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Biographical and genealogical history of Wayne, Fayette, Union and Franklin Counties, Indiana

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Jonas Gaar.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND GENEALOGICAL HISTORY
... OF ...
WAYNE, FAYETTE, UNION AND FRANKLIN COUNTIES
INDIANA.

THE GAAR FAMILY.

If a complete account of the events which form the history of Wayne county were written no name would appear more frequently or figure more prominently in connection with leading events than that of Gaar. Through many decades representatives of the family have been important factors in the public life, especially that department bearing on the industrial and commercial development whereby the growth and prosperity of the county has been assured. From the Fatherland came the first American ancestors, who left their Bavarian home and crossed the Atlantic to the shores of the New World. Their first location was made in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, whence they removed at a later date to Virginia. In 1807 the first settlement of the family was made in Wayne county, then a wild western region on the very borders of civilization. The Indians had not departed for western hunting grounds, fleeing before the oncoming tide of civilization; the forests stood in their primeval strength, and the broad prairies had been unturned by the plow.

Such was the condition of the country into which Abraham Gaar made his way more than four score years ago. He was born in Madison county, Virginia, February 28, 1769, and was there reared to manhood. He married Miss Dinah Weaver, who was likewise born in the Old Dominion and was also of German lineage. In 1805 they became pioneers of Kentucky, and in 1807 they made their way to Wayne county, Indiana, locating in what is now Boston township, where Abraham Gaar secured one hundred and sixty acres of land from the government. A little clearing was soon made and a log cabin erected. Then other trees were cut down and such vegetables and grains planted as would supply the family with the necessaries of life. As the years passed, however, and the work of development was continued, the entire tract was placed under a high state of cultivation, and waving fields of grain were seen where once stood the uncut timber. The father

of the family thus took an active part in reclaiming the wild tract for the uses of civilization, and was active in promoting the agricultural interests of the county. His untiring industry, energy and well directed efforts at length were crowned with success, and ere the end of his earthly pilgrimage he found himself in possession of a good home and a comfortable competence. His religious obligations were never neglected, and even in the days when churches had not been established, and when ministers had not found their way into the new region, he gathered his family around him for worship on the first day of the week, and was ever observant of his Christian duties as a member of the Baptist church. His wife was alike faithful and earnest, and they gave a generous support to the erection of a house of worship in their locality and to the establishment of a Baptist congregation. Having for more than half a century borne an important part in the development and upbuilding of Wayne county, Abraham Gaar passed to his final rest August 20, 1861, and his wife died September 26, 1834, at the age of sixty-six years, ten months and one day.

This worthy couple were the parents of eight children: Jonas; Fielding, who died in Utah; Larkin, who resided on the old family homestead in Boston township, Wayne county; Abel, who made his home in Michigan; Fannie, deceased wife of William Lamb, of Iowa; Rosa, deceased wife of John Ingels; Martha, who was the wife of Jephtha Turner; and Eliza J., wife of Thomas Henderson, of Iowa. All of this family are now deceased except Eliza J.

Jonas Gaar, who was the eldest, was born in Madison county, Virginia, February 1, 1792, and came with the family to Wayne county in 1807. He was therefore reared amid the wild scenes of frontier life, enduring many of the hardships and privations which fall to the lot of the pioneer. He pursued his studies in a log school-house, but acquired his education largely through self-culture. He was a great reader and a close observer of men and events, and in the busy affairs of life added greatly to his knowledge. He and his younger brother, Fielding, were soldiers in the war of 1812, doing duty on the frontier in defence of the homes and lives of the border settlers. He assisted in the work of the home farm until attaining his majority, when he resolved to learn a trade, and took up that of cabinet-making. In 1820 he established a little cabinet shop of his own in Richmond, where he carried on business for a number of years.

In 1836 he extended his operations into other fields of labor by establishing a foundry and machine shop, in connection with Abel Thornbury and Job W. Swain. The plant was operated by a rotary steam engine, the first steam engine in the county, but the enterprise was conducted for only a few years, and for a decade thereafter Jonas Gaar was connected with other busi-

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ness lines. In 1849, in connection with his sons, Abram and John M., and his son-in-law, William G. Scott, he purchased of Jesse M. and John H. Hutton their machine works, which later became the extensive Spring foundry, then A. Gaar & Company and lastly the Gaar, Scott & Company's machine works. This was the foundation for the present mammoth establishment now conducted under the last mentioned title. Mr. Gaar, his two sons and his son-in-law, were all natural mechanics and soon the old foundry business was placed upon a paying business basis and its patronage steadily increased. Prior to this time it had never been a profitable enterprise. On the 1st of April, 1870, the name was changed to Gaar, Scott & Company, and Jonas Gaar continued to be identified therewith until his death, which occurred June 21, 1875. In 1870 the business was incorporated with a paid-up capital of four hundred thousand dollars. Abram Gaar then became president of the company, and so continued until his death.

