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## Biographies of Named Individuals: John Diggs-Dorsey

This page provides biographical information on all participants named in the newspaper accounts. was not included in the narrative for the sake of clarity, but may bring additional context to the ev lynching of John Diggs-Dorsey on July 27, 1880.

The following information was researched and compiled by Sarah Hedlund, Archivist/Librarian for between October, 2019 and July 2020. Special thanks to those who assisted with research and ge Frydl, Jay Mallin, Doug Hill, Scott Jung, Emily Wurtz, Caroline Sowinski. *Content copyright: Montg rights reserved.*

### JOHN DIGGS-DORSEY and FAMILY

**John Diggs-Dorsey** (born c.1856-1860, died 1880) According to newspaper reports quoting Mr. Tschiffely, Dorsey had said he was from the Damascus area, and that he had been formerly enslaved by Mr. King (of King's distillery). As of 1880, the owner of the distillery was Luther Green King, but there is no evidence L.G. King was an enslaver. Luther's father John Duckett King (who owned the distillery until 1857 when he gave that land to Luther) owned nine slaves in 1850. Luther's brother Rufus also owned slaves (four) in 1850; as did his brother Charles M., who claimed four slaves in 1860 and two slaves in 1867, and brother Edward J., who claimed one slave in both 1860 and 1867 (no Dorseys, Diggs, or Williams among them). So it is possible John Diggs-Dorsey grew up on the Kings's distillery land (they were all neighbors), even if he wasn't enslaved by Luther Green King directly. However, there is no clear match for a John Diggs or John Dorsey in the census of 1867, unless his supposed age is adjusted quite a lot (according to varied accounts of his age in 1880, he could have been as old as 11 or as young as 7 in 1867).

According to the Commissioner of Slave Statistics report (1867-1868), the following individuals named John Dorsey and John Diggs of the approximate proper age are recorded as enslaved by Montgomery County residents in 1864 :

John W. Dorsey (claimed by Kate E. Hershey, per C.R. Hershey) age 12 (age ~25 in 1880)

John Dorsey (claimed by Franklin Waters—"a lunatic") age 4 (age ~18-19 in 1880)

John T. Dorsey (claimed by Mary Kinsey) age 3 (age 17-18 in 1880)

John Diggs (claimed by Horace Waters) age 13 (age ~26 in 1880)

John Diggs is an interesting potential match, considering Horace Waters was the son of Horace Waters, Sr. and Charity Duckett Boyd (who held 20 enslaved people at the time of Horace, Sr.'s death in 1823); John Duckett King was the patriarchal enslaver that John Diggs-Dorsey may have claimed a connection to. If there is a relationship from Ducketts through both families, it would lend credence to John's Montgomery County origins. However, no such relationship has yet been discovered.

There are surname relationships and cross-connections between white and Black Dorsey families, white and Black King families, and the Waters family. The Waters family enslaved people with both the surnames Diggs and Dorsey; the white Dorsey family enslaved people with the surname King as well as listing multiple enslaved families with no surnames (did they become Dorseys?). If these particular slave-owning families and those they enslaved had a "tradition" of passing the

owner's surname to the enslaved, it may explain why John used Diggs and Dorsey as alternative surnames— it is also possible that his mother was one and his father the other.

There is also the existence of a [parody article](#) in the Fayetteville *Observer* (Tennessee) that states the John Diggs hanged on July 27 in Rockville was "the eldest son of Pompey and Chloe Diggs." Titled "A Novel Obituary," this is almost certainly a fiction meant to be a dark way to report a lynching for the benefit of white readership. The names "Pompey" and "Chloe" were, at the time, stereotypical and derogatory names used for Black characters in stories evoking the era of slavery.

