



FAMILY ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER
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2001 VVV REUNION REPORT

From reports submitted by Cheryl Kelley and Jim Vaughters

The 2001 VVV Reunion was held at the Arlington Hotel in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Registration began on Thursday, August 2, in the Magnolia Room with a reception that evening. This year's hosts, Vernon and Traudl Vawter greeted everyone and Jim Vaughters had the archives on display. Fun and memories were shared by all. The reception was headed up by Ken and Norma Wicker.

FRIDAY

Registration continued on Friday morning in the foyer of the Ballroom. The opening meeting, held in the Ballroom, was called to order by the president, Ken Wicker, with a welcome to all. The traditional "ringing of the cowbell" was by James Quigley, son of Karla Vawter Quigley, and grandson of Jesse and Laneill Vawter. (Some may not know that the cowbell was made many years ago by Vernon Vawter.) Invocation was given by Karla Vawter Quigley. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by McDaniel Wicker, son of Roger and Gayle Wicker, and grandson of Fred and Wordna Wicker. Several items of business were discussed and new members were introduced.

The center aisle was "decorated" by Georgene Jurgenson's paper, including a listing of all the various spellings of the name that have appeared in public records. The number of spellings is amazing - 45!

The first genealogy session was to have been Marvin Vawter's presentation of his paper, "The Forgotten Man." He was unable to be present, so those who knew the story filled in for him. Marvin is a former president of the association. His great-great-grandfather William Vawter, son of David, was an officer in the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War. The Continental Army was the professional and prestigious army, different from the militia. After the war, the officers formed the Society of Cincinnati, in which membership is limited to one male descendant of each officer. Marvin has the honor of holding membership as a descendant of William. As far as is known, William was the only V/V/V who was an officer in the Continental Army.

Georgene distributed and explained the "Cousins Chart," which always works in calculating relationships such as your half-uncle's 3rd cousin twice removed! If you would like a chart, please let us know.

Friday midday was the luncheon river cruise on the Belle of Hot Springs. It was a pleasant trip and the only way to see the homes of the wealthiest families in the area.

Friday afternoon's genealogy session was a display and description of the archives we have collected through the years. Our historian/archivist Jim Vaughters has promised to have them organized and indexed by the next reunion.

A buffet dinner featuring barbecue and catfish was enjoyed on Friday night. A highlight of the evening was good ole country music on the keyboard, played by our host, Vernon Vawter.

Jim Vaughters gave an update on the Swift and Julian Vaughter project in Elbert County, Georgia, and had more of their documents on display. He also told that it will be possible to hold the 2002 reunion in Elbert County.

SATURDAY

Saturday was reserved for everyone to do their own thing. Many attended genealogy and story telling sessions; others shopped and toured Hot Springs.

The morning genealogy session was one of the best ever. Georgene drew on her years of research in describing and charting the first four generations of V/V/V in America. She made it interesting in addition to being accurate and detailed.

The story telling session in the afternoon was a wide mixture of reminiscences, jokes, sad times, and serious thoughts. This family has no shortage of stories to tell!

The Saturday night banquet was a wonderful way to close the reunion. The hotel food was delicious, the V/V/V Family Singers, led by Ellen Cummings, were entertaining, and the door prizes were delightful. Vernon was given a standing ovation, and he and his cousins made a beautiful sight when they all got together.

The Memorial service was conducted by Fred and Wordna Wicker, with flowers being placed in a vase by James Quigley and Jordan Joling. Jackie Hudson sang "Precious Memories"

The nominating committee recommended the following be elected as officers for the coming year: President, Ken Wicker; Vice-President, Jesse Vawter; Secretary, Judy Blanks; Treasurer, Norma Jean Vawter; Assistant Treasurer, Barbara Vawter; Historian/Archivist, Jim Vaughters; Newsletter Editor, Bonita Welch; Associate Editor, Caroline Scarlett. All were elected by acclamation.

The youngest person in attendance was James Quigley, age 11; oldest was Silas Vawter, age 88; and the longest married were Evert and Maxine Joling, 56 years. Traveling the farthest was Marjorie Vawter from California. The roll call of states showed Texas having the largest number present - 16.

An invitation was extended by Jim Vaughters for the 2002 reunion to be held in Elberton, Georgia.

POSTSCRIPT FROM JIM VAUGHTERS

After the banquet on Saturday night, Sherry Neal showed up at the hotel with three relatives. She lives in Hot Springs, had just heard of the reunion, and had stories of being raised by "Grandpa Vawter." We are sorry Sherry missed the weekend, but welcome her to the association and hope to see her next year.

