

# *Early Vardaman-Vardeman- Vardiman Ancestry in America*



*Detail from George Caleb Bingham's Daniel Boone Escorting Settlers Through the Cumberland Gap,  
1851-1852*

The Washington University Gallery of Art, St. Louis, MO

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# ***PREFACE***

This publication has been prepared specifically for the *Vardeman-Holmes Family Reunion 2003* held July 4, 5 & 6<sup>th</sup>, 2003, at the William Whitley House Historic Site State Park, near Crab Orchard, Lincoln County, Kentucky. The publication and formal presentations put forth at the *Vardeman-Holmes Family Reunion 2003* were conducted in conjunction with the rededication of the newly relocated Holmes-Vardeman-Stephenson (Cedar Creek Cemetery) pioneer cemetery.

Included with this publication is a family tree chart of the first four Vard(a,e,i)man generations and two narratives: *A Nutshell History of Early Vardaman-Vardeman-Vardiman Family Ancestry In America*, and *Origins*. The first narrative discusses the condensed history of the original **John & Margaret** (maiden name unknown), **Vardaman** family of Appoquinimink Creek, New Castle County, Delaware, who are documented as the first known Vardamans to immigrate to America, ca 1705. In particular, the narrative discusses the documentation supporting the interpreted history of **John & Margaret Vardaman**, their sons **Johannes**, **William (I)**, and **Christopher**, their daughter **Jane Margarita** and their subsequent generations.

**John & Margaret Vardaman's** eldest son, **Johannes Vardaman** and his wife **Sarah**, (maiden name unknown), lived on Black Bird Creek, New Castle County, Delaware. **Johannes Vardaman's** will has not been found but according to references made in subsequent land deed records he did, in fact, leave a will stipulating that his three sons; **William**, **Christopher**, and **Jacob**, should inherit his estate. No references to any daughters have been found.

**John & Margaret Vardaman's** son, **William (I) Vardaman**, is the most extensively researched Vardaman family line and therefore his lineage represents the largest portion of the narrative contained in this publication.

**John & Margaret Vardaman's** son, **Christopher**, is the least researched Vardaman family line as very little documentation has been found on him to date.

**John & Margaret Vardaman's** daughter **Jane Margarita** marries **James Senex(on)** at Holy Trinity Church located in modern-day Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware on 30 January 1730 and they have ten children; **James**, **Henry**, **John**, **another James**, **Susanna**, **Sara**, **Issac**, **Margret**, **Morina**, and **Senecce**.

**John & Margaret Vardaman's** son, **William (I) Vardaman's** first marriage to **Magdalena Petersson** is performed at the Holy Trinity Church located in modern-day Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware on 21 April 1720. **William (I) & Magdalena** migrate from New Castle County, Delaware, ca 1724 and are located on the Rivanna River, near modern-day Charlottesville, Albemarle County, Virginia by ca 1734. They subsequently relocate to the area of Plumbtree Branch, a northern drainage of the Staunton (Roanoke) River, near modern-day Leesville, Campbell County, Virginia in 1744. **William (I) & Magdalena Vardaman** are documented as having three sons; **John**, **William Jr.**, and **Peter** as well as several daughters. Although only two daughters, **Maria**

and **Jemima**, can be proven through documentation, we are confident that two more, **Frances** and **Susannah**, can be linked to this marriage by circumstantial information.

The narrative discusses **William (I)**'s second marriage to **Bridget Tinkler** and the birth of his last son **James Vardaman** as well as **William (I) & Bridget**'s final migration into The Dutch Fork area of what is now Newberry County, South Carolina in 1766.

Information is also provided regarding the migration of **William (I) & Magdalena**'s sons, **John (II)**, **William Jr.** and **Peter**, through Virginia and to their respective final destinations in Missouri, Georgia and Kentucky.

**William (I) & Magdalena**'s son, **John (II)** and his wife **Elizabeth (Morgan) Vardaman** are seen emigrating from the Staunton (Roanoke) River area to Coles Creek, near modern-day Rocky Mount, Franklin County, Virginia, ca 1764, then to the New River, in modern-day Wythe or Pulaski County, Virginia, ca 1767. **John (II)** joins the Daniel Boone expedition across the Cumberland Gap into Kentucky and the construction of Fort Boonesborough in 1775, but due to Indian conflicts along the frontier decides to "fort" his family along with numerous other frontier families at the Maiden Spring Fort located on the Maiden Spring Fork of the upper Clinch River, southwest of modern-day Tazewell, Tazewell County, Virginia, ca 1777. By ca 1779 **John (II) & Elizabeth** move their family to Cedar Creek, near Crab Orchard, Lincoln County, Virginia, modern-day Lincoln County, Kentucky. It is believed that **John (II) & Elizabeth Vardaman** had twelve children; **Mary Magdalene, William, Letitia, John III, Elizabeth, Jemima, Amaziah, Morgan, Minnie, Tabitha, Jeremiah, and Sabra**. **John (II)** moves once more in his elder years, apparently without **Elizabeth**, to Gravois Creek, near modern-day Crestwood, St. Louis County, Missouri, ca 1812 and is reportedly buried in the family estate cemetery of Capt. John Sappington.

**William (I) & Magdalena**'s son, **William Jr.** and his wife **Jane**, (maiden name uncertain), remain in the Plumbtree Branch area of Bedford County (becomes Campbell County in 1783), near modern-day Leesville, Campbell County, Virginia, until ca 1784-85 when he moves his family into Wilkes County, Georgia. It has been proposed that **William Jr. & Jane Vardaman** had five children including one documented son; **William** and two documented daughters; **Hannah** and **Rhoda**. A third daughter, **Mary**, although not proven, is documented in the genealogy of the Wilkerson/Hall families. Another suggested daughter, **Elizabeth**, wife of Reuben Bennett, is unsupported by any documentation whatsoever and remains pure speculation at this time.

**William (I) & Magdalena**'s son, **Peter Vardaman** marries **Prudence**, (maiden name unknown), and they reside on Pretty Creek in Bedford County, Virginia, near modern-day Leesville, Campbell County, Virginia, until ca 1769 when they move further west onto the Pigg River, near modern-day Rocky Mount, Franklin county, Virginia. Peter next moves his family to the Dix (Dicks) River in Lincoln County, Virginia, near modern-day Crab Orchard, Lincoln County, Kentucky, ca 1780. In May of 1781, his neighbor, Col. William Whitley, reports in his diary that two sons of **Peter Vardaman**, **William** and **Peter**, are attacked by Indians while washing in Cedar Creek. No records for these two men are found subsequent to this incident.

**Peter & Prudence** migrate further north on Coopers Run Kentucky, near modern-day Lexington, Bourbon County, Kentucky by 1786 and then finally to near modern-day Bagdad, Shelby County, Kentucky by ca 1804, where he is thought to be buried. The will of **Peter Vardaman** lists one son; **Thomas** and four daughters, **Prudence, Naomi, Dorcas and Mollie**.

**William (I) & Bridget's** son, **James Vardaman** is believed to marry twice and between these two marriages to sire seven children. It is believed he first marries **Sabra Liles (Lyles)**, who may have been the mother of his three sons; **William, Thomas and Joseph**. **James** also marries **Jane Johnson**, prior to January 1783 and she bears a documented daughter; **Rachel Vardaman**. Two unproven daughters are also found in the records; **Nancy and Sally** and a seventh child is suspected of being an unnamed daughter. **James** lives in The Dutch Fork area of what is now Newberry County, South Carolina, where his father **William (I)** settled, but temporarily migrates into Wilkes County, Georgia, ca 1790. He remains there only briefly before returning to Newberry County, South Carolina, ca 1792 where he later dies. The three sons of **James** subsequently make their own migrations into Jefferson County, Georgia, ca 1797 with two of the three finally settling in Alabama.

The second narrative, *Origins*, discusses the existing publications on Vardaman history as well as possible origins of the Vardaman surname and possible European emigration locations for the family. Point by point evaluations of each known biography and its contradictions and similarities with the documented history are presented. Numerous family “folklore” stories and statements are discussed for the benefit of clarifying misconceptions regarding the family history.

It is anticipated that a more thorough narrative of the ancestry and origins of the Vardaman-Vardeman-Vardiman family will be forthcoming in the near future by the authors, however, it is the desire of the authors to present a synopsis of their research at this time for the benefit of this family reunion.

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# ***ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS***

The authors of this publication wish to thank the many friends and family members who have generously contributed their information to this synopsis of Vardaman family history. It is the collective efforts of these many researchers, present and past, which has allowed the most definitive compilation of the first three American generations of Vardaman history to now be presented.

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Note: Through the years our family name has been variously spelled Vardaman, Vardeman and Vardiman. This is true in the same lines and occasionally for the same individual and is true right up to the current generation. On rare occasions it may even be seen as Vardemon, Vardman, Verdiman or Verdeman. However spelled, it is the same family. For simplification purposes only the "Vardaman" spelling is used in this document unless an official record is being cited in which case the spelling that appears in that record is used.

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***A NUTSHELL HISTORY OF EARLY  
VARDAMAN-VARDEMAN-VARDIMAN  
FAMILY ANCESTRY IN AMERICA***

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*A Condensed Chronicle of the Individuals of the First Three Generations of  
Vardaman/Vardeman/Vardimans in America*

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*by*

*Jesse H. (Jack) Vardaman, Jr.*

**2003**

# ***A NUTSHELL HISTORY OF EARLY VARDAMAN-VARDEMAN-VARDIMAN FAMILY ANCESTRY IN AMERICA***

## **JOHN VARDAMAN (I)**

The original immigrant to America was **John Vardaman (I)** who died 17 March 1714, leaving his will of that date in New Castle County upon Delaware. At that time the three counties of present day Delaware (New Castle, Kent and Sussex) were nominally part of the Province of Pennsylvania although they had their own assembly. They were known as New Castle (or Kent, or Sussex) on the Delaware. They did not exist as an entity of their own until the American Revolution.

The family is thought to have arrived in America ca 1705, settling on Appoquinimink Creek in Appoquinimink Hundred, New Castle County on the Delaware.

Note: The area that we now know as Delaware was discovered in 1609 by Henry Hudson, then in the employ of the Dutch government. Early Dutch efforts to colonize this area were unsuccessful and it was not until 1638 that the first permanent settlement was established by Swedish immigrants led by Peter Minuit, a Dutchman in the employ of the Swedish government. In ensuing years control of the territory passed back and forth between the Dutch and Swedish governments until 1764 when the three counties “on the Delaware” (New Castle, Kent and Sussex), under the terms of the Treaty of Westminster, became part of the English possessions in America. First placed under the control of the Governor of the Province of New York, this area was later included in William Penn’s royal patent for the Province of Pennsylvania in 1681.

