



## **FAMILY ASSOCIATION**

April 2003 – Page 1  
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### **NEWSLETTER April 2003**

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Dues - \$7.00 per year

IF A RENEWAL FORM IS ENCLOSED, YOU NEED TO PAY DUES

2003 REUNION INFORMATION  
from Jesse Vawter, Association President

Why not combine the 2003 VVV reunion with an awesome family vacation? Pensacola is certainly the place to do it !! Gulf Island National Seashore – beautiful “sugar like” white pristine beaches with emerald water.

The dates are Thursday, July 31, through Sunday, August 5. As many know, at the banquet you were given a survey seeking input to make the reunions better and more what the cousins want. Those that were completed and returned were tabulated, and the most requested single item was to hold down or reduce the cost.

Ralphe Vawter volunteered to host the 2003 reunion. Ralphe has done a fantastic job of retaining quality while holding down the cost. Laneil and I visited Ralphe and Caroline. Ralphe had several options for most items. We visited each item that Ralphe had scheduled, and agreed on the ones that best met our objectives. The reunion schedule of events is as follows:

Thursday, July 31:

Check into the Days Inn - Historic Pensacola, 710 N Palafox St., Pensacola FL 32501, (850)438-4922. Cost: under \$50.00 per night, includes hot breakfast.

Noon – 5:00 p.m., registration at 1700 Scenic Highway  
5:00 – 7:00 p.m., Dinner on your own  
7:00 – 9:00 p.m., Reception at 1700 Scenic Highway hospitality room

Friday, August 1:

8:00 – 8:45 a.m., Opening meeting of 2003 reunion  
9:30 a.m. (sharp), Present at Navy Air Museum (free)  
10:00 a.m., 1 ½ hour guided tour of museum  
11:30 a.m., IMAX movie – Magic of Flight with the Blue Angels (under \$7.00)  
12:30 p.m., Lunch on your own (CUBI Bay is an excellent choice)  
2:30 – 4:30 p.m., Family History Center – genealogy session  
6:00 – 7:30 p.m., Fried chicken at 1700 Scenic Highway – Scenic Dinner catered (under \$10)  
8:00 – 9:30 p.m., Informal hospitality room – games and get to know each other.

Saturday, August 2:

8:00 – 9:30 a.m., Business meeting  
10:00 a.m. – Noon, Genealogy session with Georgene Jurgensen and Jim Vaughters  
Noon – 5:30 p.m., Lunch on your own and Fun on the Coast  
6:00 p.m., Dinner program, The Grill at Osceola is a good possibility (under \$13.00)

Sunday, August 3:

8:00 a.m., Morning devotional before getting on the road  
10:30 a.m., Christ Church Worship service

We visited Days Inn – Historic Pensacola and found the staff to be friendly, and their rooms clean. They have a large swimming pool and the room price of under \$50 per night that includes a complete cooked breakfast. Other hotels are available, some with beachfront, but they cost several times this price.

Registration and reception at 1700 Scenic Highway – This is Ralphe and Caroline's high-rise residence. There is a swimming pool available, and an area where we can visit. At the Friday night cookout, there will be games, swimming and a tour of Ralphe and Caroline's eclectic art collection.

There will be a letter following this newsletter. It will contain many more details and lots of information about things to see and do in the area. There will be opportunities to order T-shirts. After having been there for a weekend, Laneil and I plan to spend a whole week enjoying Pensacola. We certainly hope to see you there. Jesse

#### OTHER REUNIONS

On page three of this newsletter, we have an announcement of a Vaughters reunion being held in Georgia in June. We know there are other branches of the family that also have annual reunions. Please send the information to the newsletter editor several months in advance, and we will include our reunion news.

### SMITH WILLIAM STOREY

A Holiday tour of Homes was sponsored by the Jennings County (Indiana) Historical Society in December. One of the homes on the tour was built about 1869 by Smith William Storey in Vernon, Indiana. The stone walls on each side of the home were part of the foundation of the former Vernon Woolen Mill.

Smith William Storey was born 23 December 1833 in Vernon, the son of Thomas J. and Jane Vawter Storey. His grandparents were John and Polly Smith Vawter.

