

Pioneers of Second Fork, James P. Burke, 2009

Chapter 4

The Lewis Family

A story of Love, Thievery, and Longevity

The Lewis Lewis family history is steeped in both richness and diversity to rival the most epic Hollywood production. From an Oxford graduate in England to a shoot-out on the banks of the Sinnemahoning, the story of the **Lewis** family presents a most dramatic story of pioneer life in Pennsylvania.

Lewis & Jane

The story begins with Lewis Lewis' birth in Wales in 1736, the son of Thomas Lewis. At the age of twenty-one, Lewis Lewis graduated as an engineer from Oxford University in 1757.

Sometime after graduation, he and his two brothers, David and William, together with relatives by the name of Williams, immigrated to America. Lewis' early travels in this new country took him to Dillsburg, and here he made the acquaintance of Jane Dill, the youngest of four children of Thomas and Mary Dill.

Dillsburg was founded upon land owned by Jane's grandfather, Captain Matthew Dill, who received this land as a grand from the Provincial Government of Pennsylvania for exemplary services to the Colony. Jane never knew her father, Thomas, as he died the same year she was born. Mary, Jane's mother, remarried Caleb Beal, who fathered and raised Jane, together with her two brothers John and Thomas, and her sister Mary.

When Jane first met Lewis, she was a robust Irish lass of seventeen, sort of an inquisitive tomboyish type with boundless energy. It would obviously appear that Lewis's life as a surveyor, traveling the countryside of Pennsylvania's untamed frontier, cast an irresistible lure of adventure and excitement that a girl with Jane's spirited personality couldn't resist. Although Jane was fourteen years younger than Lewis, in 1767, Jane and Lewis were married and moved to Carlisle to settle.

Here in Carlisle, Lewis began his life as a noted pioneer surveyor on the Colony's western frontier, surveying up and down the banks of the Juniata River. This area at that time exposed both the inhabitants and travelers to many perilous risks from both Indians and wild animals such as panthers and wolves that roamed the area. All the land west of the Alleghenies was Seneca Indian Territory. The French and Indian War had just ended a few short years before, and the Revolutionary War was about to erupt. Indian hostilities in Pennsylvania would not be extinguished until the end of the War of 1812.

The Pioneer Surveyor

On September 13, 1773, Lewis received an appointment as District Surveyor in the Nittany Valley Area by the Provincial Government of Pennsylvania. **Lewis** would be the first person to practice his profession as a surveyor in and around the area of Centre County. Centre County was then part of Cumberland County. His surveying work included laying out the town of Lewistown, a town that some claim was named after him.

About this same time, Jane gave birth to the first of their ten children, Jacob Henry, born in York County. Sadly, two of their children died in infancy. Sara, the second oldest, was born in Bellefonte, which at the time was in Northumberland County. Thomas, the third child was born on August 27, 1776, the same day that George Washington's troops were being soundly defeated in the Battle of Long Island at the beginning of the Revolutionary War.

Lewis's position as District Surveyor kept him quite busy traveling and surveying up and down the Susquehanna and Juniata Rivers. Quite often, when Thomas became of age, Lewis took him as a helper in surveying lines in the headwaters of the Susquehanna. While Lewis was attending to his work, Jane was kept quite busy having children and raising a family.

In 1785, Cumberland County encompassed a rather large portion of Pennsylvania. It is interesting to note that the county's records for this year show that Lewis and Jane were assessed for a horse, two cows, and two Negroes. Unfortunately, the records do not indicate where in the county the Lewis family lived at this time.

Tragedy Strikes

Lewis was seriously hurt in an accident, being hit by a falling tree and suffering severe internal injuries. In 1791, Lewis died in Lewistown as a result of these injuries. Just prior to his accident, and shortly after the birth of their youngest son Davy, Lewis and his family moved to a 300 acre parcel of land in Bald Eagle Nest, once the residence of the famous Indian Chief Bald Eagle. This is the present site of Milesburg.

At the time of his death, Lewis and Jane's names appeared on the tax rolls on numerous parcels of land located throughout Central and Western Pennsylvania. It was a common practice to pay a surveyor in a portion of land in Northumberland, Bedford, and Cumberland Counties. These counties were much larger than they are today and included land in present day Clearfield and Elk Counties.