**John H. Williams** (born c. 1821) According to newspaper reports, John Williams, living at 410 E. St., Washington, D.C. in 1880, was the father of John Diggs-Dorsey. According to the 1880 census, this John Williams was 59 years old, a laborer born in Maryland, living with wife Jane Williams (64) and Ida Howard (16), a grandchild. John William's marriage to Jane post-dates his son John's birth, so this is probably a second marriage, and the Jane Williams here is not John D.'s mother; however, the possibility of a child born to a couple before their marriage cannot be ruled out, especially in this time period around the Civil War. Diggs-Dorsey's mother was reported in the newspapers as living in Port Tobacco, Charles County, Maryland, but it is unclear how this information was obtained by reporters.

## THE TSCHIFFELYS

**James Hall Tschiffely** (1844-1910) was listed in the 1880 census as James H. Schiffley [sic], age 36, living in the 6th District of Darnestown with his wife Mary, and next door to John Dorsey, servant. Newspaper accounts said he lived "between Darnestown and Seneca," and that he kept a drug store at Darnestown. He was the second-eldest son of Frederick A. Tschiffely, Sr. and Elizabeth (Berry) Tschiffely; his brothers (mentioned in several newspaper accounts, but not directly named) included Frederick A. Tschiffely, Jr., Elgar Tschiffely, and Wilson B. Tschiffely. James died in 1910 and was buried in the Darnestown Presbyterian Church cemetery.

**Mary Malinda ("Linnie") Tschiffely** (1836-1916) was listed in the 1880 census as Mary Schiffley [sic], age 44. Linnie was the daughter of Caroline Federman and William Wilson Lysle of Pennsylvania. Census records indicate the Lysle family moved to Kentucky prior to 1870, and William died there in 1871. Linnie and her older sister Elizabeth lived with their parents into their early 30s (Linnie is listed in earlier censuses, living with her parents, as both Linda and M.M. Lysle). Linnie inherited \$2500 in her father's will, executed in September, 1871. James Tschiffely and Linnie M. Lysle were married January 2, 1873 at the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. The deed for their property in Darnestown was executed in Linnie Tschiffely's name, dated April 3, 1873, and purchased from Elbert and Elizabeth Perry (this would be Elbert II), Julian and Mary Griffith, Hilleary and Elizabeth Hoskinson, and Jane Peter. Their homestead is marked on the 1879 Hopkins map as "Jas. Tschiffely." James and Linnie never had children; they are found in the 1900 census still living in Darnestown; Linnie's unmarried sister Elizabeth Lysle (65) and her 14-year-old niece Ivey Alice Phillips, from Kentucky, living with them. Ivy was not born yet in 1880, but was the child of Linnie's sister and brother-in-law, Thomas and Virginia (Lysle) Phillips, with whom Linnie's sister Elizabeth and their mother were living in 1880. Linnie's husband James died in 1910, after which Linnie sold the Montgomery County property and moved with Arthur and Ivy (Phillips) Garrett to Brooklyn, New York, where she appeared living with the young couple in the 1915 state census (Ivy Phillips married Arthur Garrett in October, 1914). Linnie died in 1916, and was sent back from Brooklyn, interred without a stone in the Darnestown Presbyterian Church cemetery.



James H. Tschiffely's gravestone at Darnestown Presbyterian Church Cemetery. There is no marker for Linnie, but enough space to hold more than one grave. The iron fencing beyond was moved from the Rockville courthouse grounds in 1891, when the new Red Brick Courthouse was built.



Frederick A. Tschiffely, Jr. and his wife (center), with their family at Wheatlands, 1907. F.A. Tschiffely, Jr. was the younger brother of James Tschiffely.

Frederick, Jr. in 1900 and remained the Tschiffely family home until the 1930s. In 1880, Frederick Tschiffely, Sr. was living on his estate in the 6th District (age 64) with his wife and a few of his grown unmarried daughters. Elgar Tschiffely was his eldest son; James H. was his second eldest son; F.A., Jr. was third eldest, W.B. was fourth.