FUND RAISERS

A highlight of the reunions for several years has been the door prizes. Patricia Vawter Renton, of Pipe Creek, Texas, brought a lap quilt she had made, and instead of giving it away, it was decided to hold an auction. It was bought by Bob and Donna Vawter of Middletown, Delaware for \$140.00.

Vernon Vawter donated about 100 of his sketches of Vawter's Church. They were quickly sold out, with all the money given to the association.

With the money from the quilt auction, the sale of the sketches, and many people making donations, several hundred dollars were added to the treasury.

DIRECTORY

Before the Saturday night banquet, Jesse and Laniell Vawter took pictures of each one in attendance, and Cheryl Kelley got information from everyone so a directory can be compiled. If you did not attend the reunion, but would like to be included in the directory, please send a photograph - family or individual - to Jesse and Laniell. Jesse is vice-president of the association, and his address can be found at the beginning of this newsletter. Be sure to include your name, address, phone number, e-mail address, birthdate and how you fit on the Vawter(s)Vawter/Vaughter(s) family tree. They need to received this no later than December 1, 2001. There will be a nominal cost for the directory.

WHERE IS ELBERT COUNTY, GEORGIA?

Those V/V/V members who are accustomed to staying in luxury hotels, taking guided tours in air-conditioned buses, and sitting in comfortable meeting rooms to listen to presentations will have a different experience at the 2002 reunion. The Association voted, after hearing the hardships described to them, to meet in the area where John Vawter appears in the records in 1801. Elbert County, Georgia, is east of Atlanta and Athens, on the Savannah River that forms the boundary with South Carolina, and between Interstate Highways 85 and 20. The enclosed brochure describes the town of Elberton and the county.

Headquarters will be at the Civic Center, not a hotel. Suggested accommodations available in Elberton are the Holiday Inn Express (43 rooms), 706-283-8811, and Day's Inn (35 rooms), 706-283-2300. Ten miles out of town is Richard Russell State Park, with ten cottages. Each will sleep about six people. If you want to stay at the park, it is important to call now. The phone number is 1-800-864-7275.

The tentative schedule is as follows:

Wednesday, July 31, late afternoon -
Early birds arrive and visit the farm of Swift and Julian Vaughter.

Thursday, August 1, 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. -
Trip to Franklin County, historical society, James and Hiram Vaughter's farm, cemetery, etc.
4:00-9:00 p.m. -
Civic Center in Elberton, registration, reception, executive meeting

Friday, August 2 -
Opening meeting, ceremony at farm to dedicate park, tour the farm buildings, original house on farm, courthouse, monuments in town, Sons of the American Revolution ceremony, church cemetery - Sons of Confederate Veterans

Saturday, August 3 -
Go to Winder to see furniture from Swift and Julian's house,
Visit Ruckersville, return to Elberton for story-telling and banquet

Sunday, August 4 -
Service at Harmony Baptist Church, visit 200-year old restored house

As you can see, the genealogy sessions will be a matter of "go to where they lived" rather than sit and talk about them.

It is guaranteed to be hot and humid, and the woods will be full of chiggers. But, this is a once-in-a-lifetime event, so plan to be there!

HIRAM VAUGHTERS
submitted by Jim Vaughters

James and Jane Vawter/Vaughters settled in Franklin County, Georgia, in the early 1800s. James' father, John Vawter, was living in adjacent Elbert County with his second wife, Joanna Vernon. All ten of James and Jane's children were born in Franklin. The first was named William, probably for James' brother who, like James, was born in North Carolina to John's first wife, Franky Ward.

They named their second child Hiram S. Vaughter. Jane had been born in 1794, and living near them and selling land to them was Hiram Bennett, who was born in 1796. There is a good possibility that Jane and Hiram Bennett were siblings.

Hiram S. Vaughter was born in 1814, and lived his entire life in Franklin. He married Elizabeth Glenn in 1832. Their second child, Samuel Hiram, was born in 1837 and became a teacher, an officer in the Confederate Army, a P.O.W., and finally a teacher in the Indian Territory of Oklahoma. Their fourth child, born in 1841, was named Hiram J. He joined the Confederate Army at the same time as Samuel, but died in camp at Athens, Georgia, in 1862. Hiram J. was the second Hiram to die. His father, Hiram S. had died in 1853.

By the time Hiram J. died, his uncle, Lindsey Vaughters, brother of Hiram S., had married and was raising children in Dawson County, Georgia. His last child was Hiram Bennett Singleton Vaughters, born in 1865. The old matriarch Jane, who had moved to the mountains after James died, took all of her children except Hiram S. Having lost that son and his son of the same name, undoubtedly she was influential in the choice of name for Hiram Bennett Singleton, the 4th Vaughters man to have the name (including Samuel.)