Jane, now forty-two years old, was a widow faced with the enormous undertaking of raising a family that included eight children ranging in ages from Jacob the oldest, at 18, to David, an infant. In addition, Lewis died without a will.

Jane's neighbor, Frederick Leathers, had purchased his property in 1790, and here he cleared the land and established a farm. Leathers, a widower, lost his wife about the same time Jane lost Lewis. In 1792, Jane and Frederick decided to pool their resources and were married. In addition to farming and lumbering, Frederick built and operated a distillery.

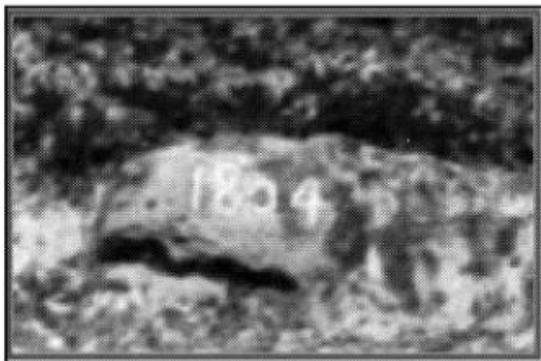
Frederick died in 1796, leaving Jane a widow for the second time within four years. Jane inherited the farm and some money, together with the responsibility of providing for the family, which included running the farm. Sometime earlier, Jane had taken on an Indian woman and a young girl by the name of Cynthia, believed to be the daughter of the Indian woman, to help with family chores. Davy, who loved his mother dearly, although quite young, worked at odd jobs to help support the family.

Jane, unable to make ends meet on the farm, followed in the footsteps of her older sister Mary, who like Jane, had lost her husband early in life, at the age of thirty-six, and had taken up general nursing and midwifery to help support the family.

Sometime between 1800 and 1802, Jane moved from her farm in Bald Eagle to Chinklacamoose, in Lycoming County. On March 25, 1804, this same area would be carved from Lycoming County to form Clearfield County, which remained annexed to Centre County until 1808. The Clearfield County had one large township known as Chinklacamoose, and Jane and her sons (Thomas and David) appear on the list of the first taxable inhabitants of the Township. **Lewis Lewis**' name appears among a list of the single freemen of the county, and although he died in 1791, his name probably is listed because his will was still in probate court.

Jane's son Thomas married Cynthia Ellis on February 12, 1804, and moved to a stone house in Roopsburg, located in Bellefonte. This same year Thomas signed on to guide to a surveying party hired to mark the boundary lines of Clearfield County. A man named Webb, believed to be Isaac Webb, was a surveyor in this party. He would later settle on a thousand acre tract of land, founding the village of Force.

Thomas Lewis's great, great, great grandson, Samuel Lewis McCracken, would state quite confidently that he had Indian blood flowing in his veins, and was quite certain that Cynthia was the daughter of the Indian woman. This probably is the origin of stories about there being Indian graves on Lewis Mountain.



Could this rock have been a marker for the old Clearfield County line?*

In the 1950s to 1980s, Jack Van Alstine, who spent many years searching for the lost gold shipment, found a rock near the base of Buck Point, near the stream of Trout Run, upon which was chiseled the date of "1804." Could it be that the surveying crew who made the original survey of the Clearfield County boundary line marked this date on the rock? This date rock is in the general proximity to the old Clearfield County Line.

In 1806, Thomas, Andrew Overturf, and Levi Hicks ventured up the Susquehanna to the present site of Driftwood, where they planted corn for

shares during the spring and summer months. Tom would return back to his home in Roopsburg to spend the winter months with his family. This went on for several years. Andrew Overturf would settle in Driftwood a few years later, becoming the second citizen of Driftwood, and

Thomas would acquire a parcel of land of about 290 acres on Rock Hill, located on the top of a mountain overlooking the village of Medix Run.

When Jane moved to Clearfield in 1802, she brought her late husband's distillery, and here in Clearfield she established the first brewery and distillery in the area on a site which is presently the intersection of Brewery Hill and Third Street. In addition to operating the brewery and making moonshine, Jane continued to practice the profession of midwifery.

Jane took her work as a midwife quite seriously, and as a result of her dedicated and faithful service to the citizens of the area, she became very popular and well liked. Affectionately known as "Granny Leathers," she had a hand in the births of nearly all the first born citizens of Clearfield County.