In 1818 Jonas Gaar was united in marriage to Miss Sarah Watson, a native of Kentucky, and they became the parents of eight children: Abram, born November 14, 1819; Malinda, born November 11, 1821; John Milton, born May 26, 1823; Samuel W., born October 22, 1824; Fielding, born January 1, 1827; Emeline, born June 16, 1829; Elizabeth, born June 27, 1831; and Fannie A., born October 5, 1853. All have now passed away with the exception of John M., Fielding, Emeline Land and Elizabeth Campbell. The father died June 21, 1875, and the mother's death occurred November 8, 1863. Though his business demanded much of his attention, he yet found time to labor for the advancement of many movements and measures calculated to benefit the community and promote the welfare of his fellow men. He was a public-spirited, progressive citizen, honored for his integrity in industrial life, for his fidelity to every trust, and his faithfulness to family and friends. A portrait of Jonas Gaar appears as frontispiece of this volume.

JUDGE HENRY C. FOX.

Henry Clay Fox, judge of the circuit court of Wayne county, and a distinguished jurist of eastern Indiana, was born near West Elkton, Preble county, Ohio, on the 20th day of January, 1836, a son of Levi and Rebecca (Inman) Fox, the former of English and the latter of Irish lineage. On the paternal side he is descended from the celebrated Fox family of England that furnished to that nation some of its most eminent and prominent representatives. His grandfather, Thomas Fox, was a native of New Jersey and there spent his entire life, devoting his energies to farming. He was quiet and unassuming in manner, but merited and gained the high regard of his neighbors and friends. His wife bore the maiden name of Nancy Pitman, and was a native of New York. Levi Fox also was a native of New Jersey,

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of Frederick and Piety (Parker) Fulghum. The great-grandfather of our subject, Michael Fulghum, was a native of Wayne county, North Carolina, and there spent his entire life, his death occurring in 1804, at the age of sixty-five years. He owned a large plantation of several hundred acres and was one of the leading planters of his district. He married Molly Bunn, a lady of French-Huguenot extraction. Tradition says that their ancestors fled from France at the time of the persecution of the Huguenots and took refuge in England. Later they came from that country to America, settling in North Carolina. To Michael and Molly Fulghum were born eleven children, five sons and six daughters, several of whom emigrated to Indiana. Among these was Anthony Fulghum, who located in Richmond, Indiana. He was the father of Benjamin Fulghum, a minister of the Friends' society. He preached for thirty years and was well known in church circles.

Frederick Fulghum, the grandfather of our subject and the youngest of this family, also came to Indiana. He was born in Wayne county, North Carolina, in 1799, and emigrated westward in 1820, being one of the first to seek a home in this state. He took up his residence in Randolph county, where he remained until called to the home beyond in 1879. He made farming his life work, and was the owner of a valuable tract of land of one hundred and sixty acres, upon which stood a good residence and other substantial improvements. An active member of the Society of Friends, he was an elder in the church, and for fifty years was the leading representative of the Arba meeting. In politics he was first a Whig and afterward a Republican, but was never an aspirant for office. He married Piety Parker, a lady of English descent, born in Guilford county, North Carolina, in 1818, a daughter of Jesse Parker, who spent the greater part of his life in that county, engaged in merchandising. About 1830, however, he came to Indiana and spent his last days in the home of Frederick Fulghum, in Randolph county. He was also a Friend, and the members of the family were prominent in the work of the society. To Frederick and Piety Fulghum were born four sons and five daughters: Edah, who became the wife of William Hunt, and both are now deceased; Michael, who also has passed away; Anna, who became the wife of Nathan Overman and has also passed away; Sally also married George Overman and is now deceased; Jesse P. is the next of the family; Martha is the wife of Alpheus Test, of Richmond; Mary is the deceased wife of Joshua Thomas; Francis A. died in infancy; and Frederick C. is the secretary of the Richmond Business College.

