

PETER VARDAMAN

(Son of Joseph and Rachel (*Vining*) Vardaman)

by
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Many years ago we found on the 1850 Georgia census a **Peter Vardaman**, age 26, together with a **Simeon Vardaman** (age 27) and **Albert Vardaman** (age 23) living in the household of an Augustus Cargile in Butts County, GA. All three men were reported to be mill-wrights and our first thought was that they were brothers..

We had long known of the established five sons of the Joseph and Rachel (Vining) Vardaman family — **Edwin Joseph, Thomas Butts, Benjamin Boone, Simeon** and **Albert George** — who appear on numerous family trees and other records. We also knew that Joseph Vardaman and his sons were noted wheel-wrights and wain-wrights (wagon makers) and that the **Joseph and Rachel (Vining) Vardaman family** lived in nearby Harris County, GA.

As a result, we immediately recognized that at least two of the three Vardaman men in the Cargil household, **Albert Vardaman** and **Simeon Vardaman**, were the sons of Joseph and Rachel Vardaman. However, **Peter Vardaman** was a mystery to us as he did not then (and does not now) appear on any of the many **Joseph Vardaman/Vardeman** family trees on the internet, nor on any of the many additional **Joseph Vardaman/Vardeman** family trees that I had accumulated in correspondence and in person from descendents of this Vardeman family during my early research.

Unfortunately, at that time we had, in fact, no information whatsoever to suggest that Joseph and Rachel may have had a son named Peter. At the same time, we could not place him in any other Vardeman (however spelled) family known to be in the Georgia-Alabama area of that era. So, we began an unproductive search for a possible explanation as to who this Peter might be.

At that time, we were aware that Joseph Vardaman's older brother, **Thomas Vardaman**, (my ggg-grandfather) whose wife was **Annie Vining**, twin sister of Joseph's wife Rachel, did have a son named **Peter Lafayette Vardaman** who was born February 11, 1830, in Meriwether County, GA, when brothers Joseph and Thomas Vardaman, as well as a third brother, William Vardaman, all lived there. William Vardaman was married to Ruth

Vining, another sister of his brother's wives. The children of these three Vardaman/Vardeman families were all double first cousins.

During the 1830s the **Joseph Vardaman** family moved a little to the south across the county line to permanently settle in Meriwether County's southern neighbor, Harris County, GA. The **Thomas** and **William Vardaman** families moved a more substantial distance away to settle in Alabama, **William** to Talladega County, AL, ca 1834 and **Thomas** to Tallapoosa County, AL, ca 1836.

We also knew that **Peter Lafayette Vardaman** had married his wife, **Susan Matilda Durham**, 14 March 1854, in Harris County, GA, (confirmed), the home of his uncle Joseph Vardaman's family.

Despite the fact that Peter Lafayette Vardaman was properly enumerated on the 1850 Federal census, age 20, in his own parent's household in Tallapoosa County, AL, and that his confirmed age of 20 on the 1850 census did not agree with that of the Peter in Butts County, GA, (age 26 -- some 6 years older), in view of his marriage in Harris County, GA, in 1854 and since he was a double first cousin to Albert G. and Simeon, we reluctantly theorized that this Peter Vardaman in the Cargile household in Butts Co., GA, was possibly Peter Lafayette Vardaman. We speculated that he could have been enumerated twice in two different locations on this census as the result of an almost six-month gap between the taking of the two census records. The 1850 Butts Co., GA, census was dated August 17, 1850, while the 1850 Tallapoosa Co., AL, census was dated January 7, 1851.

This tentative theory has subsequently turned out to be totally incorrect and our first thought that the three men in the Butts County household were brothers has now been determined to be absolutely correct by recently discovered circumstantial evidence.

A recent review and analysis of the available Federal census records for 1820, 1830 and 1840 (see below) indicate that **Joseph** and **Rachel Vardaman** could, indeed, have at least one, or possibly two, additional sons whom we were unaware of and whose names do not appear on any record or family tree and who left no previously known official record.

The recent discovery of an additional state census record has confirmed the existence of another son whom we can now identify as **Peter**, although it does not tell us what happened to him. Based on the records currently available, he apparently never married and died without issue some time between his appearance on an **1855 Alabama State census**, and the date of the 1860 Federal census on which he cannot be found.