**What is a “Hundred”?** The following explanation is from the *Delaware Genealogical Research Guide* by Thomas P. Doherty, published in 1997:

*On October 25, 1682, William Penn directed that Delaware be divided into townships occupied by 100 families where each family would have an average of about ten members (including servants). These townships were referred to as “hundreds” in a 9 April 1690 order by the Provincial Council. Originally, there were five hundreds in New Castle County, five in Kent County and two in Sussex County. As the population grew, several of the hundreds divided, creating new hundreds. In 1875, the total number of hundreds had grown to the present day thirty-three. Their boundaries have essentially not changed since and no longer serve as judicial or legislative districts.*

Appoquinimink Hundred was one of the five original New Castle County Hundreds created in 1682 and was the southernmost Hundred in New Castle County. Its boundaries remained undisturbed until 1875 when the southeastern portion was separated as Black Bird Hundred.

**John Vardaman (I)** left a wife, **Margaret** (maiden name unknown), an adult son, **Johannes**, and three minor children: Sons **Christopher** and **William** and daughter **Jane Margarita (Margaret)**. The first three of these children were all born before 1700 and prior to the family's arrival in America. The last child was apparently born ca 1708 after the family's arrival in America.

We know nothing of the fate of John's wife, Margaret.

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### **JOHANNES VARDAMAN, son of John (1) Vardaman**

**Johannes** was an adult (age 21 or over) and away from home at the time his father's will was written in March 1714. As a result we know that he must have been born prior to 1693. It is estimated that he was probably born ca 1690. He married a woman named **Sarah** (maiden surname unknown) and, by the terms of his father's will, inherited his father's lands in Appoquinimink Hundred, New Castle County. The date of his marriage is not known but it was prior to the date of a New Castle County deed of 9 February 1718 in which his wife's name is mentioned. He is almost assured to have married in New Castle County subsequent to his arrival in America.

He died in New Castle County between 1733 and 1735 leaving at least three sons: **William, Christopher** and **Jacob**, born in that order. We do not know of any daughters. All three sons were minors (not yet 21 years old) at the time Johannes wrote his will, 1 May 1733 and further appear to have been minors still on 16 May 1735 when their mother and her new husband, John Hardin, sold certain of Johannes' property that had been left to his three sons.

The New Castle County will of Johannes Vardaman cannot be located; however, we know of its existence, the date that it was written and certain of its provisions from a New Castle County deed dated 17 November 1748 in which Christopher, one of Johannes' sons, sells his 1/3 interest in the lands left to him and his two brothers by their father to his brother William. It is also from this deed that we learn the names of Johannes three sons, William, Christopher and Jacob.

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### **WILLIAM VARDAMAN, son of Johannes Vardaman**

This **William** was born after 1714 (he was not yet 21 on 1 May 1733 -- see Johannes Vardaman) and before 16 May 1727 (see below); married a woman named **Elinor** (maiden surname unknown) and died prior to 17 January 1752 when his widow requested a survey on 100 acres of land in New Castle County. He was born, married and died in New Castle County on the Delaware. We know that William was of age by 16 May 1748 when he



purchased land in New Castle County; that he was married by 13 February 1749 when his wife's name is mentioned in another New Castle County deed and that he was a bricklayer by trade. Based on the fact that we know that he had to be at least 21 years old prior to 16 May 1748, his birth had to be prior to 16 May 1727. Yet another New Castle County deed dated 15 June 1786 states that William and Elinor had two children who both died in their minority without issue. While the gender of these two children is not specified, another report states that one of them was a son also named **William**.

After her husband Williams's death, his widow, Elinor, married a second time to **Charles Hillyard**. This marriage was prior to a deed dated 23 May 1757, in which she is specifically named both as the widow of William Verdiman (sic) and the wife of Charles Hillyard.

Prior to June 1786, Elinor was widowed a second time and subsequently married for the third time to a gentleman named **Carpenter**. This information is contained in yet another New Castle County deed dated 15 June 1786 which cites her name as **Elinor Carpenter of Kensington, Northern Liberties, City of Philadelphia**. This deed specifically states that she was the widow of William Verdiman (sic) and it is from this deed that we learn of the two children of William and Elinor. The deed specifically states that, both children died without issue and in their minority; however it does not provide the names of the two deceased children nor does it provide the first name of Elinor's husband.

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### **CHRISTOPHER VARDAMAN, son of Johannes Vardaman**

This Christopher was also born after 1714 (see Johannes Vardaman) but before 13 February 1728 (see below) in New Castle County on the Delaware. It is presumed that he married but no information regarding a marriage has ever been found. He sold his share in the lands left to him by his father to his brother William on 13 February 1749. We know that Christopher had to be at least 21 years of age by the date of this deed and can state then that he was born prior to 13 February 1728. This Christopher later lived in Sussex County, Delaware, where he died intestate ca 1799 when an Administrator was appointed to handle the affairs of his estate.

While it has not been proven that this Christopher in Sussex County was Christopher son of Johannes, logic leads us to that conclusion. We are confident that the Christopher in Sussex County was not Christopher son of the original John (who would have had to have been well over 100 years old at the time that an administrator was appointed for the estate of the Christopher in Sussex County in 1799) and we know of no other Christopher Vardaman in existence during the 18th century.

Although we have no proven information concerning any children that Christopher may have had, a **Henry Verdiman** appears on a 1782 Sussex County tax list living in the same area (Baltimore Hundred) and close to Christopher Verdiman. It seems logical to conjecture that this Henry was a son of Christopher. A Henry Vardeman is later reported to have paid taxes in Norfolk County, VA, in 1787 and it is assumed that this is the same Henry who was with Christopher in Sussex County, DL, earlier. We know that Henry was at least 21 years of age at the time of the 1782 Sussex County tax list and, therefore, that he was born prior to 1761.

It is also within the realm of possibility that Christopher could have had a son named Jacob (see Jacob Vardaman, son of Johannes). While there is no record linking the Jacob Vardaman who appears in both North and South Carolina ca 1782–83 to this Christopher, the dates are not untenable and there is no known contradictory information that would preclude Christopher from having had a son named Jacob.

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### **JACOB VARDAMAN, son of Johannes Vardaman**

Jacob was born after 1714 in New Castle County on the Delaware (see Johannes Vardaman) and died after 24 May 1783 when, as a resident of St. David's Parrish, South Carolina, he sold a grant of land in Chatham County, NC, that he had received in the previous year. Again, there is no proof that the Jacob in South Carolina in 1783 was Jacob the son of Johannes. But, also again, we know of no other Jacob Vardaman who could have been in this area at this time. We know nothing further regarding this Jacob.

To date, no record has been found to show that Jacob, son of Johannes, sold his 1/3 interest in the lands left to him and his brothers by their father. However, his brother William's dealings with respect to these lands seems to indicate that such might be the case. Alternatively, Jacob could have died as a young person – possibly before reaching the age of maturity – without having married or leaving any issue in which case his interest in the land left to him by his father would have reverted to his two brothers.

We also cannot ignore the possibility that the Jacob Vardaman who obtained the land grant in North Carolina in 1782 and subsequently sold it the following year while a resident of St. David's Parrish, SC, may not have been the son of Johannes but, instead, a son of Christopher Vardaman of Sussex County, Delaware, son of Johannes Vardaman. The dates of the above land transactions do not preclude such a relationship.

In 1783 the area comprising St. David's Parrish, SC, was congruent with the administrative area of Cheraws District. In 1785 the Cheraws District was divided into Chesterfield, Darlington, and Marlboro Counties. Since the 1783 deed specifies only the Parrish name, we do not know in which county Jacob may have lived. The Cheraws District of South Carolina and the three counties formed from it are located in the northeastern part of the state along the border with North Carolina. For those who might wonder about it, this is well removed from the old Ninety Six District and Newberry County to the northwest where "old" William Vardaman settled his then family when he removed from Virginia to South Carolina in 1766. If we are correct in postulating that this Jacob Vardaman was a son of Johannes Vardaman, he would have been a nephew of "old" William Vardaman. If, instead, he was a son of Christopher, son of Johannes, he would have been "old" William's grandnephew.

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## **CHRISTOPHER VARDAMAN, son of John (I) Vardaman**

We have only one single piece of information that appears to relate to this Christopher and that is the witnessing of the will for a William Boon, Yeoman, Boon's Island, Philadelphia, PA, on 27 December 1714. While it is not proven that the Christopher who witnessed the Boon will was the son of John Vardaman, he certainly was not Christopher, the son of Johannes who had not yet been born and we know of no other Vardaman family in America at this time. While we know that this Christopher was still a minor (not yet 21) at the time his father's will was written on 17 March 1714, it was legal for a minor to witness a will and, of course, it is possible that Christopher became an adult (reached the age of 21) sometime between 17 March and 27 December 1714 -- a not improbable circumstance.

It appears certain that the children of John (I) Vardaman are named in his will in the order of their birth. This establishes that Christopher was born prior to 1698, the year that his younger brother William is presumed to have been born. It also establishes that Christopher was most likely born in Sweden and was definitely born prior to the arrival of the family in America. Since he was not yet 21 at the time of his father's will (17 March 1714), we know that he was born no earlier than March 1693. Since it appears that he has left his father's home to make his own way by December 1714, it is conjectured that he was born ca 1693 – 1694.

It is the opinion of Dr. Peter Stebbins Craig, a noted historian of the early Swedish settlements in the Delaware River valley and author of two books on this subject, that, due to the lack of the appearance of any documents bearing this Christopher's name, it is likely that he died young, having never married and leaving no issue.

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## **JANE MARGARITA (VARDAMAN) SENEX(ON), daughter of John (I) Vardaman**

Margarita (her name appears in church records variously as Margareta, Margaret, Margaretha, Margret and Marget **Werdeman**) married James Senex(on), a tailor, on January 30, 1730, at Holy Trinity (Old Swedes) Church in Christiana, New Castle County on the Delaware (now Wilmington, DL). Her surname in the Holy Trinity Church records is consistently shown as **Werdeman**. James' surname is variously spelled in church and deed records as Seneca, Senecce, Senece, Senecee, Senech, Seneck, Senecka, Senecks, Seneke, Senekeson, Senex, Senexon, Senneckson, Sennex, Sennexon, Sinex, Sininks, Sinix, Sinnex, Sinnick, Sinnickson and Synexxon. I have been told by a descendant that there are additional variations of the name.

James Senex(on), born in 1708 in Christiana Hundred, New Castle County on the Delaware, was of Finnish descent, the son of James Sinnexson and Dorcas Harmonson; grandson of Broer and Sophia Sinnickson; and great-grandson of Sinnick Broer, a Finn who emigrated to this area of America with his family during the period of Dutch rule, 1655-64. At that time, and for many years to come, Finland was an integral part of the Kingdom of Sweden. James' family belonged to the Swedish Church (Holy Trinity). James died in Christiana Hundred, New Castle County on the Delaware, in 1765.

