

# Gardner Newsletter

Summer, 2024

## Cogitations on the 2024 Gardner Family Reunion

### **Challenging Weather Conditions**

Climate change affects all of us – and if you’ve been following weather conditions, you know that the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont experienced massive flooding during the month of July. The Gardner Family Reunion was held July 13th at the NorthWoods Stewardship Center. Those who were there must have been surprised that the 10 Mile Square Road beginning at the Island Pond end was closed. Fortunately, this did not stop the reunion from happening as the East Charleston entrance to the 10 Mile Square Road remained open.

A week or so after the reunion in East Charleston, even more rain fell upon the beleaguered region closing the entrance to the Center’s grounds which are accessible from the East Charleston section of the road. Marie Cargill, granddaughter of Aunt Nita – and David and Ann Ames’ daughter – chronicled the devastation on her Facebook page. If you search for “Marie Cargill” on Facebook you will see the videos she posted about how she and her husband, Phil, helped their neighbors and friends throughout all the flooding. You’ll see graphic videos of the deluge that befell the area. Kudos to the Cargills for selflessly helping others in their time of need!

Since the reunion carried on as planned, we’re able to report on the great time everyone had – in spite of the weather.

### **Honorees and Presentation**

Naturally, we always honor The Original Gang of Ten members who attend. Aunt Beulah, 93, and Uncle Raymond, 98, posed for a wonderful picture as you can see (top right). What a privilege it is to know these nonagenarians, to be a part of their family, and to learn from their many years of lived experience. It can only be to your benefit if you make a special effort to be around them before next year’s reunion.



Uncle Raymond and Aunt Beulah - 2024

“Here’s hoping you’ll send in an article for our Fall 2024 issue.”



Grace Frizzell, President; Audrey Frizzell, Secretary, of The Charleston Historical Society

## Cogitations on the 2024 Gardner Family Reunion (continued)

Now let's move on to the "Frizzells." Grace and Audrey Frizzell, together, now manage The Charleston Historical Society after the passing of Richard Colburn, who was the curator of the Society for many years. Grace is now President and Audrey is Secretary of the organization. This year, the Gardner family chose to honor these two ladies who today are the faces of The Charleston Historical Society.

In recognition of the invaluable contributions that the Society makes to local, state, and national early 20th century culture, Cousin Rod Ames presented to Grace and Audrey one of Grandpa Gardner's bog shoes to be placed on display at the Society's museum in West Charleston. (Check out the picture above.) Each lady (including Aunt Beulah) was given a souvenir bound issue of Volume 6, Issue 23, Summer 2003 of the Gardner Newsletter which contained an article written by Aunt Beulah's husband, Don Griffes, explaining exactly what bog shoes are and how they are used. Uncle Don was a great friend of the newsletter, and he wrote many interesting and informative articles for the publication, so it is fitting that his widow, Aunt Beulah, be recognized and awarded this souvenir bound edition. Why not go online at [www.gardnernews.org](http://www.gardnernews.org) and find this special issue yourself and learn all about bog shoes!?



Rod Ames presents bog shoes for display at The Charleston Historical Society

### Attendees and First-Timers

Attendance this year was down from last year. Approximately 46 people were at the NorthWoods Stewardship Center as opposed to the more than 60 who usually attend. This did not dampen the enthusiasm, however, as everyone delighted in reconnecting and even meeting new attendees who had never been there before. Uncle Raymond's family is always the best represented group at our reunions. In fact, as you can see from the photo, all six of Uncle Raymond's children attended. Even more amazing is that all four of Cousin Stephen Gardner's (Uncle Raymond's son) children were there too. Full attendance at these Gardner events is fast becoming an annual tradition of

Uncle Raymond's extended family.

Let's talk about some of the "first-timers" who were there. I apologize if I've forgotten anyone, and please

let me know about any "first-timers" I might have missed. Cousin Jean Gonzalo's youngest son, Ron Gibbs – and his girlfriend, Alexandra – accompanied Jean, Miguel, and Paul to the festivities. Justin Seeholzer – and his girlfriend, Abbey – came along with his mother, Lorraine Shelton. Getting to meet Cousin Lorraine's husband, Steve Shelton, for the first time was an especially nice encounter.

Perhaps they weren't "first-timers," but visiting with Jay Griffes' wife, Kim, and Lorraine Shelton's

daughter, Diane, certainly made the reunion more than worthwhile. Let me know which attendees were very meaningful for you and who you would love to see at future reunions!



