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# THE DOSS CONNECTION

Vol 1, No. 1

July, 1995

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## Doss Family Association Forming

by Libbie Griffin

For the past couple of years I have been collecting information about the Doss families in America. Inspired by family trees created by my grandmother, Edna Richmond Lilly, and a photograph of her grandmother, Roxie Doss, I embarked on a search for my Doss ancestors. I have exchanged letters with many people around the country who are also Doss descendants. To date I have compiled a database of more than 5000 Dosses. Finding and connecting all these people and publishing a Doss genealogy have become my "obsession."

In the course of my research I have corresponded with many Doss descendants. Many people have suggested that we begin a Doss Family Association, and have expressed an interest in a Doss newsletter. A newsletter seems like the best way to share the information others have so generously shared with me, and the only practical way to keep everyone apprised of the new information I am finding about our family.

A Doss Family Association seems to be a great way to acquaint all the wonderful "cousins" I have found with one another and to preserve the history and the heritage of our ancestors. We can collect the stories of our ancestors and record them for future Doss descendants. We can share our knowledge and learn more about our distant cousins. Perhaps someday we will organize a Doss reunion.

Our Doss ancestors were not famous people. They were the kind of people who have made America unique. They worked hard and struggled against poverty, war, disease and bad luck. The thing that most stands out, when one looks at so many of them together, is the eternal optimism and love of their children that kept them moving to the frontier, settling new lands, always working for a better life for their families. The comforts we enjoy today were earned, in large measure, by those nearly forgotten people who came before us. I hope that by joining together in a family association we will all learn more about our ancestors, and preserve the history of their lives for the 21st century.

This newsletter is an invitation to you to join the Doss Association. Information about joining the association is found on the last page. This first newsletter contains some of the Doss family history that I have discovered. I trust that you will enjoy learning more about your ancestors. I hope you will join us today and will submit your own family trees, stories, pictures, inquiries. Please contribute part of your own family's unique history.

**DOES NOT CIRCULATE**

For membership information, inquiries or comments please contact:  
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**DOSS  
REFERENCE**

## *An Open Letter to My Doss Cousins*

Many people have shared the information about their Doss families with me, and I appreciate each one, but some people deserve special recognition and appreciation for sharing with me their knowledge of the Doss family.

Barbara Doss McKinlay of Los Angeles California has been researching the Doss family for more than 20 years. A native Californian, Barbara's Doss line traces back to James Doss Sr. of Pittsylvania Co. Va. Barbara is a librarian and an expert genealogist. She is very active with the Southern California Genealogical Society for whom she teaches genealogy classes. She has compiled thousands of pages of information about all the Doss families, and is now in the process of copying her files and sending them to me. If you've never heard from me, chances are you received this newsletter because you have previously contacted Barbara. Thank you, Barbara, for your diligent research and for your kind cooperation.

Barbara's chief co-researcher is Madonna McCarthy of Las Vegas, Nevada. Madonna has traced her line back to William Doss of Pittsylvania Co. Madonna has compiled information from countless census records and from the facilities of the Las Vegas Family History Center. Along with Madonna's cousin Evelyn Rich, Barbara and Madonna have collected an enormous amount of data on the Doss families.

James H. Doss Jr. of Weatherford Texas is my own "cousin" who shares with me the line of Joshua Doss of Cumberland Co. Va. Mr. Doss was one of my first Doss correspondents, and he has provided me a great deal of information and with books written by his mother and his cousin, Charles Doss, that are rich with the history of one Doss family in Texas. Another Weatherford resident, Donnell Doss, has compiled complete census files for all Dosses everywhere, as well as a great deal of other information on these families. Mr. Doss put me in touch with Donnell, and copied her extensive files and sent them to me at an early stage in my research. I am very grateful to both of them.

Nathan Murphy of Hanson, Kentucky is a brilliant young genealogist who has an uncanny knack for finding obscure clues and understanding their meaning. Nathan and his father David, who are members of the LDS church, have compiled a complete genealogy of the descendants of Azariah Doss and Lydia Ayres of Bedford Co. Va., their ancestors.

Gail Adkins of Ringgold, Pittsylvania Co., Virginia is my cousin whose letters first led me to my own Doss family. We have learned that our great, great, great grandfathers were brothers who died in the Civil War. Our part of the Doss family didn't move west, they moved into southern West Virginia, looking for survival in the lumber camps and coal mines that ruined that land and abused its people in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

I must acknowledge Prodigy, and the many wonderful Doss descendants I have found there. One in particular, Nora Fleming of Troy Michigan, has shared this search with me almost daily. Nora, who has more patience than I do, finds the hidden gems in the processioners' reports and obscure court records she spends her weekends reading on microfilm.

One major reason that I produced this newsletter is to keep these people and all the others who I have corresponded with up-to-date on my research. A short time ago I spent one wonderful week in the Virginia State Library and Archives. The exciting news is that I have found a father for the Bedford Co. Va. Dosses (see the article on Zachariah Doss). And I believe I'm hot on the trail of the father of all the Virginia Dosses, who I believe to have been Thomas Doss of Goochland Co. Evidence is building that he is the same Thomas (b. 1686) who was the son of John and Ann Doss of Middlesex Co. Va. If you want to know how this story ends, please join the Doss Association today!

