

## Big House on the Prairie Comes Alive

A series of short videos and follow up activities for ages 8 - 12

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## **A series of short videos and follow up activities for ages 8 – 12**

# **Big House on the Prairie: At Home With The Davises**

The Davis Mansion has created short videos to introduce the Davis family and their home and life style to children ages 8-12. The videos can be viewed at home as well as in the classroom. They can be used as part of a study of Bloomington history, as preparation for a field trip to the Mansion or as a follow-up to a Mansion field trip. Extension activities accompany the videos. The videos are best viewed in sequence.

When students view the videos, they will be given a glimpse of a very different lifestyle from the way they live today. Experiencing life as Illinois residents lived it in the 19th century gives young people an intriguing and meaningful way to compare the differences between their own lives and those of people living in the past.

## **Videos**

### **1). Introduction to the Family and Mansion**

While looking through a family photo album, Mrs. Davis and her granddaughter Alice talk about the history of the family and the Mansion.

### **2). Tea Party**

Mrs. Davis and Katie, the Irish maid, prepare for a tea party.

### **3). Tea Party Manners**

Mrs. Davis teaches Alice and her friend Arthur tea party manners.

Videos and Extension Activities are based on the following Illinois Learning Standards for 2020-21.

### **History Standards**

#### **2nd Grade    Change, Continuity, and Context**

**SS.H.1.2:** Summarize changes that have occurred in the local community over time

**Perspectives SS.H.2.2:** Compare individuals and groups who have shaped a significant historical change

#### **3rd Grade    Change, Continuity, and Context**

**SS.H.1.3:** Create and use a chronological sequence of events

**Perspectives SS.H.2.3:** Describe how significant people, events, and developments have shaped their own community and region

#### **4th Grade    Human-Environment Interaction: Place, Regions and Culture**

**SS.G.2.4:** Analyze how the cultural and environmental characteristics of places in Illinois change over time.

#### **5th Grade    Human-Environment Interaction: Place, Regions, and Culture**

**SS.G.1.5:** Investigate how the cultural and environmental characteristics of places within the United States change over time.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**We would like to thank the many people who worked on this project.**

Christine Albritton, M.S., David Davis Mansion volunteer

Ronald Frazier, DDM Foundation Board Member

Sondra Findley, BHS Social Studies Dept. & DDM Foundation Board Member

Adrienne Huffman, DDM Program Coordinator

Jennifer Maloy, DDM Foundation Board Member

Scott Myers, DDM Foundation Board Member

Cindy Rustemeyer, DDM Foundation Board Member

Jeff Saulsberry, Site Superintendent, David Davis Mansion, IHPA\

Lynda Straw, President DDM Foundation

Howard Tepper, M.A., David Davis Mansion volunteer

Beth Kater, DDM Foundation Advisory Council Member

Alan Wilson, DDM Foundation Board Member

## **Extension Activities**

Calling Card Activity.....	6
Map Activity.....	7-9
Bloomington History Sheet.....	10
Prairie Town Activity.....	11
Information sheet for Photo Album.....	12
Photo Album.....	13-17
Letter written by Judge Davis (Primary Source).....	18
Letter written by Sallie Davis (Primary Source).....	19
Writing a Letter.....	20
Story Activity.....	20
Timeline & Activities.....	21-25
Fill in the Blank Worksheet.....	26

## **Teacher Resources**

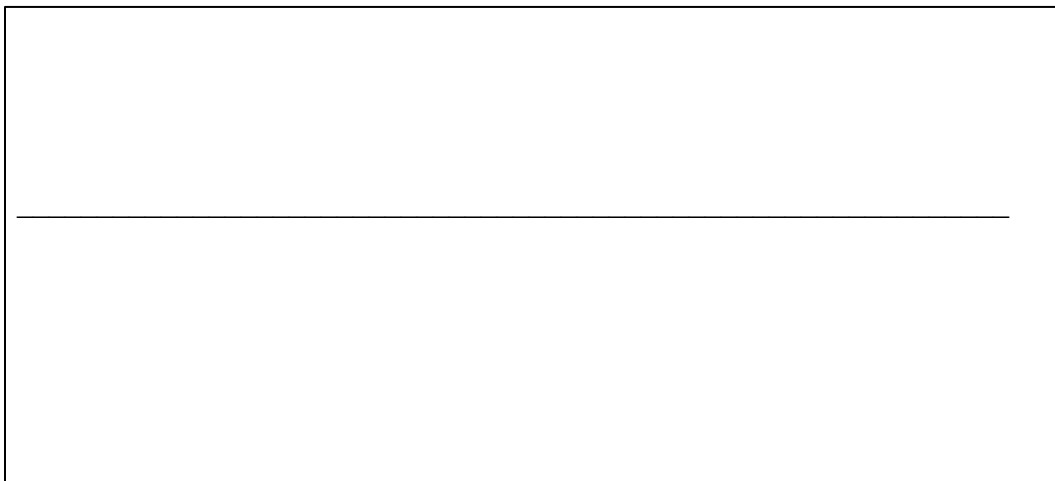
Suggested Readings.....	27
Suggested Websites.....	28
Tea Party information (Proper Victorian Tea, Top Ten Tea Party Don'ts and Steps to Reading Tea Leaves).....	29-33
Teacher Evaluation Sheet.....	34

## **Make Your Own Calling Card**

A calling card is a card with your name on it. In the 1800's, when paying a visit to someone, these cards were presented to the servant who answered the door.

At first these cards were handwritten, later they were machine made. Cards were often decorated with pictures of hearts, birds and flowers in bright colors.