While the Lewis family was living in Clearfield, Davy, Jane's youngest son, now seventeen, ran off to Bellefonte and joined the Army. He deserted soon after enlisting, and several months later in Carlisle, he reenlisted in Captain William Irvine's Company of U.S. Light Artillery under the assumed name of Armstrong Lewis. Shortly after he joined this unit, Davy's true identity was discovered and he was court martialled. Double enlistment was a crime, and desertion was a hanging offense. The military court convicted him of desertion and sentenced him to be executed before a firing squad. Some accounts claim that his mother, Jane, attended the court martial pleading for clemency for her son. Perhaps it was because Davy was a minor, but in any event, Davy's sentence was reduced to prison time. Shortly following his conviction, he escaped from prison. David Lewis was now a wanted man.

Davy Lewis and the Robber

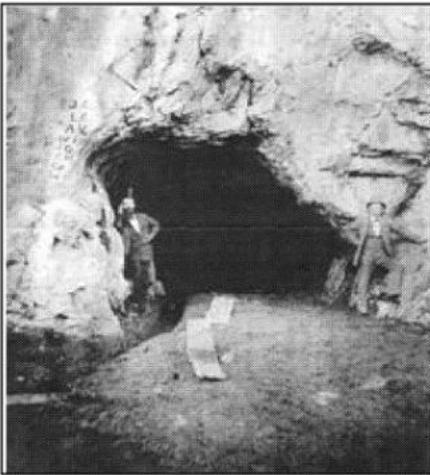
Running out of places to hide in Centre County area, Davy fled to Burlington, Vermont, and became involved with a gang of counterfeiters. In the early 1800's, paper currency was in the form of bank notes drafted on various banks throughout the country and much easier to counterfeit than today's currency. Davy and his gang were not just content to pass off phony bank notes, but in addition, they engaged in a spree of robberies and hold-ups in Vermont, Canada, and New York.

In Troy, New York, sometime about 1810, David met and fell in love with Melinda Blankenburg. However, Davy's love life didn't interfere with his thieving activities. Soon after he met Melinda he attempted to buy a horse from an Army general, using a counterfeit bank note for payment. This obviously angered the general, who made an asserted effort to have Davy captured and locked up in the Troy jail house.

Born with a silver tongue, Davy, could charm the pants off a preacher's wife. One Sunday morning, as Davy sat locked up in the Troy jail, the only guard was the jailer's daughter. Davy began working his charm on the girl until he finally persuaded her to unlock the cell door and let him escape. He kissed the jailer's daughter good-bye. As the faithful citizens of Troy sat in church singing hymns as a tribute to God, Davy boldly strolled down Main Street to find his true love Melinda. Together they rode off to Albany to get married, leaving only a brokenhearted jailer's daughter and a cloud of dust for a posse to follow.

In Albany, David and Melinda were married, and while there, Davy used his charismatic charm to finagle a private invitation to a party given at the home of the wife of the noted entrepreneur John Jacob Astor. Davy charmingly relieved the wealthy partygoers of their jewels and other valuables, letting them know they were robbed by Davy Lewis the Robber. There is a scene in the movie of “Butch Cassidy and the Sun Dance Kid” that mimics this real-life escapade of Davy Lewis.

Davy comes home



One of several caves the Lewis Gang allegedly used as a hide out in Carlisle, Pa.
Courtesy of the Cumberland County Historical Society.

On September 28, 1811, Davy and Melinda became the proud parents of a daughter they named Mary Jane, who assumed the nickname of Jemima. The following year a second daughter, Kesiah, was born but unfortunately, shortly after giving birth, Melinda died. Sometime about 1812, Davy decided to return home to Carlisle, the site of his birthplace, with his two children and marry a woman by the name of Margaret.

The estates of both of Jane’s deceased husbands, Lewis and Frederick, were still in probate. In 1812, Jane, as an executor of both of these estates, moved back to Centre County where she could administer first hand the final disposition of these properties and where she could again renew her relationship with Davy and see her two new grandchildren.

In Centre County, Jane took up residency in a house located on the turnpike between Pleasant Gap and Axeman, near an old known landmark called the “Old Red Barn.” Jane’s son Caleb lived nearby in Milesburg and worked as a laborer at the Harmony Forge.

