

Dear Mother,

I would like to apologize to you for all of the stress I have caused you these past few weeks.

Sorry for the brutal journey I put you through in a futile attempt for freedom. I know that piling in a horse sleigh and walking across an icy river in January was not good for your health.[1] I knew freedom would be worth any brief discomfort we had suffered, but our freedom did not last long. Why, it must have been only ten in the morning when the Deputy Marshal arrived with his crew at Kite's doorstep, ready to capture us all.[2] I know you did not raise me to be a violent man, but I had to do everything to protect you, Father, Margaret, and the kids. I did not mean to injure anyone by firing the revolver, I simply wanted to buy us some time.[3]

Mother, I am most sorry that I could not shield you from the horror our predicament has caused.

Never in my life will I be able to erase the image of my baby's head detached from her neck.[4]

My dreams are filled with the screams of the other kids as they desperately fend off Margaret's attacks.[5] I will never understand why she thought it best to take away our child's life than allow her to grow up enslaved, but I love her, and I must stand by her through this difficult time.

I was naïve enough to believe that our troubles would be over after that day. Following news of the indictment[6] I was fairly certain that Margaret would eventually be charged with murder, but I never imagined that Father and I would be charged as accessories to the crime.[7]

Furthermore, I felt so strongly that we would be able to remain in Cincinnati. Margaret and I had both been to Ohio before this Fugitive Slave act was passed so surely, we should have been considered free long before our escape.[8] You also came with me when I visited Ohio before, so you should have been considered free as well.[9] I guess we should have just stayed when

Marshal brought us to Ohio before, right? The defense was able to win by arguing that we returned willingly to Kentucky and later chose to escape. [10]

I wanted you to know that there were a lot of people in Cincinnati fighting for us. Several even collected donations to help pay Jolliffe, our lawyer, for his hard work.[11] While he put up his best, fight it was to no avail. I felt so sorry Mother as you wept while we were swiftly delivered back into the hands we had so bravely tried to outrun.[12] Know that I love you for the bravery and strength you exhibited throughout this entire ordeal. Thank you for supporting Margaret and I as we push through this difficult time. While I will never get over the loss of my child, I hope that our family will be able to move beyond this event toward a brighter future.

Love,

Robert

[1] “Arrest of Fugitive Slaves: A Slave Mother Murders Her Child Rather than See It Returned to Slavery.” *Anti-Slavery bugle [volume]* (New-Lisbon, Ohio), Feb. 2, 1856. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Cox, Joseph, correspondence to Governor Salmon P. Chase, May 15, 1856 & April 29, 1856. *Ohio History Connection*, State Archives Series 631, BV226.

[7] “Annual Report.” *Anti-slavery bugle. [volume]* (New-Lisbon, Ohio), Dec. 27, 1856. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress.

[8] Stephen Middleton. "The Fugitive Slave Crisis in Cincinnati, 1850-1860: Resistance, Enforcement, and Black Refugees." *The Journal of Negro History* 72, no. 1/2 (1987): 29

[9] Cincinnati Daily Gazette, February 27, 1856 "The Fugitive Slave Cases. Decision of Commissioner Pendery. The Fugitives remanded back to Slavery," in *Who Speaks for Margaret Garner?*, Mark Reinhardt (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 114.

[10] Ibid, 116.

[11] Stephen Middleton. "The Fugitive Slave Crisis in Cincinnati, 1850-1860: Resistance, Enforcement, and Black Refugees." *The Journal of Negro History* 72, no. 1/2 (1987): 29

[12] "Annual Report." *Anti-slavery bugle. [volume]* (New-Lisbon, Ohio), Dec. 27, 1856. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress.

Obituary of Robert Garner

On this somber day of April 20, 1871, the world says a peaceful goodbye to Simon (Robert) Garner Jr.[1] Robert passed away due to a lost battle with tuberculosis.[2] He will be remembered by friends and family for his honor and his bravery. Many recall the time he fired shots at a US State Marshal in an attempt to shield his family from their return to a life of slavery.[3] He again showcased his bravery by fighting for the Union in the Civil War.[4] He is preceded in death by his first wife, Margaret, and two of their children. While suspicions surround the death of their second child, who tragically drowned, Robert fiercely defended Margaret to his death that she did not intentionally kill a second child of theirs.[5] Those who wish to pay their respects to Robert Garner can attend a memorial service held tomorrow in the Walnut Hills area of Cincinnati, where he lived out his final days with his second wife.[6]

[1] Nikki M. Taylor, *Driven Toward Madness: The Fugitive Slave Margaret Garner and Tragedy on the Ohio* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2016), 127.

[2] Ibid.

[3] "Stampede of Slaves: A Tale of Horror." *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, January 29, 1856. From *The Cincinnati Enquirer Archives*. Accessed December 3, 2017, http://enquirer.com/editions/1998/10/02/loc_w_slave02.html.

[4] Taylor, *Driven to Madness*, 127.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.