

GARDNER- Samuel Gardner, son of John Gardner, was born in Pennsylvania in 1830. He moved to Springfield, MO, as a young man and married Sarah Frances Garrison in 1855. Sarah Frances was a descendant of Isaac Garrison who was a frontiersman and soldier of the American Revolution. Isaac was a great hunter and had been on surveying trips with George Washington. He knew Daniel Boone well and had been with him on trips into the Kentucky Territory.

Sam Gardner and Sarah Frances moved to the hill country of Taney County where they had three children: James, Elizabeth and Nancy. Sam began hauling freight from Springfield to Arkansas along with his two Gardner cousins. On one trip while traveling by wagon through the Loftin Community, which is located southeast of Ava, MO, they became hungry and stopped to eat. They were used to living off the land and located what they thought were Sweet Annas which all three ate. They had actually eaten poison turnips, however, and they all became deathly sick. Sam and one cousin crawled to a nearby stream and died, leaving only one of the three alive to tell the tragic story. The two dead cousins were the first to be buried in what is now the Loftin Cemetery.



Standing L to R: Emery Gardner, Anna Gardner, Maggie Gardner holding Lewis Gardner, Dora Gardner, Alf Gardner and Bertha Scovel. Sitting L to R: James Gardner, Myrk Gardner and Artelia Gardner holding Glen Gardner.

Sarah Frances was left as a widow with three small children and would also lose two brothers within the next few years as casualties of the Civil War. Pioneer life was extremely rough for her but she later remarried Dr. John Hardin Simpson and together had nine more children while living in the Long Run area of Douglas County, MO.

Sam Gardner's son James grew up and married Artelia Hythe in 1877. They lived on Guffie Creek on the Christian/Douglas County line. Artelia is noted for discovering the Seneca Lead Mines. She had been exploring for seneca roots and accidentally dug up deposits of lead. The lead mines which followed were named as a result of her discovery.

In the late 1890s, James and Artelia moved to Oldfield and homesteaded 400 acres of land. James was one of the early postmasters and also a businessman of Oldfield during the railroad boom days. Many friends and acquaintances referred to James as "Uncle Jimmie." James and Artelia had five children: Bertha, Will, Emery, Alf and May. Many descendants of this family still reside in the Oldfield, Sparta and Ozark areas of Christian County.