

THE GARNER FAMILY

The original Name was Gardner and a branch of the old Nantucket Gardners who came from England, somewhere about 1642 or 43. Our family, or the Garner branch, had their name corrupted, or changed from Gardner to Garner by dropping the "d". In Old Captain James Garner's time, or almost the time of the Revolution, while Captain James Garner lived in S.E. Virginia, he was a ship owner and also a military Captain, being also a pretty large slave owner.

We are descended from his son, John Fushee Garner, who was named in honor of one of his sea captains by the name of John Fushee. Old Captain James Garner had 13 children from whom descended the numerous Garner family, who are scattered east, west, north and south. John Fushee Garner moved from Virginia to Randolph County, North Carolina, before the Revolutionary War. He married first Nancy Whittle, whether in North Carolina or Virginia we have not ascertained. About 1789 or 1790 he moved to Blount County, Tennessee near the mouth of the Ellejay (This could also be Ellejoy) Creek, where he lived, died and was buried on the same farm and lived in the same house most of the time.

The house was torn down about 1935 being nearly 100 years old when taken down. In the course of time his wife died and he [John Foushee Garner] married Betsie Donaldson. After her death he married the third time to Gracie Conrad, a Virginia woman. Himself and his three wives were buried side by side on the old farm a few rods from where our grandfather James' house stood. Our Great Grandfather, John Fushee, had the following children: John, James, William, Bradley, Polly, Betsey, and Dollie, all of whom married and had large families.

Our grandfather James married Mary Moon, oldest daughter of Joseph and Ann Moon, in Randolph County North Carolina in the year 1794 and moved to Tennessee in 1796 and settled just across the road from his father, John Foushee Garner. After living fifteen years in Tennessee they moved to Clinton County, Ohio, with 9 children, one having died in Tennessee and was buried in the family burying ground on the old Foushee place. Four more were added to the family in Ohio making 14 in all: William married Anna Hockett; John, Elenor Ratcliff; Nancy, Seth Hockett; Elizabeth, John Ratcliff; Joseph, Rebecca West; Mary, Josiah Graham; Jane, Thomas Hunt; Rebecca, Samuel Clark; Rileigh, Mary Batterton; Matilda, John McKibben; Sarah, James Darby; James died in infancy; Ira, Margaret Lightfoot; and James, Martha Seal. Two of the 14 are still living at this date August 14, 1894, the youngest son and daughter. In 1877 there were 7 of the 14 living, three of the number came from Tennessee and the four that were born in Ohio. In 1877 there were 114 grandchildren, 298 great-grandchildren, and 113 great great grandchildren. A total of 526 descendants of James Garner in about 80 years.

When James Garner, our grandfather, started to emigrate from Tennessee to Ohio, he, with some others who came with him moved in wagons and when they started out in the year 1811 there were a large number of the relatives and slaves of the relatives and neighbors came on foot a half-days' journey to talk and sing and cry at the parting, and returned at night. Of that company there is only one living representative, Old Aunt Millie Henry, who was a slave girl of old Fushee, given him by his daughter Betsey, who married Samuel Henry, who is now 97 years old and hale and hearty. When grandfather left Tennessee he had a wagon, 8 horses, and 11 head of cattle; but while coming through Kentucky his cattle were all stolen and after he arrived at Snow Hill in the county where he first stopped, his horses all died with milk poison. He then traded his wagon for a horse and amidst all these discouraging circumstances he moved down the East Fork and bought a farm of 150 acres where Edom Ratcliffe now lives.

This country was then in reality a howling wilderness, being inhabited by almost all kinds of wild beasts and occasionally a wild Indian. Amid all of the misfortunes and discouragements he returned to Tennessee on foot and disposed of some interests left behind and collected some debts, and getting some help from old Fushee, his father, in all amounting to over \$400 in silver which he carried on his back in a knapsack over the mountains amounting in weight in over 25 pounds.

On his way back home he had several narrow escapes from robbers but his giant proportions and immense strength (being 6'4" in height and weighing about 250 pounds) with his determined resolutions and fleetness of foot, brought him safely back through it all. It required no small amount of heroism to face all the privations and dangers of pioneer life in those days when the country was a wilderness [which was more or less hostile] with only here and there a white settler with long distances intervening, to buy a farm on time, to clear it up and pay for it while raising a large family of children with everything low that could be made to sell and not much to be bought by way of groceries. With only one horse and no other stock to begin with yet such were the circumstances our grandfather and others of his day had to contend with and all of which they triumphed over in a complete victory. Of William's family (the oldest of grandfather's children) there are 10 living and 3 dead. There has not been a death among the brothers and sisters for nearly 52 years, the oldest being 77 years old and the youngest 59. Their children are too numerous to mention. The others of grandfather's grandchildren I have not had time to procure any history.

Then in conclusion we can safely say that those old pioneers were honest, straight-forward, stalwart men [and women] partaking largely of the metal that heroes are made of and it is to do them homage that we have met here today. Then let us all, especially the younger members of this family, so live that we will not dishonor the good name which has been handed down to us or in any way lower the standard of our grandparents.

The foregoing "SHORT HISTORY OF THE GARNER FAMILY" is a full copy of a history which was printed at the time of a reunion of the Garner family held in 1895 in Ohio, as I remember hearing my mother and grandfather, Henry Andrew, say. The original copy from which the foregoing copy was made bears date 1895 and is in the possession of Rosaltha Margaret Hays, who now is living at Eugene, Oregon.

Dated at Boise, Idaho, 30th day of July, 1941. Ethyl House

Please see our Garner ancestor on FamilySearch.org, Rebecca Garner KWJT-Y4D, and her Garner ancestors, particularly John Foushee Garner. In his MEMORIES folder there is a clever story about his family called "The Garner in Me" by Juanita Smith Wagner. It's worth noting.

Transcription by E.C. Shaeffer, Nov. 2020