

Locations of the Plantations of William Garner and Family

Excerpted from:

Planter of Northampton County, NC and Greenville County, VA.

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The Civil War era maps of Major General Jeremy Gilmer were examined to determine the site of early Garner Plantations in Northampton County NC and Greenville County Va. These maps identified roads, railways, mills and plantations as part of the nascent Confederate Government's geographical department.

The Gilmer Map 44 illustrates the Greenville County VA region including the northwestern-most regions of Northampton County NC (Figure 11). Garner plantations were marked in the region of now present Gaston, NC (Figure 12). Analysis of the 3 sites immediately bracketing the Gaston region was given priority as the region is believed to be the site of plantations owned by the Colonial Planter Rev. William Garner Sr. (~1745-1824).



Figure 1. Gilmer Map 44 Drawn in 1864, the area illustrated is Greenville County VA region including the northwestern-most regions of Northampton County NC. Horizontal line is NC/VA border, Roanoke River is on lower left border of map and lowermost feature is the township of Weldon.



Figure 2. Detail of Gilmer Map 44. Area illustrated is northwestern Northampton County, NC region. Creek that crosses NC/VA border is Beaver Dam Creek



A

B

C

Figure 3. USGS topological map of Gaston area, Northampton County, NC. Black Duck Creek (Falling Run) is at lower left and Beaver Pond Creek is stream crossing NC/VA border. Garners Mill is at upper left. Road bed of the “main road” follows NC HWY 46. Hypothesized Northampton Garner allied plantation sites A, B, C represent USGS Map unnamed cemeteries.

To identify potential plantation sites the locations of the Gilmer map Garner Plantations were compared with cemeteries located on USGS topographical maps (Figures 12 and 13, respectively). It was assumed that home sites occupied over several generations may also have family graveyards which may still be identified in detailed topological maps. Points with unidentified extant gravesites were identified on the USGS map which had similar placement as the plantation sites on the Gilmer map 44 (Figure 13). Close examination of detail maps indicate the presence of evidence that confirms the likelihood of older plantation sites.

USGS Site A

Analysis of USGS map sites west of present Gaston in the Gum Fork Region indicated another cemetery and potential plantation site (Figure 14). Factors contributing to this hypothesis were proximity to Site B, proximity to cemetery of the Moody and Squire families, who were allied with early to mid 19th century Garners, and, importantly, proximity to the vicinity of the Falling Run patent of William Garner. Falling Run is now known as Black Duck Creek.

These properties were joined together along the lines of the Falling Run. The instructions to the surveyor in William's 1790 patent were to "Survey for Wm Garner a tract or parcel of land containing two hundred acres lying in Northampton County between his lines and Nathaniel Norwoods lines and on the main road and on the north side of the Falling Run." These are the properties given to Samuel Garner in William's 1824 will.

The area of site A was explored in winter of 2005 with a focus on the unmarked cemetery identified in the USGS map in Figure 14. This site contained several marked graves of indeterminate age and a number of mid 20th century graves. There

were no definitively identifiable Garner graves in this site but this does not rule out the potential that this was used as an early Garner graveyard.

Detail Gum Fork Area

Other Western Gilmer Map Garner Site?



Figure 4. West Gaston Potential Garner Plantation Site A.

USGS Site B

Site B on the USGS map in Figure 13 had been previously discovered and positively identified as a potential plantation site through interviews and site visits. Present at this point are graves of Dr Presley Killingsworth Garner (1835-1861), E I Thomas, and Susan Garner Thomas from the mid 19th century (Figures 15-16). In his will probated in Northampton county 1861, Dr P K Garner requested that his *“body be buried in the graveyard of his brother in law E I Thomas”*. Thus this point represents the location of the Thomas property, marked “b” on Figure 17. Though no images of the house have yet been secured, it is clearly the site of an early home for the following reasons: the presence of dwelling symbols at this site on older maps, the presence of hand formed bricks in piles suggesting a collapsed dwelling; tree growth in rectilinear patters suggesting growth around a once standing structure and the cemetery.

Thus this USGS site B was identified as the location of the Gilmer Map site “b” (Figure 17).



Figure 5. Presley Killingsworth Garner Graveyard, Gaston NC.

Figure 6. Presley Killingsworth Garner (1835-1861) Gravestone Gaston NC.





Figure 7. Detail of Gilmer Map 44 Showing Gaston region Garner and allied plantations.

USGS Site C

A potential USGS site C, northeast of site B, was identified (Figure 13). Factors contributing to this hypothesis were proximity to Site B, proximity to cemetery of the Thomas family, a family that was allied with mid 19th century Garners. The author visited the location of USGS site C off of Hwy 48 N approximately 1.25 miles north of Gaston (Figure 18). No house was extant. However the present owner of the property showed me the house site and the graveyard (approximately 0.5 miles off highway) and confirmed that the property was the site of an old Garner “Big House” (Figure 19). The house was pushed down and buried in the early 1990s. The house was identified as a Garner property by an inscription in the chimney masonry: “James Garner built 1825”. The cemetery was overgrown severely and it was difficult to find gravestones. The owner stated that several Garner graves were present including the grave of a Henry Garner.