.1820 Federal Census Record for the Joseph Vardeman Family

On the **1820 Morgan County, GA**, Federal Census, the **Joseph Vardeman** (sic) family contains two white males under the age of 10 and one white male age 10 thru 15, as well as one white male age 28 thru 45. The elder male is, of course, the father and head of

household, **Joseph**, who is reported to have been born ca 1781 and would be about 39 years old at the time of this census. The two males under age 10 would be his sons **Benjamin Boone** who, born ca 1820, has not quite yet reached the age of 1 at the time of the 1820 census, and **Thomas Butts** who, born in January 1816, is only age 4. The male age 10 thru 15 is Joseph's eldest son, **Edwin J.**, who, born in January 1807, is age 13.

This census record also reports two white females under the age of 10, two white females age 10 thru 15, and one white female age 26 thru 45, in the family . The older female is, of course, Joseph's wife, **Rachel (Vining)**, the mother of his children, who, born 19 October 1786, would be age 34. The two females under the age of 10 would be daughters **Nancy Cannon**, who, born ca 1818, would be age 2 and daughter **Delinda**, who, born ca 1814, would be about age 6 . The two females age 10 thru 15 would be daughter **Elizabeth Ann "Betsy"**, who, born ca 1809-1810 would be about age 10, and daughter **Ann Clay (or Clarke)**, who, born 22 April 1812, would be age 8 and has been incorrectly included in this "age 10 thru 15" column.

Note: Ann "Annie" C. (*Vardaman*) Hagin's grave stone at historical Linwood Cemetery in Columbus, Muscogee Co., GA, includes her full name as "**Ann Clarke Hagins**". However, on page 620 of the "*History of Harris County, Georgia, 1827 - 1961*" by Louise Calhoun Barfield (Mrs. G. C.), of Columbus, Georgia, in a biographical paragraph referencing Ann's son, James Smiley Hagins, she is reported as "**Annie Clay Vardeman, born 4-22-1812**" The source of the information in the paragraph which includes this name is specifically reported to be a **Bible** record and is attributed to a Murray Craig of Columbus, GA.

1830 Federal Census record for the Joseph Vardaman Family

On the **1830 Meriwether County, GA**, Federal Census, the **Joseph Vardaman** family contains two males under age 5, three males age 5 thru 9, one male age 10 thru 14, one male age 20 thru 29, and one male age 40 thru 49. The elder male is, again, **Joseph** who would now be about 49 years old.

The two males under age 5 are sons **Albert G.** who, born in 1827, is age 3 and an "**unknown**". The three males age 5 thru 9, are sons **Simeon** who, born in 1823, is age 7, **Benjamin Boone** who, born in 1820, is apparently age 9 not yet having reached age 10, and another "**unknown**". The male age 10 thru 14 is son **Thomas Butts** who, born in 1816, is age 14 while the male age 20 thru 29 is son **Edwin J.** who, born in 1807, is age 22. One of these two "**unknown**" males has now been determined to be son **Peter**, who born ca 1824-25 would be about age 5 or 6, The other unknown male on this census is thought to be another possible son who will die as an infant or small child and never appear again although this is not confirmed.

Also included in the family on this census are one white female age 5 thru 9, two white females age 15 thru 19, and one white female age 40 thru 49. The older female is, again, Joseph's wife and the mother of his children, **Rachel (Vining)**, who born 19 October

1786 is now age 44. The white female age 5 thru 9 is **Nancy Cannon**, (the youngest daughter of Joseph and Rachel), who born ca 1818 would be age 12 at the time of this census and has been reported in the wrong age column. The two females age 15 thru 19 would be daughters **Delinda**, who born ca 1814, would be age 16 and **Ann C.**, who born in 1812 would be age 18. Daughter **Elizabeth Ann "Betsy"**, now age 20. has married **Neil McEachern**, 10 December 1829 in Meriwether County, GA, and is enumerated in her husband's household in Meriwether County on this census.

1840 Federal Census record for the Joseph Vardeman Family

On the **1840 Harris County, GA**, Federal Census the Joseph Vardeman family contains two males age 10 thru 14, two males age 15 thru 19 and one male age 50 thru 59. This last male is **Joseph**, who is now age 59..

The two males age 10 thru 14 would be son **Albert G.** who is now age 13 and a previously "unknown" son who would be one of the two "unknowns" on the 1830 census and who, despite the slight discrepancy in age, we can now identify as **Peter**. The two males age 15 but under 20 are sons **Simeon** who is now age 17 and **Benjamin Boone** who is now age 19 having not quite yet reached the age of 20. Son **Thomas Butts**, now age 24, has married **Emily Adeline Evans**, 4 August 1835 in Harris County, GA, and son **Edwin J.**, now age 30, has married **Elizabeth "Betsy" Ann Phillips**, 26 March 1833 in Meriwether County, GA, and neither of these two sons is now included in their father's household. **Edwin J. Vardeman** is enumerated as head of his own household in Meriwether County, GA; however, I have been unable to locate the **Thomas Butts Vardaman/Vardeman** family on the 1840 Federal census in Alabama, Georgia or anywhere else even though his family would now include a daughter (Parthenia) born in 1838.