Jesse Parker Fulghum, the father of O. B. Fulghum, was reared in Randolph county, where he remained until twenty years of age; and then he came to Richmond, where he began working at the carpenter's trade, which he had learned with his father. A year later he entered the employ of Gaar, Scott

& Company, in their machine shops, where he remained for eight years, when he went to Milton, Wayne county, to accept the position of superintendent of the Joseph Ingels drill works. After acting in that capacity for a year he purchased a half interest in the enterprise, and the following year, 1866, in connection with Joseph Ingels, organized the Hoosier Drill Company, of which he became secretary. The following year, however, he sold out, and in 1869 went to Dublin, Indiana, as a superintendent of the Wayne Agricultural Works, with which he was connected until 1873, when he returned to the Hoosier Drill Company as mechanical expert in charge of the machinery. For four years he occupied that position and in 1877 removed to Richmond to accept a similar position in the Wayne Agricultural Works, which in the meantime had been removed from Dublin to Richmond. When that enterprise went into the hands of a receiver in 1886, he became mechanical expert for M. C. Henley, in which capacity he is still serving. He is a man of remarkable mechanical genius and has taken out about forty patents, having secured more patents on agricultural implements than any other man in the west. To his enterprise, energy and ability is due not a little of the commercial activity of this section of the state, and the welfare and progress of any section depends upon its commercial activity.

Jesse P. Fulghum married Miss Susan Benton, a daughter of Thomas Benton, who was born near Elizabeth City, North Carolina, and came to Wayne county, Indiana, in 1838, locating in Boston township, where he engaged in farming for a few years. He then sold his land and removed to Richmond, where he engaged in freighting by team from Cincinnati, Ohio. A few years later he abandoned that enterprise and established a hardware and grocery store as a member of the firm of Fletcher & Benton, his partner being S. F. Fletcher. He became the leading hardware merchant of the city and continued to carry on operations in that line until his death, which occurred in 1871, when he had reached the age of sixty-five years. In politics he was a stalwart Democrat. He belonged to the Elkhorn Baptist church, was one of its active workers and for many years served as deacon in the church. He married Miss Susan Rhodes, and to them were born two sons and four daughters. The elder son, Thomas H., was killed at the second battle of Bull Run.

O. B. Fulghum, whose name introduces this review, was reared in Richmond, Milton and Dublin, Indiana, his parents living at the three places during his youth. His literary education, acquired in the common schools, was supplemented by a course in the Richmond Business College, and he was thus well fitted for the practical duties of life. When fourteen years of age he began earning his own livelihood as an employe in the Wayne Agricultural Works in Dublin. When sixteen years of age he accompanied his parents

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on their removal to Milton, where he attended school and also worked in a shop. In Richmond he was employed by Gaar, Scott & Company, and on leaving that service he spent three years with the Singer Sewing Machine Company as bookkeeper. Later he went to Cambridge City, from which point he superintended the sale of the Singer sewing machines through a considerable territory. Upon his return to Richmond, in 1883, he assumed the management of the White Sewing Machine Company, acting in that capacity until 1887. Since that time he has been extensively engaged in the fire-insurance business, representing a number of well known and reliable companies, including the Springfield Fire and Marine, of Springfield, Massachusetts; the Firemen's Fund, of San Francisco; Hamburg-Bremen, of Germany; the American Central, of St. Louis; the American, of Newark, New Jersey; the Pacific Mutual Life Insurance Company, and the Ætna Indemnity Company, of Hartford, Connecticut. In 1889 he also began dealing in real estate and now has control of considerable valuable property. He is a man of keen foresight and sagacity, and therefore is enabled to make judicious investments, which yield him a good profit. He is energetic, enterprising and reliable, and has the confidence as well as a liberal share of the patronage of the public.

In 1882 Mr. Fulghum was united in marriage to Miss Mary L. Tracy, of Richmond, and they have one child, Myra G. He belongs to the First Presbyterian church, in which he holds the office of deacon. To church, charitable and benevolent work he contributes liberally and is always found on the side of progress and advancement. Most of his life having been spent in Wayne county, he is widely known among her citizens and is held in uniform regard.

HON. OLIVER H. SMITH.

The subject of this memoir, now deceased, was a son of Thomas and Lætitia Smith, and was born twelve miles above Trenton, New Jersey, on Smith's island, in the Delaware River, October 23, 1794. His ancestors, both paternal and maternal, were friends and associates of William Penn, and emigrated with him from England in 1683. They were members of the Society of Friends and prominent in the early colonial history.

Mr. Smith attended school at Lurgan, but was educated mostly by self-tuition. Upon the death of his father in 1813 he left home with but a few dollars. In 1817 he settled at Rising Sun, Indiana, and the next year moved to Lawrenceburg, where he read law under the instructions of General Dill, and was admitted to the bar in the Dearborn county court in March of that year. He immediately located in Versailles, Ripley county, and in 1820 came to Connersville. He had been here but eighteen months when he was induced to become a candidate for the legislature, and in