**Frederick A. Tschiffely** (1814-1892) James's father, the father-in-law of Linnie Tschiffely, as he was referred to in the newspapers, was married to Elizabeth Berry in D.C. in 1840. Known in D.C., according to the *Evening Star*, as a "well-known government clerk here," he worked for the Department of the Interior [Land Office] and the U.S. Patent Office until moving to his Montgomery County property in 1859. Tschiffely, Sr. is found in the Montgomery County 1860 census with four children all born in D.C., as well as one enslaved man, age 38. He was still living in Rockville in 1870 with his wife and now six children. In 1852, he had purchased a 200-acre estate in the Quince Orchard area he called "Wheatlands." His son Frederick A. Tschiffely (Jr.), who owned a successful drug manufacturing company in D.C., inherited Wheatlands (see photo at left). This estate is now known as "Kentlands"—the Kentlands mansion was renamed by later owner Otis Beall Kent, but was originally built by

## OTHER KEY PARTICIPANTS



Zachariah Davis, similar to the age he would have been in 1880.

**Zachariah Joseph Davis** (1819-1885) and **Edward Charles Davis** (1846-1929). Zachariah Davis is credited with the apprehension of John Diggs-Dorsey on Monday, July 26, on his way from Germantown to Sandy Spring. Davis was described in the papers as "past three score and ten" (meaning over seventy years old), which was exaggerated, as he was just over sixty at the time. The *Sentinel* article refers to him as "Joseph Davis" which is his middle name. Davis was clearly a bit of a showman: he told and retold his story of the capture of Diggs to so many people that reporters from *The Post* commented on it. He also told an elaborate story of capturing another black man, John Russell, for a "similar offense," who had escaped to Philadelphia. This was all supposed to have happened "about 12 years ago," but a search of the newspaper records locally and in Pennsylvania papers has yielded nothing to corroborate this story.

Zachariah Davis married Mary Jane Shaw in 1843 and they eventually had nine children. In the 1850

census, he was listed as enslaving one person. In 1880, he was enumerated as Z.J. (age 61), living in the 8th District of Mechanicsville (Brookeville/Sandy Spring). He was active in the Democratic party in Montgomery County for many years. His son Edward C., who assisted him in the transport of Diggs-Dorsey to Rockville, was living in the elder Davis's household in 1880, and both were employed as wheelwrights. Edward married Lydia A. Green the following year (1881) and they had three children.





According to several accounts, two granddaughters were in the wagon with Zachariah Davis the day he apprehended Mr. Diggs-Dorsey. The only granddaughters the correct age to have been with him in July, 1880 would be: Lelia Reed (b. 1870) and Florence Walker (b. 1876), children of his daughter, Rebecca Davis Reed Walker.

The Davis house in Sandy Spring, with several family members outside.

**Amos West** (1844-1920), neighbor of James and Linnie Tschiffely. Amos was the son of Tighlman West and Mary Jane (Harper) West, who were married in 1829. Tighlman died sometime between 1850 and 1860. Amos and his widowed mother lived in the 4th District (Rockville) in 1870, along with another brother Armstead and a Black servant, Ann Higgins (age 11). In 1880, Amos West's household was enumerated ten+ pages away from the Tschiffelys—obviously a quirk of the census taking process, since the 1879 Hopkins Atlas shows them living across the street from each other. In 1880, still living with his mother and adult siblings in the 6th District (Darnestown), Amos was single and 36 years old, his mother—assumed to be the "Mrs. West" who presumably owned the house—was 72. Adult siblings Eliza (46) and John (44), both widowed, and niece and nephew Lillie and Monel are also living in the house. In 1882, Amos married Marion Cross, and the couple had two sons, Reginald (b. 1884) and Edwin (b. 1886); Marion died in 1887. Amos then married Ella F. Connell in 1891 but had no further children. He died in Darnestown in 1920.

**Samuel Matlack** (1831-1909) As part of the Sheriff's ad hoc posse on the evening of July 27, Matlack brandished a revolver in an attempt to prevent the lynch mob from taking the jail. In 1880, he was living in the Town of Rockville with Rebecca Fields, widow of *Sentinel* editor Matthew Fields and her eight children, listed as a widowed printer born in Ohio, age 45. His wife Annie had died in 1866. Additionally listed in the household are: another printer, 40-year-old J.P. Miller, also from Ohio, butcher Bernard Cassidy (18), and a 13-year-old black laborer, John Procter. It is assumed Matlack and Miller are employed by Mrs. Fields in printing the *Sentinel*.

