

**Jesse E. GARDNER**, a well-known and substantial farmer and land owner of Jay county, proprietor of the "Twin Hills" farm and gravel pit in Penn township and for years actively engaged in highway construction work as a contractor, the builder of many miles of gravel roads hereabout, was born on the place on which he is now living, on rural mail route No. 2 out of Pennville, and has lived there all his life. Mr. GARDNER was born on June 10, 1861, and is a son of William and Mahalia (HUNT) GARDNER, the latter of whom was born in Wayne county, this state, daughter of Jesse and Catherine (PEDRICK) HUNT, North Carolinians, who had located in Wayne county in pioneer days. William GARDNER also was born in Wayne county, September 21, 1828, and was a son of Jesse and Rhoda (BUNKER) GARDNER, both of whom were born in Guilford county, North Carolina, who had become early settlers in Wayne county, among the considerable number of Carolinians who had located in that section of Indiana when the land was being opened to settlement. William GARDNER's father was a blacksmith and he followed in his father's footsteps along vocational lines, and from boyhood was well trained as a worker in iron, from the time he was fifteen years of age being competent to do a man's work at the forge. When he was but a lad he had come up here into Jay county on a visit to an elder sister who was living here and at that time became so deeply impressed with the possibilities of this region that he made up his mind to locate here when the time should come to establish a home of his own. He married in the spring of 1849 and in the next year, 1850, came up into Jay county and traded for eighty acres of the "Twin Hill" farm in section 24 of Penn township and established his home there. This famous "Twin Hill" farm, the gravel alone on which has been worth a fortune, cost William GARDNER the price of a scraggy pony, or rather, an old flint-lock rifle, and this is the way of it. When he was sixteen years of age he started out on his pony to make a trip up from Wayne county through this region and on over as far west as Howard county. He enjoyed hunting and when he reached Howard county he traded his pony for a flint-lock rifle and after a season of hunting there traded the rifle for a tract of eighty acres of Howard county land. Upon his return to Wayne county he traded to one of the settlers there who wanted to go over into Howard county his newly acquired "eighty" in Howard county for an "eighty" in Wayne county and it was this latter "eighty" he traded for the "twin hills" tract when he came up into Jay county in 1850. Upon his arrival here he set up a blacksmith shop on the place and proceeding to make of himself a very useful member of the community. The plows turned out at the GARDNER smithy immediately attained a wide local reputation for their superiority over other plows which had come into the community and there was much demand for the products of that forge. At the first county fair held in Jay county William GARDNER exhibited a plow of his manufacture which won first prize. He also manufactured axes and other implements for use in the community, at the same time giving attention to the development of his farm and presently came to be the owner of a fine farm of 270 acres, and there he continued to live until his death in 1880. He and his wife were the parents of ten children, namely: Rhoda A., deceased, who was the wife of J. W. WILLIAMS; Winfield S.; Catherine C., deceased, who was the wife of Emry RIGBY; Eleanor N., who married Oscar LEWIS; Matilda J., who married Jerome BRONSON; Jesse E., the subject of this review; Maud L., who married George MILLER; William M., of whom further mention is made elsewhere in this work; Leila M., wife of Irvin V. GRAY, and Norla, who died in infancy.

Reared on the "Twin Hills" farm, Jesse E. GARDNER received his schooling in the neighborhood schools and from the days of his boyhood was actively engaged in the work of developing the farm. After his marriage when twenty-two years of age he continued to make his home there, renting the place, and seven years later bought from the other heirs their respective interests in the farm and continues to make his home there, the owner of a well improved place of 181 acres on which is situated the famous "twin hills" of Penn township, which have proved an inexhaustible source of gravel supply for both railway and highway construction. For the past ten years or more Mr. GARDNER has been engaged as a highway contractor and has built about forty miles of gravel road, taking his gravel from his two great gravel pits. In addition to this and his general farming he also has given considerable attention to the raising of live stock and has done well.

It was on January 26, 1884, that Jesse E. GARDNER was united in marriage to Phoebe Miller, daughter of David and Abigail (BEARDSLEY) MILLER, and to this union one child has been born, a son, Warner E. GARDNER, who is now living in Oklahoma. Mrs. GARDNER was born on a farm in the vicinity of Ft. Recovery, over in Mercer county, Ohio, where her mother died in 1878. Two years later her father, David MILLER, who was a veteran of the Civil war, came over into Jay county and located on a farm in Penn township, where he spent the remainder of his life. He was born in Mercer county in 1827 and was a son of John and Mary (BIDDLE) MILLER, the former of whom also was born in Ohio and the latter in Maryland. David MILLER enlisted for service in the Union army in November, 1861, and served throughout the war, being mustered out at Nashville, Tenn., in December, 1866, a member of Company K, 40th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. In 1886 he was elected justice of the peace in and for Penn township. He and his wife were the parents of six children.

**Source unknown**