In a 1764 census of Old Swedes Church by Pastor Anders Borell, Margaret is reported to be 56 years old (*born ca 1708*), able to read the Swedish Bible and knew the Swedish

language “completely”. Born ca 1708, which was subsequent to the Vardaman family’s arrival in America, places Margaret’s place of birth as New Castle County on the Delaware in the Province of Pennsylvania.

James and Margareta (or Margaret, et al) Senex(on) (however spelled) had 10 children with the last, a son named **Senecce** born on 13 April 1752. He is reported to have died young. The other children were: [1] **James**, born 7 February 1731 (this James apparently died as an infant); [2] **Henry**, born 4 May 1732, died after 1790, married his first cousin Ann Senex Stalcop, widow of Isaac Stalcop; [3] **John**, born 17 April 1734; [4] another **James**, born 17 April 1726, married Elizabeth (maiden surname unknown); [5] **Susanna**, born 19 March 1738; [6] Sara, born 13 June 1742; [7] Isaac, born 12 August 1744; [8] **Margret**, born 6 July 1746, married John Hendrickson and [9] **Morina**, born 26 October 1749; died as an infant, 20 December 1749.

While naming a second child James when a previous child already had been given that name may seem somewhat unusual it is not unheard of. This is often associated with the death of the first child of that name prior to the naming of the second child, which is the case here.

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### **WILLIAM VARDAMAN, son of John (I) Vardaman**

You will note that I have left this son until the last. That is because all of the contacts that I have had over the past many years, with one exception, and most of the records that I am aware of, other than a few from the very early years, pertain to this son and/or his descendants. The one exception is a contact with a descendant of Jane Margaret Werdeman (Vardaman) Senex(on). We generally refer to this ancestor as "**Old**" **William Vardaman** or **William (I) Vardaman**.

William was born, as near as we can currently determine, ca 1698 in Sweden. He was brought to America by his parents at about the age of seven and was raised in New Castle County on the Delaware. He married **Magdalena Petersson**, daughter of Peter and Karin Petersson, at Holy Trinity Church in New Castle County on the Delaware, Province of Pennsylvania, on 21 April 1720. The Peterssons were a Swedish family. The last record of this William Vardaman family in the area that is now the state of Delaware is the baptism of a daughter, Maria, in 1724.

William next appears in 1734 on the Rivanna River in what is now Albemarle County, VA, but was then in Goochland County. The area where William settled was just south of the present city of Charlottesville and very close to the lands of Peter Jefferson, father of Thomas Jefferson.

It has been conjectured that the William Vardaman family were members of a party led by “Old Michael Woods” who came down the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road from Pennsylvania, into the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, and crossed through a gap in the Blue Ridge Mountains from west to east, to settle on the east side of the mountains.

While I am unfamiliar with this piece of history, it could very well be correct. The route of the Great Wagon Road from Philadelphia westward along the southern border of Pennsylvania and then southward through the Shenandoah Valley and on to the Carolinas to the south and the Cumberland Gap to the west was well known during that period of history. The gap in the mountains mentioned in the above story would be Rockfish Gap at the southern end of present day Shenandoah National Park and the Skyline Drive and at the beginning of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Present day Interstate Route 64 between Charlottesville and Staunton, VA, crosses the Blue Ridge Mountains at Rockfish Gap.

By 1744 William has moved further south to settle on the northern side of the Staunton (Roanoke) River in what is now the extreme southwest corner of Campbell County, Virginia. In 1744 this area was part of Brunswick County but became part of newly formed Lunenburg County in 1746. It was next included in Bedford County when Bedford was created out of the northwest part of Lunenburg in 1754. This area then became part of Campbell County when that county was formed in 1784 from the eastern half of Bedford County; however, William Vardaman had departed from this area some 18 years earlier while it was still part of Bedford County.

In 1766 "old" William with his second (or possibly third) wife and youngest son, **James**, relocated to The Dutch Fork area of what is now Newberry County, South Carolina, but was then in Craven County and later included in the judicial division known as Ninety Six District. William Vardaman's "plantation" of 100 acres was on the Hunting Fork of Indian Creek, a southwestern tributary of the Enoree River, and near the conjunction of Indian Creek with the Enoree River. This was on the northeast fringe of a rather ill defined area of Newberry County known as "The Dutch Fork". "Old" William made his will dated 24 February 1783 and died prior to March 1789 when the will was probated in Newberry County. In this will he names his wife Bridgit and four sons **John**, **William, Jr.**, **Peter** and **James**, in order in the will. The first three sons, as best we can determine, were with his first wife, Magdalena Petersson, while the last son, James, was with his last wife, Bridgit Tinkler.

Based on details included in the various biographies of his grandson, Rev. Jeremiah Vardeman of Kentucky and Missouri, "old" William raised a very large family. Since there were only four sons – at least only four who lived to maturity – we believe that this implies several daughters. Unfortunately, only two are proven: **Maria**, born in 1724 in New Castle County on the Delaware and **Jemima**, born in then Goochland, now Albemarle County, Virginia ca 1741. While it cannot be proven, we feel certain that there was another daughter named **Frances** who married **Peter Bennett** and yet another named **Susannah** who married **James Shelton**. Beyond this we are unable to speculate, with any degree of confidence, as to the names of any additional daughters.

However, reported marriages of additional Vardaman women in Virginia and the presence of additional families in mid-18th century Virginia with children bearing the first or middle name of Vardaman lead us to believe that there may have been additional daughters. We have a DAR record citing the marriage of a **Mary Vardiman** to an **Adam Epting** (probably in Ninety Six District, SC), prior to 1775 but cannot place her in the family. There is also a **Vardiman Clements** in Pittsylvania County, VA, in 1767 and we can make no connection of the Vardaman family with the Clements family.

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## **JOHN (II) VARDEMAN, son of William (I) Vardaman**

This John Vardeman is thought to have been born ca 1725-1730 probably in either New Castle County on the Delaware or elsewhere in Pennsylvania, and was in Bedford County, VA, in his father's household, as late as 1750. Notwithstanding the discredited statements in the Rev. Jeremiah Vardeman biographies that John married in South Carolina, John married **Elizabeth Morgan**, daughter of Thomas and Lettice (Evans) Morgan, ca 1750, in all likelihood in Bedford Co. VA, where both the Vardaman and Morgan families resided at that time.

John began moving his family westward as early as 1764 when he obtained 400 acres of land on Coles Creek, a southern tributary of the Blackwater River, itself a southwestern tributary of the Staunton (Roanoke) River, in what was then the far western part of Halifax County. This area to which John moved was on the eastern slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains. In 1767 this location became part of Pittsylvania County and then part of Henry County in 1777. It is currently located in the western part of Franklin County, VA.

Ca 1767 John Vardeman departed the Coles Creek area to move his family over the mountains to the western side of the Blue Ridge Mountains where he settled on the north side of the New River about 12 miles above old Ft. Chiswell in what was then part of Augusta County (formed in 1745) but which later became part of Botetourt County in 1770. This area then became part of old Fincastle County in 1772. Short lived Fincastle County was extinguished in 1777 and the area in which John Vardeman resided became part of newly formed Montgomery County. This area on the New River, where John lived, is now located in the northeastern part of Wythe County, VA. The New River eventually becomes part of the Great Kanawha River, which flows northward until it reaches the Ohio River at Point Pleasant.

In 1775 John, as an experienced woodsman, joined a company of men recruited and led by Daniel Boone to blaze a road through the Cumberland Gap into Kentucky for the Transylvania Company of Col. Richard Henderson. Boone's mission was accomplished with the founding of Fort Boonesborough on the Kentucky River. The names of Boone's intrepid band of frontiersmen, including that of John Vardeman, are recorded on a bronze plaque mounted on a granite monument located in Fort Boonesborough (KY) State Park

Ca 1777 the John Vardaman family had begun their trek to Kentucky and had moved westward once again to the Maiden Spring Fork of the Clinch River in southwestern Virginia in what is now Tazewell County but was then in Montgomery County. Ca 1779 John relocated the family to Kentucky County, VA, (which, at that time, included all of the area of the current state of Kentucky). Kentucky County, VA, was extinguished in 1780 and the area in which John Vardeman had settled became part of Lincoln County. John settled on Cedar Creek, a tributary of the Dix River, near Whitley's Station about 3 miles from a community that would come to be called Crab Orchard located some 35 miles south of Fort Boonesborough. Although Lincoln County would later become a county of the state of Kentucky when that state was established in 1792, at the time the Vardeman family settled there it was still part of western Virginia.

John (II) Vardeman remained in the Crab Orchard, KY area until 1812 when, at the approximate age of 82 – 87, he moved to the Territory of Missouri where certain other family members had preceded him. He is reported to have died on Gravois Creek in St.

Louis County, MO, in either 1827 or 1835 at an age of either 104 or 109 and to have been buried at Captain John Sappington's about 15 miles west of St. Louis. The historic Sappington Cemetery still exists but there is no marker for a Vardeman of any name and no record that one ever existed.

The Jeremiah Vardeman biographies state that John and Elizabeth (Morgan) Vardeman had 12 children. The names of most of these children are known to us and are without question; however, the lists of names passed down in family lore of various family lines do not entirely agree and at least two of the names which appear on most such lists, Peter and Thomas, have been disproved. Nevertheless, a majority of the names have been partially confirmed from various official records and are considered to be valid.

Note: Over the years I have received many different lists of the children of John and Elizabeth (Morgan) Vardeman from descendants of various lines of this ancestor. Although I attempted to learn the source of these various lists, I was not successful. The few responses furnished in this respect always referred me to the "*list of children in Spencer's History of Kentucky Baptists 1795 – 1885*". Would that this were so but, unfortunately, it is not. There is no such list contained in *Spencer's History*. The only names mentioned in *Spencer's* book other than Jeremiah are his brothers, Amaziah and Morgan. I suspect that the reason they are mentioned is because they, too, were apparently active in the affairs of the Crab Orchard Church.

The birth date of the oldest of the children, daughter **Mary Magdalene** who married **Simon Cockrell** in then Fincastle County in southwestern Virginia, is not known for sure but is considered to be ca 1750 - 51.

The oldest son, **William**, who married **Anne** (thought to be an **Ayers**), is reported to have actually settled in Kentucky prior to the arrival of his father with the rest of the family. This William, who had participated in the memorable Battle of Point Pleasant against the Shawnee Indians, later relocated, ca 1790, to the Natchez area in what is now the bayou country of southern Mississippi and Louisiana. This William's marriage to Anne (Ayers?) is thought to have taken place in the southwestern part of Virginia (probably in then Fincastle County) and definitely prior to 1787 when their son, Jeremiah was born. William was probably born ca 1754–55 in Bedford County, VA.