The previously unknown male age 10 thru 14 on this census has now been determined to be son **Peter**, who born ca 1824 or 1825 would now be about age 14 or 15, who is possibly, again, reported in the wrong age column. It should be noted that the only age record that we have for Peter is his age of 26 on the 1850 census dated 16 April 1850 and this age may, or may not, be exactly correct. Based on the date of the 1850 census, that age extrapolates to a birth between April 1823 and April 1824. However, that is not confirmed as ages reported on the census records are known to not always be reliable.

This 1840 census also includes one white female, age 50 but under 60. This is, of course, Joseph's wife, **Rachel (Vining) Vardeman**, who is now age 54. No other females are listed for this family. The three daughters who were still at home with their parents on the previous 1830 census have all married (**Delinda**, now age 26, to **William Ward**, 15 February, 1833, in Meriwether County; **Ann Clay**, now age 28, to **Robert D. Hagins**, 26 January 1839. in Harris County; and **Nancy Cannon**, now age 22, to **James Smiley Hagins**, 21 January 1840 in Harris County). All three are enumerated in their respective husband's households on the 1840 census: William and Delinda Ward in Meriwether County, GA, and both Robert D. and Ann Clay Hagins and James Smiley and Nancy Cannon Hagins in Harris County, GA.

Note: Robert D. Hagins (ca 1820 - aft. 1870) and James Smiley Hagins (ca 1813 -1862) were brothers, sons of Joseph and Nancy Hagins. Do not be confused by the presence of a younger James Smiley Hagins, son of Robert D. and Annie Clay (Vardaman) Hagins, born 13 June 1849, died 22 February 1900, who is buried together with other family members, in historic Linwood Cemetery located in Columbus, Muscogee County, Ga.

The two marriages in 1833 (daughter Delinda to William Ward and son Edwin J. to Elizabeth Phillips) both in Meriwether County, when viewed in contrast with the marriage of son Thomas Butts in 1835, daughter Ann in 1839 and daughter Nancy in January 1840, all in Harris County, tends to point to the relocation of the Joseph Vardeman family from Meriwether County, GA. to Harris County, GA, some time between 1834 and not later than 1839. This would be at the same time (1834 - 1836) that records indicate that Joseph's brothers, William and Thomas Vardaman, both relocated from Meriwether County, GA, to Alabama.

1850 Harris County, Georgia, Federal Census Record

On the **1850 Harris County, GA**, Federal Census, dated 16 April 1850, the Joseph Vardeman family contains only two individuals, the head of household, **Joseph**, age 67, who, based on his reported birth in 1781, should correctly be age 68 or 69, and his wife **Rachel**, age 64, which is correct based on her reported birth in October 1786.

Son **Benjamin Boone**, who was still at home with his parents on the 1840 census, has married **Mary Ann Huey**, 14 December 1840, in Harris County, GA, and is enumerated as head of his own household in Harris County, GA, on the 1850 census.. Sons **Albert G.**, now age 23, **Peter**, age 26 and **Simeon**, now age 27, the only other children still at home with their parents on the 1840 census, are enumerated in the household of Augustus Cargile in Butts County, GA , as follows:

1850 Butts County, Georgia, Federal Census Record

On the **1850 Butts County, GA**, Federal Census, dated 17 August 1850, **Augustus Cargile** is enumerated in District 8, with a household containing the following individuals:

Augustus Cargile, farmer, age 30, born in GA
Albert Vardaman, millwright, age 23, born in GA
Simeon Vardaman, millwright, age 27, born in GA
Peter Vardaman. millwright. age 26. born in GA
Zack Beachan, millwright, age 23, born in GA
Hugh Casstile, Stone Mason, age 23, born in Scotland
William Douglass, Farmer, age 22, born in GA
A C B Hall, Czpenter, age 26, born in N. C.

A subsequent **1855 Alabama State** census includes the above Peter Vardaman confirming him as another son of Joseph and Rachel Vardaman. Note the two previously unknown males cited in the Joseph Vardaman household on the 1830 census and the previously unknown male cited in the Joseph Vardaman household on the 1840 census.