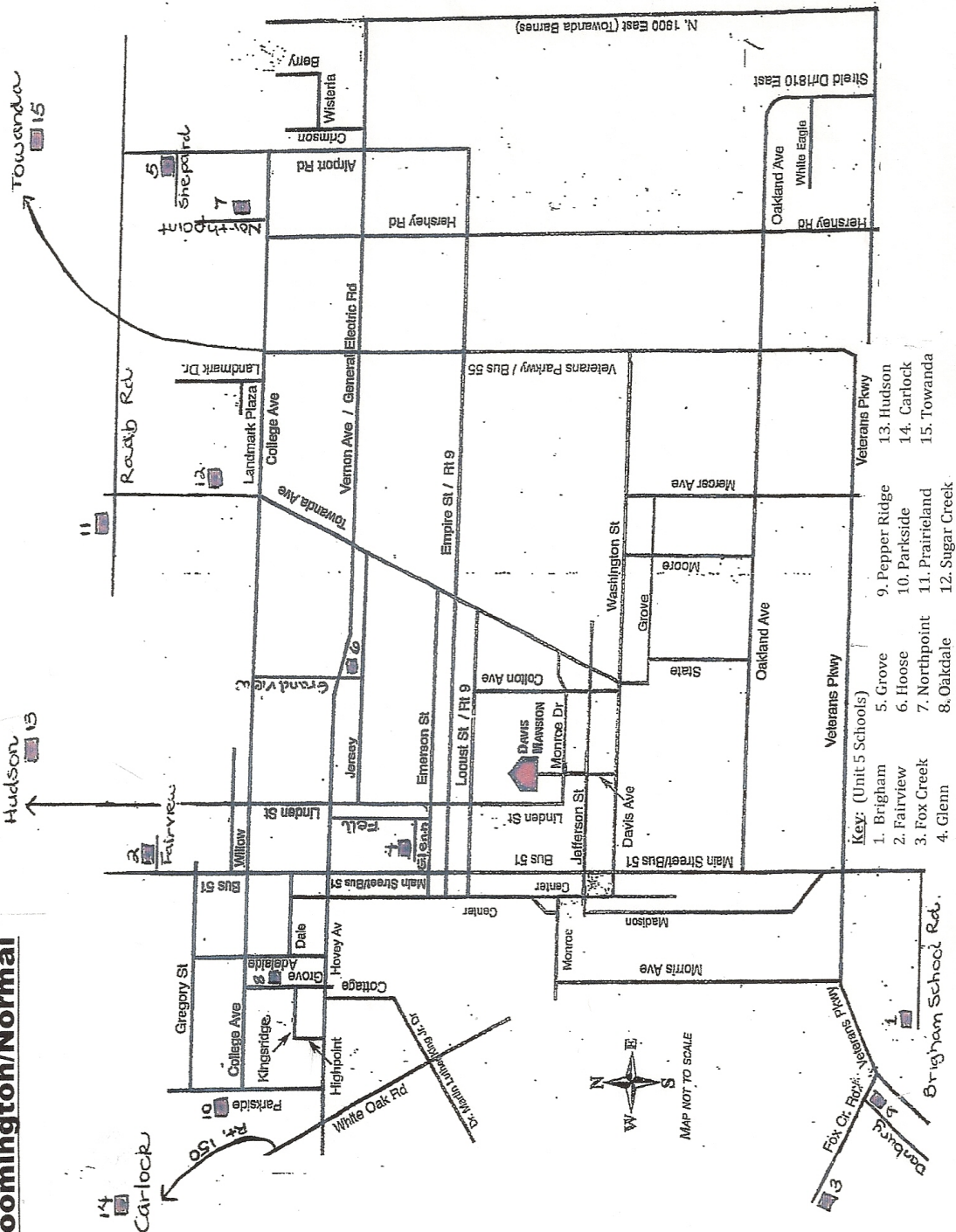
**Use the outline below to make your own card. Cut it out and bring it with you on a visit to the Mansion.**

A rectangular outline representing a calling card. It consists of a large rectangle with a horizontal line drawn across its middle, dividing it into two equal halves. This is intended to be cut out and used as a template for a calling card.