In addition to **Mary Magdalene** and **William**, the children are: (1) **Letitia** who married **John Calfee** ca 1775 and was later divorced from him; (2) **Elizabeth** who married **William Menafee**; (3) **John (John III)** who married **Mary Spaulding** in Lincoln County in 1785; (4) **Jemima** who married **William Pope** in Lincoln County in 1785; (5) **Amaziah** who married **Nancy Wright** in 1791 in Lincoln County; (6) **Morgan** who married **Mary "Polly" Truesdale** in 1792 in Lincoln County; (7) **Minnie** who married **William G. Clark** in 1785 in Lincoln County; (8) **Tabitha** who married **Rane McKinney** in 1787 in Lincoln County; (9) **Jeremiah** who married (first) **Elizabeth James** in 1799 in Lincoln County, (second) **Elizabeth "Betsy" Bryan** in 1820 and (third) **Lucy Redd Bullock** in 1823; and (10) **Sabra** who married **Rane McKinney** (the same Rane McKinney who had previously married her sister Tabitha) in 1797 in Lincoln County.

To the best of our knowledge all of John and Elizabeth's children married either in southwestern Virginia or Kentucky. Some of these families moved south to Tennessee, Mississippi and Texas while others moved westward to Missouri. Some, of course, remained in Kentucky. To our knowledge none moved to the east or to the southeast.

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### **WILLIAM VARDEMAN, JR. son of William (I) Vardaman**

This William Vardeman, second son of William (I) Vardaman, was born some time between the birth of his older brother John, 1725 – 1730, and the birth of his younger brother Peter, 1734 – 1736 in either Pennsylvania or Virginia. He was probably born ca 1730. He remained in his father's household in Lunenburg County, VA, through 1750 but established his own household there in 1751 or 1752. From this we know that he must have married in then Lunenburg County in 1751 or 1752.

Note: The area of Lunenburg County, VA, on the north side of the Staunton (Roanoke) River in which the Vardaman family lived became part of Bedford County when that county was formed in 1754.

We know that William, Jr., had a wife named Jane who first appears in this capacity in a 1784 Campbell County, VA, deed and later in various documents in Wilkes County, GA. Whether Jane was William's first wife is not known. In the April 1752 court of Lunenburg County, VA, a contract of marriage between William Verdeman (sic) and Eleanor Heard is proved in court by two of the subscribing witnesses. Whether this is William Vardeman, Jr., or his father, William (I) Vardaman, is a moot point as it could be either.

Considering that William, Jr., had married and established his own household in 1751 or 1752 it appears likely that he could be the William Verdeman of the above marriage. As has been postulated, a new marriage by the father, William (I), could also have been the impetus for William, Jr., to leave his father's household, marry and establish a household of his own. Since we believe that William (I) did, indeed, remarry at about this time but to Bridgit Tinkler rather than to Eleanor Heard, it appears likely that the marriage to Eleanor Heard was by William, Jr.

While Jane Vardeman's maiden surname is unknown, it has been conjectured that she could have been a Bennett. Unfortunately, no information is known to exist to support this hypothesis and it appears to be unlikely. It has also been proposed that she may have been a Snow. Available records of the Snow family, while not positively precluding this possibility, make it very tenuous. Nevertheless, it seems a more likely possibility than the Bennett proposal.

William, Jr., was the last of William (I) Vardaman's three older sons to remain in the same general area of Bedford County, VA, where the family had originally settled. The father, William (I), and sons, William, Jr., and Peter, remained in the Plumbtree Branch area of Bedford County, near the confluence of Goose Creek with the Staunton (Roanoke) River until ca 1766 when the father relocated to South Carolina. Peter left the same area in 1767 while older brother, John, had departed this area no later than 1764 and probably earlier.



Plumbtree Branch, a northern tributary of the Staunton (Roanoke) River, is located in the extreme southwest corner of now Campbell County, VA, but was in Bedford County prior to 1782.

William, Jr., a lieutenant in the Bedford County Militia and a Revolutionary War veteran, remained in this area until ca 1784 – 1785 when, with his wife **Jane** and certain of his children, he relocated to Wilkes County, GA, where he died ca 1796.

We know that William, Jr., and Jane Vardeman had a son, **William**, who married **Rachel Walker**, daughter of Sylvanus Walker, ca 1796 in Wilkes County, GA, and at least two daughters, **Hannah** who married **Jesse Evans, Jr.** and **Roda** who married **Lewis McLean**. The families of both of these daughters also lived in Wilkes County. It is reported, in the Hall and Wilkerson family genealogies, that William, Jr., and Jane had another daughter, **Mary**, who married **William Gerald “Jerry” Wilkerson** in Virginia but this is not proven.

This Wilkerson family later moved to Lincoln County, KY, sometime after 1800. Wilkerson family records report their known children to have been born in Virginia. The oldest child, daughter Mary (“Polly”) is reported to have been born ca 1787 in Mecklenburg Co., VA.

It has also been proposed that William, Jr., and Jane probably had yet another daughter, **Elizabeth**, who married **Reuben Bennett**. However, not only has this not been proven but there is no known record to support this proposal. It is not unlikely that William and Jane could have had additional daughters that we know nothing of but there is absolutely no evidence of any son other than William. The families of the children of William and Jane, except for the unproven daughter Mary, remained in Georgia although we know that the widow and children of their son William moved on to Alabama, Louisiana and Texas.

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#### **PETER VARDEMAN, son of William (I) Vardaman**

This Peter Vardeman was born in 1735 or 1736 in what is now Albemarle County, VA, but at that time was part of Goochland County. His birth year can be determined from the fact that his father paid a tithe for him in Lunenburg County, VA, in 1752. Tithes were required for males only after they had reached the age of 16. Since his father did not pay a tithe for him in 1750 we know that he had not yet reached the age of 16 at that time. The 1751 tithe lists for the area of Lunenburg County in which William (I) Vardaman lived have never been found so it is possible that Peter reached the age of 16 in 1751.

He married **Prudence** (maiden name unknown) ca 1760 almost assuredly in Bedford County, VA. Based upon the wording in an October 1767 Bedford County deed, it is conjectured that Prudence may have been a Snow; although I believe that this is unlikely. It is in this deed, in which she is specifically cited as Peter’s wife, that we first learn her name (*Prudence*).

The date of Peter’s marriage -- presumably to Prudence, as we know of no other wife of Peter -- is based on the ages of two of his sons, Peter and William, who were attacked by Indians in 1781 in Lincoln Co., VA (later Lincoln County, KY). According to the

narrative describing this incident by Lyman Draper in the Draper Manuscripts (page 36 of Volume 9cc, Kentucky Papers), wherein both boys are stated to be sons of Peter Vardeman. Peter, age 20, was shot through the thigh and William, age 16 or 17, was tomahawked. These ages would extrapolate to Peter having been born at least by 1761 and William by 1764 –65. Draper's narrative does not provide us with the fate of the two boys but both may have died as a result of their wounds suffered during this Indian attack. It appears certain that both boys were deceased, unmarried and without issue, prior to their father's 1808 will in Shelby County, KY. Neither they nor any issue from them are included in the will, which not only includes the names of all of the children living at that time but also names as heirs the children of a deceased daughter.

In 1761 Peter acquired 285 acres on Pretty Creek, a northern tributary of the Staunton (Roanoke) River located in what is now the extreme southwest corner of Campbell County but was then still in Bedford County. This was very close to Plumbtree Branch and the area where his father and brother, William, Jr., lived. In 1767 he sold this land on Pretty Creek and in 1769 moved to the far western area of then Pittsylvania County where he acquired 50 acres on both sides of the Pigg River, a southwestern tributary of the Staunton (Roanoke) River.

The area to which Peter moved in 1769 was then part of Pittsylvania County, which had been part of Halifax County prior to 1767. It later became part of Henry County when that county was established in 1777. In 1777, Peter acquired additional property on the Pigg River stretching up the north side of the river to Hatchett Run (Creek). This area to which Peter moved his family ca 1769 was not far from Coles Creek where his older brother John had settled in 1764. However, John was departing from this area to move further westward at about the time that Peter arrived. During his stay in Henry County Peter became an officer in the Henry County Militia rising to the rank of Captain before he resigned his commission in 1779 preparatory to his next move to join his older brother, John, in Lincoln County in what is now Kentucky.

By 1781 Peter had moved his family to Lincoln County, VA, (later Lincoln County, KY) where he acquired two 100-acre land grants on Dick's (Dix) River. In September 1786 Peter purchased 1400 acres on Coopers Run in newly created Bourbon County, VA, (later Bourbon County, KY). In July 1804 the land in Bourbon County was sold and Peter next appears in Shelby County, KY, in 1808 where his will was written.

Peter died prior to October 1811 when his will was proved (probated) in Shelby County. His place of burial is unknown but is almost certainly in the Bagdad area of Shelby County, KY, where he was apparently residing at the time of his death. While we have no information concerning her death or burial, it is presumed that Peter's wife Prudence also died in this same vicinity and is probably buried with her husband somewhere in the Bagdad, KY, area.

In addition to the two sons, Peter and William, mentioned above, both of whom appear to have died unmarried and without issue (possibly from the Indian attack described earlier in this narrative), Peter and Prudence had five additional children: **Prudence** who married **Lewis Marshall**; **Naomi** who married **George Marshall**; **Dorcias** who married **Thomas Overall**; **Mary (Molly)** who married a **Menafee**; and **Thomas** who married **Mary "Polly" Wilcox(son)**, daughter of Daniel and Sally (Faulconer) Wilcoxson, 29 October 1804. It has been reported that Dorcias (above) first married a Greer before her marriage to Thomas Overall but, to my knowledge, this is unproven.

Also, Thomas Vardeman (above) is reported to have died before 1822 (see reported second marriage of his wife) and that his widow, Mary (Polly), then married Samuel Miles, Jr., 3 April 1822, in Shelby Co., KY.

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### **JAMES VARDEMAN, son of William (I) Vardaman**

This James Vardaman (my 4th great-grandfather) was the youngest son of William (I) Vardaman and his second (or possibly third) wife, Bridgit Tinkler. James was born in then Bedford County, VA. Although the date of his birth is not known, based on the reported birth years of his three sons (William, 1775, Thomas, 1777, and Joseph, 1781), it is conjectured that he was born ca 1750 – 51. Circa 1766 he moved with his parents to old Craven Co., SC, where his father settled on the Hunting Fork of Indian Creek, a tributary of the Enoree River and, at that time, the frontier with the Cherokee Indians. The area where the Vardaman family settled would later become part of the old Ninety Sixth Judicial District (*Ninety Six District*) established in 1769 and later Newberry County when that county was created in 1785. This location was on the northeast fringe of an ill-defined area known as “The Dutch Fork”.