Finally, I must thank my own wonderful husband, George Griffin, whose patience knows no limit. He endures the trips and pays the bills and in return is only neglected while I play on the computer.

To each of the people named above, and to all the many others who have sent me your family charts, photos, stories and questions, I want to express my enormous appreciation for your willingness to share your families and your research with me. If my book ever gets published, it will only be because of your support. Thanks to you all.

## The First Generations

The earliest mention of the Doss family in America occurred in 1661, when John Underwood of Middlesex County, Virginia, cashed in headrights for "Jno. Dawe and An Dawe." (*Cavaliers & Pioneers, Vol. 1*, Nugent) Headrights were established early in the colonies to encourage immigration. A person who paid for the ocean crossing for any person—family member or servant — received 50 acres of land for each person he brought. It is likely that John and Ann, who were probably brother and sister, were indentured servants brought in by Underwood.

The earliest occurrence of the name Doss in Virginia is found in the Christ Church Parish Register for Middlesex County in 1679. John Doss married Ann Taylor there on January 26, 1679/80. This is still in the period when England and its colonies used double-dating. The new year began on March 25, so the date January 26, 1679 was actually, by our calendar, January 26, 1680. Their children William and Ellener, apparently twins, were christened January 16, 1680/81. Thomas Doss, son of John and Ann, was christened January 9, 1686/87. John and Ann may have had other children not recorded in the parish register.

Nathan Murphy, a Doss researcher from Hanson, Kentucky, points out that the Christ Church Parish Register lists the death of "John Dawd, cooper and servant to Major Robert Beverley" on 17 Sept. 1686. The parish register also lists the marriage of Ann Doss and Thomas Winger on July 15, 1688. Nathan feels that John Dawd was really our John Doss, and that his death explains why the births of no other Doss children are listed in the parish register. It is a compelling argument; perhaps it can be established by one of us seeing the actual register page, since the name Daws or Doss is often transcribed incorrectly. The Ann Doss who married Thomas Winger may have been "An Dawe," the probable sister who immigrated with John. The death of Ann "Wingo" is recorded on June 15, 1726. There are no other entries in the parish register for the name Winger or anything similar.

Ellener married Jephtha Edmunds on August 18, 1704; she must have died shortly after her marriage, because Jephtha Edmunds married Mary Pain on Dec. 24, 1705.

The marriage of William "DESS" and Katherine Woodyard was recorded in Christ Church, Middlesex on Dec. 18, 1708. This is the only listing under this

spelling in the parish register. This is probably our William Doss. There are two references to William in other Middlesex Co. records: in the Vestry Book of Christ Church Parish, the only Doss entry is from the accounts of 1716, William DOS is listed as a "delinquent" and John Robinson was paid 82 3/4 pounds of tobacco for him. There is no explanation of his offense. Also, from Middlesex Co. Deed Book 2, 1694-1703, from the court of May 4, 1702: "We doe present Richard Woods, Servant to John Sandiford, for fishing on the Saboath [*sic*] day. Wittness William Doss." On June 17, 1735, John Doss married Sarah Herring. He may have been the son of William and Katherine. A daughter Mary was born to John and Sarah; she was christened on January 3, 1739. The death of "John Dose" occurred on Mar. 17, 1743. Because the first John would have to be nearly 100 years old by 1743, this notation likely refers to a second John Doss, the one who married Sarah Herring. I have found no other likely descendants of William, but there may be some.

Thomas appears to be the same Thomas Doss who first appears in Goochland Co. in June 1735, in Goochland Co. Court Records Book 3, p. 269: "On the petition of William Daniell against Thomas Doss the parties being heard it is considered by this Court that the petition be dismiss & that Tho. Doss do recover against this pet. his costs by him in this behalf expended & a Lawyer's fee." In November, 1751, David Murry sued both Thomas Doss Senior and Thomas Doss Junior; the case against the elder Thomas was dismissed. Again, in December, 1754, David Murry sued "Thomas Doss (the Elder), John Pryor and Jacob Oglesby;" John Wright provided the bail. That case was finally dropped in March 1759, "dismissed, plaintiff failing to further prosecute his suit." (*Goochland Co. Court Orders Book 7, pp. 110-111; Book 7, p. 484; Book 8, p. 194.*)

Proving that Thomas the baby in Middlesex and Thomas the man in Goochland are the same person is the focus of my current research. So this seems like a good place to stop, with a promise of more on Thomas in the next issue.