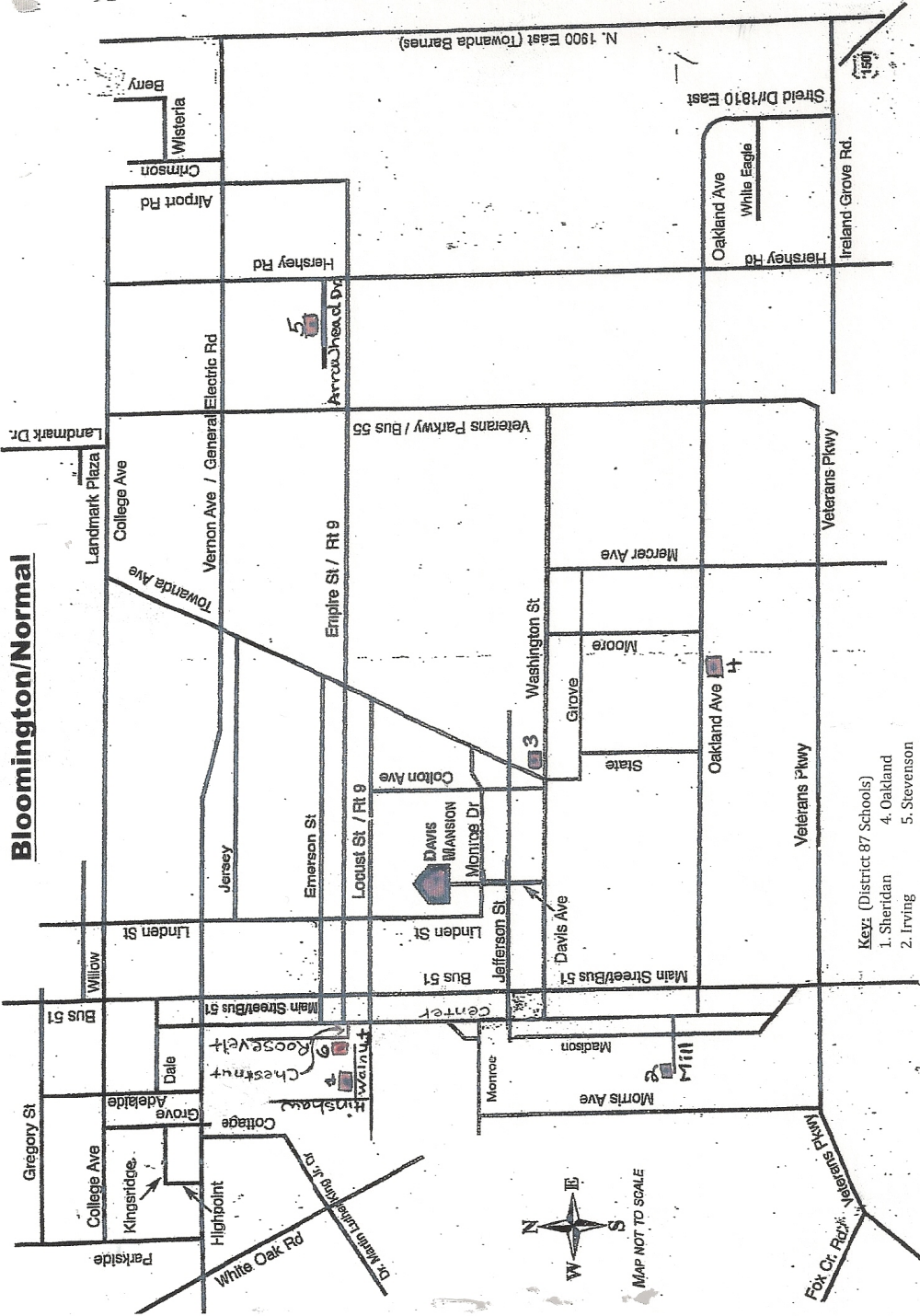
## Map Activity

You will be virtually visiting the David Davis Mansion. Find your school and the David Davis Mansion on the map. Use the map key to help. With a yellow crayon trace the route you would take from your school to the mansion. Then on the lines below, in the correct order, write the names of the streets you would take from your school to the David Davis Mansion.

[illegible]







## **An Early History of Bloomington Illinois**

Until the 1820's, the land that was to become Bloomington was a large wooded area. The Kickapoo people lived there before the first settlers arrived. First named Keg Grove and then Blooming Grove, the name Bloomington was given to the town in 1830 when McLean County was created. James Allin donated 60 acres of his land for the new town. Land was sold to settlers at a big party on the fourth of July, 1831. Rich soil brought new farmers. People came from all over to trade and do business in the new town. That included lawyers like David Davis and Abraham Lincoln. In 1900 a fire destroyed most of the downtown. It started in a laundry across the street from the old City Hall. The burnt area was quickly rebuilt using local architects. Some of these buildings are still in use today.\*

\*[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bloomington,\\_Illinois](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bloomington,_Illinois), Nov. 2008

# PRAIRIE TOWN

The first settlers came to Bloomington in 1822. Back then Bloomington was mostly prairie. The prairie is land covered by tall grasses. These grasses could grow to 10 feet tall. Yellow, pink, white and blue wildflowers were also found on the prairie. The prairie was home to many animals such as deer, the red fox, coyotes, ground squirrels, the long-tailed weasel and bison. Settlers first thought the prairie soil was not good for growing crops. They discovered, however, that it is very rich soil. They cut down the prairie to farm the land. The David Davis Mansion sits on land that was once prairie.

