

Mystery Orricks of Mid-Tennessee

By Roger Arrick

Surnames: Nunley, Ark, Arrick, Orrick, Qualls, Smartt, Baugus, Cornelison, Crownover.
Places: Grundy, Warren, Coffee, Hardin Counties of TN; Kaufman Co., TX; Corinth, MS.

It started for me in 2006 when I set out to unravel the history of our Arrick family in Tennessee. My father, Leonard W. Arrick, and older brother Randy had searched for years but evidence of who our ancestors were remained a question. Dad even created a nice 3-ring binder of genealogy information for us boys, but the Arrick line just stopped at my great-grandfather John Riley Arrick. He had moved from somewhere in Tennessee to Kaufman County (near Dallas) Texas in the mid-1880's.

Having no experience with genealogy research, I had to start from scratch and learn the ropes. I was shocked to learn about the demise of the 1890 census and that only head-of-households were listed before 1850. Also, realizing how much information had not been put on the web was a big surprise. These basic facts of genealogy research were all news to me.

It took a while to navigate through the internet complex and figure out what was available for free and what was worth paying for. Eventually I got up to speed and began staring at census data and clicking links until the wee hours like so many other researchers. After spending an average of 20 hours per week for 2 years, many questions have been answered, but many mysteries remain, and new questions have surfaced in the process.

My genealogy journey has been life-changing to say the least, and here you'll find a little piece of it that relates to Grundy County, Tennessee.

Arricks are really Orricks from Warren County Tennessee

It's a story for yet another article, but suffice to say, evidence that my Arrick family are descendants of the Orrick family in Warren County Tennessee is irrefutable. I'm sure I could prove it in a court of law if required to. Who knows, maybe one day I'll need to.

John Orrick, his wife Margaret, and their kids can be found in the 1850 and 1860 census of Warren County. They're living near several other Orrick families. John is the father of my great-grandfather John Riley. These Orricks are descended from the ORROCKs of Fife Scotland who immigrated to Maryland around 1650. Many branches of ORRICK, ORICK, ARRICK, ARICK around the US are related to this family and this connection is now supported by DNA testing – See <http://www.arrick.com/family/dnaproject1.html>

Post-1860 Confusion

After 1860, things get complicated. Margaret is shown in the 1880 Coffee County census with her kids but no husband. Her name is written as ARRICK.

1870 is a tricky one. A sharp cousin located a suspicious entry in the Grundy census but the name was "Arke" and many of the first names were unusual. After many hours of research and learning some basic things about names (such as Peggy being a substitute for Margaret), I'm certain this is my Orrick/Arrick family. The use of casual names and the apparent estimation of ages indicates the information might have come from a neighbor. The 1870 census contains another mystery; living with Margaret (Peggy) is a William Jones. We'll explore that in a moment.

Orrick/Arrick Family in the Census

1850 Warren Co.	1860 Warren Co.	1870 Grundy Co.	1880 Coffee Co.
John Orrick 23	Ans Orrick 30	Stake Pigg 50	Orrick Margaret 51
Margaret Orrick 21	Margaret 30	Bittel 30	" " 32
Sarah B. Orrick 2	Sarah 11	Laura 18	" " 13
James B. Orrick 12	James 9	James 17	John R. 17
	Laura 7	Calaway 15	Jenny 12
	William 5	Lewis 12	Leah 7
	Melba 3	John 10	
	Margaret 1	James 9	
	W. B. 1	Oris William 50	

The Tragedy of War

So, what happened to Margaret's husband John Orrick? It took several trips to the Dallas library to find out. They have a nice set of Tennessee microfilm and civil war records. John's name is misspelled Orick on his service record. It shows he fought at the battle of Shiloh with the 35th TN, then died of wounds down in Corinth MS a few days later.

This was a big breakthrough for our Orrick/Arrick research, but it was heartbreaking as well. It took me a while to fully grasp it, but it explains so much about our family's mysterious history. John, his parents, nor grandparents owned slaves, but he fought along with his neighbors for the South. I can never know for sure, but I seriously doubt that he willingly gave his life to protect the morally bankrupt institution of slavery - leaving his widow and 6 young kids to live in poverty - even causing the loss of their original name. The magnitude of the chaos and devastation caused by the war would have been difficult for me to fully realize without discovering this.

Margaret Marries William B. Nunley

After the war, in 1867, John's widow Margaret married William B. NUNLEY in Grundy County. Nunley's wife, Sarah Jane Smartt, had died the year before and they had many children. It's no surprise that Margaret remarried; after all, she was only in her mid-30's and had hungry kids to feed.