### JESSAMYN WEST

As part of the 42<sup>nd</sup> annual Sassafras Tea Festival and Civil War Living History program, the Jennings County (Indiana) Historical Society had a showing of the Oscar-nominated 1956 film "The Friendly Persuasion" on April 26. This film was based on the book by the same title written by Jessamyn West, who was born in Jennings County. A discussion of the book and film followed. VVV Association newsletter editor, Bonita Welch, provided a display of the author's books and information about her connection to the Milhous and Vawter families. The home where she stayed while in Jennings County to research and visit cousins was open for tours.

Jessamyn West's great-great-grandparents were James and Elizabeth Vawter Glover. Philemon and Anna Vawter were the parents of Elizabeth Vawter Glover.

The January 2001 VVV newsletter has more information about her life and books.

### GEORGIA VAUGHTERS REUNION

Charles Burt organized the first Georgia Vaughters Reunion in 1999, along with Gary Vaughters and Becky Vaughters McCord. We have continued to meet every year since then.

The 2003 reunion will be on Sunday, June 8, at Bethel Baptist Church. The church is two miles north of Dawsonville, where the road meets Highway 136. The church is on one side of the highway, and the cemetery on the other.

Last year, Gary bought a box of 50 American flags and tried to put one on each Vaughters grave. There are more than 50 graves, so this year we will need to buy more.

The schedule will be about the same as previous years:

11:00 a.m.	Walk through the cemetery and identify Vaughters
Noon	Brief family history and introduction of all the families attending.
12:45 p.m.	Photographs on front steps of the church
1:00	Covered dish dinner

Please bring all those old photographs, family Bibles, rolling pins and stories. Contact Jim Vaughters at 303-771-3937 for more information.

### ANOTHER CONFEDERATE CEREMONY

Hiram Vaughter, son of Hiram S. and Elizabeth Glenn Vaughter, and grandson of James and Jane, was in the Confederate Army in 1862. He is buried in the family cemetery on the family farm in Red Hill, Franklin County, Georgia.

The VVV Association and the Hartwell Camp of the Sons of Confederate Veterans will conduct a ceremony honoring his grave and a new marker. The ceremony will be on Saturday, June 14, 2003. The schedule for the event is as follows:

- 9:00 a.m. Music
- 10:00 a.m. Ceremony, including flags, soldiers in uniform, reading of the charge, telling of the life of Hiram, history of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Georgia Infantry Regiment, black powder salute, playing of Taps, names of other Confederate ancestors, and presentation of the ceremonial flag to a family member.
- 11:00 a.m. Refreshments at Hunter's Creek Baptist Church

Hiram's siblings include Mary Frances Adams (Franklin County Adams family), Samuel Vaughter (Confederate officer), and Eliza Missouri Vandiver (grandmother of Georgia Governor Ernest Vandiver.)

The landowner has cleared the trees and bushes in the cemetery, and the \$644.00 donated by the VVV Association was used to put a chain link fence around the cemetery. The Veterans Administration has contributed the marker, four feet high and white marble.

The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Franklin County Historical Society will also participate in the ceremony.

### CONGRATULATIONS

Eric Jason Taylor is being recognized for having the best term paper by the faculty of the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University. He has also been nominated by the school to Pi Alpha Alpha, the National Honor Society of Public Affairs and Public Administration.

Eric is the son of Tom and Diana Taylor of North Vernon, Indiana, and the nephew of VVV newsletter editor, Bonita Welch. He is a graduate of the International School of Kenya in Nairobi, and Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana. He and his wife, Jennifer, also an Earlham College graduate, live in Atlanta, Georgia.

Eric's parents were educators at the International School of Kenya for ten years, and their four children are all graduates of the school.

Please send news of your family, whether it be an engagement, marriage, birth, graduation, death or a special honor.

A LETTER FROM EVERETT B. VAWTER

CITY OF WEST LAFAYETTE  
ENGINEER'S OFFICE  
WEST LAFAYETTE, INDIANA

Jan 4, 1929

Mr. & Mrs. Will Holsclaw  
North Vernon, Indiana

My dear Cousins – A very good likeness of you two published in the Indianapolis Star of today moves me to write you.

Sixty five years is a good long time to live and that you folks lived long enough to have good sense before starting in on the sixty five year program puts you in a class almost alone. It has been about three years since I saw you last and if this picture of you is a recent one you are surely holding your own in a splendid way.