Several Garner graves were found (Figure 20) supporting that the site was occupied by the Garners during the late 18th century. A winter visit was necessary to identify all headstones in the yard as the undergrowth was so thick that walking was nearly impossible. It is known that Henry Garner was the son of John Garner, Sr. and the grandson of William Garner Sr. (~1745-1824). The gravestones were transcribed as follows:

Detail Gaston Area

Gilmer Map Garner Site Built 1825 Cemetery Extant



Dr PK Garner and Captain E I Thomas Cem. Gilmer Map Site

Figure 8. East Gaston Garner Plantation USGS Site B and USGS Site C Cemeteries.

Transcript of Henry Garner Cemetery, Gaston, NC off Hwy 48.

W. Paul Garner

1871-1945

Martha J. Garner

Wife of J.G Garner
Died May 2, 1907
Age 70 Years
Honored, Beloved
and Wept
Here Mother Lies

John G. Garner

Died May 14 1896
Age 81 years and 8
months
May the Resurrection
Find Thee on the
Bosom of thy God

Joseph H

Son of J. G. and
Martha J Garner
Born Aug 16 1864
Died Jan 18 1880
Though Thou Art
Gone Fond Memory
Clings to Thee

Sarah Jane

Wife of Henry Garner
Born May 10, 1804
Died Apr 15, 1864
As a Wife Devoted
As a Mother
Affectionate
As a Friend ever kind
and true

4 Unmarked Grave
Depressions

Henry Garner

Born Jan 10 1807
Died June 26 1879
May the Resurrection
Find Thee on the
Bosom of thy God

Prior to dismantling the house, the owner photographed the house from several angles (Figures 21-23). The structure was a 2 ½ story frame house with tin roof (not original). The house, according to local legend, was built over 7 years by slaves with the first part made from hand hewn timber and the second addition made with timbers made at the Garners' sawmill. This was confirmed by photos taken of both hand hewn and mill-sawn beams in the house interior. All joints were mortised and pegged. The stones in the foundation were carted onto the builder's site from the Roanoke River and stone piles of the builder's culls are present along the tree ridge in the field behind the house site. The dug foundation was partly buried for coolness. Stone steps were built up and the principal entrances were into the second floor front and back. The raised porches were removed prior to demolition. Additional entrances into the first floor were also present at the sides. This house design was common for early 19th century farm manor houses in the Roanoke Valley (Figure

24). Interior walls were plastered with horse and/or hog hair as a binder. Several outbuildings were present at the house site but dismantled prior to the demolition.

Thus this USGS site C was identified as the Gilmer Map site “c” (Figure 17).



Figure 9. Site of 1825 Garner Manor House site and Graveyard.



Figure 10. Henry Garner Gravestone uncovered during visit to USGS Site C.



Figure 11. Western view of 1825 Garner Manor House (USGS map site C).



Figure 12. Western view of 1825 Garner Manor House (USGS map site C).



Figure 13. Frontal view of 1825 Garner Manor House (USGS map site C).



Figure 14. Ivey house, Halifax, NC, built 1847. This house is a prototypical Roanoke Valley farm house and similar in design to the James Garner house.

Estimation of plantation site locations.

The positive identification of two out of the four Gilmer Garner allied plantation sites (Figure 17) presented an opportunity for the location of the remaining sites via simple geometric techniques. In figure 17, the distance between site b and c (distance bc) is approximately equivalent to the distance between sites c and d (distance bc~cd). Additionally, the distance between the westernmost site a and the easternmost site d is approximately 3 times the distance bc (distance ad~3bc). Further, the distance between site a and site b is approximately twice distance bc (distance ab ~2bc). By drawing a circle of radius bc from the location of site c, the approximate position of site d can be surmised as the intersection of that circle with the road just south of where it crosses Beaverdam Creek (Blue Circle, Figure 25). The intersection a circle of radius 3bc (orange figure) drawn from point c with the circle of radius 2bc (red circle) marks the probable location of the westernmost site a. Added confirmation of the position of the easternmost site d is noted by the intersection of circle 2bc (red circle) at the center of circle 3bc (orange circle).

Thus the position of the Gilmer map Garner plantation sites a, b, c, and d are located on the USGS topographical map as displayed in Figure 25.

Confirmation of Additional Garner Plantation Site Locations

Location of the ruins of manor house at the potential site of the easternmost plantation “d” was not evident from roadside observation. However, in the region of this site, there are several roads named for Garners and the presence of the households of several Garner families, suggesting a longtime presence of those carrying this name. Since this is private property with no cemetery access rights, further investigation of this location awaits.

Location of the ruins of manor house at the potential site of the westernmost plantation (Gilmer site “a”) was also not evident from roadside observation. However, this site is likely the location for the following reasons

In 1835, Samuel Garner, son of William Garner Sr., petitioned the court for partition of the Patent property of his father. The remaining property, portioned to his brother William Jr., was left in William’s will to Thomas, son of Samuel. Thomas willed this to his Brother Bradford who then sold it to members of the Turner family. In the region of this site, there are several roads named for Turners and the presence of the households of several Turner families, suggesting a longtime presence of those carrying this name.

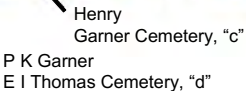


Figure 15. Location of Garner Plantations on USGS map.