During the Revolutionary War years in Newberry County James served both in the South Carolina Militia and as a provisioner to the Revolutionary Army. Except for a very brief interlude when he was in Wilkes Co., GA, James remained in Newberry County for the rest of his life.

We know that he was married to **Jane Johnson**, daughter of **Daniel** and **Ann (Anderson) Johnson**, prior to January 1783. Some records, notably those of the Johnson family, state that she was James’ only wife and the mother of all of his seven children. However, it is believed that he may have been previously married to **Sabra Liles (Lyles)**, daughter of **Williamson Liles (Lyles)**, and that she was possibly the mother of his two oldest, if not all three, sons (**William, Thomas** and **Joseph**). We know positively that he had one daughter, **Rachel**, born ca 1796, who married **Jacob Souter**. The Souter family later moved to Mississippi.

The Johnson Family records provide us with the names of two additional daughters -- **Nancy** and **Sally**. This identifies six of James' seven children. We believe that the seventh child, whose name is unknown to us, was yet another daughter. Whether she lived to maturity and ever married is also unknown. Nancy is reported (in Johnson family records) to have married a man named **Martin**. Whether Sally ever married or not is another item for which we have no information.

Based on available South Carolina land records, James Vardaman obtained a land grant dated 2 November 1784 (recorded June 5, 1786) for 200 acres on the headwaters of Foster’s Creek, a southern tributary of the Enoree River. This grant was located near the community of Browns Crossroads in the northern extremity of the area known as “The Dutch Fork” in Newberry County. James obtained an additional grant dated 8 November 1784 (recorded Sept. 5, 1785) for 440 acres also located in Newberry County on an unidentified northern tributary of the Enoree River. This latter grant, lying north of the

Enoree River, near the community of Maybinton was not considered to be included in the “The Dutch Fork” area but was located just north of that area.

James sold the 200-acre grant on Feb. 10, 1789, and the 440-acre grant on March 23, 1790. In the meantime he inherited his father’s 100-acre “plantation” on the Hunting Fork of Indian Creek, a southern tributary of the Enoree River. He sold this property on Oct. 18-19, 1794. This Hunting Fork property, located near the present day town of Whitmire, lay to the north of the “The Dutch Fork” area of Newberry County.

In addition to the above, on May 30, 1796, James and Jane Vardaman sold a 43-acre tract of land located on Heller’s Creek (a western tributary of the Broad River) in the “The Dutch Fork” area of Newberry County and close to James’ property on Foster’s Creek. Although we do not know how James came into possession of this Heller Creek property, it may have been obtained from the estate of his father-in-law, Daniel Johnson. Daniel, who died ca 1783, had extensive property holdings in this area, a portion of which abutted James’ property on Foster’s Creek.

Circa 1790, for reasons unknown, James moved to Wilkes County, GA, where he is listed as a taxpayer and served as a Captain in the Wilkes Co. Militia. He resigned his commission as Captain in the Militia in April 1792 when he returned to Newberry Co., SC, to take up his father’s lands, which he had inherited when his father died ca 1789. James subsequently died in Newberry County in 1797, reportedly from yellow fever. We do not know his place of burial but believe it to be somewhere in the upper Dutch Fork area of Newberry County.

Jane (Jean) Johnson Vardaman is reported in Souter family annals to have lived to the age of 60. In 1810 she appears on the Newberry County, SC, census as head of household in the “*at least 26 but not over 45*” age column. If her enumeration in this column is correct, she can fix her date of birth as not prior to 1765 nor later than 1784. Since she married prior to January 1783 (the date of her father’s will in which she appears as Jane Vardaman), her actual date of birth would likely have been close to 1765 rather than later. If born ca 1765 and living until age 60, her year of death would be ca 1825. There is no reason to believe that she ever lived anywhere other than Newberry County and that would appear to be where she died and is buried. For those who might wonder if Jane might have moved to Mississippi with her daughter Rachel’s family, that event did not take place until 1848, long after Jane would have been deceased.

After their father’s death (1797) all three of James’ sons moved to Jefferson County, GA. Their grandmother (or step-grandmother), Ann (Anderson) Johnson had married a William Coats after the death of her first husband, Daniel Johnson, and moved to Georgia where the Coats family settled on the banks of the Ogeechee River in Jefferson County. Whether the boys accompanied the Coats family to Georgia or joined them there sometime later is unknown. In Jefferson Co., GA, the three Vardaman brothers met and married three **Vining** sisters, daughters of **Shadrach** and **PHEREBE (Ratcliffe) Vining**.

The oldest son, William, married **Ruth Vining** and returned to South Carolina where he resided for several years before rejoining his two brothers ca 1816-17 in Georgia. However, William did not tarry long in Georgia. Together with the family of Thomas Roberson and two others, he quickly moved on to Alabama (ca 1819–20). His brother Thomas married **Annie Vining** and this family, after living for several years in Putnam and Meriwether Counties in Georgia, also moved to Alabama ca 1836. Both of these men died

in Alabama – William ca 1835-40 and Thomas in 1857. The youngest son, Joseph, married Annie Vining’s twin sister, **Rachel**, and this family remained in Georgia eventually settling in Harris County, GA, where Joseph died in 1850. Vining family lore states that the marriage of the twins, Annie and Rachel, to the Vardaman brothers took place in a double ceremony.

According to Johnson Family records, both Thomas and Joseph Vardaman were skilled wainwrights (wagon makers), and often referred to as “mechanics”.

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**THE END**

# ORIGINS

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*An analysis of Vardaman-Vardeman-Vardiman Family ancestral data from the various Rev. Jeremiah Vardaman biographies together with a brief discussion of the origination of the name.*

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*by*

*Jesse H. (Jack) Vardaman, Jr.*

*2003*

# ORIGINS

## THE REVEREND JEREMIAH VARDEMAN BIOGRAPHIES

The only records of our Vardaman family origins that have ever been located are found in the various biographies of the Reverend Jeremiah Vardeman (1775-1842), a noted Kentucky Baptist preacher of the late 18th and early 19th century. Jeremiah was a son of the second John Vardeman, grandson of “old” William Vardaman and great-grandson of the original Vardaman immigrant to America. While the biographies are lengthy, the ancestral data contained in them is very brief consisting of only one or two short paragraphs. These biographies are the only documented source of most, if not all, early Vardaman family ancestral lore, however distorted it may have become through the years.

Several of these Jeremiah Vardeman biographies have appeared in various publications over the years, including:

*A History of the Baptists in Missouri* by R. S. Duncan, published in 1882;  
*History of Kentucky Baptists 1795–1885* by J. H. Spencer, published in 1886;  
*The History of Salt River Association Missouri* by Wiley Jones Patrick, published in 1909;  
*Missouri Baptist Biography, Vol. I* by J. C. Maple and R. P. Rider, published in 1914;  
*A History of the Missouri Baptist Association* by W. Pope Yeaman, publishing date unknown;  
*Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, Vol. II* published in 1959, author unknown;  
*Baptist History and Heritage, Vol. 21* an article entitled **A Restored Baptist Treasure: Portrait of Jeremiah Vardeman, 1775–1842** by Ronald F. Dearing, published in October 1986.

All of the above cited biographical sketches appear to have been derived from an original biography authored by Rev. John M. Peck (see the second biography below) and published in *The Christian Repository* in August 1854, one of three original, independent accounts of the life of Rev. Jeremiah Vardeman.

The first of these three original biographies, dated October 17th, 1844, appears in the *Draper Manuscripts, Vol. 12C*, pages 62 – 66, and is from an interview by the author, Lyman C. Draper, with Morgan Vardeman (1767-1847) of Lincoln County, KY. Morgan Vardeman was a son of John and Elizabeth (Morgan) Vardeman and an older brother of the Reverend Jeremiah. This interview presumably took place in Lincoln County, KY, where Morgan lived. It should be remembered that Morgan Vardeman, born 12 December 1766, was approaching an elderly 77 years of age at the time of the interview by Lyman Draper.

The pertinent passage in this interview, as contained on page 63, is as follows:

*"Jeremiah Vardeman was born in what is now Wythe County, then old Fincastle – on New River – about 12 miles above Ft. Chiswell in the (illegible) year '75. His father was John Vardeman who came to Ky to mark the road in company with Boone & others in the spring of '75. He died at his son's in Mo abt the year 1827, aged about one hundred and nine years old - a native of Sweden & at seven years old his father and family emigrated to America & settled in South Carolina, & there the old man (John V. Sr.) died at the advanced age of 125 years - a man of piety of the established church. John Vardeman Jr. married Elizabeth Morgan - a native of Wales - young in South Carolina & soon after removed & settled in Bedford Co. Va & there was united with the Baptists & ever after continued religious professions ....."*

The second of the three original biographies is by the Rev. John M. Peck who is reported to have been a close personal friend of Rev. Jeremiah. The Peck biography was first published in *The Christian Repository*, No. XXXII, August 1854. This would have been some 12 years after Rev. Jeremiah's death and presumably written from what Rev. Peck could remember of what Rev. Jeremiah had told him of his ancestry.

*The Christian Repository* was a monthly Baptist periodical published from January 1852 through 1905. Through August 1861 it was published under the above title and in subsequent editions under the title *Ford's Christian Repository*.

The pertinent passage from the Peck biography, as contained on page 459 of the above publication, is as follows:

*"Jeremiah Vardeman was the youngest of twelve children, and a descendant from Swedish ancestors on the father's side, and from Welsh by the maternal side. Traits of character peculiar to each nation were conspicuous in him. His birth-place was on New River, in what is now Wythe county, Va., July 8th, 1775, about twelve miles above old Fort Chiswell. Both his father and grandfather were natives of Sweden. The latter, John Vardeman, senior, with his family, emigrated to America and settled in South Carolina in the early part of the 18th century, and there died, as his descendants reported, at the extreme age of 125 years. He was a member of the Lutheran church in his native country and united with the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina and was esteemed for his piety and moral worth.*

*His son, John Vardeman, Jr., was seven years old when his father came from Sweden, but recollected many incidents of his native country. While living in South Carolina he married Elizabeth Morgan who was a native of Wales, and soon after removed and settled in Bedford County, Va., on the eastern slope of the Blue Ridge and not far from the celebrated peaks of Otter..."*

The third and final original biography, dated May 25-26, 1868, appears in the *Draper Manuscripts*, Vol. 23S, pages 143 – 160, and is from an interview by the author, Lyman C. Draper, with Rev. William H. Vardeman (1816–1891) in St. Charles Co., Mo. Rev. William H. Vardeman was a son of Rev. Jeremiah Vardeman and great great grandson of the original Vardeman immigrant to America.



