

Jesse Gentry
ca. 1757 - ca. 1833
from the book, Echoes of the Past
A Book For the Descendents of John Alexander Gentry & Minnie Bell Woods
Compiled by Helen Watson Edwards
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Jesse Gentry was born the second son of Robert Gentry and Judith Joyner in Albermarle County, Virginia, in about 1757.¹ His parents owned land, kept slaves and were prosperous farmers for the times. Jesse was one of seven children, four boys and three girls.

Doubtless the boys learned their vocation of farming through early experiences with their father. They were also given at least the basics of education either at a frontier school or were taught by their own father. Jesse always signed his documents and we have examples of his signature. (See copies of his petitions to the Superior Court in the State vs Jesse Gentry & William Hays.)

When Jesse was about 5 years old his maternal grandfather, Phillip Joyner, died and left he and his brother, Charles, 200 acres of land each in Albermarle county. This land is land on which the University of Virginia now stands.² His father, Robert Gentry, was a witness of Phillip Joyner's will and doubtless they lived nearby.

When Jesse was about 19 years of age in 1776 his father sold his property in Albermarle County and headed west. They moved into the area which is now known as East Tennessee.

Charles, Jesse and their father, all three apparently fought in the Revolutionary War as they made claims against the North Carolina Military Paymaster Department for payment owed. The record does not say the request for payment was for service in the North Carolina Militia, but the chances are excellent that that was what it was for.

The first record of any of the Gentrys in what is now East Tennessee, and was then Washington County, North Carolina, was in the records of the first court convened in 1778. Washington County was established in 1777 by the North Carolina Assembly. Charles Gentry was listed in the court records.

The first record of Robert Gentry was in the records of the Court of Pleas in 1780. The first record of Jesse Gentry, then about 24 years old, is in the 1781 records of the Washington County Court of Pleas. He was there as a witness. From then on Jesse's name appears periodically for one reason or another.

In the May, 1782 session, Jesse is listed as a Constable in relation to tax assessors. In 1783 he appears again.

Jesse probably married in the early 1780's and probably had some children. She probably

died and he married again a woman named Sarah in the early 1790's. However, there are no records to substantiate this. Jesse left no will nor any other record that names his children. However, there is a great deal of circumstantial evidence to suggest some of the children. These were determined partly by a process of elimination of other possibilities. The only other Gentry in the Knox County area near his age was an Aaron Gentry. Aaron Gentry had considerable property and when he died there was a big court battle so it lists in detail all his children and heirs.

Jesse I's children appear to be Jesse II, Silas, William, Martin and Isaac. Doubtless there were some daughters, but they are much more difficult to trace because of their name change when they marry.

When the Gentrys entered East Tennessee they probably settled for a while in what is now Carter County. A Jesse Gentry married an Eva Miller in 1824. If it had been Jesse I, he would have been 67 years old and it appears in 1850 his wife's name was Sarah. Thus, it is logical to think this was probably Jesse I's son.

Silas Gentry, who lived in Jefferson County was also Jesse I's son. Jesse I was appointed Administrator of Silas' estate when Silas died in 1815. Although the court record does not say Jesse was Silas' father, why else would he, living in Knox County gone all the way to Jefferson County to administer Silas' estate.

Martin Gentry II, born in 1794 is most probably another son. Martin lived practically next door to Jesse Gentry in the 1830 census and in the 1850 census he apparently had his mother, Sarah Gentry, age 75 years, living with him.

Isaac Gentry born in 1799 also lived quite near Jesse I and Martin. Isaac was of the right age to have been another of Jesse I's sons. Martin and Isaac's names were linked in a number of situations. Martin signed Isaac's bond when Isaac married. (See copy of marriage bond.) The clerk of the court made an error on Isaac's marriage bond & license by entering Jesse's name on the records and then when the error was pointed out the clerk drew a line through Jesse's name and above it he wrote in Isaac's name.