Raymond Gardner with his children - Gloria, Raylene, Sharon, Ellen, Cheryl, and Stephen



## Cogitations on the 2024 Gardner Family Reunion (continued)

### Looking Forward to the Future

We need your ideas and future participation to make the Gardner Family Reunions even more memorable. Please stay in contact with Cousins Paul and Rod to express your interest, suggestions, and how you can help.

For instance: Cousin Adele Dusablon suggested that at the next reunion we have a huge blown-up picture on display of Grandpa and Grandma Gardner at their 50th wedding anniversary surrounded by The Original Gang of Ten which was shot way back in 1962. This photo is iconic and is the first thing you see when you access [www.gardnernews.org](http://www.gardnernews.org). What do you think of this idea? Angela Jutra, one of Cousin Stephen Gardner's daughters,

is a whiz at genealogy. She can instantly pull up obscure relatives and relationships on her phone! Let's consider how we can put that skill to work for use in future get-togethers. We hope to hear from Angela herself in connection with this. Furthermore, Megan Ludgate Eaton (Cousin Raylene's daughter) expressed to Cousin Rod her desire to get involved with the planning and execution of new/future events. These two ladies are part of the next generation of Gardner Cousins who can carry on the tradition of "The Gardner Family

Reunion."

There's lots of talent to nurture here. Let's put it to good use to make our reunions more spectacular than ever.

### Expressions of Gratitude

Our host, The NorthWoods Stewardship

We want to thank Mike Ludgate for his photography prowess. His professional camera equipment plus his eagle eye for great content and expert perspective greatly enhance our experience at the reunions and his photographs and videos preserve the events for posterity.

Many thanks to Sharon Gardner who manages the distribution and placement of the many name badges involved with those who attend (as well as for those who don't). This is a frustrating job at best and Sharon willingly devotes her time and energy to make it work. Thanks, Sharon!

Special thanks go to everyone who prepared all the culinary delights and baked goods. Eating together is such a wonderful way to reconnect, isn't it?!

Most of all, though, our thanks go to YOU – our dear readers who are friends and family of the Gardners. YOU make it all possible just by being yourselves. Because of your connection to the Gardner family, you are preserving the almost extinct early 20th century family values that Grandma and Grandpa Gardner instilled in their children – The Original Gang of Ten. And now it's up to YOU to pick up the torch and run with it. So far, you're doing a great job!



THE ICONIC 1962 PHOTO OF GRANDMA AND GRANDPA GARDNER'S 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Center, is perhaps the perfect place to hold our reunions because of the fact that the land the Center occupies once belonged to Grandpa Gardner. Talk about a direct connection! Of course, we thank them profusely for allowing the Gardners to use their facilities. We hope that some of you noticed the wooden donation box in the main building. Hopefully, you dropped some funds in there; if not, you can still mail them a check at NorthWoods Stewardship Center, East Charleston, VT 05833.

Don't forget to log onto [www.gardnernews.org](http://www.gardnernews.org) to see Mike Ludgate's wonderful photos of the 2024 Gardner Family Reunion.

# HOW IT ALL BEGAN - The life and times of the Metcalf Family - PART II (continued from our last issue)

By: Ruth Anne Metcalf and Geri Rosser

(When we last left young Ruth Gardner, she and her friend Betty were attending the Riceville Nazarene Church and Ruth was about to meet her future husband, Henry Metcalf.)

Betty and Mom sang together and helped out in the church. Betty also drove her Dad's defense buses and was a big help to him. World War II was



**Metcalf Siblings: Ruth Anne, Geri, and Dick**

winding down but help in the defense plants was still very much needed. So, Mom took a job in the Corry, Pennsylvania plant.

Dad, apparently, often drove the bus that Mom rode to the defense plant in Corry. (He probably MADE SURE that he drove her bus, once things got rolling!) Mom was living with Betty Higgins, whose father was Dad's boss. Mom got to know Dad and found that he was pastoring the Riceville Methodist Church. Eventually, Mom and Dad began double-dating with Betty Higgins and her friend at the time, Rusty Gibbs. (Betty would later marry a gentleman by the name of Al Kuhn. Mom was writing to Al during his time in the service.) Mom, Dad, Betty and Rusty had a lot of fun together. They rode horses at Lake Canadohta, canoed up small streams, and rode motorcycles with Betty's cousins.