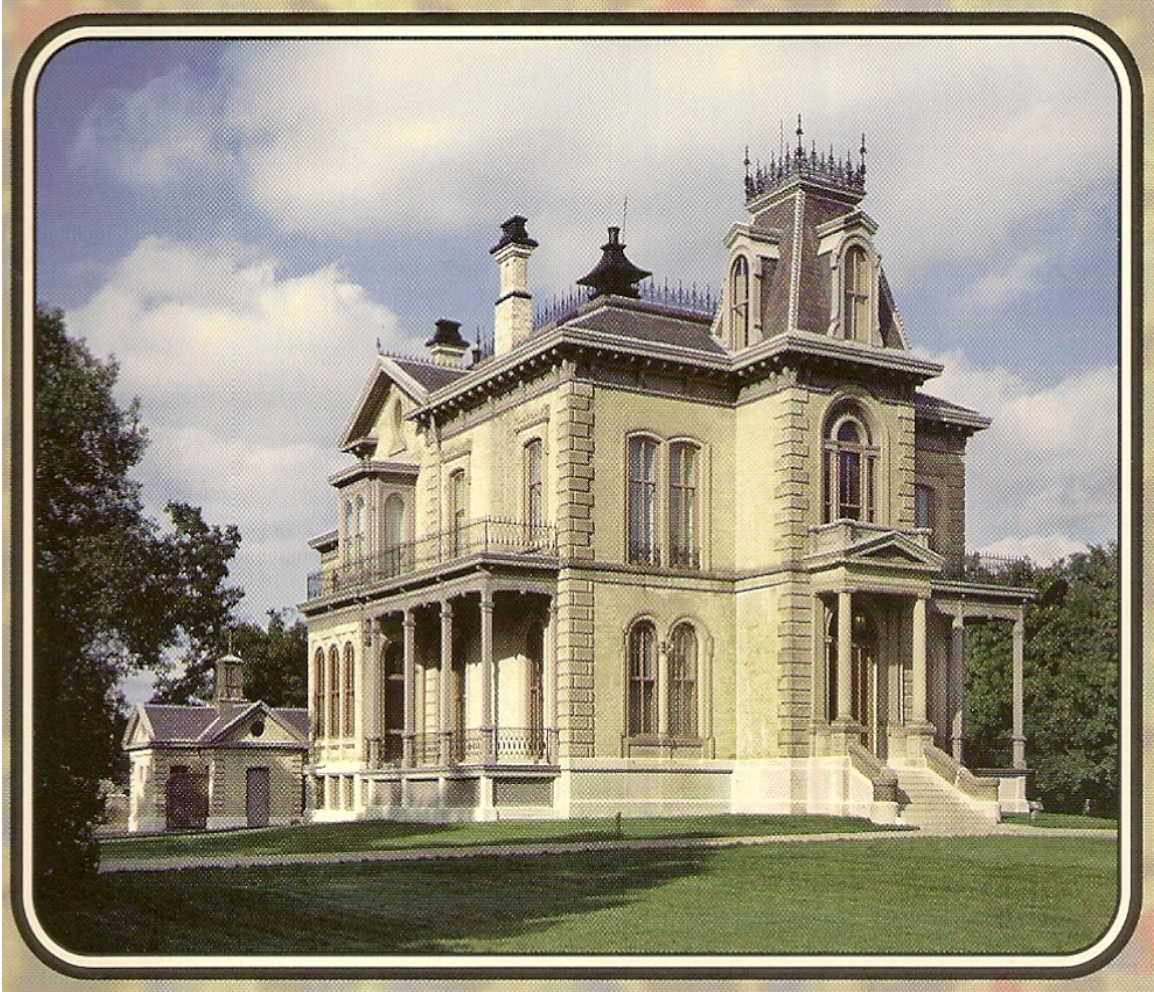
Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. What is the prairie?
2. What kind of animals lived on the prairie?
3. What was difficult about clearing the land for your farm?

## Introduction to Photo Album

On the following pages is a photo album of the David Davis family. Having the children review this information before watching the videos may make them more meaningful. Feel free to copy these pages along with any other activity pages.

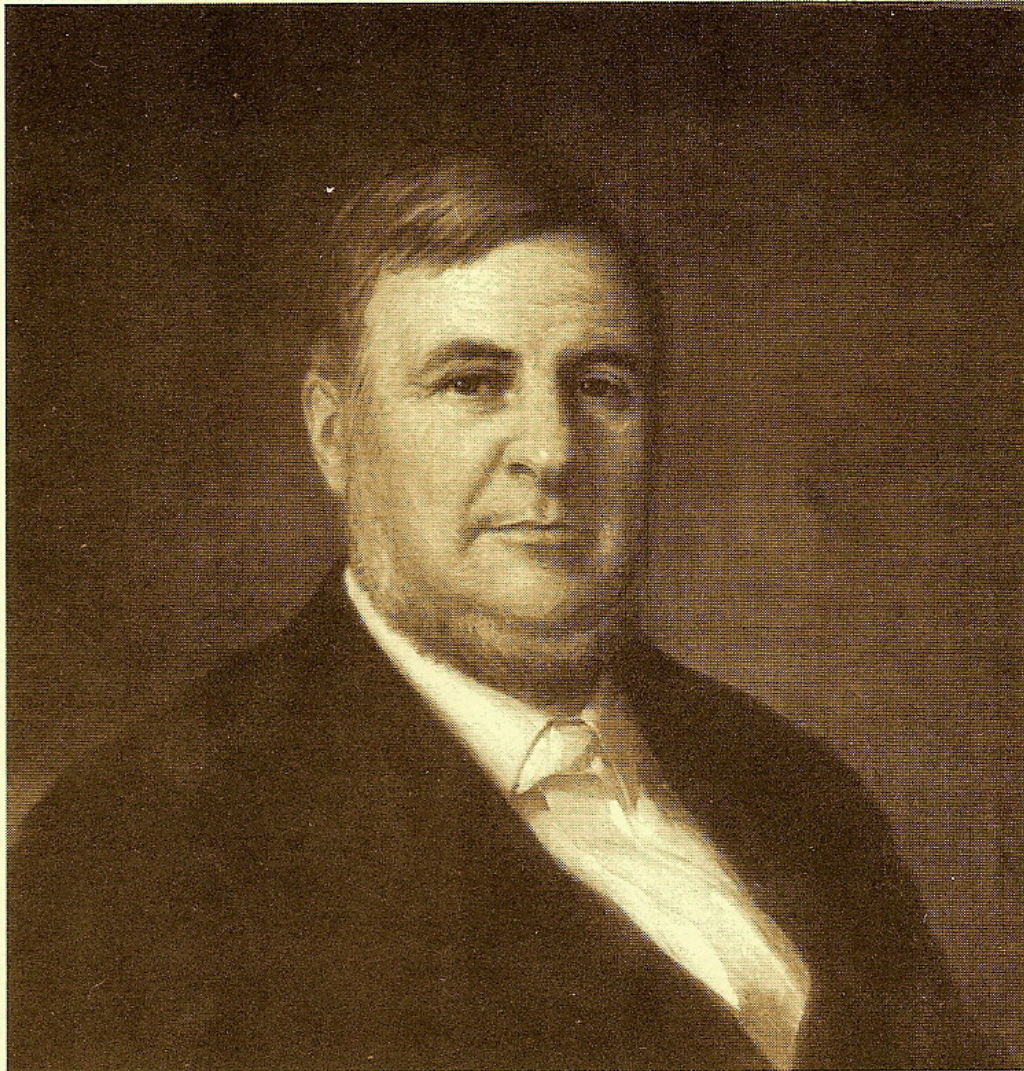
## David Davis Family Photo Album



Clover Lawn

Home to the David Davis family. It was completed in 1872.  
The house was part of a 1200 acre farm that sat on the edge of Bloomington.