## Doss Family in the Settlement of America

Tracing the movements of the Doss families has been a education in American history. For as long as new land remained to be settled, Dosses were on the edge of the frontier. By the early 1750s Dosses were in many of the newly created central and southern Virginia counties. When the frontiers of western South Carolina and Georgia opened, several Doss families moved there. Before 1800 most of the Pittsylvania, Bedford and Buckingham Co. families had moved on to Kentucky and Tennessee. By 1825, Doss families were pioneers in Alabama and Mississippi. Several Doss families were in Texas during its years as a nation, before it became a state in 1845. Every state in the midwest, south and west had Doss residents before it was admitted to statehood. In addition to a number of 49-ers in California, several Doss families crossed the Oregon Trail to settle in California and Oregon.

At this time I believe I have found evidence that suggests Thomas Doss, son of John and Ann born in Middlesex Co. in 1686, is the ancestor of nearly all these Dosses (except Joshua, see p. 10). This research is still developing and is not conclusively "proven" but seems reliable enough to present it here. Here is a family group sheet for Thomas, as it currently seems to me to have existed. In the following pages a series of articles on the third generation begins.

### *Family Group Sheet of Thomas Doss as reflected by the current status of my research.*

*July, 1995*

#### Husband: Thomas Doss

Born: 1686

in: Middlesex Co. Va.

Died: Aft March 1759

in: Goochland Co. or Albemarle Co., Va.

Father: John Doss

Mother: Ann Taylor

#### CHILDREN

1	Name: James Doss, Sr. Born: Abt 1718 Married: Abt 1740 Died: 1796 Spouses: Frances Nix, Ann Thurman	in: Virginia in: probably Amelia Co. in: Pittsylvania Co., Va.
2	Name: Zachariah Doss Born: Bef 1720 Married: Abt 1740 Died: Aft 1810 Spouse: Elizabeth unknown	in: Virginia in: probably Goochland Co. Va. in: Perhaps in North Carolina (not proven)
3	Name: Azariah Doss Born: Abt 1720 Died: 1754 Spouse: possibly Judith Taylor	in: Virginia in: Henrico Co., Va.
4	Name: Jeremiah Doss Born: Abt 1720 Married: May 6, 1756 Died: Abt 1792 Spouse: Ursley Taylor	in: Virginia in: St. James Northam Parish, Goochland Co., Va. in: South Carolina
5	Name: Thomas Doss, Jr. Born: Abt 1720 Married: November 28, 1754 Died: Bef 1782 Spouse: Elizabeth Wright	in: Virginia in: St. James Northam Parish, Goochland Co., Va. in: Buckingham Co., Va.
6	Name: Marcus Doss Born: Abt 1720 Died: Abt 1792	in: Virginia in: Buckingham Co., Va.

## James Doss: Early Doss Patriarch

James Doss Sr. of Pittsylvania Co. Virginia is the early Doss about whom we have the most information. James was probably born in either New Kent or Hanover County, Va. before 1720. The earliest record of him is in Goochland Co. Court Order Bk. 3, "petition of James Doss agst Bouth Napier is dismissed, neither party appearing" dated March 18, 1735/6.

By 1744 he and Mark Doss, probably a younger brother, appeared on the tithel list in Amelia Co. where he was closely associated with the family of Edward Nix, a large landowner from Hanover Co. No deeds for James can be found in Amelia, but evidence exists describing his "lines" on Doss's Spring Branch of May's Creek. James first wife was almost certainly Frances Nix, a daughter of Edward Nix, who called her Fanny Doss in his will. James seems to have been a very religious man, highly respected by his neighbors, and may have been the preacher of a Presbyterian group led by Edward Nix.

By 1752, Nix, Doss and other members of Nix's family sold their lands in Amelia Co. and moved to Halifax Co. November 21, 1752: "James Doss & George Wilcox reported on road they were appointed to view from Banister Road crossing Edw. Hubbard's ford to the ridge between Stanton & Straightstone convenient to Nix's town." (*Plea Book 1, Halifax Co., VA 1752-55*). When Pittsylvania Co. was formed in 1767, "James Doss qualified as Constable" (*Pitts. Court Orders Book 1, p. 22; Nov. 27, 1767*) He is found many times in both the deed books and the Entry Record Book.

James' second wife was Ann Thurman, daughter of Richard Thurman, who moved from Amelia Co. to Pittsylvania some years after Doss. James must have been quite old when he married her, but it appears that several of his children were born to Ann. She is called Ann, Anna and Nancy in various records. It appears that she moved to Kentucky with several of her children after James' death.

James Doss died between May 21, 1796, when his will was written, and July 18, 1796 when it was presented in court for probate. Here is the opening paragraph of his will, "In the Name of God, Amen. I James Doss Sr. of Pittsylvania County being very weak of body but of perfect sound mind & memry thanks be to Almighty God for the same and calling to mind the mortality of this my feeble body do make & ordain this my last Will and Testament, first I rezine my Soul to God as gave it and my body to be buried at the discesion of my friends hoping that at the great day of god when Michel the Arch Angel shall sound the last Trumpet that then my Soul & body shall be reunighted together again to rest in the Regins of a Mortel day through the tender mercies of Almighty God Amen." (*Pitts. Co. Deed Bk. 10, p. 420-421.*) His will names these children: James Jr, Ambrose, Delilah Patey, John, Rachel Right [Wright], Mary Vest (I believe these are the children of Frances Nix), Anne, Agness, Samuel, Fanny, Edy [Edith], and Sarah (probably the last six were children of Ann Thurman). Evidence indicates he also had a son Thomas, probably the oldest child, who predeceased him. He probably had other children who died young.