Some of May Smartz' children in Indianapolis phoned me of May's death but the phone was working so badly I did not get any particulars. From a brief notice I saw in the Star later I take it they buried her at North Vernon. Have wondered of Bessie is still on the old place and Jim Will, tho it seems in my mind that Bessie went again to Indianapolis. I have not the address of any of May's children or of the near relatives and have not written them. The last I saw of May was about three years ago I think when she attended a Rail Road meeting here and at that time she seemed real well.

When Wallace lived in Indianapolis I would call her up from his home but he is not there any more. He gave up his work with the State (the conservation department) and located at Memphis Tenn., where he is a Civil Engineer on the Mississippi flood control under the War Department. It has been some months since we have seen him or his little family and we plan to go down there next week for a few days visit. Wallace has a nice wife and a little boy now nearly a year old. Had we been picking a wife for Wallace we could not have suited ourselves better and the baby of course is a wonder in every way. We rejoice that they are all well and enjoy living in that place tho we wish we might see them oftener than is possible for us to do now.

The flu is taking off many of our old folks here and it behooves you my good cousins to be on your guard these days. I am nearing 70 myself and while I am well and have had as busy a summer just past as any in my life, yet I am careful during the sudden changes, tho my work takes me out the most of the time.

I never forget the homecomings you people have observed near your abode and wished I might be there. I plan to give more time to rest and recreation before I am too old to enjoy it but like many others may wait too long to make the start.

If Bessie and Jim Will are still in your neighborhood remember me to them and let them know I was thinking of them when May was called to her long rest.

I believe Bertha is not with you now and in fact I don't know if any of your

children are near by. I wish I might spend a while in that vicinity looking over the scenes of my own and my parents childhood and renew the acquaintances of my relatives and their children. But it is a habit of life to become engrossed in things that are near about us to such an extent that we neglect those that meant much to us in earlier life.

We are just embarking upon a new era in our church here with a pastor formerly in Iowa City and if we follow closely the program he has laid out we will be a busy people. We have a goal of 100 new members for the year and expect to launch a campaign for the erecting of an education plant that will tax our giving ability.

With a wish that you may live to travel together for more years yet, I am affectionately yours- Everett B. Vawter

Bro Will is still practicing his profession and lives with us.

Notes: The letter was written by Everett Bates Vawter to William T. and Almira King Holsclaw. Everett and Almira were cousins, both being the grandchildren of William and Frances Vawter of Jennings County, Indiana. Everett was the son of Philemon and Sylvia Hunter Vawter, and Almira the daughter of George and Frances Vawter King. Although he congratulates them on being married for 65 years, it would actually have been their 67<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Several records show the date they were married to be 2 Jan 1862.

He writes of the death of May Smartz. That would be another cousin Emma May Feagler Smartz, the daughter of Ormand and Mary (Polly) Vawter Feagler. "Bessie and Jim Will" are Bessie Feagler and James William Feagler, sister and brother of May Smartz.

"Wallace" is Everett B. and Helen Read Vawter's son, Wallace Read Vawter, who died 24 June 1988. His wife, Helen Cripe Vawter died 28 Aug 1992. Everett speaks of wanting to visit the "scenes of my own and my parents childhood." We don't know if he did that, but in 1982, Wallace and Helen traveled from their retirement home in Ajijic, Jalisco, Mexico, to attend the VVV reunion in Madison, Indiana. One day of the reunion was spent in Jennings County, and Wallace was able to visit those "scenes" his father remembered. The "little boy" Everett calls "a wonder in every way" is W. Read Vawter, who is now retired and living in Ajijic. He is a member of the association.

"Bertha" is Bertha Alice Holsclaw, the daughter of William T. and Almira Holsclaw.

"Bro Will" is William Hunter Vawter, the brother of Everett Bates Vawter.

A biography of Philemon Vawter, the father of Everett Bates Vawter, appeared in the January 2003 newsletter.

This letter had been kept for many years by Florence Beeman, a granddaughter of William T. and Almira King Holsclaw, and a copy was given to us by her nephew. Do you have old letters to share? It is important that the information gleaned from these letters be preserved. In this time of e-mails and cell phones, not many people write long letters (or even short notes) filled with family news. Please send copies of letters for possible inclusion in the newsletter.

**THE PLAIN DEALER AND REPUBLICAN**

North Vernon, Indiana

31 May 1923

Mrs. Mayme Vawter Dead

The body of Mrs. Mayme Vawter, seventy-four years old, whose death occurred at her home at Vawter Park near Syracuse, Ind., Saturday morning, May 26<sup>th</sup>, was brought to Vernon Tuesday evening. Funeral services were held at Vernon Presbyterian Church on Wednesday morning, and the burial took place in Vernon Cemetery.

