



FAMILY ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER January 2003

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

REV. PETER "UNCLE PETE" VAUGHTERS

In Franklin County, Georgia, many stories of the old Vaughters family in the 1800s and into the early 1900s area beginning to surface. One of the most interesting is that of Peter, who was a slave, became a teacher and preacher, and left behind a sterling reputation among whites and blacks alike.

A great-granddaughter of Hiram Vaughters, Mary Dilworth, missed the reunion in Elbert County, Georgia, but she had told Jim Vaughters, the historian/archivist some information that bears repeating. Her father, Charlie Dilworth placed the highest priority on his "kinfolks" and wanted to preserve the old stories.

Hiram Vaughters went to Athens one day, probably around 1850. At the end of the day, he went by the slave market. All the business was done and everyone was leaving. But one black baby boy was sitting there crying, looking sick, and he had no connection with anyone. Hiram took him home and explained the situation to his wife, Elizabeth Glenn. She did not like it, but she and Hiram agreed to keep the baby. They raised him in their home, taught him to read and write, and made him a member of the family.

Hiram died a few years later, and Peter stayed with the family. After the Civil War, he took the name Vaughters and remained in the Red Hill area. He became a teacher and

built what was called the Vaughters School. Those who took part in the tour to Franklin County during the 2002 reunion will remember meeting 102-year-old Tom Austin who attended this school.

Peter was a preacher for many years. His grave marker reads “Rev. Peter Vaughters, 1852-1922.” He was known as “Preacher Vaughters” and “Uncle Pete,” both of which are terms showing great respect.

All of Hiram’s daughters married men in Franklin County, stayed there, and produced families whose descendants still live there. His sons had different fates. Hiram J. died in Athens two months after enlisting in the Confederate Army. Samuel Hiram, also a teacher and perhaps Peter’s mentor, was in the Civil War for three years, came home and married, and went to Arkansas and later Oklahoma, where he taught Indian children. James M.C., the youngest, stayed until 1873 when he and his wife also went to Arkansas.

Jim, as James M.C. was called, was also a preacher. Years later he came back to Georgia on a visit and was asked to preach at Allen’s Methodist Church. Two of his sisters, Mary Frances Adams and Julia A. King, are buried in the cemetery at the church. Jim began the service and saw old Peter slip in and sit in the back row. Jim stopped the service, went to the back and told Peter, “You come up front and sit with the rest of the family.” They hugged each other and cried and had an emotional reunion. Peter invited Jim to stay with him at his home. The two chimneys of this house are still standing.

Descendants of Hiram still refer to “Uncle Pete,” who passed the Vaughters name on to generations in Franklin County. He married three times and had 18 children. His grandchildren have reunions in North Carolina, and some of them come to Franklin County to research and see old-timers like Tom Austin.

Thank you, Uncle Pete, for a wonderful legacy.

And we thank Jim Vaughters for sharing this story of Peter Vaughters with us. Do you have family stories or traditions? Please send them to the news editor.

FRANKLIN COUNTY CEMETERY

Thanks to all who donated toward the total of \$644.00 for fencing the Vaughters Cemetery in Franklin County. The cost is a little more than what was collected, but our cousin, former Governor Ernest Vandiver, has agreed to pay the difference to complete the job. His generosity is greatly appreciated. Thank you!

2003 REUNION

As reported in the last newsletter, Ralphe and Caroline Vawter will be hosting the 2003 reunion in Pensacola, Florida. Other than the tentative plans that have already been given, we have no further information to share at this time. Details of the event will be given in the April newsletter. Anyone wanting an update now could contact Ralphe at 850-439-1380, or the association president, Jesse Vawter.

PAST AND PRESENT OF TIPPECANOE COUNTY, INDIANA

Volume II

Richard P. DeHart

B. F. Bowen & Company, Publishers

Indianapolis, Indiana

1909

PHILEMON C. VAWTER

Seventy-nine years have dissolved in the mists of the past since the birth of the honored subject of this review. He springs from an old and highly esteemed pioneer family whose first representatives in the West settled in Jefferson county, Indiana, as early as 1806, migrating to this state from Kentucky, though originally from Virginia. These early comers were William Vawter and Frances, his wife, who located on the hill near Madison, where Mr. Vawter secured a tract of land which he cleared and improved and in due time become one of the leading farmers and representative citizens of his part of the country. He was made captain of a militia company soon after his arrival and took an active part defending settlers against the Indians during the troublous times which marked the pioneer history of southern Indiana. Later, in 1829, the family located in Jennings county.