Ten years earlier, in 1870 (as "Matlock"), he was already living with the Fields family, when Matthew was still alive, along with (presumably) an 18-year-old daughter Agnes (this is an error, as Agnes was born in 1858 and would have been 12), and an apprentice printer, Thomas McLaughlin from New York. Originally from Ohio, Samuel had married Anna E. Davis in Montgomery County in 1857. When the Civil War broke out (1861), he enlisted in the Confederate Army: Company D of the 35th Battalion, Virginia Cavalry (under command of Major Elijah White) of which his Democratic employer would have approved. He was arrested by the Provost Guard of Rockville (military police) in February of 1862 but released shortly after. Following the war, he was a member of the Ridgely Brown Camp of Confederate Veterans, a member of the Rifle Club and the Sons of Temperance (Hope Council #5), and served on the Rockville Town Council. He was not only a printer for the *Sentinel*, but also the Rockville correspondent to the Washington *Evening Star*. He died in Rockville of Bright's disease in April, 1909, and is buried in St. Mary's Church cemetery.



Dr. Anderson and family, on the steps of his house on W. Montgomery Avenue in Rockville, c. 1891. (L-R: stepdaughter Noma Lawn, wife Alice, son Edward, Jr. with stepson J. Lawn Anderson.)

**Dr. Edward Anderson** (1841-1917) Dr. Anderson examined the body of John Diggs-Dorsey and entered a cause of death by strangulation. He was the brother of Captain James Anderson (jury member) and George Minor Anderson, both of Rockville. Dr. Anderson graduated from the University of Maryland School of Medicine in 1875, after which he lived and practiced in Rockville. He was a member of the Montgomery County Medical Society, formed in 1892, and served as physician for the Alms House. In 1880 he was listed, age 35, as boarding with the Kingsbury family. He married Alice Thompson Lawn in 1883; she had three children from a previous marriage. Together they had one son, also named Edward.

**W.R. Pumphrey** (1846-1928) Pumphrey was born in Rockville and lived there his entire life. By 1870, he was working as a carpenter and still living with his parents. By 1880 he was working as an undertaker with a shop in downtown Rockville. He married Harriet Sheckell in 1882 and they eventually had twelve children, eight of which lived to adulthood. Pumphrey buried the body of John Diggs-Dorsey in the Alms house field. These bodies (at least the marked ones) were re-interred in Parklawn Cemetery in the 1950s; many of the unmarked graves were likely turned under and lost in the construction of I-270.



W.R. Pumphrey's undertaking business in Rockville, c. 1880s.

## OFFICIALS

**Sheriff John H. Kelchner** (1838-1903) was elected Sheriff in November, 1879. He married Martha Garner in 1860 while living in D.C. working as a hackman (carriage driver), and they eventually had at least nine children. He lived in Sandy Spring by 1870, working as a stagecoach driver, and also contracted as a postmaster (1873, 1883 and 1887) He was listed in the 1880 census as living in Rockville and keeping a hotel, then age 43. He was the proprietor of the Montgomery House Hotel for twenty years, having completely renovated it by 1883. He died of Bright's Disease in 1903 and is buried in Congressional Cemetery, Washington, D.C. (as John F. Kelchner).



Montgomery House Hotel, owned by John Kelchner after 1879, (undated)