The pertinent passage from this interview, as contained on pages 144 and 145 of Vol. 23S, is as follows:

*“The original Vardeman came from Sweden to America 260 years ago, & married a Welch lady – one of their sons settled in Virginia, & he had a large family, one of whom was John, the father of Rev. Jeremiah Vardeman. This John Vardeman died on Gravois Creek, St. Louis Co. Mo, perhaps about 1835, aged 104. He was buried at Capt. John Sappington’s, about 15 miles west of St. Louis. One of his daughters, Magdalena, married Simon Cockrill & they lived together 80 years – he a noted hunter & trapper in Kentucky & Missouri; they both died within a day of each other, on the borders of Clay Co., Mo., she at one hundred, & he at one hundred & five years.*

*Jeremiah Vardeman was born in 1775 – was the youngest son – moved to Missouri in the fall of 1830 – died in Ralls Co. Mo, May 28, 1841...”*

The very limited ancestral data set forth in these three biographies, while uniform in some respects, is seriously flawed. They not only contain differences but also many errors and/or distortions. However, all three are consistent in stating that the Vardaman family immigrated to America from Sweden. While this statement cannot be substantiated by any known official record, other available records tend to lead us to the conclusion that it is probably correct. Nevertheless, although there is no argument (at present) that the Vardaman family came to America from Sweden, the name does not appear to be of Swedish origin but of German origin instead.

Note: During the 16th and 17th centuries, Sweden’s economy was predominantly agricultural. While the country possessed a wealth of natural resources, especially minerals, the skills to develop and exploit these resources were not widespread. As a result it was common for the more experienced Germans from the south side of the Baltic Sea to immigrate to Sweden where their industrial and commercial talents were much in demand.

Unfortunately, many of the other statements contained in the Jeremiah Vardeman biographies, as they pertain to early Vardaman ancestry, are contrary to available records and demonstrably erroneous. This includes the statements that:

**(1) The family originally arrived in America and settled in South Carolina and later moved to Bedford Co., VA:**

We now know that the family originally settled in Appoquinimink Hundred, New Castle County, in what is now the state of Delaware but at the time of the Vardaman immigration was part of the Province of Pennsylvania.

New Castle County, the northernmost of the three counties that would later form the state of Delaware, was originally settled by Swedes in the early 17th century and was a Swedish Colony before coming under first Dutch and later, ca 1674, British control. During the period that these three counties (New Castle, Kent and Sussex) were nominally under the jurisdiction of the Province of Pennsylvania they were generally referred to as “New Castle (or Kent or Sussex) on the Delaware”.

William Vardaman (I), son of the original John Vardaman, did ultimately settle in up-country South Carolina ca 1766 and died there ca 1789. But this was in his later years and came after an extended stay of some 30 years or more in the Blue Ridge Mountain area of Virginia. This may be the source of the erroneous information that the family originally arrived in South Carolina when they migrated from Sweden.

In *The Historical and Genealogical Annals of Newberry County, South Carolina* by George Leland Summer published in 1950 the following paragraph appears:

*“Vardeman—William Vardeman came from Pennsylvania with his family before the Rev. War. He settled near Hunting Fork, between the Enoree and Tyger Rivers. He made will February 4, 1783, and died about 1788, leaving widow, Bridgit, and children: John, William, Peter and James. James inherited the home plantation at Hunting Fork...”*

Mr. Summer, in the Preface to this book, states that most of the material contained in this history was published previously in daily and local papers and in magazines. As a result there is no way that we can know just when the above paragraph may have first appeared in print.

And, just as with the Jeremiah Vardeman biographies, this short paragraph from the Newberry County history contains certain errors that could have infected our Vardaman family ancestral lore. For instance: Although William Vardaman did originally come from that portion of Pennsylvania that later became the state of Delaware, he had resided in the Blue Ridge Mountain area of Virginia for many years prior to his move to South Carolina.

Also, the second sentence is incorrect. The location of William Vardaman’s land on the Hunting Fork of Indian Creek, a western tributary of the Enoree River, was not between the Enoree and Tyger Rivers. The Tyger River is located north of the Enoree River, flowing from northwest to southeast roughly parallel to the Enoree.

**(2) The original John Vardeman to immigrate to America married a Welch lady and died in South Carolina at the age of 125:**

The original John Vardaman was married to Margaret (maiden surname unknown). Although it has been suggested in some family lore that Margaret’s surname may have been “Evans”, which is certainly a Welsh family name, the source of this suggestion has never been determined nor any reference ever located to confirm or substantiate it. It is highly unlikely that John Vardeman’s wife could have been of Welsh descent. This suggestion probably originated as a result of confusion between the wife of the original John Vardaman and the wife of his grandson, the second John Vardaman. The second John did, indeed, marry a woman of Welsh descent, Elizabeth Morgan, whose mother was Letitia (Evans) Morgan.

The original John Vardaman died in New Castle County (now Delaware) in 1714 at an undetermined age. Although we have no information as to his date

of birth, he left 3 minor children at the time of his death, the youngest born ca 1708, and was assuredly not of an advanced age at that time. Again, the writer or narrator of this information has apparently confused the original John Vardaman with his grandson, the second John Vardeman, who, by all accounts, was of a very advanced age — over 100 years old at the time of his death. In addition the writer/narrator has confused the original John's place of death with that of his son William Vardaman who did, indeed, die in South Carolina ca 1789.

**(3) The second John Vardaman married Elizabeth Morgan in South Carolina:**

While there is no question that the second John Vardaman did marry an Elizabeth Morgan, daughter of Thomas and Letitia (Evans) Morgan, this marriage did not take place in South Carolina.

Note: Notice that Letitia Morgan's maiden name, Evans, is the same name that has been suggested as applying to John (I) Vardiman's wife, Margaret.

Although not proven by official documents, the marriage must have taken place in that part of then Lunenburg County, VA, from which Bedford County was later created (1754). Both the Vardaman and Morgan families were residents of this area during the period in which this marriage most likely would have taken place.

Note: There is no evidence whatsoever that any Vardaman ever set foot in South Carolina prior to the arrival of "old" William Vardaman there in 1766.

It is a matter of record that in 1750 William Verdsman (Verdaman) paid tithes in John Phelps District in Lunenburg County, VA, for himself and his sons John and William, Jr. John Phelps District was "from Falling River to Goose Creek" and adjacent to Nicholas Haile's District where the Morgan family is listed as paying their tithes. Due to the fact that their tithes were paid by their father, we know that both Vardaman sons were members of their father's household and unmarried at that time. Had they been married they would have been considered as head of their own households and, consequently, would have been tithed separately from their father. With this determination we can also be reasonably sure that none of John (II) and Elizabeth (Morgan) Vardeman's children were born prior to or probably even during 1750.

Note: Elizabeth Morgan is reported to have been born ca 1732. Her father, Thomas Morgan, is reported to have come to Virginia ca 1735 with his first wife and children as members of Josh Hite's group of settlers from the Quaker community of Chester County, PA. It is reported that records for Thomas Morgan in Chester Co., PA, are present up to 1734 but no longer found after that date. In Virginia, Thomas first settled along the Shenandoah River in what is now Clarke County (established in 1836) but was then in Orange

County until 1743 when it was included in the newly created Frederick County. This area was on the northwest frontier of the then inhabited area of northwestern Virginia.

Thomas Morgan sold his land in then Frederick County in 1749 and left the area at about that time to resettle his family, now including his second wife (Hester “Esther” Taylor), in the northwest area of then Lunenburg County that later (1754) became Bedford County. In 1750 Thomas Morgin (Morgan) paid three tithes for himself, son Thomas Jr. and a Headly Smith in Nicholas Haile’s District of Lunenburg County. Nicholas Haile’s district was “from Goose Creek to the extent of the County upwards”. His sons, Luis and William, who are nearby, paid their own tithes in this same district.

**(4) Elizabeth Morgan was a native of Wales:**

As mentioned above, while there is no doubt that Morgan is a Welsh name and that Elizabeth was of Welsh descent, her father, Thomas Morgan, was a resident of Pennsylvania at the reported time (ca 1732) of Elizabeth’s birth. As explained above, she was in all likelihood born in Pennsylvania although it is possible (should the 1732 date prove to be somewhat early) that she was born in Virginia.

**(5) The family arrived in America 260 years prior to 1868:**

This statement from the Draper interview with Rev. William H. Vardeman cannot possibly be true. It would place the date of the Vardaman family’s immigration to America ca 1608 when, in fact, available records place the time of their arrival more logically closer to 1708. The actual time of arrival was more likely ca 1705, (see item 9 below). Since the actual period of arrival was close to 160 years prior to the time of the interview with the Rev. Wm. H. Vardaman, this may have been an error on Mr. Draper’s part in recording what Rev. Vardaman was relating to him.

The Peck biography tends to confirm the family’s arrival ca 1704–1705 when it states that John Vardaman came to America with his family “in the early part of the 18th century”.

Note: In 1608 neither the area that is now Delaware or the area that became South Carolina was settled or inhabited by European colonists.

The Delaware Bay and River were not discovered until 1609 by Henry Hudson, then in the employ of the Dutch government. Although the Dutch made efforts to colonize the area that is now Delaware, their attempts were unsuccessful and it was not until 1638 that Peter Minuit, a Dutchman with allegiance to Sweden, established the first permanent settlement in this area at what is now Wilmington, naming it “Fort Christina” and naming the entire area “New Sweden”. In ensuing years the territory passed back and forth between Dutch and Swedish control until 1674 when by the Treaty

of Westminster the three counties “on the Delaware” (New Castle, Kent and Sussex) became part of the English possessions in America. First placed under the control of the Governor of the Province of New York, this area was later included in William Penn’s royal patent for the Province of Pennsylvania in 1681.

While South Carolina was discovered by the Spaniards in 1521, their attempts at colonization were fruitless and no permanent settlements were established. Later, British influence over the area began ca 1629 and in 1663 King Charles I granted the territory to eight English Lords (“The Lords Proprietors”). However, the first settlement was not established until 1670 at Albemarle Point on the west bank of the Ashley River. In 1680 this settlement was moved a short distance to the present site of the City of Charleston. Settlement by the English, together with French Protestants (Huguenots) gradually extended up and down the coast. There was no interior penetration until ca 1730.

It is obvious from the above that the Vardaman family did not, and could not have, settled in either Delaware or South Carolina ca 1608 or at any time for several decades to come.

**(6) The original John Vardaman was a member of the Lutheran Church and later united with the Protestant Episcopal Church:**

There is no evidence that the original John Vardaman was ever a member of the Swedish Lutheran Church or the Protestant Episcopal Church. In fact, none of the original Vardaman family members ever appear in the records of Holy Trinity (Old Swede’s) Church, the official Swedish (Lutheran) Church in then Christiana (now Wilmington, DL), until 1720 when William Vardaman married Magdalena Petersson who was of proven Swedish descent. Other than the William and Magdalena Vardaman family, no other Vardaman family member appears in this Church’s records until 1730 when the original John Vardaman’s daughter, Jane Margarete (variously spelled), is married to James Senexson (variously spelled). The Senexson family was unquestionably of Finnish descent (Finland was then part of Sweden) and members of the Swedish Church.