Henry's father had a nice Packard automobile, which he allowed him to borrow to take Ruth on

what was to be a day trip to Niagara Falls, New York. However, before they even reached Buffalo, the car began to overheat. They decided to turn around and go home, but they could only travel four or five miles at a time. At about 7:00 a.m. the next day, they made it to North East, Pennsylvania (our future home) where they called Henry's Dad. His Dad got another car and came to pick them up. Eventually, they figured out what the problem was and made it home, – BUT IT WAS SOME ADVENTURE!!

Before the summer ended, Dad had made plans to go back to school and to West Virginia. His version of how he asked Mom to marry him goes as follows:

“I'm planning to return to West Virginia to preach and to go to school and I could use someone to look after me. What do you think about it?”

Mom answered, “I'm in favor of it!”

So began their odyssey together. Regarding the wedding, Mom said: “Thanks to Henry's Mom and Dad, we had a beautiful wedding in Fredonia, Pennsylvania.”



**Cousin Dick Metcalf with his son, Andy**

Ruth's folks were unable to come to the wed-



# HOW IT ALL BEGAN - The life and times of the Metcalf Family - PART II (continued from our last issue)

By: Ruth Anne Metcalf and Geri Rosser

ding, but they sent a turkey for the wedding feast!

## OVER THE YEARS

Henry went back to West Virginia and was given a student pastorate called “The Phillipi



Greg and Geri Rosser

Circuit”. There was a small parsonage there where they made their home. They were quite impressed by the fact that almost every room had a fireplace in it. They were coal fireplaces and were used to heat the house. Dad preached in three churches one Sunday, and the other three the next. Their income was \$75.00 a month. Dad pastored here for a little under three years.

It was here that Richard Lee Metcalf was born. Mom and Dad Metcalf helped them out, so he

was well taken care of. Dad was hit by a drunk driver and his leg was broken. He had to have his leg put in a cast for six months. Mom and Dad then decided to join forces with Henry’s Dad in evangelistic work in Pennsylvania. They moved in with Henry’s folks in their large home. Dad did meetings with Grandpa Metcalf. Henry directed the music and his Dad preached.

Dad relates his first real encounter with Christ’s grace:

“It was during one of our meetings in Pleasantville, Pennsylvania, that I came to know Jesus as my Lord. My Dad had thought me to be a Christian, but I knew better! That experience caused me to see a LOT of things differently, including WHERE THE VOICE HAD COME FROM THAT SAVED MY LIFE!”

The meetings ran out and they had to have employment. Dad used a small motorbike to get around to tune pianos. This money helped to keep them going, but it wasn’t enough to pay the bills. Dad says:

“Through it all Ruthie was so patient and helpful...

I’m sure she did a lot more praying than I did... It seemed to be her nature!”

Dad and Grandpa Metcalf worked together doing janitorial work at the General Electric Plant in Erie, Pennsylvania. Everything was going very well, and Mom and Dad found a place on Land Contract in the country above Lowville, Pennsylvania. Eventually, Dad began driving a semi-truck. They moved to Ripley, New York and lived in an upstairs apartment. Dad says:

“It was here that Ruth Anne decided to present



Kim, Andy, and Cousin Dick Metcalf

her appearance! I had just barely gotten back from a run to Syracuse-Utica, when Ruthie said ‘It’s Time!’ We then proceeded to Hamot Hospital in



## HOW IT ALL BEGAN - The life and times of the Metcalf Family - PART II (continued from our last issue)

By: Ruth Anne Metcalf and Geri Rosser

Erie, Pennsylvania, where, in due time, Ruth Anne did appear! I wasn't able to be there when Dick was born; so, when they brought her out for me to see, I was dumbfounded! I never dreamed babies were so small... and so.... well, YOU KNOW!"

Dad had quit his first job driving truck because of problems with his boss.

He worked pumping gas and opened a radio repair shop to keep them going. Later, he took another job with a new employer who ran a good trucking firm. Things were much better there.

After several years, Dad got a call from a Methodist Church in Edinburg, Pennsylvania. They moved there. Dick and Ruth Anne were growing fast. Dad says he became quite depressed, perhaps because his message of holiness was not reaching the congregation. His doctor suggested that he take a respite from the ministry, so they moved back to Ripley and drove truck again. Dad says:

"Poor Ruthie! All this moving must have taken its toll, but she never complained!"

Dad had several jobs. He sold Stanley Home Products for a while, which didn't work out. Ruth, Dick and Ruth Anne went to live with Grandma and Grandpa Metcalf, while Dad tried to make a go of it in North East, Pennsylvania. He worked for the Sunshine Packing Company and eventual-

ly began to manage their trucking fleet. He found a farm five miles outside of North East, which they bought on land contract. Ruthie and the children moved back and settled into life in the country. Dad says:

"While living in the country, Geri decided to put in her appearance! She was welcome, of course, and her presence added to the many exciting occurrences there!"