The following excerpt is from a book entitled *An Intimate History of The American Revolution in Pittsylvania County, Virginia* by Frances Hallam Hurt. This book is available from the Pittsylvania Co. Historical Society, Box 1206, Chatham, Va. 24531.

"James Doss was going in and out of the court house at Peytonsburg in the 1750s attending to his affairs, for he held land grants on Valentine, Nixes (Nisc.), and Beechtree Creeks as early as 1753. These creeks were in the northern section of Halifax County at the time, now Pittsylvania.

"Family sources say that old citizens of the area around Hurt, where legions of Dosses still live, say that they always heard that James Doss was given his land for fighting in the French and Indian War. This well may be, though family researchers have not located the original grant in the Virginia State Archives.

"Judging from the Book of Estrays, James Doss was also much at court at Callands. He often reported finding strays, whereas many citizens did not report for six months or even a year, by which time they sometimes had accumulated five or six horses, cows or pigs. In the first entry mentioning James Doss, he is said to be of "Nixc. town," which may have been an old Indian village. [Actually, it is a reference to the settlement founded by Edward Nix.]

"In 1767 when Pittsylvania County was organized, so was Camden Parish of the Church of England. Six months later, the parish levy laid in February, 1768, gave 6001 pounds of tobacco to James Doss for maintaining Judah May and finding her clothing. The ancient custom of processioning land, in which trees were re-blazed along the lines of ownership, was ordered from Doss's Road to Clement's Road in the 1700s. Doss's Road is now Route 631 and travels past the New Bethel United Methodist Church in the Grit area, leading off from Ward's Line or Road. James, Sr., James, Jr., William and John Doss took the oath of allegiance in Pittsylvania County in 1777."

## *Zachariah Doss: A Father Found for Azariah and Joel?*

Azariah Doss of Bedford Co., Va. and his brother Joel have been the subject of a great deal of genealogical research, much of it by David and Nathan Murphy. Many of the recipients of this newsletter are descendants of Azariah. Recent discoveries in the Pittsylvania Co. Tithe Lists at the Virginia State Library & Archives seem to prove that their father was Zachariah Doss. The most important piece of evidence, from the 1767 list, says "Zachariah Doss and his son Joel." Because Azariah and Joel were so closely associated throughout their lives, we deduce that they were brothers and Zachariah must also be Azariah's father.

The first reference to Zachariah is found in the 1746 Goochland Co. tax list, where Zachariah Doss, his brother the first Azariah Doss, and Thomas Doss are all listed. By 1749 Zachariah had moved deep into the frontier of Lunenburg Co., on the Pigg River, near the present border between Pittsylvania and Franklin Cos. (*Sunlight on the Southside* [tithe lists of Lunenburg Co.] by Landon C. Bell, 1974.) Zachariah seems to have moved there with Hodges and Atkinson families, who were his neighbors in Goochland. The surname of Zachariah's wife is not known, but it is likely that she was a member of one of those families.

Deeds for Zachariah's original land holdings have not been found. It is possible that he was a "squatter" on unclaimed land in the wilderness but later he was taxed for more than 200 acres of land that he probably acquired during this time. On Nov. 22, 1753, Zachariah Doss was named as one of a crew to maintain a road from the mouth of Snow Creek to Hickey's Road. (*Plea Book 1, Halifax Co., VA. 1752-55, Chiarito*) In 1762 he purchased 50 acres from William "Adkerson" (Atkinson) for £5 (*Halifax Co. Deeds Books 2 - 6, 1759-1767, Book 4, p. 357*). He was listed on a list of voters July 17, 1765 in Halifax Co.

Pittsylvania Co. was formed from western Halifax Co. in 1767. In 1767 the first Pittsylvania Tithables List shows "Zachariah Doss & John Doss." James Doss is on the same list, which was taken by Thomas Dillard. The tax lists for 1768 and 1769 don't exist. On the 1770 list, compiled by Thos. Dillard, these entries appear: "Zachariah Doss & son Joel" with 2 men, 10 squirrel scalps credit toward tax, and 256 acres of land. Listed immediately after them is John Doss, with 1 tithe, 5 squirrel scalps and no land; immediately after

John is Stephen Doss, taxed only for himself. The next extant tax list is 1773, but Zachariah sold his land in that year and is not on the list; of his sons, only John and Thomas remained in Pittsylvania.