Jane died in 1884. A short newspaper article in 1886 stated that Hiram Vaughters died in a prison in Atlanta. The only Hiram living at that time was Hiram Bennett Singleton. The article said that he was buried in Dawson County.

By that time, the patriarch of the family was Rev. George Robinson Vaughters, oldest son of Lindsey and Marinda Hicks Vaughters. George and his wife, Epsy Bennett, had sons in the following years: 1881, William Oscar Aiken; 1883, Linzey; 1885, Homer Charley.

After Jane and her grandson Hiram Bennett Singleton Vaughters had died in 1884 and 1886, George and Epsy Vaughters had one more son in 1891. What should they name him?

Living in that Shoal Creek area of Dawson County was an elderly couple who were relatives. Robert Bennett had married Jane Vaughter, a daughter of James and Jane who was born in 1829. Robert and Jane had a son whom they named Solomon Andrew Jackson Bennett. His tombstone at Bethel Baptist Church has his full name as well as the Masonic emblem.

"Uncle Jack," as Solomon Andrew Jackson Bennett was known, wanted to have that Vaughters boy named for him. It is not yet known exactly how Epsy was related to Robert, but the Bennett's and Vaughters' have been related forever it seems. George and Epsy agreed to give that name to him.

The Solomon Andrew Jackson certainly recognized the long and distinguished history of part of the Bennett family. But George and Epsy were not satisfied. They probably were thinking of Jane and her long life in Franklin, Lumpkin, and Dawson Counties. They surely thought of Hiram S., who died of a stroke while mining for gold in Lumpkin; of Samuel Hiram, who by then was living in Oklahoma; Hiram J., who died in a Confederate camp; and Hiram Bennett Singleton, George's youngest brother. And if Hiram Bennett was in fact a brother of Jane, there was another component in honoring the Bennett family.

Hiram Vaughters (Con't)

George and Epsey culminated many colorful family histories by naming my grandfather Hiram Solomon Andrew Jackson Vaughters. He was the last in that long line of Georgia Vaughters to carry the honored name of Hiram.

In the Samuel Hiram Vaughter family, the name has been passed to his descendants, and now belongs to Samuel's great-grandson, Paul Hiram Vaughter, Jr. of Sauk Rapids, Minnesota. Paul is the brother of former VVV president, Phil Vaughter.

- Jim Vaughters

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

The events of September 11, 2001, affected us all in some way. It is a day that we will always remember "where we were" and "what we were doing."

For Paul and Connie Bugos of Farmington, Illinois, it was a day of personal loss. They had worked all day, and kept their business open late because of the long lines of people wanting gas. They were the only ones in their town still selling at a decent price, and at times there was a 1 ½ hour wait. After arriving home about 9:30 p.m., Paul was watching the reports on television and Connie was in the kitchen when she smelled something like plastic burning and discovered their house was on fire. Their bedroom, bathroom, a half bath and laundry room were completely destroyed. They lost all their clothing and bedroom furniture, and the rest of the downstairs had heavy smoke damage. Much of the house will need to be rebuilt and it will be four to six months before they can move back in. Still, they are thankful, realizing what could have been.

For Richard and Dorothy Vawter of New York City, the actual events were closer to home. They live in Manhattan at 211 East 18th Street, only 2 ½ miles from the site of the World Trade Center. So, while we were watching television and listening to the radio, Richard and Dorothy were "there."

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to first time grandparents, Phil and Peggy Vaughter of Austin, Texas. Reid Alen Marsh was born 9 June 2001 to daughter Courtney and her husband. Reid weighed 7 lbs 15 oz, was 21", and had, as Grandpa said, "a smile and curly brown hair."

A PERSONAL NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Family obligations kept us from the 2001 reunion, and Joe and I want to thank everyone for the card sent from those in attendance. We look forward to seeing everyone in Georgia in 2002.

LOOKING FOR COUSIN

Mary Beth Norwich is looking for her cousin, Richard "Richie" Vawter. He is the son of Amelia Norwich Vawter, who is deceased, and Theodore "Teddy" Vawter. Richard is in his 40s, his wife may be named Patricia, and he has an deceased older brother named Teddy, who is buried in Morgantown, West Virginia. She said he may have lived in Houston, Texas, at one time.

Mary Beth's need to locate her cousin involves the sale of timber on the Norwich farm in West Virginia. Her address is 2024 Mason-Dixon Highway, Core WV 26529, and her phone number is 304-879-4568. She does not have e-mail.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Thomas Lamar Wiley III, 26, died suddenly Saturday, September 15, 2001, at Baptist Memorial Hospital in Oxford, Mississippi.