In Carlisle, Davy’s activities as a robber intensified. The Lewis gang found a secluded cave in the vicinity of Carlisle that they used for a hideout and went on a reign of terror robbing travelers and stagecoaches in the local area. Posse after posse pursued this elusive outlaw without success, as Davy would make it back to the hideout undetected. To this day, many treasure hunters search Davy’s old hideout, believing that there are thousands of dollars worth of gold and silver coins buried near the cave.

On one occasion in neighboring Adam County, a posse was formed to go after “Davy Lewis the Outlaw.” Davy, hearing of the lan, thought he would have a bit of fun and joined the posse. When the search ended in failure, Davy expressed his disappointment and rode off on his way. A few days later, the sheriff received a letter which read, "I trust you did not find Lewis, the Robber, to be such a bad companion after all," signed Davy Lewis. (In 1813 Carlisle was in the Cumberland County).

Another time, in Penn's Valley, Davy decided to rob a boarding house. As he entered the boarding house, he was greeted by an elderly lady, who asked what she could do for him. Davy asked if she could make a change for a five dollar note. The idea was to watch where she hid her

money and then rob her. To his surprise, she broke down in tears, explaining that not only didn't she have any money, but the constable was coming this very day to serve her with an eviction notice for back taxes. Davy, felling sorry for her situation, gave her the twenty dollars she needed to pay for the back taxes with instructions to get a written receipt. As the constable rode back down the trail after being paid, Davy sprang from his hiding place in the bushes with guns drawn and relieved the constable of the twenty dollars and then some.

Quite often when Davy was roaming the country sides of Centre County, he would take time to visit his mother. The Sheriff of Bellefonte, because of these frequent visits, hearing that Davy might be in the area, would often raid Jane's house trying to capture the elusive outlaw. On a number of occasions, Davy would be awoken from a sound sleep by a friendly neighbor warning him of a pending raid. Grabbing his coat and hat, Davy would tear out on the fly, galloping down along Spring Creek, leaving only a warm bed and a cloud of dust for the Sheriff and his deputies to follow, and would escape up over Sugar-loaf Mountain. Later in his life, Davy would reflect back on these foiled attempts to capture him and laugh, referring to them as fox hunts, adding that the fox always got away.

Davy Lewis, described as a handsome, good-looking chap, standing about 5'10" high with a muscular physique, was a very polite, well-mannered person and an exceptional conversationalist with a likeable sense of humor. Certainly he was not a person you would take for a villainous outlaw and hold-up man. As Davy's reputation grew as a notorious robber, he was often referred to by many citizens throughout the countryside as the Robin Hood of Pennsylvania. While newspaper accounts referred to him as "Davy Lewis the Robber," Davy himself preferred to be called the "Equalizer." He was a shrewd outlaw, as he often shared his loot with those who supported his unlawful activities. This personality coupled with his unique, flamboyant flare for practical jokes and pranks, was amusing at times causing many of his antics to become legendary.

The Guest of Davy Lewis

One night a lonesome traveler by the name of Simmons was traveling between Bellefonte and Lock Haven. Having been forewarned that Davy Lewis was in the area, he cautiously traveled the back trails, and as nightfall was approaching, he noticed a light coming from a small cabin. Thinking that this would be a good place to spend the night, he knocked on the cabin door and was greeted by a smiling, muscular man who invited him in. That evening the host fixed Simmons something to eat and offered him a drink. Later, while they were playing cards, the traveler confided to his host that he was carrying a large sum of money and was worried about robbers being in the area. The next morning the host bid Simmons a safe trip and said, "By the way, tell all your family and friends that last night you were the guest of Davy Lewis."

Another story exists about Davy. Philip Benner was returning from Pittsburgh one day with a considerable amount of money that he had received as payment for the sale of iron ore when Davy stopped him on the road. Being quick witted, Benner gave Davy a friendly greeting by saying, "Oh, Mr. Lewis! You are just the person I was hoping to meet. Things have been mighty tough lately, we are having problems finding good ore, the ore market is down, and we desperately need some money or we are in big trouble." Davy looked Benner in the eye, thought

for a brief moment, and gave him a sum of money. Davy's decision may have been influenced by the fact that his brother Caleb worked as a laborer at the Milesburg Forge for Joseph Miles and Joseph Green.