By 1773 he had moved to Bedford County. From Pittsylvania Co. Deed Books 1, 2, and 3, abstracted by Payne: "Zachias Doss and Elizabeth Doss" of Bedford County planter of one part and Daniel Witcher of Pittsylva. County planter of other part...for £28 current money of Virginia...50 acres on North side Pigg River ...Down the River (*Deed book 3, p. 356, 23 Sept. 1773*). Here we come upon a new source of confusion. One of Zachariah's sons was named Zacheus. Once he appears in the records, it is difficult to distinguish between them. It appears that only the deeds of Zacheus and his wife Mary survive in Bedford Co. Campbell Co. was formed from Bedford in 1781, and deeds for Zachariah's land may be there. However, *Virginia Tax Payers 1782-87* by Augusta Fothergill and John Mark Naugle lists him in Bedford Co. as does a 1790 tax book by the same authors. He may have been living in Campbell on land owned by James Doss of Pittsylvania; when James sold his Campbell Co. land, Zachariah witnessed the deed. (*Campbell Co. Deeds, p. 220, March 28, 1787*) By 1801, "Zacharius" Doss was living in Franklin Co. In the 1810 North Carolina Census, two Zachariah Dosses were listed in Stokes Co., NC in the 1810 census; these may have been Zacheus and his son, also named Zachariah.

On the next page is a family group sheet showing the children of Zachariah Doss. Stephen moved to Wilkes Co. Ga, and his descendants later moved to Alabama. His brother William also appears in Wilkes Co. and died in Marengo Co., Ala. Azariah and Joel lived in Bedford Co. Azariah may have moved to Muhlenberg Co. Ky. and Joel is known to have gone to Pulaski Co. Ky. Zacheus lived in North Carolina; most of his descendants moved to West Virginia, as did Micajah Doss. Noah continued to live in Franklin Co. Va., and later Henry Co.; his connection to Zachariah is not proven. John lived in Pittsylvania, married Amy Keese, and had sons Azariah, Stephen, Elisha and John Jr. and daughter Rachel. Thomas Doss of Pittsylvania appears to have also been a son of Zachariah. There are a number of early marriages of Doss women in Franklin Co., some of whom are probably Zachariah's daughters, but their connection to him has not yet been proven.

*Family Group Sheet of Zachariah Doss as reflected by the current status of my research.**July, 1995***Husband: Zachariah Doss**

Born: Bef 1720 in: Virginia  
 Married: Abt 1740 in: probably Goochland Co. Va.  
 Died: Aft 1810 in: Perhaps in North Carolina (not proven)  
 Father: Thomas Doss

**Wife: Elizabeth unknown****CHILDREN**

1 M	Name: Thomas Doss Born: Abt 1740 Died: Aft 1802 Spouse: unknown	in: probably Goochland Co., Va. in: Pittsylvania Co., Va.
2 M	Name: John Doss Born: Abt 1742 Married: Abt 1780 Died: Abt 1835 Spouse: Amy Keesee	in: probably Goochland Co., Va. in: Pittsylvania Co., Va. in: Pittsylvania Co., Va.
3 M	Name: Stephen Doss Born: Abt 1745 Died: Abt 1802 Spouse: Mary Wylie	in: probably Goochland Co. Va. in: Wilkes Co. Ga
4 M	Name: Joel Doss Born: Abt 1749 Married: Abt 1783 Died: Aft 1810 Spouse: Hannah Ayres	in: Virginia in: Bedford Co., Va. in: Pulaski Co., Ky.
5 M	Name: Azariah Doss Born: Abt 1750 Married: Abt 1778 Died: Bef 1820 Spouse: Lydia Ayers	in: Virginia in: probably Bedford Co., Va. in: Kentucky
6 M	Name: Zacheus Doss Born: Abt 1755 Married: Bef 1782 Died: Aft 1820 Spouse: Mary unknown	in: Virginia in: probably Bedford Co., Va. in: perhaps in North Carolina
7 M	Name: William Doss Born: Abt 1760 Married: Bef 1785	in: Virginia in: went to Wilkes Co. Georgia
8 M	Name: Micajah Doss Born: Bef 1765 Married: December 23, 1792 Died: Bef 1820 Spouse: Mary Swain	in: connection to Zachariah not proven in: Bedford Co., Va. in: Giles Co., Va.
9 M	Name: Noah Doss Born: Bef 1765 Married: January 11, 1807 Died: Aft 1820 Spouse: Lucy Pyrtle	in: Connection to Zachariah not proven in: Henry Co., Va. in: possibly Tennessee

## Mark Doss and Some Dosses of the Deep South

Marcus Doss, of Buckingham Co., Va., is the ancestor of many Doss families who moved to Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas and Texas.

The first record of Mark is in the Amelia Co. Va. Tithables Lists for 1745, 1746 and 1748. James Doss, later of Pittsylvania, lived in Amelia then, and Mark, probably his younger brother, was there with James. Mark received his first land grant in 1759 (*Va. Patent Book 33, p. 569*) when he received 200 acres on both sides of Elk Creek, Albemarle Co., May 7, 1759. On Aug. 10, 1759 he patented another 160 acres in the same place (*Va. Pat. Book 34, p. 377*) Buckingham Co. was formed from part of Albemarle in 1761. He patented 235 acres in Buckingham Co. "amongst the South branches of Wreck Island Creek," Feb. 16, 1771 (*Va. Pat. Book 39, p. 241*) His brother Thomas also lived on Wreck Island Creek in Buckingham Co.