He was a 1993 graduate of Jackson, Mississippi, Preparatory School, where he participated in football, basketball and track, and served as president of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. He was a member of First Baptist Church Jackson's Boy Scout Troop 8 and attained the rank of Eagle Scout. An active member of the church, he was president of the youth council, a member of the New Revelation youth choir and participated in many mission endeavors.

Mr. Wiley graduated from Mississippi State University in 1997 with a degree in communications. While there he served as president of Roadrunners student recruiters, was a senator in the student association, a member of Kappa Sigma fraternity and an officer in the Baptist Student Union. He served as a student summer missionary in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and was employed as a summer intern at World Com.

On June 21, 1997, he married Laurie Michelle Dabbs, and they moved to Murfreesboro, Tennessee, where he was vice-president of corporate communications for American School Directory. He was an active member of River Oaks Community Church in Murfreesboro, serving as a member of the leadership team and the staff search team and was a couples Bible study leader. At the time of his death, he and his wife were relocating to Tupelo, Mississippi, where he was associated with Document Imaging Services.

Surviving with his wife are his parents, Thomas Lamar and Merrie Wiley of Jackson; a brother, David Arthur Wiley of Jackson; sisters, Mary Elizabeth Wiley and Julia Katherine Wiley of Jackson; grandmothers, Mary Helen Coburn of Ridgeland and Pearl Robbins Wiley of Tupelo; a great-uncle, William Wiley, of the U.S. Navy Retirement Home in Gulfport, Mississippi; and a great-aunt, Addie Edwards of Concord, North Carolina. He was preceded in death by his grandfather, Thomas Lamar Wiley.

Funeral service was held the First Baptist Church in Jackson, with burial at Parkway Memorial Cemetery in Jackson.

Thomas Lamar Wiley, grandfather of Thomas Lamar Wiley III, was a brother of Ora Wiley Wicker, the mother of Ken and Fred Wicker.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Funeral service for Shirley Ellen Vawter Byler, 92, of Sweeny, Texas, was held Saturday, September 8, 2001, at First Baptist Church in Old Ocean, Texas. Burial was at Sweeny Cemetery.

Shirley was born May 1, 1909, in Neosho, Missouri, the daughter of Albert Calvin and Frances Josephine Churchwell Vawter. She graduated from Southwest Baptist College and William & Jewell College and received her Master of Arts Degree in Counseling and Education from Missouri University at Columbia. She also attended Southwestern Theological Seminary in Ft. Worth. She was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution for over 35 years. At the age of 11, she was saved and then baptized into the membership of the Woodland Baptist Church. In early years, she was a missionary volunteer and in later years became a member of the Mission Service Corp, which is a volunteer group of the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Denomination.

Through the years, she kept busy as a mother, pastor's wife, school teacher and doll maker. She learned how to make marionettes and used them in church and school. In addition to teaching school for 33 years, she had also been a writer for many years. She sold her first poem while in high school. In junior college, she won 1st place in the state of Missouri Sunday School prohibition contest and 1st place in the Southwide WMU Tithing Story contest. After retiring from teaching school, she learned to use the computer and wrote and published two family history books. In October 1997, Southwest Baptist University conferred the honor of Life Service Award to her in recognition of outstanding Christian service.

Survivors include her husband of 67 years, the Rev. Roger L. Byler; a son, David Byler; a daughter, Elizabeth Melton; grandchildren, Robert Howard, Richard Howard, Randall Howard, Beverly Cowan, Gregg Howard, Daniel Byler and Matthew Byler; and great-grandchildren, Robyn Mathews, Austin Howard, Aisha Howard, Spence Howard, and Austin Byler. She was preceded in death by a daughter, Susan Esther Byler; and grandsons, Bert Howard and Timothy Byler.

Shirley and Roger have been members of the VVV Association for many years, and their daughter, Beth Melton, is a past president and secretary of the association.

One of the family history books Shirley wrote is *The Family of Albert and Josie Vawter*. This book tells not only about the descendants of Albert and Josie, but also the ancestors of Albert. It is an especially interesting account of the life of William and Frances Vawter, who were the great-grandparents of Shirley. William had kept a diary of sorts by writing on the backs of old letters and on scraps of paper. Most of his notes were dated and signed. Shirley was able to borrow those papers from the late Wallace Vawter, a grandson of William, put the notes in chronological order and included them in her book. An example of a note is: "26 May 1838 Received of my Mother-in-law Anna Vawter for safe keeping \$2.50."

Shirley attended many reunions, the last one being in 1998 in Austin, Texas. She was very proud of her Vawter heritage.

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