



# Haverford Township Historical Society



## JOHN GEORGE GARDNER (1851-1924) AND FAMILY

Compiled by Richard D. Kerr

*[The following is excerpted and adapted from A History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania and Its People, John W. Jordan, editor, published by Lewis Historical Publishing Company, New York in 1914.]*

**JOHN GEORGE GARDNER**, a progressive and public-spirited citizen of Bryn Mawr, is a man of good business tact and judgment, prompt and reliable in the performance of all obligations, and by the exercise of those characteristics which insure success in life, industry, perseverance and enterprise, has attained a place of prominence in business circles.

**RICHARD GARDNER**, grandfather of John G. Gardner, was a native of England, in which country he spent his entire life, honored and esteemed by all with whom he had dealings for his trustworthiness and faithfulness. For the long period of sixty years he served as builder and clerk of the works of Spencer Lucy, now Lord Lucy, whose estate was Chalcotte Park, situated near Wellsbourne. He was an exceedingly competent man, faithful and conscientious in the performance of his duties, and as a reward for his years of toil was retired on a pension, a most fitting testimonial from his employer. He lived to the great age of ninety-three, having well passed the allotted scriptural age of three score years and ten. He married \_\_\_\_\_, who bore him among other children: John Gardner, of whom further, and Robert Gardner who was a successful architect and builder, who emigrated to the United States, and erected the Vendome Hotel in Boston and a number of the buildings of Wellesley College.

**JOHN GARDNER**, father of John G. Gardner, was born in Stratford-on-Avon, England, there grew to maturity and was educated in the common schools. Being very skillful in the use of tools, in fact, a natural born mechanic, he naturally turned his attention to that line of work upon arriving at a suitable age to choose his life vocation, and learned the trades of gunsmith, locksmith, bellhanger and blacksmith, building up an extensive trade, which brought him good returns, and subsequently the business was conducted by his eldest son, who assumed control, and he moved the shop to Birmingham, believing that the advantages for business were greater there than in the old location. Mr. Gardner spent his entire life in his native land, his death occurring there. For many years he served as justice of the peace, and always took a keen and intelligent interest in local affairs. He staunchly upheld the principles and measures advocated by the Liberals, and served in the capacity of warden of the Episcopal church. He married Elizabeth Mabley, born in Stratford-on-Avon, England, daughter of Robert Mabley, who was a game warden on the Chalcotte Park estate, serving as such for many years. Four sons were born of this marriage, as follows:

1. Garrad Gardner, who, by virtue of being the eldest son, received his father's estate, and now resides in Birmingham, England, where he is ranked among the successful business men.
2. Richard Gardner, who emigrated to the United States, and who immediately secured the position of manager of the Vanderbilt Estate at Newport, Rhode Island, in which capacity he has served ever since.
3. John George Gardner, of whom further.
4. Harry Gardner, who emigrated to Australia and is now a successful woolen merchant in Adelaide.

**JOHN G. GARDNER** was born in Stratford-on-Avon, England, July 14, 1851. His educational advantages were obtained in the public schools in the neighborhood of his home, and for seven years thereafter he served an apprenticeship at the trade of nurseryman and florist, becoming highly proficient during this period of time. He then went to London and entered the employ of Messrs. James Veitch & Sons, Kings Road, Chelsea, where he gained considerable knowledge about propagation, an important branch in that industry, and he also acquired a practical knowledge of laying out landscapes and gardens. His scope of activity being too limited to suit him, Mr. Gardner decided to come to the United States and join his uncle, Mr. Robert Gardner, previously mentioned, at Wellesley, Massachusetts, where he was erecting the college buildings. This was in the year 1874, and six months later he returned to England, there settled up his affairs, and returned to the United States. His first work here was the laying out of an extensive new landscape at Newport, Rhode Island, for Mr. Pierre Lorillard. He next secured employment on the Rancocas Stock Farm in New Jersey for Mr. Lorillard, laid out the farm, built game preserves and managed the gardens, also performed similar work at Tuxedo Park, New York, for the same employer, and in all served him for sixteen years, his work being highly satisfactory, as evidenced by the many years he was retained in his service.

He then laid out the Stoke Pogeas, an estate for Frederick and Morro Phillips at Villanova, near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and afterwards established a nursery of his own in order to be enabled to set out first class gardens without undue delay. In all he has laid out sixty gardens on the main line between Philadelphia and West Chester, none of these having a duplicate. In 1906 he removed to Haverford township and purchased a farm consisting of twenty-two acres, located on Coopertown [now called Darby] Road, remodelled on old building, making of it a modern and comfortable residence, and has resided there ever since, his three sons being employed in the business with him. He has gained a wide reputation for the excellence of his work, to which he has devoted the utmost care and thought, and he well merits the success which has attended his efforts. He is a member of the Episcopal church, as is also his wife, and his political allegiance is given to the Republican party.

Mr. Gardner married Emily Bridle [1853-1926], a native of Exeter, Devonshire, England, daughter of Richard Bridle; she came to this country two years later than her husband. Their children:

1. Ethel Gardner [1882-1938], married Oscar Murray, an electrician in Collingdale, Pennsylvania; two children: Oscar Murray and Pauline Booth Murray.
2. George B. Gardner [1883-1940], conducts an auto garage in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; married Pearl Hoover; one daughter, Louise Gardner.
3. Richard Neal Gardner [1885-1923], engaged in business with his father; married Mildred Caum.
4. Frederick A. Gardner (1888-1948), engaged in business with his father; resides in Oakmont; married Laura Reese; one son, Frederick Aubrey Gardner.
5. Florence Gardner [1893-1967], educated in Banks Business College, now serving as bookkeeper for her father; resides at home.
6. Ernest Gardner [1895-1983], resides at home, unmarried.

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