Joseph and Rachel's son **Peter** is reported as age 26 on the 1850 census which extrapolates to a birth date ca 1824. He would be the unknown male on the 1840 census and one of the two unknown males on the 1830 census. If his age of 26 on the 1850 census is correct and he was born ca 1823-24 he would be about age 6 in 1830 and about age 16 in 1840. This would match with the "age 5 but under 10" unknown on the 1830 census or would be only one year off from matching with the "under age 5" unknown on that census and would be only one year off from matching the unknown on the 1840 census. When viewed in context with the other two confirmed sons of Joseph and Rachel Vardaman, this is solid support for the **Peter** on the 1850 Butts County census to be a son of Joseph and Rachel and a brother of the other two Vardaman men (Simeon and Albert G.) in the Augustus Cargile household on this census.

I have noted that Simeon Vardaman was born ca 1823 while Albert was born ca 1827. There is an approximate four year gap between the ages of these two children of Joseph and Rachel which provides an appropriate interval for the birth of another son – in this case, **Peter**. As a result, I tend to believe that Peter was probably born ca 1825 and that his reported age of 26 on the 1850 census may be in error by one year.

1855 Alabama State Census Record for Tallapoosa County, Alabama

The identification of the **Peter Vardaman** included in the Augustus Cargile household on the 1850 Butts County, GA, census as the son of Joseph and Rachel Vardaman is confirmed by the presence of three Vardimen (sic) men on an **1855 Alabama State Census Record for Tallapoosa County, AL**. On this census the following three individuals are enumerated in sequence, just as I have them listed here::

Vardiman, A. G.

Vardiman, P. K.

Vardiman, P. L.

The first person above is **Albert G. Vardaman** with one white male over the age of 21 and one white female under the age of 21 in his household. Albert is the white male over 21 (he would now be age 27) and the female is his wife, **Susan M. Napier**, daughter of Caleb and Prudence (Johnson) Napier, whom he married 24 December 1854 in Tallapoosa County, AL (confirmed). Based on her reported birth date, she would be age 19 in 1855.

The second Vardiman in the above cited 1855 Alabama state census, **Peter K. Vardaman**, is the brother of **Albert G. Vardaman** and son of **Joseph** and **Rachel (Vining) Vardaman**. He is the only individual (one white male over 21) in the household and obviously unmarried. He and brother Albert have joined their double first

cousin, **Peter Lafayette Vardaman**, and his family in Tallapoosa County, AL. (I wish I could learn what the initial "K" in Peter's name stands for — could it be "Knox"?. Just speculating!) Peter K. apparently died unmarried and without issue sometime not long after this 1855 record as it is the last record ever found for him.

The third person listed in the above cited 1855 Alabama state census is **Peter Lafayette Vardaman**, youngest son of **Thomas** and **Annie (Vining) Vardaman**, with one white male under age 21, one white male age 21 and over, and one white female age 21 and over, in his household. Peter Lafayette, born 11 Oct. 1830, is now age 24 (having not quite yet reached his 25th birthday) and is the white male over age 21 and head of household. The white female, age of 21 or over, is his wife, **Susan Matilda Durham** whom he married 14 March 1854 in Harris County, GA, daughter of **Silas M.** and **Alvenia (Booles) Durham**. She was born 8 May 1834 in Greene County, GA, and would have become age 21 on that date in 1855. The white male under the age of 21 is their new-born son, **Walter Albert Vardaman**, born 15 April, 1855 in Tallapoosa County, AL.

This 1855 census record completely eliminates any possibility that the **Peter Vardaman**, age 26, of the 1850 Butts County, GA, census could be the same person as the **Peter Vardaman**, age 20, of the 1850 Tallapoosa County, AL, census. In addition, together with the "unknown" male on the 1830 and 1840 Joseph Vardeman census records, it fully supports the confirmation of the Peter Vardaman of the 1850 Butts County, GA, census, as a son of Joseph and Rachel Vardeman.

Note the oddity in the marriages of the two Vardaman double first cousins:

Albert G. Vardaman, who had been a resident in his parent's household in **Harris County, GA**, married a woman named **Susan** in **1854** in **Tallapoosa County, Alabama**,

At almost the same time, his double first cousin, **Peter Lafayette Vardaman**, a resident of **Tallapoosa County, AL**, married a woman named **Susan** in **1854** in **Harris County, GA**.

Unbelievable! Thank goodness it was not Albert's brother, Peter, who married Susan Napier in Tallapoosa County in 1854 or we might never have sorted this out correctly.

THE END.