The Buckingham Co. courthouse and all its records were destroyed by fire in 1869, making research in this county extremely difficult. A few records do exist, including some tax lists sent to the state. A 1764 List of Tithes shows Mark Doss with 1 tithable, 275 acres of land and no slaves. In 1773 and 1774 he was taxed for three tithables, meaning two of his sons were over 21. He was taxed for John Doss in 1774. In the 1787 *Census of Virginia*, Buckingham Co. Tax List he is listed as Mark DORSE with zero males between 16-21, 2 blacks above 16, 4 blacks below 16, 3 horses, 10 cattle. Also listed, apparently in same household: Edward, James, William, and either in the same house or next door, John. The 1787 tax list is unique because a law required each male over 16 be named. The 1790 census substitute by Fothergill lists Mark in Buckingham Co. with 5 tithes. Mark appears in the Buckingham Co. Land Tax Records from 1782 until 1791; in 1792 his land was listed "estate of Markis Doss" (records on file at Virginia State Library and Archives). He signed a petition on Nov. 7, 1791, so his death probably occurred in early 1792. If he left a will it no longer exists. The loss of the Buckingham records means we know nothing about the women in this family, but the following sons have been identified.

John Doss married Polly (possibly Jarrett) and moved first to Wilkes Co., then Jackson Co. Georgia. He was a deeply religious man. A marble table at Grove Level Church in old Franklin Co. (now Banks Co. Ga.) says, "Constituted the third Saturday in May, 1802, with 62 members. Presbytery composed of Rev. Moses Sanders,

Sr., John Doss, William Denman and Thomas Maxfield." It seems unlikely but he may be the John Doss, age 70-80 in the 1840 census of Harris Co. Ga. whose will was probated there in 1842, naming wife Sarah and son James J. Doss with a reference to other heirs. The known children of John and Polly are George (m. Mary Cunningham), Edward (m. Jenny Williamson), Marcus (m. Elizabeth Taylor), John (m. Nancy Beauchamp), and Jarrett, who apparently died as a young man.

Edward Doss married Mary Overstreet, daughter of Thomas Overstreet of Bedford Co. Edward lived in Buckingham Co. Va. in the part that became Appomattox Co. He was a successful farmer on Wreck Island Creek. Overstreet Doss was his son. Edward's other children were probably daughters, who are difficult to identify given the lack of county records.

William Doss was a Revolutionary War soldier whose pension file provides us with much information. He said he was 69 in April, 1832 and was born and raised in Buckingham Co. He described his life: "a few years in Franklin Co., Georgia; a short time in Buckingham Co., Va., a few years in Wilkes Co., North Carolina; a few years in Buncombe Co.; a few years in Wayne Co., Kentucky; then to Overton, Tennessee, to the part that is now Fentress County, where he has lived for about 12 years." He probably married two or three times, last marrying Nancy Brown in Haywood Co., N.C. on Oct. 30, 1809. He left a large family in Fentress Co. Ky. when he died on Sept. 15, 1853.

James Doss lived in Buckingham Co. until about 1804. Following Mark's death, the tax records show that William first had possession of Mark's land. When he left about 1793 James and Stuart Doss took over that land. James probably moved to Tennessee, but the number of James Dosses there at that time makes it difficult to identify him. I continue to work on finding him after he left Buckingham Co.

Stuart Doss married Mary Flowers, the daughter of Ralph Flowers. He moved to Smith Co., Tenn., evidently with the Flowers family. He was very successful there, and left a will, written May 11, 1853, which disposed of considerable assets "to be equally divided between my six children, Elizabeth Wallace, Jonathan C. Doss, Mary Wright, Martha Dowel, Caroline Dowel, and Dorthuta[?] Gray." Other daughters, Permelia W. Wright, Rebecca Amonett, and Mariah Terry were also named in his will.



## Do you have an Azariah?

While many common names repeat endlessly through the generations of the Doss families, one unusual name that often appears is Azariah. If this name appears on your family tree it is a good clue which will help you learn more about your ancestors.

The first Azariah Daws/Doss appears initially in Goochland Co. where he bought land in 1752 and 1753. He was referred to as "of Henrico County." This Azariah died by 1754, apparently while still quite young. His son and heir, Mathew, later claimed and sold his lands. The first Azariah must have been quite beloved by his family, because it appears that at least two of his brothers named sons for him. One of the second generation Azariahs lived in Bedford Co., Va. His descendants have been thoroughly researched; many of the recipients of this newsletter descend from him. The other second generation Azariah is a little more subject to interpretation. Jeremiah Doss and his wife, Ursley Taylor, had their son christened at St. James Northam Parish in Goochland County on April 2, 1769. While his christening record calls him Israel, there is quite a lot of evidence that he was actually named Azariah. His War of 1812 record calls him "Izariah" and "Ayariah." Since

Jeremiah and Ursley were married in Goochland County on May 6, 1756, very likely Jeremiah and the first Azariah were brothers.

