run of wills, deeds, parish registers, chronicles, and scholarly pedigrees, every link checked.

That is what this project built: each of the roughly 130 people in the documented tree carries a verification badge, and every medieval link survived an adversarial re-check against published scholarship.

Exploring the History Online

All of this lives on the web at DavisGenealogy.com, where the family can read and explore it from any device. Three things are there. The first is this written history. The second is the Classic Family Tree — a traditional chart you can zoom and pan like a map, color-coded by rank, with a strip of world history running along the bottom so you can see where the family stood at Tours, at Hastings, at Runnymede, at 1776. The third is the Detailed Branch Document, which lays out every line in full, with a verification badge on each person and the royal gateways and legend tier clearly marked.

In the Classic Family Tree, every name card is clickable. Click a person and the card expands to show the full detail — dates, place, rank, and whatever is known of their life — then click again to close it. It is built to be wandered through, following a branch back through the centuries, rather than read once. The site is kept out of search engines, but anyone with the link can open it — so share it freely.

Sources: WikiTree and FindAGrave records (browser-verified), Dignity Memorial obituaries, DAR records, The Luter-Davis and Allied Families (Upton, 1959), the 1975 Davis family letter, Douglas Richardson's Magna Carta Ancestry (2011), the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, the Annals of Ulster and Four Masters, the Chronicle of Fredegar, Complete Peerage and thepeerage.com, German and Czech parish and civil records via Geneanet and Ancestry. Full chains, verification notes, and open research leads are preserved in the project files and in the companion tree charts (v.16).