

Reverend Davis Morton Wood Glen Wilton, Botetourt County, Virginia

Davis M. Wood was born September 20, 1819. He was the son of James M. Wood and Elizabeth Crenshaw Wood of Botetourt County. Davis attended school at the Botetourt Seminary in Fincastle, Virginia, and graduated as class valedictorian in July, 1840.

In the early 1840's he married Sarah Eleanor Reynolds and between 1845 and 1865 they had 8 children. Davis was a farmer and the Methodist minister in Glen Wilton.

In June, 1864, their oldest son James became a private in Company D of the 11th Virginia Infantry and joined the unit at Cold Harbor. Several family letters survive from late 1864 and early 1865 while the 11th was stationed at Bermuda Hundred and then near Five Forks.

On February 5, 1865, Davis advised his son that, “. . . we were very sorry to hear your Box had failed to come to hand. . . . You have in your Box two letters, a pair of gloves, two splendid pair of socks, 2 Turkeys, 7 chickens, 1 ham of Pork, 2 Cakes of butter, 1 Sponge Cake, a number of pies, and biscuits, a few irish potatoes . . . tallow and soap, . . . and a small tin cup.”

In the same letter Reverend Wood is deeply concerned about Confederate soldiers, while home on furlough, leading local young women astray. He noted, “*Babies are plenty up this way. Miss Bettie Lemon is said to have a daughter and a Miss Gilleland, on the Cowpasture [River], had a baby . . . and put it in a hollow log, where it was found dead – and a Miss, on Jackson's River is said to be expecting! What a state of things.*”

On April 6, 1865, not knowing about Five Forks and Sailor's Creek, Davis wrote to James, “. . . I hope my son you will remember, and feel your dependence upon God . . . especially when upon the battlefield with death dealing bullets falling thick and fast around you . . . Then to whom can we look but God! . . . But always be watchful of Yankees. Never be too ready to confide in them. They are generally not to be trusted.”

In the last surviving letter, which is dated April 9th, Davis suggests, “*As to the employment of Negroes as soldiers in our army, I think this ought to have been done long ago. I would sooner rely on faithful Negroes than weak-kneed whites. I would like to hear how our Negroes have behaved in Lee's army. . . .*” Davis does not know that Lee's army surrendered on the day he was writing this letter to James.

Davis died on September 10, 1904, 10 days short of being 85. Sarah died in 1910. They are both buried in the Wood family cemetery in Glen Wilton. The old family home burned in 1995 and most of his hand written sermons were lost in the fire.