Other statements in these biographies, while not totally in error, can be shown to be distorted and to require corrective interpretation.

**(7) The second John Vardaman’s reported age at the time of his death:**

The biographies furnish us two different dates for this event – 1827 and 1835. The 1827 date is accompanied by a stated age of 109, which would extrapolate to John being born ca 1718 while the 1835 date supposes his age to be 104, born ca 1731.

Note: I believe that it is the statement from Lyman Draper’s interview with Morgan Vardeman that the second John Vardeman “died in 1827 at the age of 109” that has resulted in the erroneous

calculation of the second John Vardeman's birth as having occurred in 1718 which appears in some versions of our Vardaman ancestry.

Certain versions of our family history contain the false assertion that the family arrived in America in 1725. The source of this erroneous date appears to be a result of the above miscalculation of John (II)'s birth year coupled with statements from both the Draper interview with Morgan Vardeman and the Peck biography that he arrived in America with his parents at the age of seven (i.e., born in 1718 and arrived in America at the age of seven – ergo, 1725).

We now know that the statements regarding the arrival in America at the age of seven must refer to John (II)'s father, William, rather than to John (II) himself.

Since we are not sure of the second John's year of birth, it is not possible to determine how old he might have been in either 1827 or 1835. However, it can be unequivocally stated that he was not born prior to his parent's marriage in 1720. We can also be fairly confident that he was not born prior to or during 1724, the year of the last entry for the William Vardaman family in the records of Holy Trinity (Old Swede's) Church in New Castle County. Had he been born prior to this time, there should be a record of his baptism in the Church records. There is no such record.

We can be sure that he was born no later than 1832 (or probably 1831) as his father pays a tithe for him in 1748 in Lunenburg County, VA. John would have had to be 16 years of age old or older at that time for a tithe to have been required for him.

With the above as a guide, an age of 109 with a death year of 1827 would be impossible and a birth year of 1718 can be dismissed as fiction.

However, had he been born ca 1730, an age of 104 with a death year of 1835 would be mathematically acceptable. More importantly, had John been born ca 1726 (a very acceptable possibility), an age of 109 with a death year of 1835 would also be acceptable.

From the above I believe that we can establish as a premise that John was probably born sometime during the period 1726-1730. At this time, not knowing either John's correct year of birth or the correct year of his death, his age at the time of his death is a moot point. Nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt that he was of very advanced years at the time of his death and an age of either 104 or 109 could be considered possible with one of the two in all likelihood correct.

**(8) The second John Vardeman who married Elizabeth Morgan and eventually settled in Kentucky is said to be a son of the original John Vardeman who brought his family to America from Sweden:**

This is the most egregious error of all and occurs in both of the first two biographies mentioned above. This statement completely skips a generation – that of William Vardaman, son of the original John and father of the second John. The third biography mentioned above does provide for this missing generation.

As a result of this skipped generation, certain statements said to apply to the second John should actually be understood to apply to his father, William, son of the original John. This includes the statements in both the Morgan Vardeman interview and the Peck biography where John is said to have been about 7 years old and a native of Sweden when his father brought the family to America and could recollect incidents from his childhood days in Sweden.

**(9) William Vardaman’s date and place of birth and the arrival of the Vardaman family in America:**

The only clue that we have regarding the original William Vardaman’s birth comes from the record of a court deposition taken in then Halifax County at Mays’s Ferry (later Booker’s Ferry) on the Staunton (Roanoke) River on June 1st 1758. This deposition was part of an official investigation ordered by “Mr. President Blair” (John Blair was President of the Virginia Council) to determine the origin of troubles in Halifax and Bedford Counties with the Cherokee Indians. Included in the investigation was a certain incident between a group of settlers and a band of Cherokees. Both “old” William Vardaman and his son, William Vardaman, Jr., were members of the group of settlers who took part in this incident.

Included in the deposition is the following statement:

*“Deponents say that Old William Verdiman aged about sixty...”*

If we accept the above statement as credible (and we have no conflicting information), a year of birth of 1697 or 1698 would be indicated for “old” William Vardaman. If, as stated in two of the Rev. Jeremiah Vardeman biographies – and if we correctly accept these statements as applying to William rather than to his son, the second John – William came to America with his parents at about the age of 7, the date of the family’s arrival would be established as ca 1704-1705. This imputed date for their arrival does not conflict with any known record. Also, this would confirm that “old” William Vardaman, son of the original John Vardaman and father of the second John, was, as a result of having been born in Sweden, a native of that country.

Note: The complete text of the above Deposition can be found in *The Colonial Records of South Carolina* beginning on page 463 of “Documents relating to Indian Affairs 1754– 1765” as edited by William L. McDowell, Jr. and published by the University of South

Carolina Press for the South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

This same Deposition can also be found beginning on page 79 of *The History of Pittsylvania County Virginia* by Maud Carter Clement as well as in sundry other records of early Virginia history.

Although we know from his will that John Vardaman had acquired land in New Castle County on the Delaware prior to his death in 1714, available New Castle County land records, *Liber (Volumes) A, B and C* for the period *1673 through 1710* (with several pages missing) do not include any record of a deed to John Vardaman. *Liber (Volume) D*, together with the first 58 pages of *Liber (Volume) E*, covering the period *1710 to 1715* is also missing. The more obvious conclusion would be that the deed confirming John Vardaman's purchase of property is included either in the missing *Volume D (1710-1715)* or is among the missing pages of the earlier volumes. Since we have no information regarding exactly which books or what periods are involved in the missing pages from the first three volumes, we have no way to determine if this latter possibility should be considered viable.

Nevertheless, this missing deed record not only does not conflict with – but would tend to confirm – the arrival of the Vardaman family in this area ca the 1704-05 date calculated above.

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## **VARDAMAN–VARDEMAN–VARDIMAN FAMILY NAME**

The origin of the Vardaman surname (however spelled) has been attributed by various family historians to many different nationalities including Swedish, German, Dutch and Danish. While there is strong family lore for a Swedish origin and strong linguistic support for a German origin, no documentation or linguistic support has been found for either a Dutch or Danish origin.

### **German vs. Swedish Origin**

**In the Jeremiah Vardeman biography by Rev. John M. Peck it is stated that both the father and grandfather of Jeremiah were natives of Sweden.**

This statement as cited would apply to the original immigrant John Vardaman and to the second John Vardaman. However, with a correction for the missing generation, it would actually apply to the original John Vardaman and his son, William, father of the second John.

This statement, even with a correction for the missing generation, is assuredly incorrect as the Vardaman name, from all indications, is not Swedish but, instead, German. It is possible that John Vardaman's wife, Margaret, could have been of Swedish descent even though John, himself, was most likely of German descent. If this were to be true, her children could be considered to be Swedish also. However, there exists no evidence to



support such a premise and existing records in Delaware cast substantial doubt that such could be the case.

We have previously noted that William, son of the immigrant John, was apparently born in Sweden and, as a result, could be said to be a native of Sweden even though his parents may not have been Swedish and he did not descend from Swedish ancestors.

**Dr. Peter Stebbins Craig**, noted author (*The 1693 Census of the Swedes on the Delaware*), historian and expert on the early Swedish settlements on the Delaware River, in a letter to David M. Vardiman, dated 19 January 2002, has set forth the following analysis pertaining to whether the Vardaman family was in fact Swedish. Dr Craig writes:

*“...I believe that John Vardaman who died in Appoquinimink Hundred, New Castle County, in 1714 was not Swedish, although two of his children did marry into the Swedish congregation at Holy Trinity (Old Swedes) Church in Wilmington.*

*That church was a Swedish Lutheran church, open to persons born in Sweden, descendants of the same and also persons who intermarried with members of the church. Others could be baptized or married there, but they were not considered members. In the case of two of John Vardeman’s children – William and Margaret – they became members by such intermarriage.*

*The name Vardeman – or variations thereof – did not appear in the records of Holy Trinity Church until 21 April 1720 when William Vardeman married Magdalena Peterson, daughter of Peter Peterson and his wife Karin. William and Magdalena Vardeman took communion together at that church on 15 May 1720, 24 May 1724 and 18 October 1724. Their only known child (at that time) was Maria, born 1 April 1724, who was baptized in the church on 5 April 1724, with Pastor Samuel Hesselius, Jacob Vandiver, Maria [Stalcop] Smith and Erasmus Stedham’s wife Helena appearing as sponsors. The name of William Vardeman disappears from church records after 1724.*

*William Vardeman’s sister Margaret married James Sinnicks [variously spelled] at Holy Trinity Church on 20 January 1730. She was called Margaret or Margareta (or Marget, Margret or Margaretha) in church records but in one deed [New Castle County deeds, B-2: 313] she was referred to as Joanna Margaret. She had many children and, in the 1764 church census taken by Pastor Anders Borell, she was described as “Swedish”, a term which generally meant that she was of Swedish extraction. She was then (in 1764) reported to be 56 years old (born ca 1708), able to read the Swedish Bible and knew the Swedish language “completely...”*

Dr. Craig further writes:

*“Borell was not particularly accurate in his census of 1764. I tend to think that Margareta [Vardeman] Sinnicks’ “Swedish” label was the result of her having learned the language well as the wife of a Swede. I believe her “Swedishness” was acquired, not inherited from her mother. But certainly not from her father who, it seems, never stepped foot in the Swedish church.*

And finally, Dr. Craig concludes:

*“...I note that most of the Swedes lived close to present Wilmington, in Brandywine, Christiana and New Castle Hundreds. Very few were to be found at the southern end of New Castle County in Appoquinimink Hundred ...”*

(Note: Items in parentheses, in non-italic scrip. added by the author.)

Several additional items support Dr. Craig’s analysis:

**(1) In a published biography of my gg-grandfather Edwy Lyles Vardaman (1804 – 1879), a grandson of James Vardaman of Newberry County, SC, (the youngest son of “old” William Vardaman), included in the History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biographies, Vol. IV by Thomas, McAdory Owens it is stated that Edwy L. Vardaman was:**

*“...grandson of James Vardaman, of German descent, one of three brothers, Peter, James and William, who came to America in the early part of the 18th century.”*

Of course, we know that the above statement is not correct as there were, in fact, four brothers (John is not mentioned) and that all four were born in America.

However, their father, William Vardaman, did come to America sometime after his birth, probably at about the age of seven, one of three brothers, sons of the first John Vardaman.