Davy was once again captured in the early part of 1816 and sentenced to six years in the Philadelphia Penitentiary. In September of 1819, Governor Findlay pardoned Davy, commuting his sentence from six to 3 1/2 years. Shortly after being released from prison, Davy teamed up with a man by the name of Connelly who was a mean, vicious character. They went on a crime spree in Dauphin, Perry, Cumberland, York, Adams, Franklin, and Bedford counties holding up stagecoaches and robbing Conestoga wagons and travelers traveling the roads and turnpikes of central Pennsylvania. These assaults instilled many fears and anxieties in those persons planning to travel in this area.

When Governor Findlay ran for reelection in 1820, a man by the name of James Duncan had hand bills printed and passed out to the citizenry of the Commonwealth, announcing that Governor Findlay had pardoned this terrible outlaw - Davy Lewis. The poster listed all the crimes that sent Davy to prison together with a copy of his signed confession. Heister defeated Findlay in this election and many people felt it was the result of Duncan's handbills. Governor Heister was obviously appreciative, as he appointed James Dunan as Auditor-General of Pennsylvania on April 2, 1821.

David and his gang were captured on October 1819, when they tried to rob a Pittsburgh merchant on a mountain turnpike and were locked up in the Bedford county Jail. They broke out of the jail, but within a short time were recaptured and returned to the Bedford Jail. Davy managed to escape for a second time, and this time in order to over his escape, he freed all the prisoners in the jail. In the midst of all the confusion, Davy made a clean getaway.

Davy's freedom, however, was short lived, as several months later he was caught in an attempt to rob the house of Mr. Beshore. As reported by the Republican compiler, Lewis and Connelly were seen in the area of Mr. Beshore's residence several times arousing suspicion about their intentions. The neighbors devised a plan that if a robbery attempt was made, the victim would blow a horn. The trap worked and Davy was caught, but Connelly managed a clean get away. However, Davy, being the escape artist he was, broke out of jail a short time later, again free to continue on his crime spree.

Tom & Jane homestead Rock Hill

While Davy was having his run-ins with the law, Thomas, in 1817, moved to a 290 acre parcel of land that he had previously purchased on Rock Hill, which was located on the top of a mountain overlooking the village of Medix Run. Thomas family at this time included his wife Cynthia and their three children: Ellis, Lewis, and George Washington Lewis. Also coming here to settle with Thomas was his mother Jane and Cynthia's mother, the Indian woman. This settlement would soon be known as Lewis Mountain as Thomas gradually converted the forested land into fertile farm fields.

Jane was undoubtedly relieved to escape the commotion Davy was causing in and around Centre County. A few years after settling here, Jane, at the jaunty age of seventy years, married for the third time to Ree Stevens.

Take me if you dare!

Davy decided to pay a visit to a popular and well-known general store on the corner of Front & Market Streets in Harrisburg, where people would gather on a regular basis to visit and discuss current affairs, local news, and general gossip. Davy would often visit local saloons, boarding houses, and meeting places such as this to catch up on the local news and seek information on local shipments and stagecoach schedules. Davy would sit and quietly listen and learn what was happening.

On this particular visit, the conversation turned to the risks and dangers of traveling the local roads due to all the robbers and cutthroats operating in the area. Several of the braggarts began telling the crowded store how they would bring this Lewis character to his knees if he ever tried to rob them. Davy, amused by their bold statements just could not restrain himself any longer. He sprang to his feet, with both guns drawn, and shouted, "I'm David Lewis the Robber, take me if you dare." The store erupted as if hit by a sudden bolt of lightning, putting the entire crowd to flight, with people bumping into each other, falling and stumbling over barrels and butter churns, desperately trying to put as much distance as possible between them and this vicious robber. Davy, with a smug laugh, holstered his pistols and calmly walked out the front door, leaving the store in a state of shock and confusion.

In about the 1820's the Centre County area was rapidly developing economically as a result of the discovery of iron ore marking the beginning of the iron industry in the United States. As a result of this booming economy, many people were migrating to Centre County area seeking work, creating the need for goods and supplies. Hammond & Page became dominant merchants of the day to supply the needs of these people. They imported their supplies and merchandise on horse drawn Conestoga Wagons over the mountains from Philadelphia.

