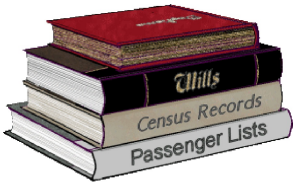
James Gunn, Jr.
1765-1823

son of James Gunn, Sr. And Elizabeth (Garner) Gunn



James Gunn, Jr was born about 1765 in the Nottoway Parish of Amelia County, Virginia. He was the son of James Gunn, Sr., and his first wife, Elizabeth Irby Jordan. His mother's surname is unproven but likely Garner. James Gunn's son, Henry Garner Gunn, likely carried the surname of his mother as his middle name.

James Gunn first appeared in the 1787 census as a property owner, with one slave over 16; 2 slaves under 16; and 2 horses. His father James Gunn, Sr., died in 1807 and his Will mentioned James Gunn as follows:

> Item: I give and bequeath to my son James Gunn, all of mine he has in possession to him and his heirs forever.

As was the custom, most likely James Gunn was given property when he married or came of age.

James Gunn Jr., married Elizabeth Irby Jordan 1793-1799. She was the daughter of James Freeman Jordan and Ann "Nancy" Cocke. Elizabeth was born about 1781 in Amelia County, Virginia. Her sister, Jane Jordan married Griffin Gunn, who was the half/brother of James Gunn, Jr. They had the same father, but different mothers.

James and Elizabeth made their home in Brunswick County, Virginia. It was here they raised their children. From tax records it has been determined that James Gunn, Jr., owned hundreds of acres of property, most which had been given to him by his father, prior to marriage.

1800-1802 James Gunn, Jr., was taxed on 957 ½ acres and another parcel of 300 acres.

1803- James Gunn, Jr., was taxed on 537 ½ and on 300 acres. He sold 400 acres to Thomas Vaughan.

1810 Census - James Gunn had one male under 10. This child was his son Freeman James Gunn. There was also a male 25-45 which was James Jr., himself. There was one female 26.-45 which was his wife Elizabeth Jordan. James owned 17 slaves. There is another likely son, Burwell Gunn who was not listed in the home. Burwell was 16 years old in 1810 and had recently married.

January 18, 1813 - James and Elizabeth sold 151 acres to William Lambert. At this time, Elizabeth was unable to relinquish her dower, so two men were ordered to travel to her and to witness her signature. Almost assuredly, Elizabeth was pregnant. In three more transactions taking place in 1814, James sold land to William Lambert and also to Thomas J. Lambert.

September 8, 1820 - James Gunn, Jr., is indebted to Robert Haskins.

The census of 1820 shows James Gunn, Jr., living in the St. Andrew's Parish of Brunswick County, Virginia.

> There was 1 male under 10 years old believed to be son Henry Garner Gunn who was born 1812-1814. There was one male aged 16-26 who was son Freeman James Gunn who was born 1800-1803. Freeman James Gunn was working for his father. Also listed was James Gunn, Jr, the male over 45.
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> There were three females under 10 years old in the 1820 census. The only female we know to be a child was Elizabeth J. Gunn who was born in 1818. Also listed were two females 16-26, who did not appear in the 1810 census. The female listed as between 25-45 was wife Elizabeth Jordan Gunn. Also listed were 8 agriculture workers, 3 slaves under 14 years old, 2 slaves ages 14-26 and 2 slaves over 45.

November 12, 1822 - James Gunn, Jr., was indebted to Jno. Rieves and John Maddux trustee, to sell and pay 170.60 in addition to Negroes, Hannah, Ruella, and child, for 200 acres of land, and all interest conveyed by Freeman Jordan to James Gunn's wife, if debt is not paid.

August 16, 1823 - James Gunn indebted to Jno Rives and William Aldridge for 261.70

September 10, 1823 - James Gunn sold his woman slave, Hannah, to Freeman James Gunn for $120.00 as payment to Freeman J. Gunn for his two years of service as overseer. Witnesses: Robert Vaughan and Benjamin Zachary. Benjamin Zachary and Robert Vaughan were both nephews of James Gunn, Jr. James Gunn's father, James Gunn, Sr, had a sister Edith who married Willis Vaughan, and another sister Caty Gunn married to Crawford Zackary.

I believe that James Gunn, Jr., and his wife Elizabeth Irby Jordon Gunn, died about 1828. James was about 63 years old in 1823, and his wife Elizabeth about 48. Neither appeared in the 1830 Census of Virginia.

Some have speculated that James and Elizabeth moved to Georgia. There was a James and Elizabeth Gunn in Georgia, but they aren't the same couple. This James and Elizabeth had young children in 1828. Their son Henry Garner Gunn was about 15 and their daughter Elizabeth Jordan Gunn was only 10. These children remained in Virginia, living with relatives, and buying property. Their parents would not have left them behind and start over at their age without their younger children. No will, or estate records for James Gunn, Jr have been found.

James Gunn, Jr., had been in financial trouble for many years. In 1800 he owned almost one thousand acres, but by 1814 had sold most of his holdings to members of the Lambert family. What isn't known is why he had financial trouble. In 1810 he still owned 17 slaves. While they were assets, they were also a liability. Slave holders in Virginia were obligated to purchase two pairs of shoes, and two sets of garments for every slave each year. In addition there were medical costs, food, and housing. I don't know why James had financial troubles, but it is evident that he did.