The Story Gets Interesting...

What is surprising is that Nunley was a Union man who had returned to the area after fighting for the 1st Alabama Vidette Cavalry. This must have caused a tense situation since most of his neighbors fought for the South, and Margaret's own husband had died in that fighting. This might explain why Nunley can not be found in the 1870 or 1880 census even though he lived with Margaret until his death in 1889. Or can he?

The big breakthrough in this part of the story comes from Nunley's war service. After his death, Margaret applied for his pension. It appears she had difficulty, possibly because of her use of the Arrick name. She ultimately had to produce affidavits from several people (Hobbs, Myers, Wilson, Crownover, Knott, etc.) confirming she was married to Nunley, verifying her financial condition, etc. You can see the pension documents here:

<http://www.arrick.com/family/files/arrickmargaretpensionapp.pdf>



William B. Nunley
Born: Oct 3, 1801
Died: Dec 15, 1889
Nunley Cemetery, Warren Co TN

The amazing thing about these pension documents is that they contain an eye-witness account of the shooting of John Orrick, my 2nd great-grandfather, at the battle of Shiloh. They also speak of his death in Corinth, MS a few days later. I feel very fortunate to have this rare first-hand account in

spite of the pain it causes. And although John's body is likely buried in an unknown mass grave near Corinth somewhere, it provides a measure of closure for me and our family.

Along with this account is an explanation from Margaret describing her former husband's name – Arrick, that it was pronounced “Ark”, and that John could not read or write. She, and her children, continued to use the Arrick name, even after her marriage to Nunley. While this doesn't prove conclusively that Arricks are Orricks, it lead to a DNA test which did.

Margaret and Nunley have a Child – or do they?

It looks like Margaret and Nunley did have at least one child together – Fanny (1868). Fanny was also hard to trace because she too used the name Arrick. She moved to Hardin Co, TN for unknown reasons as did some of her step-brothers where she married into the Baugus family. Her death certificate says her mother is “Margarett Qualls” (Qualls is yet another mystery), and father is “John Nonley”. The name “John” is either a simple mistake or a spectacular scandal, since William B. Nunley did have a son by his previous wife Sarah named John who was about Margaret's age. My vote is for a simple mistake made by the informant, but I still wonder.

Meanwhile, Back at the 1870 Census

Remember that 1870 census where Margaret (Peggy) Arke is shown in Grundy Co. living with William Jones? Margaret is known to be married to Nunley at this time according to the pension application, Nunley remains unfound elsewhere, and he has a motive to hide his identity. I can't prove this, but I believe William Jones is really William B. Nunley and that he was using another name to make life simpler in a post-war world. We will probably never know for sure.

Margaret Qualls Arrick/Orrick Nunley

It's now known through Margaret's children's death certificates that her maiden name is Qualls. There are several candidates for her parents (Canon, Isham, etc.) but no clear winner at this point.

Margaret's daughters Laura (married Cornelson) and Sarah (married Crownover and Anderson) used the name “Ark”, and Elizabeth (married Cash) used “Arick”. Her sons John Riley and James C. used “Arrick”, and son William is unfound. Daughter Fanny (married Baugus) used “Arrick”.

Although she can not be found in the 1900 census, Margaret's tiny pension payments didn't stop until 1906 when they say she passed. It's likely she is buried somewhere around Hubbard's Cove near the border of Grundy, Warren and Coffee counties, but in keeping with the Orrick/Arrick tradition, her gravesite remains a mystery. Finding it would be a wonderful discovery.

Life with the Orricks and their Disappearing Cemetery

The Orricks were farmers working the land just south of Centertown near Abe Curtis Rd. They had come to the area around 1825 from Hardin Co., KY. Apparently they kept to themselves, built a small community, and even had their own Church according to stories. The sad part is, they had their own cemetery too, and family stories claim it was plowed into a well in the 1940's. This helps explain why the Orricks have been so hard to trace. Four generations of Orricks are likely buried in the now-defunct Orrick cemetery. My genealogical dream is to locate this cemetery, and possibly even discover markers for my Orrick ancestors. I get goose-pimples just thinking about it.

Final Words

Thanks for being a part of my family history journey by reading this short story. I would encourage anyone having information associated with the families in this story to contact me at Roger@Arrick.com and view my website at **Arrick.com**. I am willing to share whatever information I have discovered that could be helpful for your research. –Happy Hunting.