

William Wallace Garner
“Last Civil War Veteran, Starke County, Indiana”



William Wallace Garner, son of Dr. and Mrs. Henry Garner, was born October 30, 1847 in Grant County, Indiana and passed away October 11, 1940 at Knox, Indiana at the age of 92 years, 11 months and 11 days.

At the age of fourteen years, he moved with his parents to Knox, Indiana, where he continued his education. At the age of seventeen years he enlisted in the Union Army and became a private in Company D, 29th Regiment Indiana Infantry. He was honorably discharged a year later, on July 1, 1865 at Nashville, Tennessee, and returned to Knox July 4th, with four others from this community.

He engaged in the mercantile business in Knox for several years and later started the Starke County Enterprise, now known as the Starke County Republican. He operated the paper about eight years, sold it and then entered the railway service where he remained about thirty-five years, at the time living in Chicago. After about forty-five years, he returned to Knox.

Mr. Garner was united in marriage to Mrs. Anna Fletcher Moore, sister of Attorney James C. Fletcher, on January 1, 1871. She passed away in February 1898.

Mr. Garner was a charter member of the Grand Army of the Republic of the William Landon Post and was honored many times by being chosen in honorary capacities. He possessed many fine badges, which he wore a great deal in later years and never tired of talking about them.

Each year, in some manner, he celebrated the years of his return from the army. On July 4th the year he died he wrote and read the following in honor of the 75th year of his discharge:

“The Passing Years
1865

June 26, Monday – Two hundred of us boys left Dalton, Georgia for Nashville, Tennessee, to be discharged from the army.

July 1, Saturday – Discharged at Nashville, Tennessee.

July 4, Tuesday – Four of us arrived at Knox, Indiana, about noon, after a walk from North Judson, Indiana and in time for a big picnic dinner in the grove at the south side of town, had a grand day. I remained a citizen of Knox until 1888 when I moved to Chicago and was away for over forty-five years.

1940

July 4, Thursday – celebrated at the old hometown, the seventy-fifth anniversary of my return from the army. The passing of the years brought great changes. The picnic grove is now part of the town and built over with homes. The familiar faces of that day are all gone, but some of their children still remain. May the blessings of Liberty and Peace remain forever.

Walked eighteen blocks today, July 4, 1940, in memory of the twelve miles seventy-five years ago.

W.W. Garner
Civil War Veteran”

Uncle Billy, as his many friends knew him, lived the last seven years of his life at the Home Hotel in downtown Knox. Mr. Garner is buried at Crown Hill Cemetery in Knox beside his wife Anna.