

**Thomas Rogers Davies of Llowes, Radnorshire, Wales and
Athens, Bradford County, Pennsylvania**

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The article below appeared in an Athens, Pennsylvania, newspaper in 1872.¹ It not only describes the celebration of the golden wedding anniversary of Thomas Rogers Davies and his wife Asenath, but also recounts Thomas's youth in Wales and his emigration. Like Thomas, his brother Eustace came to America and settled in Athens.² Thomas and his wife Asenath would live to celebrate their sixtieth wedding anniversary. Both died in 1883.

Golden Wedding

An interesting event occurred on the 24th ult., at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. T. R. Davies, of this place, in the celebration of their "Golden Wedding." Twenty-six of the members of the family were present, consisting of children and grand children, besides a number of others, friends and acquaintances.

At 3 P. M. the exercises were opened with singing the following piece written for the occasion by one of the members of the family:

When Cupid took his aim to pierce,
With sharp decisive darts,
And twine together with his art,
These tender loving hearts;
'Twas fifty-years ago dear friends,
'Twas fifty years ago.

From far and near with songs of cheer,
Came youths and maidens gay,
To celebrate, with hearts elate,
Their happy wedding day,
Just fifty years ago dear friends,
Just fifty years ago.

Since then old Time with cruel shafts,
Tried stealing cupid's quiver;
'Twas locked so closely in their hearts
It bound them both together;
'Twas fifty years ago dear friends,
'Twas fifty years ago.

To day, with loving hearts we came,
Children and children's children;
To celebrate with them anew,
This glorious Golden Wedding,
Just fifty years ago dear friends,
Just fifty years ago.

And now in this fast age we live,
Should we seek hearts to sever;
We'll point with pride, to this fair bride,
And bid them live together,
For fifty years to come dear friends,
For fifty years to come. JENNIE.

Prayer was then offered by the Rev. Mr. Crosby, and followed by singing again a piece written and composed by Mrs. T. R. Davies, as follows:

Golden sheaves of summer harvest,
For mankind an ample store.
Through the seasons through the ages,
Has been, will be ever more.
Golden seeds, the angels gather,
Sow them in the human mind,
Where they germinate and bloom,
Ripening into golden grain.

Golden wedding day has opened,
Golden doors to guests divine,
Who would meet with brothers, sisters,
At this holy Hymen shrine.
All the children God has given,
To this couple journeying here,
Will again be reunited,
In a higher holier sphere.

Golden truths this age is bringing;
The Philosopher and Sage,
We are waiting for God's kingdom,
Waiting for the Golden Age.
Thanks to God for life and reason,
For the children He has given,
For the loving friends now with us,
For the blessed hope of Heaven.

The following address was delivered by the Rev. Mr. Crosby:

[Nine paragraphs omitted]

Under these circumstances, and with these pleasing reflections, let me turn to the halls of memory, and ask the past to bring out from its treasures, and unveil before us, a few of the events which have conspired to bring about this pleasant occasion.

Thomas Rogers Davies was born A. D. 1795, in the parish of Lowes [Llowes], county of Radnor, South Wales, Great Britain. His father's name was David Davies, his mother's maiden name was Elizabeth Williams. His father died soon after he was born. His mother lived till he was twenty years old. Very few incidents of his early life have come to my knowledge. During his early years, war was raging between England and France. Some of the hardships of those times may be inferred from the fact that three out of five of all the men were conscripted for the army. In connection with the war, an event of great interest occurred in the neighborhood, which threatened to bring the strife to their own doors.

Three French war vessels landed five thousand soldiers at Milford Haven. They began to load their ships with sheep and cattle taken from the plains. Their presence was [a] danger to the neighborhood. Nearly all the men were gone to the war. One old officer, with great presence of mind, ordered the few men and all the women in the vicinity, to put on the red mantles then generally worn by the women, so as to appear like "Red coats;" and to take their pewter plates which should present the glitter of arms, and go to the brow of the mountain, which overlooked the French on the plain. There, in single file, they formed a line nearly a mile long, where they were to remain for further orders.

The officer then dressed himself in his uniform, took a flag of truce and rode boldly up to the French army. He reminded them of the powers of these ancient Britons, of their relentless fury in war, and told them he would not be responsible for the saf[e]ty of a single man, if they provoked these Britons to battle; but, that if they would stack their arms, and follow him, they should not be hurt.