Jesse bought and sold land all across East Tennessee. He had property in Hawkins, Greene, Jefferson and Knox Counties and apparently sold it all before he died.

Jesse Gentry received a land grant from the State of North Carolina of 600 acres on the banks of the French Broad River in what was then known as Greene County. Greene County was formed in 1783. The Land Grant was recorded in the Jefferson County deed books in June 1793. Jefferson County and Knox County were formed in 1792. The boundary lines for the county changed and the property became part of Jefferson County. Jesse I bought 200 acres on Long Creek in Greene County. Martin I also owned property in Jefferson County. Martin I remained in Jefferson County and inherited the home place from their father, Robert Gentry. His descendents are still living in Jefferson County.

Jesse I was a Knox County court member in 1792 and registered another deed in 1793. Jesse I purchased 300 acres in Greene county which was recorded in 1794. He sold it in

1796.

Beginning in 1792 Jesse I began selling the property he had acquired. He sold Robert Gentry 230 acres,(part of his land grant), for 30 pounds. He sold 180 acres in 1793 and 200 acres to Abraham Hughes and then to John Skeen another 200 acres on Long Creek.

In 1793 Jesse purchased a number of acres in Knox County. Then turned around and sold 200 acres at a time. Then in 1797 he purchased 200 acres and sold 520 acres.

In 1799 Jesse I was listed as a Captain in John Sevier's Commission Book for Militia.

In 1800 Jesse I purchased 100 acres on Beaver Creek. In 1803 he sold to David Maxwell 237 acres. In 1802 he sold 20 acres to Hugh Dunlap. In 1806 he appeared in the Knox County tax list as owning just 100 acres. He was on a jury in Knox County in 1801, 1802, 1808.

Jesse sold 112 acres on Third Creek in 1810 and 520 acres in 1817. Totaling up his buying and selling of property shows that all he had acquired he had sold. It is interesting to note that most all of Jesse I's descendent were also dealers in property in one form or another. An interest and ability which they probably inherited from Jesse I.

Jesse I was a justice of the peace from which office he resigned in 1814.

In 1819 Jesse Gentry's name appeared in the Superior Court records of Knox County because of having signed a bail bond for a man accused of a crime and the man fled the state. Making bond for someone in those days was a very serious thing, because if the person for whom you were making bond fell down in his duty, you would be held responsible for paying the bond even if they took every thing you had.

Thus when the man fled, Jesse I was called on to pay the \$100 bond. Jesse I then filed a petition, or several petitions, in court to try to be relieved of this responsibility pointing out to the court the accused man whose bond he had signed had been misrepresented to him and Jesse was of only moderate means and for him to pay the \$100 bond would cause a hardship on his family. (See copies of these documents) The end results was that Jesse I was excused from paying the bond but paid the court costs which was only a few dollars. The other man who signed the bond with Jesse I was required to pay the bond plus court costs.

Jesse I and his wife were living in Knox County in the 1830 census with Martin and Isaac living nearby. But in the tax records available for 1836 his name was absent and, of course, he was absent from the 1840 census record. It seems safe to assume he died between 1830 and 1836, and Martin took Jesse I's wife, Sarah, into his home where she too died by 1860.

There is no record where their graves are, but they probably were buried near their home

in the north of Knox County, Tennessee.

Petition of Jesse Gentry Superior Court

To the Honorable the Judge of the Superior Court of Law for the district of Hamilton now sitting in Knoxville for the district aforesaid,