### David Davis

David Davis was born in Maryland on March 9, 1815. His father died before he was born. When his mother remarried, he went to live with his Uncle Henry Lyons Davis. After college he went to Yale Law School and became a lawyer. In 1836 he moved to Bloomington and practiced law. Two years later he married Sarah Walker of Lenox, Massachusetts. They had two children, George and Sallie. Davis was elected judge of the 8th Judicial Circuit, where he became good friends with Abe Lincoln. Davis helped Lincoln become president, and then Lincoln appointed Davis to the U.S. Supreme Court. Davis stayed on the Supreme Court for 15 years. He went on to be a U.S. Senator from Illinois, and then Vice-President under President Arthur. He died in 1886 at the age of 71.



Sarah Davis

Sarah Walker was born in Lenox, Massachusetts on September 4, 1814. She attended a school for women, where she learned how to run a large household. She married David Davis in 1838, and they made their home in Bloomington. Sarah had 7 children, but only 2 of them grew to adulthood: George Perrin Davis and Sallie Worthington Davis. Since the Judge was often away in Washington D.C., Sarah had to make many of the decisions while the mansion was being built. She loved to entertain family and friends at Cloverlawn, treating them well. They often stayed long, since great distances had to be traveled. After becoming ill in November 1879, she went to the seashore hoping to recover. Instead, her condition got worse and she died on December 9, 1879 at the age of 65.

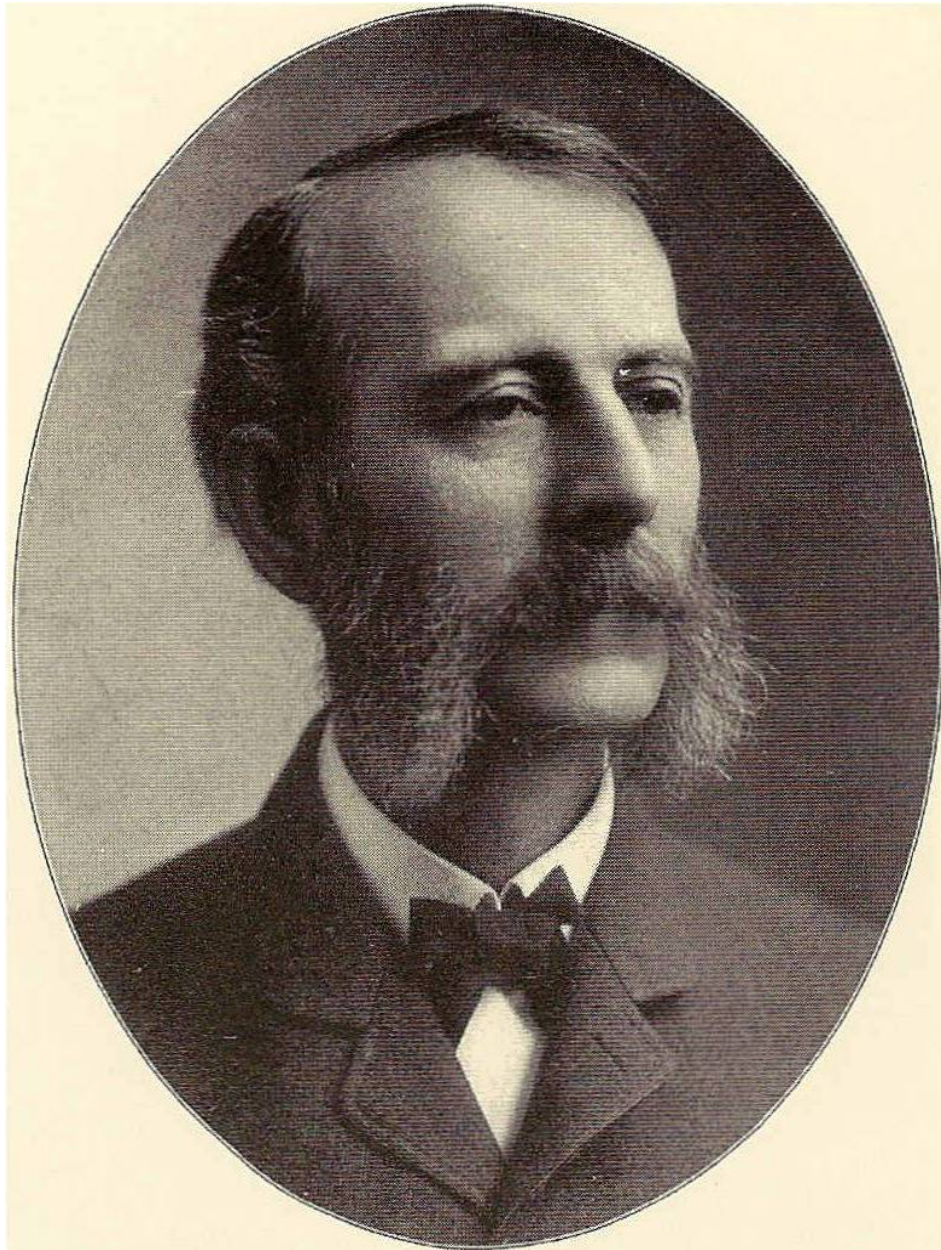




### Sallie Davis

Sallie Worthington Davis was born in Bloomington in 1852. Sallie lived with her family in the mansion from 1872 to 1875. She married Henry S. Swayne, the son of a Supreme Court Judge. Her wedding took place in the parlor of the Mansion. After her first husband died, she married John T. Lilliard, a Bloomington businessman. She never had any children. In 1934 at the age of 82, Sallie died.