Cousin Ruth Anne Metcalf

Most of our family shares many memories of this time. Life in the country was a very cherished experience indeed! Dad briefly pastored a small church in Erie, Pennsylvania. Earl Gardner's children, Linda, Jean, and Paul, stayed with us for a while. We picked wild strawberries, swam in the local swimming hole, and watched with horror as older brother Dick twirled a black snake around his shoulders!

One day Dad brought home a cake and announced that we were having an "UNBIRTHDAY PARTY!" We all said, "It's nobody's birthday!" He said, "THAT'S WHY IT'S AN UNBIRTHDAY PARTY!" (Dad was, and still does, look for any excuse to have something sweet!) Our cousins Linda, Paul and Jean ate the wax candles off of the cake, which my brother and I thought was VERY STRANGE!

We had chickens, a cow, a beagle, a goat, and a

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## Grandma Gardner's Descendant, Jim Maria, Marries Longtime Sweetheart

It's not very often we get to hear any news about Grandma Gardner's side of the family. But, thanks to Facebook and Bunny Maria's daughter, Charlene Baker, we get to see some pictures of Bunny's son, Jim, getting married to his longtime sweetheart, Paula. Thanks Charlene!

Bunny Maria is a first cousin to Aunt Beulah and Uncle Raymond, from their mother's side of the family. Bunny's mother, Laura, was Grandma Gardner's sister and for many, many years she operated an iconic roadside vegetable stand in Stow, MA.

Bunny currently resides at Bear Mountain in Sudbury, MA. As these pictures show, she attended the wedding of her son, Jim Maria, to his girlfriend of many years, Paula. Because of the brief Facebook posting, we don't have the exact date or the venue of Jim's and Paula's nuptials. You can contact Charlene Baker to find out those details. Suffice it to say that all the friends and family who are part of *Gardner News* offer congratulations and wish the very best for Jim and Paula.

Way back in 2003, *Gardner News* covered Bunny's 50-year wedding anniversary held in Maynard, MA. Also, there is a whole page devoted to that celebration on the *Gardner News* website. You can access it here: [Bunny and Tony's 50th Anniversary \(gardnernews.org\)](https://gardnernews.org)

On the next page, we've reposted an org chart that was published in the newsletter years ago which shows Eleanor Christiansen (Bunny) listed at the very right and bottom of the diagram and illustrates her relationship to others in Grandma Gardner's (née French) family.

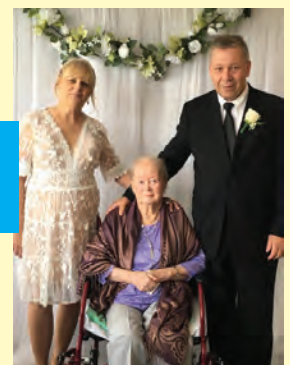
Let's hope that this is not the last time we hear of news from Grandma Gardner's side of the family; and, again, congratulations to the newlyweds – Jim and Paula!