The Petition of Jesse Gentry humbly represents to your Honor That heretofore your Petitioner together with a certain William Hays became bound in a recognizance in the sum of one Hundred dollars each to be bound on condition that a certain Archibald Allen would give his personal appearance at March term 1800 of this court to answer a charge of the Government enacted against him, which said charge was a Riot said to have been committed by a certain Lamuel Cowan, Jas. McCullough Hugh Beaty & the said Archibald Allen. That the said Lamuel, James & Hugh have been tried, convicted & satisfied by the Law for said offence which was committed when it was alleged the said Allen was in their company --Your Petitioner further represents to your honor that he was entirely unacquainted with the said Archibald Allen, that on the 27th day of March 1800 the said Allen was in custody of the Sheriff for the County of Knox on the above mentioned charge that on the representation made by said Sheriff & others to your Petitioner respecting the honesty & integrity of the said Allen he was induced to enter into said Recognizance for the appearance of the said Allen; on the day following. Your Petition further states that the aid Archibald without his privity or consent failed to appear whereby the said Recognizance became forfeited & your petitioner is now liable to pay the above sum of one hundred Dollars. That Since the forfeiture as a bond states your petitioner has spent a considerable portion of time & expended a considerable sum of money in searching after & endeavoring to bring the said Allen into this honorable court & summoned him in discharge of himself but that all his exertions have hitherto proved ineffectual & that he has no hope now but from the Justice of your Honor-- Your Petitioner further represents that his circumstances are very moderate & that he cannot pay the above sum of one Hundred Dollars without injuring himself & family in a very serious manner.

Your petitioner therefore preys the premises consider that your Honor will remit the above forfeiture or mitigate the same in such way as you may deem consistent with Justice. And your Petitioner as in Duty bound - etc:

Jesse Gentry

Sworn in open Court
6th of October 1801

(Note. The results of the hearing was that Jesse Gentry was relieved of paying the \$100, but had to pay court Costs. The other man, William Hays, had to pay the \$100 and to get it his property was to be sold at public auction.

The Gentry Family in America
1676 to 1909
By Richard Gentry
Jesse Gentry – pgs. 69 – 70.

Born in Albemarle Co., VA about 1757. He and his brother Charles inherited by will from their grandfather, Philip Joyner of Albemarle Co., VA, 200 acres of land each, being the same land on which the University now stands. Jesse sold his part of this land in 1783, and probably went to Tennessee. He is mentioned as a legatee in his father's will in 1811. It is probable that he finally settled in Southern Kentucky.

There are quite a number of Gentrys in Illinois, Missouri and Kansas who are descended from a Jesse Gentry, who was born about 1780 and lived in Kentucky, where his children were born. They were:

William; d. in KY – a Methodist minister.

Thomas; lost in Mexican War; a Methodist minister.

Elijah B; d. Greenville, IL – a Methodist minister.

Robert Preston; d. Montgomery City, MO – he was a Baptist minister.

Ann Elizabeth; md a Scoggins.

This Jesse Gentry moved from KY with his family to Ills. Probably near Greenfield, where he died. He is very likely a grandson of Robert Gentry of Tennessee, and a son of either Charles or Jesse. Bartlett Gentry had a son Jesse, who was born about 1805 and lived for a time in Jackson, TN and raised a family.

Robert Preston Gentry above had:

James Gentry; d. Canie, Kansas

Marina J.; Grand Tower, Ills.

Elijah B.; Montgomery City, MO

Jesse M. Gentry, St. Louis, MO; he was born in Union Co., Ills. About 1830. He lived in Louisiana, MO from 1860 – 1891. He served as captain in the Union army under Col. D.P. Dyer. He left three children: Neil Gentry, of Kansas City, MO; Mrs. W.O. Gray, of Bowling Green, MO and Mrs. Vist Eppstein, of Booneville, MO

A.M. Gentry, who died in 1900, a plainsman, and N.C. Gentry his brother, who died in 1875 at Salem, Oregon, are sons of one of the four preachers sons of Jesse Gentry. J.M. Gentry, of Wichita, Kansas, and his sister, Mrs. Eva Thompson, of Erie, Kansas, are children of A.M. Gentry. Mts. L.A. Blattenberg, of Spivery, Kansas, is a granddaughter of Mrs. Ann Elizabeth Scoggins, a daughter of Jesse Gentry.