William and Frances Vawter were the parents of ten children, six sons and four daughters, only two of whom survive, a daughter who has reached the ripe old age of eighty-eight years, and the subject of this sketch, who is the youngest of the family and the only one born in Jennings county. Several of the children lived to be quite old, one dying in his ninety-fourth years, and the majority were past the half century mark when called from the scenes of their struggles and triumphs.

Philemon C. Vawter was born in Jennings county, Indiana, November 7, 1830, and spent his childhood and youth on the home farm near Vernon. While still a mere lad he attended a three-months subscription school taught in a small log building furnished with slag benches, the writing desk a rough board resting on pegs driven in the wall, the room being warmed by means of a large fireplace with clay chimney and lighted by two long narrow windows, one containing oiled paper, the other filled with glass. In this backwoods college young Vawter obtained a knowledge of the rudimentary branches, reading, arithmetic and geography, and learned to write with a goose quill pen using the juice of pokeberries for ink. By diligent application, however, he soon mastered the common branches and in due time was sufficiently advanced to enter Franklin College, which he attended at intervals for about five years, completing the prescribed course during that time and leaving the institution with a high standing in all of his classes.

In 1855, Mr. Vawter came to Lafayette, and during the ensuing three years taught in the schools of the town, discontinuing the work in 1858 on account of the public funds being cut off by the supreme court. Returning to Jennings county, he worked on the farm in the summer time and taught in the country schools during the winter months until 1860, when he went to Decatur county where he had charge of a school for one year and earned an honorable reputation as a capable instructor and successful disciplinarian. Meantime he

accepted a position in a dry goods store and between clerking and teaching he spent the time until 1863, when he returned to Tippecanoe county and took up the profession of civil engineering, to which he devoted his attention for a number of years thereafter, serving eighteen years as county surveyor, five years as deputy in the office, five years as city engineer and ten years as engineer of West Lafayette, besides doing a great deal of private work the meanwhile in his and other counties and cities.

Mr. Vawter has seen West Lafayette grow from a wooded tract into a flourishing city of five thousand inhabitants, much of the progress of the place being due to his interest and energy in inaugurating and carrying forward many important improvements. The city is modern in all the term implies, and with its excellent streets and sidewalks, electric lights and waterworks, street railway, etc., has taken on not a few metropolitan airs and compares favorable with any other city of its size in the state.

Mr. Vawter's long and honorable career as a civil engineer has kept him prominently before the public and there are today in the county of Tippecanoe few men as well known and highly esteemed. As a matter of his profession he has rendered valuable service in a number of important public enterprises and as a citizen his influence has ever been on the right side of every moral issue. Of noble aims and high ideals, he has always had the good of his fellowmen in view and to this end all movements for the advancement of the community along social, moral and religious as well as material lines have found in him a willing and generous helper.

On November 25, 1858, Mr. Vawter was united in marriage with Sylvia Hunter, daughter of Joseph and Rhoda Ann Hunter, of Jennings county, a union blessed with two children, Everett B., whose biography appears elsewhere in these pages, and William H., whose birth occurred in 1868, and who, after devoting ten years to the drug business in Lafayette, became traveling salesman for a wholesale drug house, which position he now holds.

Mr. Vawter is a Republican in politics and well versed in the history of parties and in the current issues of the day. He keeps abreast of the times on all matters of public import and takes an active interest in questions concerning which men and parties divide, and is a man of strong convictions, whose opinions carry weight and command respect. He was reared under the influence of the Baptist church, to which both his parents belonged, and for a number of years he has been a zealous and respected member of the church of that denomination in the city of his residence.

In person Mr. Vawter is somewhat below the average stature, of small, though strong and well-developed physique, clear cut features and pleasant countenance, his appearance, bearing and manner indicating the man of thought and action who has always stood for the right and whose optimism makes his presence a welcome addition to the social circle. His life has been somewhat strenuous and, though well advanced in years, he is still alert and vigorous and his friends united in the wish that he may be spared to bless the world by his personality and influence for many years to come.