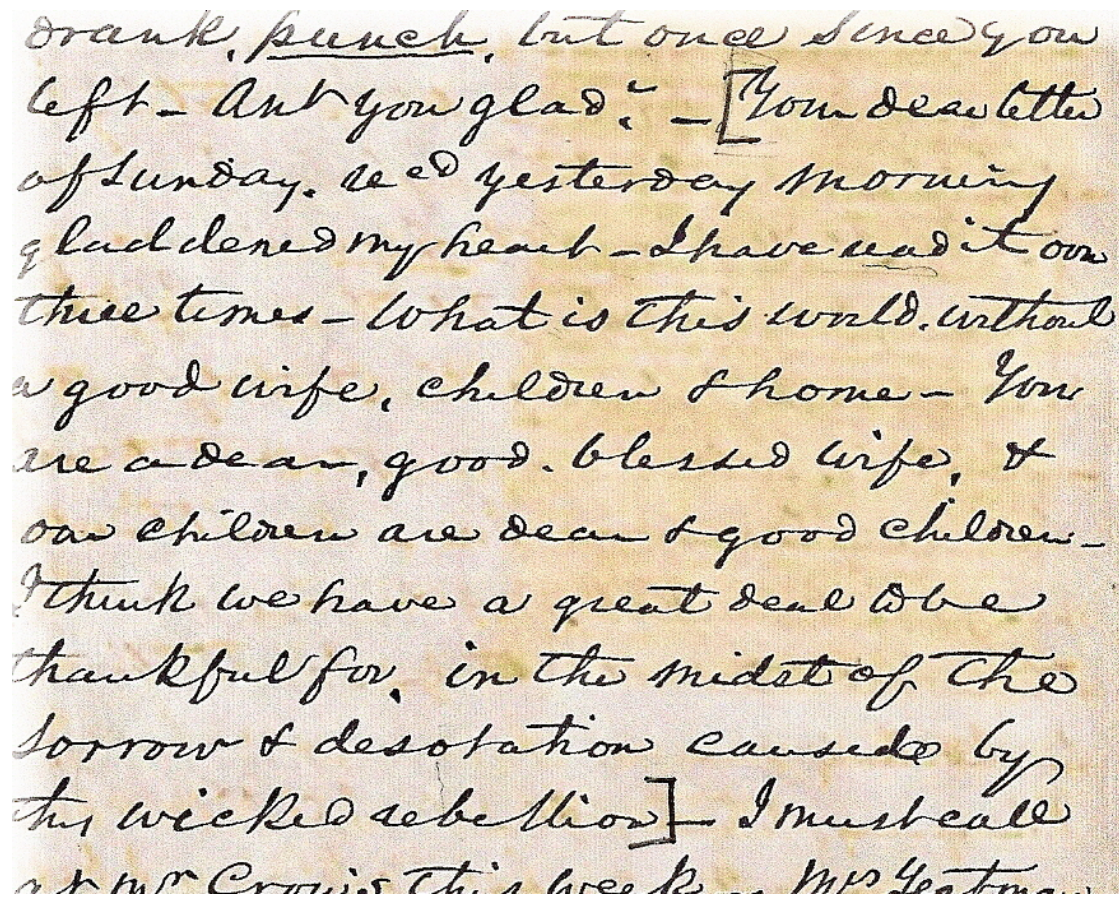


George Perrin Davis

George Perrin Davis was born in Bloomington in 1842. He went to law school at the University of Michigan, graduating in 1867. He practiced law in Bloomington and managed his father's business interests. He married Ella Hannah, the daughter of his law partner, William Hannah. They had 3 children: Alice, David Davis III, and Mercer Davis. When Judge Davis died, George moved his family into the Mansion. In 1902 a fire destroyed most of the attic and tower, so much repair had to be done. George made sure electricity, two telephone systems, and an automobile garage were added to the Mansion. He died in 1917 at the age of 75.



Children may find it interesting to see a copy of a letter written by Judge Davis to his wife on January 29, 1862. It shows the style of his speech and handwriting.



drank, punch, but once since you  
 left - Are you glad? - [Your dear letter  
 of Sunday, rec'd yesterday morning  
 gladdened my heart - I have read it over  
 three times - What is this world, without  
 a good wife, children & home - You  
 are a dear, good, blessed wife, &  
 our children are dear & good children -  
 I think we have a great deal to be  
 thankful for, in the midst of the  
 sorrow & desolation caused by  
 this wicked rebellion] - I must call  
 it Mr. Davis this week - Mrs. Yeatman

Your dear letter of Sunday re(ceived) yesterday morning gladdened my  
 heart. I have read it over three times. What is this world without a good  
 wife, children & home. You are a dear, good, blessed wife, & our children  
 are dear & good children. I think we have a great deal to be thankful for,  
 in the midst of the sorrow & desolation caused by this wicked rebellion.

folder m-1

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Lenox Oct 12  
TH 1860

DEAR PAPA

i HAD MY  
HAIRCUT DAY BEFORE  
YESTERDAY. i HAVE  
BEEN  
MAKING A VISIT AT  
AUNT  
FANNIE'S. WRITE ME  
SOON.