The third generation of Azariahs include the son of Mathew, son of the first, who was born in North Carolina and later moved to Robertson Co., Tennessee. His brother James named a son for him, making a fourth generation Azariah. Similarly, the brother of Azariah of Bedford Co. named a son for him, adding the Azariah of Pittsylvania Co. But that was just the beginning of the Azariahs inspired by Azariah of Bedford Co. He named a son Azariah Jr. Two of his other sons, James and Gabriel, named their sons Azariah. The Azariah who was the son of Gabriel had both a son and a grandson named Azariah. Two grandsons of James, the sons of Joel L. and Berry R., were named Azariah Jefferson. And the last Azariah we have record of (so far) was born in Oregon in 1872; he was the son of George Washington Doss, Jr., the grandson of George W., Sr. and the great grandson of Azariah of Bedford.

Do you have an Azariah not listed here? Please tell us about him.

### The Human Side

"Preachers began to turn up at the mining camps in great numbers. Their services were often held in saloons in which liquor sales were piously suspended and the nude paintings turned to the wall for a few hours. While both saloons and gambling rooms continued to thrive it was apparent that sobriety was making gains. Many forty-niners took the pledge. On August 15, 1851, for example, James E. Doss, accompanied by two witnesses, appeared before the county judge in Sonora to swear that he would not touch liquor for eight years: 'Whereas I have been in the habit of drinking strong drink, yea, even unto drunkenness and disgrace, seeing as I see, that unless I abandon this my drunken habit, I am forever lost unto my dear family, myself, my God and my country and to decency, and that I may better reform this brutal habit, I pray that my God will give me the fortitude to abstain.'" (Source: *The Old West: The Forty-Niners*, Time-Life Books, p. 140.)

Since this James Doss has yet to be identified, and since every Doss family has a plentitude of Jameses, everyone is free to claim or disavow this James Doss, as you see fit!



Many early Dosses were named for national heroes such as George Washington. Pictured above is Andrew Jackson Doss of Caldwell Co., Ky. This picture was taken about 1935 by Lucille Doss, Jack's granddaughter, and sent to me by Richard and Carol Sheridan of Sheffield, Alabama.

## Joshua Doss and the "German" Doss Family

Joshua Doss first appeared in the records when he received 200 acres in Cumberland Co. Va. "among the branches of Great Guinea Creek, adjacent to Isaac Allen" on Sept. 20, 1745 (*Va. Patent Book 22, 1743-45, p. 510*). There is a strong family tradition, which I have heard from three widely separated sources, that he came from Germany. I have found nothing to prove or disprove it. Recreated below is one of the pieces of evidence that says he was German. Nothing about him appears to be German: he named his children English names, all his neighbors were English, his children were among the few of their generation who were educated and literate. If he was German, his name may have originally been Daus, as there are a couple of instances of that spelling being used in documents related to his family.

Joshua is seldom found in the records; when he appears, he was invariably acting as a good and trusted neighbor. He is found as a supporter of the patriots of the Revolutionary War. Joshua left a will, written November 2, 1780 and probated May 28, 1781, which named his wife Elizabeth, sons William, James and Joshua Jr., a daughter called Lucy Loyd, and two granddaughters, Nancy and Rebecca Stewart. Catherine Stewart, Joshua's daughter, was living when the will was written, and it is interesting to speculate why she and her sons Charles, James and John Stewart were left out of the will. Joshua probably had other children not named in his will; there are strong indications that he also had sons named John and Charles.

Joshua's son James remained in Cumberland Co., where he was a constable and a successful farmer. The name of his wife is unknown; his children were Parker S. Doss, Hartwell Doss, Nancy Donahue, Susan Wray, Margaret Doss, Lucy Honeycutt, Elizabeth Boatright, Sarah Doss and Martha Bellamy. Parker S. Doss later moved to Texas, where some of his sons founded the town of Doss, Texas.

William Doss appears to me to be the William who lived in Pittsylvania Co. but there is not unanimous agreement on that. He probably first married Priscilla Womack and later Susannah whose last name is still unknown. His proven children are John, William Jr. and Capt. James Doss who stayed in Pittsylvania Co. and whose sister Maria lived with him. There were surely others.

Joshua Jr. ventured into Georgia for a while, but he settled on Chestnut Creek in Franklin Co., Va. He had a large family, some of whom moved to Sumner Co. Tenn. I continue to try to prove the parents and grandparents of my 3-great grandfather, Josiah Doss, who must descend from Joshua Jr.

Doss-O'Neill Realty Company, Corpus Christi, TX

November 12, 1908

M. W. Doss  
Seminole, Texas

Dear Sir and Cousin:

Your letter just received truly good to hear from you and know that your father is yet living. I will write to him today. Yes he is my own cousin and you are my second cousin. I will be pleased to meet any of you and want you to call on us if you ever come this way. I will gladly look you up if I ever go that way.

