

[Davis, John Lane]

John Lane<sup>2</sup>, eldest surviving son of John Lane<sup>1</sup> and Susanna (Lucius) Davis, was born June 2, 1802 in Rockingham, Vermont, died in Freeville, New York, January 13, 1866. He was apprenticed or “bound-out” at an early age, to a “Parson” Whiting, of Rockingham, Vermont, with whom he remained as apprentice boy for many years, doing chores, working on the grounds, and waiting upon the master. He was denied the usual advantages given to New England boys in the way of education, and was allowed to go to school only three months during his boyhood. He had no money with which to buy his books, but he finally procured an old spelling book and then quarried out a slate and rubbed it down with another stone to give it the proper surface. Nevertheless he always seemed to be well-educated—wrote a fine hand; composed and spoke grammatically; was a natural mathematician, and an omnivorous reader, and with it all, was blessed with a very retentive memory. The wages of young men in those days were small, but he used to boast that between his twenty-first and twenty-four year he had saved up the sum of three hundred dollars, all he earned, which was considered a fair start in life. He followed his sweetheart, Mary Boynton, a school teacher, to McLean, Vermont, where he worked with his future father-in-law at the carpentry trade. During the early part of his life he was elected to the office of constable, and was also overseer of highways, collector, etc. He was noted for his industry, temperance and public spirit. He was also a man of exceedingly courteous and kindly manners, which he doubtless acquired during his early training in New England. He was a devoted Whig and a constant reader of the *Albany Weekly Journal* and the *New York Tribune* which, with him, were almost household gods. He enjoyed such authors as Theodore Parker, Dickens, Thackeray and the like. His adoration for public men and measures, especially of his own party, was always in evidence, and, as an illustration of his zeal, when word was passed around that Henry Clay was to speak at the State Fair in Syracuse, in the forties, which was before the day of railroads, this ardent follower of the Kentucky statesman, although at a busy season of the year, drove from his home to Syracuse during the night, some fifty miles, reaching the city in the morning of the day the address was to be delivered, attending the meeting, and was back to his fields at work the second morning. That trip and address was an event in his life. He not only could describe, with great accuracy and vividness, the appearance of the noted orator, but could repeat almost word for word the address that he delivered. He was most skillful and thorough in all his duties as stockman and farmer, and was most highly respected by all his friends and neighbors, and owned a fine farm near the village of McLean, New York. He was an exceedingly strong, active man until he was taken with a fatal malady at the age of eighty-three. He married Mary, daughter of Abraham and Betsy (Marsh) Boynton in 1830. Their children were: Byron, Lucius, Eliza, George B. and Mary. A memorial window, dedicated to him and his wife, Mary (Boynton) Davis, was placed in the Universalist church at McLean by his family in the year 1907.

William Richard Cutter, *Genealogical and Family History of Central New York*  
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