WITH MY LOVE

SALLIE DAVIS

LENOX OCT 12TH 1860  
DEAR PAPA:  
I HAD MY  
HAIRCUT DAY BEFORE  
YESTERDAY. I HAVE BEEN  
MAKING A VISIT AT AUNT  
FANNIE'S. WRITE ME  
SOON.  
SALLIE DAVIS

read in S. Letter, Sarah Davis,  
and Davis, 1860, Oct 12

Sallie's letter to her "Papa" might be interesting to children. She was 8 years old when she wrote this letter.

### **Create a Family Photo Album**

Students will use family photographs to create their own photo album.

### **Writing a Letter**

Students will write a letter to the mansion expressing their opinion of the videos. They might include their favorite part of the video, something special they remember, or something new they may have learned.

### **Story Activity**

Draw a picture of your favorite part of the videos and write sentences about it.

## **The DAVIS Family TIMELINE**

- 1814 (September 4) Sarah Woodruff Walker is born in Lenox, Massachusetts. She attended Catharine Beecher's Seminary in Hartford, Connecticut, where she learned the skills necessary to run a large household.
1815. (March 9) David Davis is born in Cecil County, Maryland, on Mercer Plantation. His father died 8 months before he was born.
1820. David Davis's mother married Franklin Betts. David was sent to live with his uncle, the Rev. Henry Lyon Davis, in Annapolis, Md.
1832. Davis graduates from Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio.
1834. Davis attended Yale Law School in New Haven, Conn.
- 1836 Davis begins his law practice in Bloomington, Illinois
- 1838 Davis marries Sarah Walker on October 30.
- 1842 Birth of son, George Perrin Davis, on June 3.
- 1845 Davis received the Jesse Fell farm east of Bloomington in payment for some law work. He remodeled the house and renamed it "Clover Lawn."
- 1848 Davis is elected judge of the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit. Lincoln, a young lawyer from Springfield, also rides the circuit. They become good friends.
- 1852 Birth of a daughter, Sallie Worthington Davis
1860. Lincoln becomes our 16<sup>th</sup> President of the U.S. Davis helped Lincoln as his campaign manager.
- 1861 The Civil War begins.
- 1862 Davis is appointed by Lincoln to the U.S. Supreme Court.
- 1875 Sallie marries Henry Swayne.
- 1877 Davis resigns as a Supreme Court Justice and is elected to the U.S. Senate.
- 1879 Sarah Davis dies.

- |      |                                                                                                                      |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1881 | Davis, as head of the Senate, becomes acting Vice-President, after the assassination of President James A. Garfield. |
| 1886 | David Davis dies.                                                                                                    |

### **TIMELINE ACTIVITIES**

1. Use the Timeline Teaser worksheet on the following page to answer questions about the Lincoln/Davis timeline or any other timeline.
2. Have students create their own timelines using the Timeline Activity worksheet.  
Example: their own family history.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**TIMELINE TEASERS**

1. What is the subject of this timeline? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. How long is the period this that timeline covers? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What year was \_\_\_\_\_?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What happened in \_\_\_\_\_?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Did \_\_\_\_\_ happen before or

after \_\_\_\_\_?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Draw a picture for an event on the timeline.

7. Which event (date) do you think is most important? Why?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Timeline Activity

**Student Activity:** Create your own timeline.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]



[illegible]

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Fill in the Blank Worksheet

Choose words from the list below to fill in the blanks in each sentence.

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ answers the door at the David Davis Mansion.
2. A visitor needs to present a \_\_\_\_\_ upon entering the Davis home.
3. Children had fun looking at pictures in the \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Guests were often invited to a \_\_\_\_\_ in the parlor.
5. The person who serves the tea is called \_\_\_\_\_.
6. A guest must wait to be served a \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Do not put a treat in your \_\_\_\_\_ for later.
8. The Davises first lived in a \_\_\_\_\_ on this spot where the mansion is now.
9. In the old farmhouse there wasn't an inside bathroom, so the Davis family used an outside \_\_\_\_\_.
10. One of Judge Davis's closest friends was \_\_\_\_\_.

**WORD CHOICES:**

Mother	Calling Card	Photo Album	Farmhouse	Pocket
Privy	Maid	Abe Lincoln	Tea Party	Treat

## TEACHER RESOURCES

### Suggested Readings

(B=Bloomington Public Library, N=Normal Public Library, I=Interlibrary Loan)

Prairie Town

By Bonnie and Arthur Geisert (N)

Nick of the Woods: Adventures of Prairie Life

By Robert M. Bird (I)

Prairie Day: Adapted from the Little House Books

by Laura Ingalls Wilder and Renee Graef (B)

Sugar Creek, Life on the Illinois Prairie

By John Mack Faragher; Yale University Press; Book is a history of Sugar Creek, a rural Illinois community (B)

Prairie Girl: The Life of Laura Ingalls Wilder

by William Anderson (author) and Renee Graef (Illustrator) (B)

Prairie Willow

By Maxine Trottier (I)

Prairie Songs

By Pam Conrad (B and N)

Prairie Friends (an I Can Read Book)

By Nancy Smiler Levinson (B)

A Prairie Boy's Winter

By William Kurelek (I)

Belle's Journey

By Marilynn Reynolds (I)

Addie Across the Prairie

By Laurie Lawlor (B)

A Packet of Seeds

By Deborah Hopkinson (B)

### **Suggested Websites**

The first and second websites deal with the life of Victorian children in London but would also apply to American children in the same time period.

**[www.primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk](http://www.primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk)**

When you reach the site, scroll down and click on Victorians, then on the left sidebar for children. Many other informative subjects on Victorians are in the left sidebar also, if you want to explore more.