The children of James and Elizabeth were:

1. Freeman James Gunn born 1808. Circumstantial evidence through deeds establishes Freeman James Gunn as the son of James Gunn, Jr., and Elizabeth Jordan. Additionally he was likely named after his maternal grandfather, J. Freeman Jordan. In 2006, DNA from his ggggrandson, Gordon Reynolds Gunn confirms a biological relationship.

2. Henry Garner Gunn born 1815 - we know from the 1820 census that James Gunn, Jr., had another male under 10 in the home. On October 24, 1834, Burwell Bassett Wilkes, Jr., and his wife Lucy, sold 28 acres of land in Brunswick County, Virginia to Henry G. Gunn for 42 dollars. Burwell Bassett Wilkes, married second to Lucy Field in 1831. Wilkes was the first cousin to Henry Garner Gunn. Henry was 19 years old.

In Deed Book 31, 1836-1839, Henry Garner Gunn sold this same 42 acres back to B. B. Wilkes. Henry's full name, Henry Garner Gunn, was in this deed. This is another indicator that he was named for his grandmother, Elizabeth Garner Gunn, and it confirms a strong connection to the Burwell Wilkes family.

Henry left Virginia and moved to Maury County Tennessee where a number of the Wilkes families had moved. The Wilkes family raised race horses in Maury County. Henry G. Gunn married Martha Jane Brooks in Maury County on March 6, 1841. They had five children, all born in Tennessee, the last child born in 1850. By 1860 Henry and Martha Brooks Gunn had moved to Williamson County, Texas. Both Henry and Martha are buried in the Round Rock Cemetery, in Williamson County, Texas. They had five children, but no males survived to test DNA.

3. Elizabeth J. Gunn. Elizabeth is the only documented child born to James Gunn, Jr and wife Elizabeth. Elizabeth was born in 1818. She listed the names of her parents on her marriage license as James and Elizabeth Gunn. She was the third wife of Frederick Lewis Abernathy. Elizabeth and Frederick Lewis Abernathy were married in 1867 in Brunswick County, Virginia. After the deaths of her parents circa 1823, Elizabeth went to live with her father's half sister, her aunt Elizabeth "Betsey" Gunn (Wilkes - Claiborne). Her aunt Elizabeth was the widow of two wealthy Brunswick County men, first married Burwell Bassett Wilkes who died in 1817, and secondly married Phillip Claiborne who died in 1827. Aunt Elizabeth Gunn Wilkes Claiborne, mentioned Elizabeth J. Gunn in her Will.

Elizabeth nursed her aunt, Elizabeth Claiborne until her death in 1846. Elizabeth Jordan Gunn remained single herself until 1861 when she married the twice widowed Frederick Lewis Abernathy. Frederick died in 1875. After his death, Elizabeth lived with her cousin, Burwell Bassett Wilkes, Jr. Elizabeth J. Gunn Lewis, died June 1892. She had no children, and is buried in the Wilkes Family Cemetery, "Charlie Hope" in Brunswick County, Virginia.

Burwell Gunn - August 29, 1794 - March 22, 1855. I believe Burwell Gunn to be the son of James Gunn, Jr and wife Elizabeth Jordan. Burwell did not appear in the 1810 census of his father's home, because Burwell Gunn married Mary Shackleford Williams on March 11, 1810 in Nottoway County, Virginia. Some researchers think that Elizabeth Jordan Gunn, his mother, was too young 13 or 14 when she married James Gunn, and 14 or 15 when she gave birth to

Burwell. I agree she was young. Then too, James Gunn, Jr, was 29 years old when Burwell Gunn was born. It should be considered that his father possibly may have been married to someone prior to Elizabeth Jordan. Burwell Gunn has numerous male descendants, and if one would submit DNA, we could determine if Burwell is biologically related, and a son of James and Elizabeth Jordan Gunn.

Burwell Gunn and Mary Shackleford Williams had nine child as follows:

1. James W. Gunn 1812-1882 who married Olive Sallard
2. William B. Gunn 1817-1887 who married Mary Frances Jones
3. Sarah F. Gunn 1819-abt 1903 who married Joel G. Shackleford, John B. Clark, and Edwin Peterson Wells
4. Jemima Jane Gunn 1820- 1870/80 who married Thomas Rogers
5. Elisha G. Gunn 1827-1865 who married Molly E. Vaughan
6. Henrietta K. Gunn 1828 - 1855 who married Edwin Peterson Wells who married her sister Sarah secondly
7. Robert C. Gunn 1830 - 1865 who married Lucy J. Wilson. (Robert and two brothers Elisha Gunn and Thomas J. Gunn all died during the Civil War.
8. Ann Elizabeth Gunn 1833 - 1870/80 who married Marcus Alexander Wells
9. Thomas J. Gunn 1834-1863 - married Mary Emiline Wilson. Thomas died at Gettysburg.

I descend from James and Elizabeth Jordan Gunn through their son Freeman James Gunn.