VAUGHTERS' IN SCIOTO COUNTY, OHIO

From *History of Scioto County*, no date or publisher:

John Alexander Vaughters was born August 9, 1814, in Caroline County, Virginia, a son of John and Catharine (Mason) Vaughters. The family was English. The form of the name as used in Virginia was Vawter. Among the Revolutionary Continental Land Warrants named from the Land Office at Richmond, Virginia was one to William Vawter for 2,666 $\frac{2}{3}$ acres of land, another to Benjamin Vawter for 200 acres. These are believed to be members of the same family. Our subject's father died in Virginia, and his mother moved with her family to Ohio, and located in Ross County in 1830; but in 1831, removed to Coalton, Jackson County. His mother died in 1833.

Our subject had no means, but he had a good constitution and a wonderful quantity of energy. He and his brother came to Scioto County in 1844, and for a number of years he was a tenant farmer. In 1849, he began to purchase land. By industry, thrift and economy, he prospered and at his death his farm was one of the largest and best kept in the Ohio Valley. At that time he was the owner of 503 acres of valuable Ohio river bottom land and in the upper part of Nile Township, about seven miles from Portsmouth.

In 1847, he married Mary Dorich of Kentucky. They have five children, two of whom lived to maturity: Mrs. Harry S. Grimes of Portsmouth, Ohio, and George A. Vaughters of Chillicothe. Mrs. Vaughters died in April, 1860, and in December, 1861, he married Mrs. Ada J. Brouse, who had two children: Mrs. Chancey M. Holcomb of Gallipolis, and Mrs. W. C. Brouse of the West Side. Mr. Vaughters was always a Republican. He was a man of the most remarkable energy and strict integrity. He was more successful than either of his brothers in accumulating property. He died April 14, 1891, honored by all who knew him.

William H. Vaughters was born in Caroline County, Virginia, in 1817, the third of a family of four sons; John, Thomas G., and Richard M., and one daughter, Mary L. In 1831, [the account of William's brother, John, says 1830] his mother settled in Ross County, and in the same year in Jackson County. In 1838, he moved to Scioto County. In 1842, he married Miss Sophia Graham, by whom he had two sons and one daughter: John of the West Side, Thomas of Wetmore and Mary Margaret in Illinois, all married. In 1850, he married Mary Bryson by whom he had five children, four sons and a daughter: Richard, William, Carey, Sherman and Ella. He died July 26, 1880. His wife survived him. He was a Republican and served two terms as Infirmary Director from 1871 to 1874 and from 1875 to 1878. He was a prosperous and successful farmer and left a good estate. He held the confidence of his neighbors and associates as a just man.

William C. Vaughters was born on the old homestead in Washington Township, Scioto County, Ohio, in 1857, the second son of William H. and Mary J. Bryson Vaughters. He was reared a farmer, receiving his education in the district school. He married Mary E., daughter of E. A. Moore, an old settler of Scioto County. They have one child, William. Mr. and Mrs. Vaughters are members of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Edith Vawter, 87, of Farmington, Illinois, died 7, Nov 2002 at Methodist Medical Center in Peoria, Illinois. She was born 8 Aug 1915 in Bevier, Missouri, the daughter of Ralph and Flora Gilbert Gilstrap. On 27 April 1935, she married Harry L. Vawter in Macon, Missouri. He preceded her in death in November 1995.

Most of Edith's early years were spent in Bevier, but she also lived in Iowa for seven years before moving back to Missouri, where she married Harry. The couple moved to Farmington in 1937. That same year, Harry built the house that would continue to be Edith's home until she passed away. They were married for more than sixty years. She was a member of First Baptist Church in Farmington.

Surviving are sons, H. Richard Vawter and his wife, Patricia, and Donald Vawter and his wife, Alice; a daughter, Connie Bugos and her husband, Paul; a sister, Mary Simpson; eight grandchildren; and 15 great-grandchildren. The 15th great-grandchild, Drew Richard Vawter, was born on the same day Edith passed away, in the same hospital and just down the hall from Edith's room. She was able to know about the birth. Preceding her in death were her husband; and two sisters, Alice and Helen.

Harry and Edith Vawter were longtime members of the association. After Harry's death, Edith continued attending reunions with Connie and Paul. Harry was a descendant of Jennings County, Indiana, pioneers, William and Frances Vawter through their son Jesse R. Vawter. Harry's grandfather was John S. Vawter, a son of Jesse R. and Sara Parks Vawter.

John E. Vawter, 83, of Elkhart, Indiana, died 25 July 2002 at his home. He was born 16 Feb 1919 in Indianapolis, the son of James T. and Ina Gore Vawter. He married Lois Greer on 1 May 1971 at St. John's United Church of Christ in Elkhart. She survives.