**[www.museumoflondon.org.uk](http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk)**

When you get to the website above, use the search query and type in : what was life for children in Victorian London. You will get to the pdf with lots of information.

(**Victorian children** lived very different **lives** to **children** today. Poor **children** often had to work to earn money for their family. **Victorian children** did not have as many toys and clothes as **children** do today and many of them were homemade. ...)

**[www.daviddavismansion.org](http://www.daviddavismansion.org)**

This is the official website of the David Davis Mansion.

## **The Proper Victorian Tea**

In the Victorian era, ladies served tea from elaborate silver services in the “drawing room”. (This is what we commonly call the living room.) It was customary to have tea in front of the hearth even when the hearth may have been located in the bedroom. The hostess was the one who did the pouring and serving. The tables were dressed and displayed formally.

Most likely the tables would be clad with the whitest crisp linens that could be found, sometimes accompanied with lace. The dishes made of delicate china with intricately painted flowers. Lace doilies placed on the serving tray, and each saucer and plate.

Elaborate decorated cakes on pedestal stands bringing the eye naturally to its quaint surroundings. The teapot is also used as a showpiece with surrounding teacups and saucers, the tiny spoons nestled within. Lemon slices placed on a filigree plate. The butters are sweet, sometimes flavored with dill or sage.

You would find attractive woven baskets lined with linens, filled with hot scones and muffins. There is a perfect balance of tiny sandwiches, cream cakes and cookies. But there is never to be a carelessness of having food overwhelming the tea itself.

The Victorian Tea is the one we think of when the custom of tea is mentioned. We think of women gathering with big feathered hats, long full dresses and gloved slim hands. We imagined the traditional tea as we played with our stuffed animals and dressed them for the part. This is one of the teas that definitely bring a smile to your face and a warm feeling to your soul.

## Top Ten List of Tea Party Don'ts

1. Not placing your napkin in your lap.
2. Talking with your mouth full.
3. Reaching across others for any table item.
4. Slurping or smacking your lips.
5. Asking for seconds before being offered.
6. Not passing the salt and pepper together.
7. Doing all the talking.
8. Doing none of the talking.
9. Pushing food onto your fork with your finger.
10. Moving your plate away when you're finished.



## **Steps to Reading Tea Leaves**

- 1. Make the tea correctly**
- 2. Have the subject drink the tea properly**
- 3. Learn the symbols**
- 4. Predict when something's going to happen**
- 5. Determine each symbol's importance**

Successful Victorian Tea Reading begins with the selection of a fine loose-leaf tea. It provides better flavor than tea bags and the grounds can be used for tea readings. A tealeaf reading is a way of telling a person's fortune. After participants have finished their tea, have each person swirl the remaining leaves in a clockwise motion several times. Allow the tea and leaves to settle. Gently drain the liquid from the cup. The tea grounds will form patterns and symbols at the bottom and along the sides of the teacup. The closer to the bottom of the cup the patterns are, the longer distance in time until the event will occur.

Following are a few of the many symbols and patterns you may find:

**Acorn – prosperity or good health**

**Airplane – an impending journey or a rise in position**

**Apple – achievement**

**Baby – small worries**

**Ball – variable fortunes**

**Bell – unexpected news   Birds – good news or a journey**

**Boat – a visit from a friend**

**Butterfly – fickleness**

**Candle – help from others**

**Cat – deception or a false friend**

**Chain – engagement or wedding**

**Circle – success, completion; can also mean a baby coming**

**Coin – money**

**Crescent moon – prosperity and good fortune**  
**Cross – suffering or a sacrifice**  
**Cup – a reward**  
**Dog – good friend; if at bottom, a friend needs help**  
**Egg – good omen**  
**Elephant – wisdom and strength**  
**Eye – caution**  
**Fan – flirtation**  
**Feather – lack of concentration**  
**Fish – good fortune**  
**Forked line – a decision to be made**  
**Gate – opportunity or future success**  
**Glass – integrity**  
**Grapes – happiness**  
**Hand – open means friendship; closed means an argument**  
**Harp – love, harmony**  
**Hat – improvement, especially in a new job**  
**Jewels – gifts**  
**Kite – wish will come true**  
**Knife – a broken friendship**  
**Ladder – promotion**  
**Line – straight means progress; wavy means uncertain path** **Mountain – goals with obstacles**  
**Mouse – theft**  
**Necklace – unbroken means admirers; broken means danger of losing a lover**  
**Parasol or umbrella – new lover**  
**Pig – greed**  
**Question mark – need for caution**  
**Rose – popularity**  
**Snake – an enemy, or wisdom**  
**Spider – reward for work**  
**Spoon – generosity**  
**Square – news about money**  
**Thimble – changes at home**  
**Turtle – constructive criticism**



**Tower – disappointment**

**Triangle – an unexpected occurrence**

**Wings – messages**

David Davis Mansion, 1000 W. Monroe Dr., Bloomington, IL 61701  
Phone: 309/828-1084; Fax: 309/828-3493; email: [davismansion@yahoo.com](mailto:davismansion@yahoo.com)

## **Teacher Evaluation Form Big House on the Prairie**

1. How many of the videos did you show to your students? \_\_\_\_.
2. For what purpose did you use the videos? (Ex: a part of Bloomington history.)  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Which of the extension activities did you use with your class?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Did you use any of the Teacher Resources? \_\_\_\_ If so, which ones were helpful?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Would you use the video again? \_\_\_\_\_. Why or why not?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Did the video create interest in a field trip to the David Davis Mansion? \_\_\_\_\_  
Would you bring your class or leave it up to your students with their family members?  
\_\_\_\_\_