Hammond & Page was expecting a shipment of three wagon loads of goods from Philadelphia, and as the wagon train crossed Seven Mountains just a few miles from Potter's Mills, one of the wagons broke down. Being late, the teamsters decided to leave the wagon, and drive on to John Carr's Tavern at Potter's Mill. Lewis and Connelly had been following the wagon train, and they seized the opportunity to help themselves to the goods in the abandoned wagon. Apparently not satisfied with their haul, they proceeded on to Potter's Mills, like a fox chasing a rabbit to rob the remaining two wagons. Carr saw the outlaws approaching and was ready for a fight. Lewis, seeing he was outgunned, took off like a fox being chased by a pack of hounds. The tables had turned, and now they were being chased by the same people they intended to rob. They outran their pursuers except for one person by the name of Paul Lebo who managed to catch up to them. Connelly captured Lebo, and had him nearly choked to death before Lewis intervened. Unlike Connelly, Lewis was not a violent man, and would use force only in self defense.

Posses on their trail

A messenger was immediately dispatched to Bellefonte with news of Lewis's raid at Potter's Mills. The citizens of Bellefonte quickly organized and devised a plan to capture the Lewis gang. They formed two posses, one under ex-sheriff William Alexander, and the other under Centre County Coroner James McGhee. Alexander would proceed down Nittany valley, collecting a posse as he went, and go by the way of Great Island, following the river up to Bennett's Valley. The McGhee posse, including John Mitchell, William Armor, Paul Lebo, Peter Deisal (a one arm man), and Joseph Butler (sheriff of the county the following year), was to travel overland through the Quehanna area towards the current site of Benezette. The goal of both posses was to converge on Davy's mother, Jane Lewis', cabin on the Bennett's Branch.

The McGhee posse made it to Karthaus at the first night. Here McGhee obtained the services of Andy Walker, well-known hunter of the local area, as a guide. Also joining the posse her were William Hammond, John Koons, Samuel Karnell, and Peter Bodey. Before proceeding the next morning, they received news that the Alexander's posse captured McGuire, a member of the Lewis Gang, and had both Lewis and Connelly on the run.

The next night, on the 29th of April, 1820, the McGhee Posse got lost and had to camp overnight. On the following day the posse found their way to the confluence of Trout Run and Bennett's Branch. Walker and Karnell went to Jane Lewis' Cabin looking for Davy. Satisfied that neither Davy nor Connelly was there, they rejoined the posse. That night the posse proceeded down the Bennett's Branch to Shepard's place on the Driftwood Branch. Shepard told the Posse that two men fitting the description of Lewis and Connelly had had breakfast there that morning. The Posse, accompanied by Shepard, followed the trail of the two men eight miles up the Driftwood Branch. When they caught up to the two suspects, they were disappointed to find that they were not Lewis & Connelly.

Shoot and be dammed! We will shoot back

The posse then proceeded back down the Driftwood Branch, and between the present site of Driftwood and Sinnemahoning they encountered John Brooks gigging for eels. Brooks told the posse that he had seen Lewis and another man in the morning. Brooks joined the posse and together they had proceeded a short ways downstream when they heard gun-fire. Brooks guided them to a spot on the mountainside overlooking the river where they observed Lewis and Connelly shooting mark. McGhee shouted out a demand for them to surrender. Lewis' answer was quick and to the point. "Shoot and be dammed! We will shoot back." Who fired the first shot is not certain, but one of the first shots fired hit Lewis in the arm, shattering the bone, causing him to fall severely wounded. Connelly tried to escape across the river, but just as he was approaching the far bank, a bullet fired by Peter Deisal struck the rim of Connelly's abdomen causing his entrails to protrude.

Lewis and Connelly were taken by canoe down teh Sinnemahoning to Great Island to the mouth of Bald Eagle Creek, arriving there on the 2nd of July. Here Connelly died as a result of his wounds and was buried in the Great Island Cemetery. David Lewis was taken on to Bellefonte where he was incarcerated in the local jail. His arm was a mess from the gunshot wound, and

many of his friends advised him to have it amputated. Dr. Curtin, a skillful surgeon, offered his services but Davy refused. On several occasions when Davy would look out the window of his jail cell, probably while planning an escape, he was known to have said that he could see on the far mountain top where he buried the haul from his last robbery. Judging from David's past, this may have been a prank, but if it was, it was his last prank. David Lewis the Robber died several days later of gangrene in the Bellefonte jail on July 13, 1820. David is buried in Milesburg.