**Deputy Sheriff William O. Kingsbury** (1825-1885) Kingsbury was the warden of the jail for many years, appointed by three different Sheriffs to that post. His most recent appointment was made by Sheriff Kelchner in December, 1879 but he had held the post of jailer in Rockville since at least 1876. He is mentioned only as "the jailer" in most articles; the *Sentinel* refers to him as "Deputy Sheriff Kingsbury." He married Eleanor Ann Smith in 1847 and they eventually had ten children, seven of whom survived to adulthood. Kingsbury had a permanent residence at Boyds. In 1870 he was living in the 3rd District, Medley, ("Germantown PO," which at that time would have included the Boyds area) with his wife and two adult sons— all men are listed as railroaders— along with four more children under age ten. As of the 1880 census, he was living in Rockville, with wife Ellen and four children. There were twelve boarders living with the family, suggesting they did not live at the jail, but ran (or stayed at) a boarding house in town. One of the other boarders was Dr. Edward Anderson. Kingsbury had also served as a bailiff in Rockville and as a magistrate for the 3rd District. He died in January, 1885 and was buried in St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery in Barnesville, MD.

**Justice of the Peace Mordecai Morgan** (1824-1903) was appointed to the magistracy on April 9, 1880, replacing Charles A. Carter, who had died March 26, 1880. In 1850, a young Morgan had owned a tailor shop in Baltimore. He married Mary Josephine Davis in 1856 (no obvious connection to Zachariah Davis's family); they had at least five children.

By 1863 (Civil War draft) he was living in the 4th District of Montgomery County. In 1870, the family was living in Rockville and he was listed in the 1880 census as a tailor in Rockville at age 56.

**Justice of the Peace John W.M. Kiger** (b. 1856) was appointed as Justice of the Peace on Feb 20, 1880. Listed as Justice of the Peace in the 1880 census (at age 24), and living with Henry K. Dawson and his wife in the Village of Rockville. Nothing can be found of him in Montgomery County following this year.



Judge Bowie, c. 1870

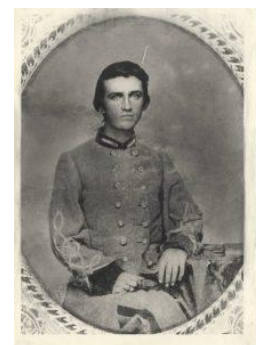
**Judge Richard Johns Bowie** (1807-1881) was the judge presiding over the Grand Jury session in November of 1880 that reviewed the finding of the jury of inquest into the lynching of John Diggs-Dorsey. In his statement to the jury members before the term of court began, Judge Bowie reminded them that John Diggs-Dorsey was still owed a fair trial despite the "heinous" crime of which he had been accused, and that failing to disclose the known identity of perpetrators was to aid and abet them after the fact. The jury disregarded this warning and found no one responsible for Diggs-Dorsey's death.

Bowie was admitted to the bar in 1826 and first practiced law in Washington, D.C. He relocated to Maryland in the 1830s, and during his career served as a member of the State House of Delegates and the State Senate, also serving one term as State's attorney for Montgomery County. In 1849, he was elected to U.S. Congress, serving until 1853. An unsuccessful candidate for reelection, he subsequently served as chief judge of the court of appeals of Maryland until his death. A benefactor of enslaved labor prior to the Civil War, Bowie was a Union sympathizer and anti-secessionist, but he was opposed to abolishing slavery. His extensive farm property on Baltimore Rd. near the Rockville Cemetery was known as Glen View (the house was extensively renovated by later owners the Lyons, and today is used as the Rockville Civic Center). Bowie died in March of 1881, only a few months after he received censure from the local newspaper, the *Sentinel*, for the opinion expressed in his statement to the Grand Jury regarding John Diggs-Dorsey the previous November.

## MEMBERS OF THE JURY OF INQUEST

*Being from out of town, the newspaper reporters frequently printed the names of Rockville men incorrectly and/or inconsistently. For the purposes of brevity, names have been corrected here (and within the narrative), according to more reliable sources, though they may appear in printed accounts with different spellings or other mistakes.*