Old Aunt Mahalia Witcher is a sister to your grandfather. She is 88 years old and lives in Ferris, Texas. I saw her three months ago. She is real active for one of her age and may reach a hundred birthday. Write to her and tell her that you are a grandson of her brother James Doss, who came to Texas many years ago and died soon after he came here. She is the only one living of the old original family.

Your grandfather's grandfather was a German and came from Germany about 160 years ago, his name was Joshua. Your father's father was named John. He died at my father's house in Mississippi the year 1858. He was 78 years old. My father, John C. Doss has been dead seventeen years. Dr. Rufus Young at Brenham Texas is an own cousin to your father. His mother was Caroline Doss. Married John Young and came to Texas about 1840. She has been dead for some time.

My oldest brother John J. Doss is 68 years old a cotton buyer and lives at Shawnee Oklahoma. One brother D.V. Doss lives at El Reno, Oklahoma. One brother C.M. Doss lives at Hartshorne, Oklahoma. One brother Charley C. Doss lives at Hartselle Alabama.

I have two sons living here, W.P. and J.F. Doss. One son C.F. Doss Chickasaw Oklahoma, and one son Dr. L.M. Doss lives at Oklahoma City, Ok.

Write me occasionally.

J.M. Doss

*The text of a letter written by James Mitchell Doss.  
This letter is in the possession of James H. Doss of Weatherford, Texas.*

# THE GENEALOGIST'S PAGE

## Doss Trivia

The family of James Doss Sr. of Pittsylvania Co., Virginia lived near the town of Hurt. The name for the settlement where they lived is Grit. What do you suppose they were trying to tell us?

Mary Susan Doss, the daughter of Philip V. and Elizabeth Bailess Doss, was born Oct. 14, 1836. Does this make her the original version of MS DOS(s)?

For the computer lovers out there who got that bad pun, if you haven't tried Prodigy, you should! The genealogy bulletin board connects thousands of people who share information about their common ancestors, resources, etc. The amount of information available from this source is remarkable.

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## Searching...

Ella Louise Parvin of Watonga Oklahoma writes that she has been searching for 19 years for the parents of Elizabeth Doss who married James Adams around 1800, probably in Kentucky or Indiana.

Robert Huggins says his father's bible contains an entry about Martha Ellen Doss Cooper, born Sept. 11, 1860 in Combs, Arkansas. Her father was John Doss. Robert continues, "She was at least one-half Cherokee ... Grandpa was from a family of 29 children, from two mothers named Markham and Stephens ... Grandma's sister was Dell Cornish, who lived near Hadley, Oklahoma..." Robert is interested in proving his Cherokee heritage.

Catherine Stiles is searching for Reuben Jackson Doss, born 1820 in Georgia. He was in Shelby Co., TN in 1850 census, living with first wife, Sarah Elvira Hindly. (Bible record says they married in 1844.) In 1870 he was in Colbert Co., Tn.; in 1880 in Winston Co., Ala.; in 1900 in Hardin Co., Tn. He died in 1912 in Winston Co., Ala. Son James was born in 1848.

A number of people are trying to identify Samuel Doss, b. ca. 1800 in Va. married Dorethy, Dolly or Doritha, b. 1801 in Va. Children, born 1831-1842 were Thomas H. (b. Moore Co. Tenn.), Isaac, John, Samuel (last two born in Illinois) and Reuben (b. in Arkansas).

Please send responses to me and I'll forward your information.

## How to join the Doss Association

I hope you have enjoyed this inaugural issue of *The Doss Connection* and will want to continue to receive future issues. This newsletter will be published four times a year, the next issue is planned for October. Hopefully many other contributors will be represented in its pages. I wish I could continue to print and mail the newsletters for free, but the cost is just too great. To join the Doss Family Association and continue to receive this newsletter, please subscribe by sending \$15 and your name and address to:

Libbie Griffin

Greenbush, MA 02040

Joining the association will provide you with these benefits:

- Access to a 5,000 person database of Doss descendants from 1660 to about 1900
- Quarterly newsletters which will include information about your Doss ancestors
- Advance notice of family reunions planned in the future
- Participation in preserving the history of our family
- Connections to your Doss cousins throughout America.

I am anxious to hear from each of you and to read your letters, to hear your family's stories and to see pictures of your ancestors (please, don't send photographs — make xerox copies of them and send me only the copies! I'll let you know if I need a photographic copy of the original, and will pay all costs.)

Please don't delay. Write your letter about your Doss family, write your check for \$15, and mail them today!



*Roxie Jane Doss, wife of John J. Dodson, and some of her children, ca. 1900. Her children were Ora Dodson East (youngest girl); John J. Dodson, Jr. (youngest boy); James Staunton Dodson (older boy); Hattie Mae Dodson Lawless (right of older boy); Mary Ella Dodson Overton (right of Hattie); also pictured, but not identified: Callie Dodson Hudson, Rosa Cornelia (Neely) Dodson Stultz, Lera Etta Dodson East. Another daughter, my great-grandmother Nannie Louanna Dodson Richmond, is not pictured.*