The boundless energy and enthusiasm Jane exhibited in her youth remained with her throughout her life. At eighty years plus, Jane made a trip on horseback from her home in Benezette Township to Louisville, Kentucky, to visit her oldest son Jacob. Jacob, who hadn't seen his mother for years, was walking down Main Street of Louisville, when Jane came galloping into town unannounced with her long gray hair flying in the breeze. Jacob turned to his companion, and in a state of amazement said, "That old lady is my mother."



JANE'S GRAVESTONE

Jane Dill Lewis Leathers Stevens, a mother of ten, survivor of three husbands, a person who lived through the Revolutionary War and the birth of this nation and a person who was one of the first pioneer settlers of the Benezette area - departed this world at the ripe old age of 92 in 1842. The energized life of Granny Lewis had come to an end.

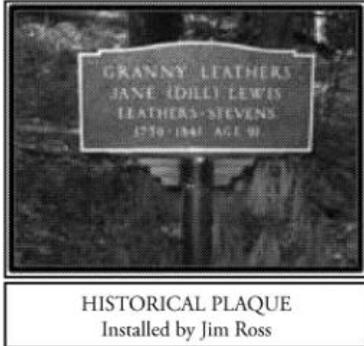
Ellis Lewis, Thomas's son, inherited the Lewis farm. Ellis was born in Bellefonte, and came to Rock Hill with his father to live. Although Ellis had no formal education due to the lack of schools in the area at the time, he learned farming, lumbering, and other useful skills while working with his father. Ellis became a millwright at the age of 20, a profession he practiced for a number of years. In 1851, Ellis was elected treasurer of Elk County and held a number of other local offices as well. The Lewis farm passed on to his son, Winfield Scott Lewis, one of Ellis and Anna Butler Michaels eleven children. Winfield Scott Lewis, described as a person whose usual attire was buckskins adorned with a coonskin hat, married Ella Younger. Their only child, Ruie, married Raymond Irwin. The Irwins were the last of the Lewis line to reside on the Lewis farm.

The Lonesome Grave?

The old Lewis homestead has vanished into the past. The site has been heavily timbered and stripped for coal. All that remains of the Lewis Farm is a crudely carved gravestone indicating Jane's gravesite. Over the years, this site became known as the Lonesome Grave. However, this name is a bit misleading, as there are a number of unmarked grave sites next to Jane's grave. Although some of the people interred in this family cemetery can be identified, Thomas is not one of them.

Where is Tom?

While returning home from Jersey Shore to consult a doctor concerning an intestinal disorder, Thomas suddenly took ill and died. The crew and passengers in the canoe were horror stricken. Thinking he had died of the plague, they quickly put to shore and buried Thomas on a bank of the Susquehanna River near Jersey Shore. Thomas's son, upon learning of his father's death, traveled to the burial site and placed a marker on Thomas's grave. Thomas Lewis died on April 10, 1855, at the age of 68.



Sometime in or around the 1970's, James Ross placed a marker near Jane's gravesite. inscribed thereupon is "GRANNY LEATHERS, JANE (DILL) LEWIS, LEATHERS - STEVENS, 1750 - 1841 AGE 92." The census records indicate Jane was born in 1750. However, some family decedents claim that Granny Lewis lived to be 106.

THE END

1. History of McKean, Elk, and Cameron Counties - J.H. Beers
2. The Legend of Lewis the Robber -Newville Historical Society
3. History of Centre County
4. Shoot and be Damned - by J. Marvin Lee
5. History of Clearfield County by Lewis Cass Aldrich, 1887
6. Outlaw David Lewis Terrorized Area - Grit #47 - October 1, 1978
7. Pennsylvania's Robin Hood - Lewis the Robber by Ann E. Diviney
8. Descendants of Thomas Lewis - Family genealogy - author unknown
9. Lewis Genealogy by S.L. McCracken

*Picture 1804- was enhanced to been show the date