**(2) A document obtained from “The Historical Research Center, Inc.” (no further identification available) entitled FAMILY NAME HISTORY – VARDAMAN states at the beginning:**

*“Vardaman is an anglicized rendering of the German family name Wardeman, which is classified as being of habitation name origin. When family names are defined as ‘habitation’ in origin they refer to the residence or home of the progenitor or founder of the family.”*

The document expands on the above and subsequently states:

*“Variants of the surname Wardeman include ‘Warderman’, ‘Werdemann’ and ‘Werder’. One of the earliest references to this name or in a variant is a record of one ‘Jakob Werdemann’ who was a resident of Juterbog in the year 1455.”*

(Author’s note: Juterbog is a small town in the province of Brandenburg about 25 or 30 miles south southeast of Berlin on the road to Wittenberg.)

**(3) Yet another reference can be found in an article from the Atlanta Journal and Constitution dated January 25, 1976, and repeated in the March 27, 1988, edition. In a column entitled “Know Your Name” by John C. Downing, the name Vardman is explained as follows:**

*“Vardman*

*This is a Germanic occupational name derived from the Old High German word ‘wart’ (to guard, to protect) plus the suffix ‘mann’ (a worker).*

*This has formed the surnames Wartmann, Warteman, Wartner and Werdeman, plus the dialectical Vartman(n) and Vardman.*

*In this instance the occupational title was added to the man’s single given name when more exact identification was needed.”*

**(4) An item copied from the IGI by Thomas D. Knight states as follows:**

*“Catharina Verdeman, daughter of Jacob and Catharina, bap. 20 Nov. 1577 Bayern, Pfalz, Landau in Pfalzstadt, Evangelisch.”*

**(5) An item obtained from a Scandinavia Vital Records Index from the Family Resource File of the LDS states:**

WERDEMAN, Frideric      Christening: 17 August 1705  
Recorded in: Kobenhavn, Denmark  
Collection: Vor Frue, Den Danske  
Folkekirke

Father: Hans Hansson Wulf  
Mother: Inger Borgesdr

FHL Film 444328

**(6) And last, all of the many references to Margareta (however spelled) Vardaman Sinnix in the records of Holy Trinity (Old Swede’s) church refer to her as Margareta (however spelled) Werdeman:**

Considering the above information, I would not be surprised to find that our family name in Europe prior to the emigration to America may have been Werdeman or Wardeman.

### **Dutch Origin**

No record to support or confirm the suggestion that the Vardaman name may have been of Dutch origin has ever been documented. This suggestion may have its origin in the fact that, in his later years, “old” William Vardaman (William Vardaman I) migrated from then Bedford County, VA, to settle his family in the “Dutch Fork” area of “upcountry” South Carolina. Since William’s youngest son, James, lived most of his adult life in this area, he (James) and his three sons who were born and raised there were said to be from “Dutch Fork”.

“Dutch Fork” was the name applied to the area in the fork of the Broad and Saluda Rivers in what would later become Newberry County, South Carolina. This broad, rather ill defined region was originally settled by Palatinate Germans ca 1740 and the name was derived from the German word “Deutsch”, meaning “German”. This region was generally understood to extend up to the Bush River, a tributary of the Saluda River, on the west and up the Broad River to its conjunction with the Enoree River to the northeast.

The William Vardaman family was **not** among these early German settlers but arrived some 25 years later (ca 1766), settling on the Hunting Fork of Indian Creek, a western tributary of the Enoree River, on the far northeast fringe of the “Dutch Fork” area. William’s youngest son, James, would marry, raise a family and live in this area for most of the rest of his life. His three sons, William, Thomas and Joseph were born and raised to young manhood in “Dutch Fork”.

It is my belief that the fact that this branch of the Vardaman family was known to be from “Dutch Fork”, SC, is the source of the unsupported suggestion that the Vardamans may have been of Dutch descent.

### **The Proper Spelling of Our Family Name**

I was recently asked, “What is the proper spelling of our family name?” My answer was that, notwithstanding that it is the same family, all three spellings are “proper”. During our research we see the three different spellings – occasionally in the same lines – in various official documents and publications. Of course, as the generations advance through the decades, the spelling in any given line tends to become more uniform.

Possibly, a more appropriate question might have been “what was the *original spelling* of the name?” The answer to this question is moot and cannot be answered with any degree of certainty.

In the original 1714 will of the first John Vardaman (John I) of New Castle County, the name is unequivocally spelled “*Vardaman*”. However, we know from an affidavit attached to this will that it was not written by John, himself, but was written for him.

In an abstract of the 1783 will of “old” William Vardaman (William I) of Newberry County, South Carolina, the surname is spelled four different ways – *Vardaman*, *Vardeman*, *Vardiman* and *Vardman* – in that one document. This official abstract of the will, obtained from the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, is annotated with the statement “*Original Will Not In Files Of Probate Judge*”. As a result, it is impossible to determine whether these variant spellings are the result of misinterpretations on the part of the abstractor or whether they actually appear, as cited, in the original will.

Two typical examples of the change in the spelling of the name can be seen in the following:

- (1) James Vardaman of Newberry County, South Carolina, fourth son of “old” William Vardaman, had three sons – William, Thomas and Joseph in that order. The “*Vardaman*” spelling was used for every succeeding generation by the descendants of both William and Thomas. However, Joseph used the “*Vardeman*” spelling and that spelling has prevailed for all of his descendants to the present time.

(2) Peter Vardeman of Bourbon and Shelby Counties, Kentucky, third son of “old” William Vardaman, had only one son who lived to have children – Thomas, who married Rachel Wilcox(son). The children of this Thomas, including his son, Peter (grandson of the original Peter) continued to use the “*Vardeman*” spelling. However, of the 17 children of this latter Peter, the first son, John Thomas (1838 – 1923), used the “*Vardiman*” spelling and that spelling has continued in subsequent generations of that line. To the best of our knowledge, the additional sixteen children of the above Peter, including 6 additional sons (siblings of John Thomas Vardiman), continued to use the “*Vardeman*” spelling.

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## ***CONCLUSION***

Attempts by Vardaman family historians of prior years, not having the benefit of many of the official records available to us today and relying on and attempting to utilize the erroneous, uncorrected information set forth in the various Jeremiah Vardeman biographies, have resulted in distorted versions of our ancestry. While it might seem that some of the incorrect lore may have existed in some branches of the family prior to the Jeremiah Vardeman biographies, it is impossible at this late date to determine whether this could be the case. The errors could easily be attributed to misunderstandings or errors on the part of the biographers in their recording of what they were being told.

The availability of these published biographies to early researchers has no doubt contributed greatly to the inaccurate and misleading versions of our early ancestry that have appeared in print and which have become imbedded in family lore currently being handed down in various branches of the family.

\*\*\*\*\*

***THE END***

2nd Generation

3rd Generation

4th Generation

Johannes & Sarah (nee ?) Vardeman

2nd husband John Hardin

Jacob Vardeman

no known issue

William & Eleanor (nee ?) Vardeman  
2nd husband Charles Hillyard  
3rd husband ? Carpenter

?William? Vardeman - died as adolescent  
? - ? Vardeman - died as adolescent

Christopher Vardeman

? Henry? Vardeman

Maria Vardeman

no known issue

Mary Magdalene (Vardeman) & Rev. Simon Cockrell  
Letitia (Vardeman) & John Calfee  
2nd husband ?  
William & Anna (?Ayres?) Vardeman  
John (II) & Mary (Spaulding) Vardeman  
Elizabeth (Vardeman) & William Menefee  
Amaziah & Nancy (Wright) Vardeman  
2nd husband William Cockrell  
Jemima (Vardeman) & William Pope  
Morgan & Mary (Trousdale) Vardeman  
Tabitha (Vardeman) & Rane McKinney  
Minnie (Vardeman) & William G. Clark  
Jeremiah & Elizabeth (James) Vardeman  
2nd wife Elizabeth (Bryan) Vardeman  
3rd wife Lucy Redd (Bullock) Vardeman  
Sabra (Vardeman) 2nd wife of Rane McKinney

John (II) & Elizabeth (Morgan) Vardeman

William (II) & Jane (Bennett?) Vardeman

Rhoda (Vardeman) & Lewis McLean  
Elizabeth (?Vardeman or Dalton?) & Reuben Bennett?  
William & Rachel (Walker) Vardeman  
Mary (Vardeman) & Jerry Wilkerson  
Hannah (Vardeman) and Jesse Evans

William (I) & Magdalena (Peterson) Vardeman

2nd wife - Bridget Tinkler

Peter & Prudence (nee ?) Vardeman

Peter Vardeman - died age 20, May 1781  
William Vardeman - died age 16 or 17, May 1781  
Prudence (Vardeman) & Lewis Marshall  
Naomi (Vardeman) & George Marshall  
Dorcas (Vardeman) & ? Greer  
2nd husband Thomas Overall  
Molly (Vardeman) & ? Menifee  
Thomas & Mary "Polly" (Wilcoxson) Vardeman

1st Generation

John (I) & Margaret (nee ?) Vardeman

Jemima Vardeman

no known issue

William & Sally (Neal) Bennett  
Micajah & Mary (Snow) Bennett  
2nd wife Ann (Johnson) Bennett  
Abner & Ann (Jennings) Bennett

?Frances (Vardeman) & Peter Bennett

Richard & Asenath (Dalton) Bennett  
Mary (Bennett) & John Lawson  
Elizabeth (Bennett) & David? Perry  
Rachel (Bennett) & Thomas Snow  
Reuben & Elizabeth (?Vardeman or Dalton?) Bennett

?Sussanah (Vardeman) & James Shelton

Nancy Sarah (Shelton) & Nathaniel Luttrell, Sr.  
Vardeman Shelton  
James Shelton, Jr.  
Peter Shelton  
Letty "Letitia" Shelton  
Hamon Shelton  
Jamron Shelton

James & (?Sabra Lyles) Vardaman

William & Ruth (Vining) Vardaman  
Thomas & Ann ("Annie" Vining) Vardaman  
Joseph & Rachel (Vining) Vardaman  
?female Vardaman  
Nancy (Vardaman) & ? Martin  
Rachel (Vardaman) & Jacob Soutar  
?Sally Vardaman

2nd Wife Jane (Johnson) Vardaman

Christopher Vardeman

no known issue

Henry Senex(on)  
Anna Senex(on)  
William & Nancy (Robinson) Senex(on)  
Sennece Senex(on)

Jane Margarita (Vardeman) & James Senex(on)

also spelled Senneckson, Seneck, Seneks and Sennece

James Senex(on) - probably died as infant  
Henry & Ann B. (Senex, Stalcop) Senexon  
John Senex(on)  
James & Elizabeth (nee?) Senex(on)  
Susanna Senex(on)  
Sara Senex(on)  
Isaac Senex(on)  
Morina Senex(on) - died as infant  
Margaret (Senex(on)) & John Hendrickson  
Senecce Senex(on) - died as infant

Arcadia Senex(on)  
Margrete Senex(on) - died as infant  
Margrete Senex(on)  
Issac Senex(on)  
Peter Hendrickson  
David Hendrickson  
Margret Hendrickson