He parleyed with them until the fog lifted, that had hid the crest of the mountain; he then pointed them to the extended army of supposed Red coats, who only waited his signal to sweep down upon them, with the besom of destruction. The argument was convincing. They immediately stacked their arms, and followed the officer to the village of Glasburg [Glasbury], on the classical river Wye, where Mr. Davies then lived. With some liberty, they soon engaged in labor for the inhabitants, then made homes, and few of them ever returned to France.

At about eighteen years of age, Mr. Davies left his native place and traveled through many cities and towns to perfect himself in his art as a worker of metals.

During this time, his mother died, and Mr. Davi[e]s determined to sail for America. But here he encountered peculiar difficulties: The English government thought to compel the Americans to buy of them the products of skilled labor in Mr. Davies' art, by prohibiting any such mechanic leaving the country, under a severe penalty.

Thinking the more easily to evade the officers of the King, Mr. Davies left London for Liverpool in Jan. 1819, where he engaged a passage to America, on the ship Meriden, of Baltimore, though at the great risk of the ship and captain.

Mr. Davies bestowed his goods here, but discreetly left the shore in a hired small boat which stood away from the track of the ship until he saw the English officers leaving the

ship, and return in their small boat to the shore. Getting on board, he found they had taken everything of his, save his food, which they could not identify.

After a very rough passage of ninety days, during many of which they subsisted on a single sea-biscuit each for a day, he, with others, landed in Philadelphia, May 12th 1819.

After unwearied effort and extensive travelling to find a satisfactory place for a home, he settled in Athens, Pa. [Pennsylvania], in 1822.

Mr. Davies was the youngest of seven sons. His six brothers were all soldiers in the protracted war between England and France, and in a regiment, all of whose members were over six feet tall.

We will now turn back to find what we can of the story of Mrs. Davies.

[Three paragraphs omitted.]

Asenath Woodburn was born Feb. 11th 1803, and was married to Thomas Rogers Davies Jan. 24th, 1822. Very few incidents of her early life have come to my knowledge.

Mr. and Mrs. Davies had ten children, whom they raised to man and womanhood. As noted before, two sons have entered the “house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

The first child, Eustace, after visiting the “far west,” came home sick with fever and ague, and died in one year, aged twenty-two years.

Their second son, Thomas R., served in the late war [the Civil War] in our own country, three years.

Of the thousand hale men of the 5th N. Y. Volunteers who went on that memorable raid under General Hunter, he was one of the sixty survivors who returned, but he contracted a fever in the mountains of Virginia, which in the end proved fatal. He died in a year from the time of honorable discharge, among strangers. His remains were brought home and laid beside his brother’s. He was aged thirty-three years.

On[e] sister lives away by the setting sun.

[One paragraph omitted.]

Aged father and mother—around you have clustered ten children, eighteen grandchildren, two of whom have gone to the circle above, and just as with you, life’s shadows are meeting eternities day, the earthly sun of one great-grandchild has arisen. Thus the shadows of life’s night, are banished, and light streams all the way from the cradle to the souls home on high.

[Eight paragraphs omitted.]

A large number of gifts were made, consisting in part of gold coin, silver sets, gold spectacles, gold rings, &c., and a very large and beautifully bound Bible, with the following inscription inlaid in gilt letters upon it:

FATHER AND MOTHER
AT
1822—GOLDEN WEDDING—1872

FROM
JENNIE F. SNELL.

besides many other smaller gifts from the grand-children.

A very beautiful and affecting piece was then sang by four little grand-daughters, entitled, "When Grand-mama is gone."

The presentation of a great-grand-child, the infant son of Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Reynolds, was made by Mr. F. S. Elliott, as a very rare event at the present day.

At the close the aged Bride and Groom were called upon to make some remarks, which call they responded to by some very interesting and affecting words of good council and advice.

In the evening, the guests were very agreeable [sic] entertained by the Athens Brass Band, who dispenced [sic] some very fine music.

O.K.C.

¹ *The Athens Gleaner*, Athens, Bradford County, Pennsylvania, February 15, 1872, p. 1. Microfilmed by Southwest Pennsylvania Genealogical Services, Laughlintown, Pennsylvania.

² Louise Welles Murray, *A History of Old Tioga Point and Early Athens Pennsylvania* (Athens, Penna.: Murray, 1908) p. 485.