Bunny Maria, 94, at Bear Mountain in Sudbury, MA



Paula and Jim Maria - 2024

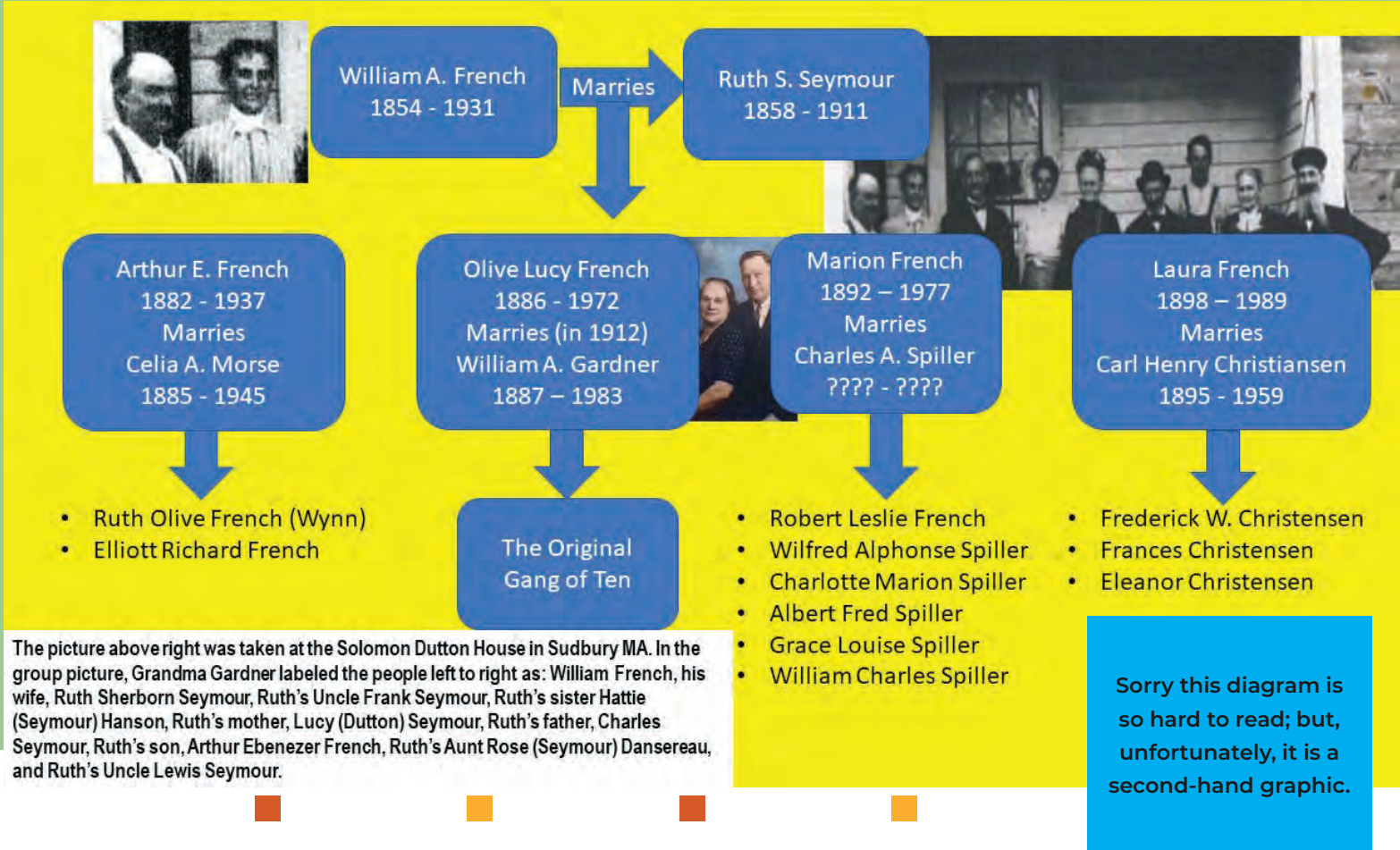
Paula, Bunny, and Jim Maria - 2024



# Grandma Gardner's Descendant, Jim Maria, Marries Longtime Sweetheart (continued)



From left to right: Steve (Son Charles Maria's partner/husband); Charles Maria, Charlene Baker, Jim Maria, Paula Maria, Bunny Maria, Amr Baker (Charlene's husband)



The picture above right was taken at the Solomon Dutton House in Sudbury MA. In the group picture, Grandma Gardner labeled the people left to right as: William French, his wife, Ruth Sherborn Seymour, Ruth's Uncle Frank Seymour, Ruth's sister Hattie (Seymour) Hanson, Ruth's mother, Lucy (Dutton) Seymour, Ruth's father, Charles Seymour, Ruth's son, Arthur Ebenezer French, Ruth's Aunt Rose (Seymour) Dansereau, and Ruth's Uncle Lewis Seymour.



## Dan and Nancy Whitney Retire from Ministry in the Church of the Nazarene

Here is Dan and Nancy Whitney's Facebook post announcing their upcoming retirement from serving as pastors in the Church of the Nazarene.

"Forty-three years ago, Nancy and I, newly married, packed up our few belongings and headed for Port Huron, Michigan to help a congregation start a Christian school. We were both full time teachers; and, in addition, I served the congregation as youth pastor and worship leader/choir director. Since then, we have served congregations in Virginia Beach, VA, Kansas City, MO, La Fargeville, NY, Plymouth, MI, East Providence, RI, Henniker, NH, and finally, Manchester CT. On March 8, 2011, I felt the distinct call of God to engage with the congregation here in Manchester; and, in the days that followed, my family and the family here confirmed that call. Nancy and I have served here for thirteen years, at this point- but the time has come for retirement. It has become increasingly clear to me that I no longer have the stamina or bandwidth to continue leading this congregation. Caring for my father is an important expressin of my