- **Captain James W. Anderson** (1831-1920), as he was identified in the *Sentinel*, was an ex-Confederate soldier taken prisoner by the Union during the Civil War. One source calls him Colonel Joseph Anderson, which is a misprint, but indicates the jury member could instead have been *Colonel* James W. Anderson, Sr. (1797-1882), lawyer in Rockville, who was also a Confederate sympathizer, especially later in his life. It's more likely that the juror was Anderson, Jr. and the out-of-town reporters conflated the titles of the two men.
- **Nicholas Dorsey Offutt** (1823-1891) was appointed Mayor of Rockville in December of 1880 to replace William Viers Bouic, who was elected to the position in June 1880, but resigned in November of that same year. Residing in the Village of Rockville (farmer) in the 1880 census. Listed in Boyd (1879) as a merchant.
- **William A. Viers**—1880, living in 4th District with wife Rebecca and 4 children, in the household of Thomas Coleman and his family, along with Philip Magruder (a 72-year-old farmer). Veirs, Wm. A. is listed in *Sentinel* as taxpayer in Rockville, and in Boyd (1879) as a Rockville area farmer; also shown as living across the street from the Stonestreeets in



Captain James Anderson, in his Confederate uniform, c. 1862.



Rockville (Hopkins, 1879). In 1870, the same Veirs family is living (along with Phillip Magruder) in the 4th District. The name is spelled "Viers" in both censuses.

- **Melchisedek Green** (1820-1890)—a "successful candidate" in Rockville elections, June 1880 (possibly for Sheriff/bailiff), listed in the 1880 census as a blacksmith in the Town of Rockville. His house was located on Jefferson Street, between Washington and Adams; his shop on Montgomery Avenue at Fayette, next to the Kleindeinst Hotel. Married Ann Rebecca Holly (/Holt?) in 1845 and had at least eight children. It seems he lived his entire life in Rockville and was appointed bailiff (tax collector) several times. According to his obituary he was a "staunch Democrat," working on City Council with E.B. Prettyman and Matthew Fields, and giving "unstinted assistance to those members of the Confederate army enlisting from this county."
- **Reynolds S. Patterson** (1826-1887)— In 1879 Hopkins there is an "R.S. Patterson" on the outskirts of Rockville (Rockville District map). Legend has it he "waded the Potomac" to join the Confederate forces under Stonewall Jackson and served the entirety of the war. In 1870, Patterson, age 44, was living in Rockville with the E.B. Prettyman family, listed as "Deputy Clerk" of the Circuit Court (Prettyman himself is the Clerk). Patterson married Mary C. (date unknown) and had a son, Barrett and a daughter who died in early childhood. Listed in the 1880 census as "Lorenzo" Patterson (age 50) with wife Mary C., and two sons John C. (9) and Barnett (7). He died in 1887 in Baltimore and was buried in the graveyard at the M.E. Church South in Gaithersburg.
- **W.H. Carr**—Listed in the 1880 census as a green grocer in the Village of Rockville (age 25). In 1881, he was the manager of the Kleindienst Hotel, as he had married Emma Kleindienst in 1878. George Kirchner (age 16) was also living with Carr family in 1880, listed as a clerk in the store.
- **Henry Vielt** (incorrectly reported as "Dielt")—Vielt was elected by Rockville Town Commissioners to be bailiff on June 7, 1878. Listed in the 1880 census as living in the Village of Rockville, a tinner born in Germany.
- **James C. Nolan**—listed in census as running a boarding house (with a sister?) in Village of Rockville (age 45).
- **John Steele** (50), (listed erroneously as "James" in some sources), a Pasturer living in the 4th District [verified by Sentinel]
- **R. A. Sheckells**—listed in census as a butcher in Town of Rockville, living near to the Stonestreeets
- **W. M. Davis**—a painter originally from Virginia, appears in Montgomery County for the first time in the 1880 census, living in Rockville
- **John P. Meflinger/Mulfinger**—Listed in the 1880 census as a blacksmith in the Village of Rockville (age 27). His shop in 1880 was across from the courthouse, on Montgomery/Commerce at Court St.
- **J.T. Ricketts** —listed as a 50-year-old farm laborer in the 4th District in 1880, living with his wife Martha and an unrelated 16-year-old named Edward Sterlinger. Ricketts was only mentioned as part of the jury in the *Sentinel*; he is missing from all other jury lists.



Henry Vielt, outside his shop in Rockville. (undated)

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