Mrs. Vawter was the widow of Smith K. Vawter and was formerly a resident of Vernon. She is survived by three children: Mrs. Louise Green and Mrs. Edna Hess, of Syracuse; and John Vawter of Los Angeles, Calif.

(Although her name is given as "Mayme" in this obituary, marriage records and other sources have her name as "Mary.")

**THE PLAIN DEALER AND REPUBLICAN**

North Vernon, Indiana

31 May 1923

Obituary

Ruth, daughter of George and Margaret Vawter, was born April 6<sup>th</sup> 1893 and passed to her reward May 19<sup>th</sup> 1923, age 30 years, 1 month and thirteen days.

At the early age of fifteen years, she united with the Christian Church at Queensville [Indiana] and remained a devoted member until her death. Ruth's life was one of sacrifice and service, every sacrificing her own pleasures to devote her time and strength to her aged parents.

Until her health failed, she was a faithful teacher in the Sunday school in the church of her choice, having been the primary teacher for 13 years. She was also a member of the C.E. Society. Indeed her whole life was one of service to her parents, to her church and Sunday school.

She leaves a fond, devoted father, a loving mother, five sisters and one brother to mourn her death, and, so we who loved her and shall long be conscious of the vacant place she leaves, can scarce regret the call of death which crept upon her to reward her high faith, to release her from the pain of life and bring her to that "peace that passeth understanding. So we will not say that Ruth is dead, she is just away!"

Ruth Vawter had a sister, Sarah Frances, born 28 May 1890, and died 14 Sept 1891. In the Jennings County, Indiana, Coroner's Book 1, Page 24, we find: "Sarah Frances Vawter, age 15 months, drowning by falling into barrel in ground for receiving slop."

## NEWSLETTERS, BICKNELL AND RUCKER

As reported in a previous newsletter, Patricia Vawter Renton has completed a project for the association by creating a CD. This CD, which is in Microsoft Word format, contains the VVV Family Association newsletters from 1977 thru 2001, the entire *Vawter Family in America* by Grace Vawter Bicknell, and excerpts from *The Rucker Family Genealogy* by Sudie Rucker Wood.

Patricia brought several of the CDs to the reunion in Georgia, and quickly sold all of them. She will make copies for those interested and donate the proceeds to the association. The Executive Committee has set the price at \$20.00.

Please order from: Patricia V. Renton, 2372 Bear Creek Road, Pipe Creek, TX 78063. Patricia's telephone number is 830-510-4625, and her e-mail is [pvrenton@evl.net](mailto:pvrenton@evl.net).

## VIDEO TAPES

Video tapes of the 2002 reunion, made and donated by Bob Vawter, are available at a cost of \$20.00, including postage. All proceeds from the sales go to the association. The two-tape set can be ordered from Norma Jean Vawter, and her address can be found with the list of officers. Please make your check to the VVV Family Association.

## IN REMEMBRANCE

Oscar Lee Vawter, Jr. of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, died 8 August 2002. He was born on 13 January 1924 in Sherman, Texas.

Oscar was a veteran of World War II (1943-45), serving on a minesweeper; and a veteran of the Korean War (1950-51), serving on an aircraft carrier. In between his wartime service, he was in the U.S. Reserves.

He retired from Rainbow Bakery in 1987. He was a member of Emmaus Baptist Church; an active lifetime member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, where he was part of the honor guard; and a member of Disabled American Veterans. He enjoyed listening to gospel music and traveling. Oscar was proud to have served his country.

Surviving are his wife of 53 years, Erma; two daughters, Shirley Troyer and her husband, Dan, and Sharon Coursey and her husband, Bill, all of Oklahoma City; a son, Richard Griffie of Velma, Oklahoma; three brothers, Billy Mac Vawter of Oklahoma City, James Earl Vawter of Iredall, Texas, and Joe Don Vawter of Noble, Oklahoma; five grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents and an infant son.

The funeral service was held at Emmaus Baptist Church on 12 August 2002. Burial was at Sunny Land Cemetery in Del City, Oklahoma.

Oscar was a longtime member of the association and attended the reunion almost every year. Our sincere sympathy is sent to Erma and all of the family.

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