Christian faith, and this responsibility, along with the pressures of school, encroaching governmental directives, the ever-present demands of the facility, and the need for younger, more resilient leadership all factor into my decision. My health isn't what it used to be. I also suspect that the COVID years have taken a toll on



Retiring from Ministry: Cousin Nancy and Rev. Dan Whitney

me emotionally from which I am still struggling to recover. Please understand, I still believe the promise of scripture that God will make a way for the Manchester Church of the Nazarene. The words of Isaiah 43 are still true: "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." I suspect, however, that

the new thing that God will do in Manchester involves a new pastoral family who will continue the work of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ in this area. Nancy and I have loved our years here. Nancy has found fulfillment in working in the CCS library, the CR program, and especially in working with the children of our church. I have exercised every bit of creativity that I possess on behalf of the ministries of the church. We will deeply miss the friends we have made here. As you know, when a pastoral family moves on from a church, they leave all the friends they have behind, which makes leaving especially hard for them. We also have no home, nor any sense of where home really is. So, we ask for your prayers during these days, as we look for a place to live.

In the back of our minds, we would like to stay through October 31, 2024. I have invited the District Superintendent to meet with the Board on August 20 to begin negotiating the details of the transition. We will work diligently to assure a smooth transition, and trust that together, we can glorify God by the work we do to prepare for new leaders.



# Dan and Nancy Whitney Retire from Church of the Nazarene Ministry (continued)

Thank you for the love and kindness you have shown to us over the last thirteen years. We will hold you forever in our hearts.

In Christ's Love, Dan and Nancy Whitney"

**(Editor's Note:** Dan and Nancy - and their two young boys, Greg and Jonathan - were featured in the second issue of the Gardner Newsletter that was published way back in 1998. They were preparing for their new pastorate at the Bethany Church of the Nazarene in Rumford, RI. This was a Portuguese congregation, and everyone was excited about experiencing the culture, food, and making new friends.

We love "full circle" stories. Now, here it is 26 years later, and the Whitneys are beginning a new era focusing on their retirement years which we know is well earned and deserved.

The Whitneys have devoted their whole lives to others - and now it's our turn to focus on them as they begin this latest chapter in their lives. Let's spur them on with best wishes and offer our assistance in any way we can to help make sure their retirement is the best possible one they could ever have.

Congratulations to Dan and Nancy!



Pastor Dan and Nancy with Jonathan and Greg at Bethany Church of the Nazarene in Rumford, RI - 1998

## MORE OF "HOW IT ALL BEGAN"

(Continued from Page 6)

good-sized garden. (To this day, my Dad still swears that I climbed up on the garage roof, put several chickens in a basket, and dropped them off the roof! I admit to this, but he says that I then tried to fly as well!)

While living there, we started attending a small Free Methodist Church in North East, PA. When the pastor moved elsewhere, Dad was asked to pastor the church. We moved in and were there for 3 1/2 years. This

## MORE OF "HOW IT ALL BEGAN"

was a difficult time for the family, as we were split up for about a year. Dad says:

"Even though I had experienced some very deep and meaningful spiritual things, I wound up confused and frustrated and fell into the enemy's trap, leaving my beloved family to pursue what seemed to my deluded mind, more worthy goals. I did not suffer long under this delusion. It was very hard on Ruthie and the children; and after a year, we retrenched as a



## MORE OF "HOW IT ALL BEGAN"

family. During that time, I was able to seek and find God's mercy available personally, and to reconcile with Ruthie, and, I hoped, our children. My parents and sister, Marge, were really very supportive during that time also. In fact, Ruthie and the children lived with Marge in Kane, Pennsylvania."

While in Kane, Dick graduated from High School and decided to join the Army. He was 17 years old. The rest of the family moved first to Erie, PA. and then to Jackson, Michigan. We lived in a large house belonging to Don Griffes' grandmother (Don Griffes is Ruth's sister's (Beulah) husband). Dad worked for Don,

and also for a small sign shop in Spring Arbor, Michigan. We eventually moved there.

Finally, here are a few highlights of the next few years, as written by Dad:

"We all seemed to simply learn to trust the Lord for guidance and providence more than ever. Rod and Irene Ames, (Nita's firstborn Son and his wife), were living nearby in Jackson at that time, and we chummed with them a lot.

(Stay tuned for Part III of "How it All Began" in our next issue)

## More Pictures from the Gardner Family Reunion - 2024





*Gardner Reunion July 13th 2024 - Michael L.*

**Even More Pictures from the Gardner Family Reunion - 2024**

