In the publication *History of Davisville*, local resident Ruth Baker, a “lifelong Davisvillian,” recalled with humor and sharp observation her neighbors who lived along Davisville Road.

**Reminiscences of the Old Days**

*By Ruth Baker*

Zenas Davis decided to move his family from Menauhant to Davisville in order to take advantage of our village school. The ingenious plan was to transport his house across the frozen surface of Bourne’s Pond during the winter, but unfortunately the ice cracked under the weight of the building. The frustrated mover, James Mayhew, had to split the house in two and haul the halves around through East Falmouth and down Davisville Road. John De-Mello, Sr., a carpenter-apprentice at the time, assisted Mr. Mayhew on the long trip, and the handsome old edifice was reassembled and ensconced at the foot of the village road. Comfortably settled on his new property, Zenas was watching a thunderstorm from his front porch one evening and was knocked down by a bolt of lightning, an accident from which he fortunately recovered. Since 1921, this historic house has been occupied by the Moor family, and its driveway serves as an access way to the old village cemetery to this day.

Alfred and Kate Davis owned Shelley Peirce’s house before Mrs. Haskell. Kate couldn’t read, but pretended that she could. Once, when caught reading the Bible upside down, she retorted to her accuser, “Any damn fool could read it the other way.” Neighborhood kids used to tease Kate by moving her privy from its base and hiding it in a remote spot.
Joshua Davis once owned the Pratt house, and his daughter Lena distinguished herself by riding her bicycle to Falmouth regardless of inclement weather and graduating from Lawrence Academy.

Joseph Davis and his wife Mame originally owned the Fitzpatrick house, where Joseph fished, painted, and carved working duck decoys, one of which his niece Ruth Baker still cherishes. Joseph fell out of his boat and drowned after suffering a sudden heart attack.

Andrew Baker lived with his housekeeper Johanna Quirk, a midwife, in the home later owned by Dr. Vannerman and now his grandson Mike Kinney. When Andrew died, he bequeathed the property to Johanna, who later sold it to Charles Hadley.

Orrie Baker was a hermit in the true sense of the word. Supposedly jilted as a young man, he never quite recovered. Orrie used to tear up the inside of his house, even the floorboards, to burn as firewood. The fact that he never under any circumstances allowed anyone to enter his house is quite understandable. Clad in a long overcoat and sneakers, Orrie cut a familiar figure as he plodded daily through the village carrying a hoe and potato sack for hoggin’.

Ruth Baker’s father, Freeman Baker, lived with her grandfather, Henry Orlando Davis, in the white house south of Ruth’s present home. At one time Henry farmed a huge area stretching from Edgar Davis’ to Cogwell’s, with orchards and hayfields all the way to Green Pond.

After Amanda Davis, John and Ida Dennis and family occupied what we know as the Otis Baker residence. Many of us remember this talented clan. Mr. Dennis was a prominent Boston newspaperman; Mrs. Davis was a dressmaker who fashioned elegant gowns for the well-to-do ladies of Boston; son Morgan sketched perky black and white Scotch terriers for the famous ad for Scotch whiskey so prominently displayed in national magazines of the time; his brother Wesley painted horses
with artistic skill; and sister Lillian was a pianist who later married theatrical producer and director William Howard and performed in his touring show “My Maryland.”

Barnabas Baker owned the property later known as Lovell’s Ten Acre Farm, where he tended a large fruit orchard, hiring the neighborhood kids to help pick the ample crop. A cherry tree in his front yard proved fair game for the youngsters, and Barnabas wisely permitted them to grab a handful of the succulent fruit whenever they passed by the house.

The house owned by the late selectman John DeMello, Jr., was first occupied by J.M. Parmentual, who died of diphtheria. When the Carreiro family bought the property, they devoted much of their land to the raising of pigs, and the boys Johnny, Jimmy, and Raymond picked up the neighborhood garbage for use in the pig pen, located in front of where the Falmouth East condominium now stands.

Simeon Jenkins and his wife Mary Ann lived in the home just south of the Parmentuals. Mary Ann, a short, stocky lady, used to give an ice cream party for the kids each summer. Since there were no screens in the windows, the flies were thick around the party sweets. Later, the Winslows purchased the property, which remains in their family to this day.

Captain Israel B. Davis, Ruth Baker’s paternal great-grandfather for whom Israel’s Cove is named, lived in the vicinity of Shaker Lane where the Hand house is now located. After the sea captain’s occupancy, J.H. Crocker took over the premises. The house reportedly burned down while rented by Antonio DeMello and his family.

Source:

*History of Davisville* by James R. Moor and Shelley D. Peirce. Their material was included in the 1986 *Book of Falmouth*. Ruth Baker’s reminiscences, however, were not published at that time.