John was a graduate of Arsenal Technical High School in Indianapolis, studied aeronautical engineering, and graduated from Purdue University with a mechanical engineering degree. During World War II, he was a civilian instructor for the U.S. Air Force for two years at the Eretrea base in Eastern Africa. There he supervised a crew who taught recruits assembling and repair of airplanes and their engines.

John was employed by Allison Engineering and Ransburg Electrostatic Coating Systems, both in Indianapolis. He was plant manager of SaniMetal Co., and Swartout Mfg. in Cleveland, Ohio; Vice-president of Manufacturing for Henry Weis Mfg. Co. in Elkhart; group manager for ILC Products; and retired from Keene Products Division of CTS Corp. in Middlebury, Indiana, where he was vice-president of Keene Products and general manager of their Monon, Indiana, plant.

Since semi-retirement in 1982, John had been a consultant for Omega Industries, made prototypes, and loved working with wood in his hobby shop. He enjoyed making home and church furniture, and several of his pieces are in St. John's United Church of Christ. He made mantle and grandfather clocks, and loved restoring antiques. He had made an heirloom rocking cradle that was used by all his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, with their names being written on the underside.

He enjoyed encouraging children to excel in many ways and also through the Junior Achievement Program. He had a remarkable memory for telling jokes, and was an entertaining public speaker and motivator. He wrote and delivered several sermons at St. John's United Church of Christ, where he had been a member since 1957. He served for many years as an Elder and Deacon of the church, President of the Consistory, Property Committee Chairman, and enjoying singing in the church.

Survivors include his wife, Lois Greer Vawter; children and spouses, Hale (Mary) Newman of Cincinnati, Valarie (Martin) Moorhead of Elkhart, J. Brett (June) Vawter of Duluth, Minnesota, and Andrea Vawter (Scott Powell) of Elkhart; step-children, Ralph Greer of Arizona, Stephen (Rhoda) Greer and Gary (Janet) Greer of Goshen; five grandchildren; five step-grandchildren; and six step-great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by a brother, James T. Vawter, Jr.

John E. Vawter's grandfather was Jesses Monroe Vawter, a son of William and Matilda Carter Vawter, who lived in Ripley County, Indiana. Information on this family can be found in the Summer 1993 newsletter. Longtime members of the association, John and Lois attended many reunions.

Roy Taylor, 94, of North Vernon, Indiana, died 23 November 2002 at his home after being diagnosed in early October with cancer of the gall bladder. He was born 13 June 1908 in Jefferson County, Indiana, the son of Charles and Lillie Grace Robbins Taylor. He married Hilda Beree Clarkson on 15 June 1929, and she preceded him in death 16 July 1983.

Mr. Taylor was a 1926 graduate of North Vernon High School, and was the last survivor of the class. He had worked during the 1940s for Thompson Dairy, Eaton's Hatchery, and was a brakeman on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. An accident while working on the railroad on Labor Day 1951 resulted in the loss of a leg. He was then employed as a bookkeeper at First National Bank, retiring in 1963 after suffering a stroke. For more than thirty years, he was self-employed in bookkeeping for small businesses in the area and tax preparation.

Over the years, Mr. Taylor served the community as volunteer treasurer of many organizations, including the North Vernon Youth Center, the Boys' Club and the Associated Church Charities. He was a former member and treasurer of the North Vernon Lion's Club and a 50-year member of the United Transportation Union. He served on the Jennings County Board of Revue during the 1960s. In 1987, he was named Deacon Emeritus of First Baptist Church in North Vernon, where he was a member and treasurer for many years. He helped distribute baskets at Christmastime and privately counseled those who were recent amputees. He enjoyed fishing, collecting and polishing rocks, and collecting coins.

Surviving are a son, Thomas Charles Taylor of North Vernon; a daughter, Bonita Fern Welch of Scipio, Ind.; seven grandsons, Donald Robert Taylor and James Daniel Taylor, both of North Vernon, Anthony Brian Welch, Darren Michael Welch and Alan Wayne Welch, all of Indianapolis, Eric Jason Taylor of East Point, Georgia, and Joshua Adam Taylor of Dupont, Ind.; four granddaughters, Deborah Jean Taylor of New Albany, Ind., Cynthia Sue Burton of Dwight, Ill., and Jessica Rose Taylor and Summer Beree Taylor, both of North Vernon; six great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Hilda Beree Clarkson Taylor; a son, Roy Taylor, Jr.; two grandsons, David Brent Welch and Jacob Thomas Taylor; a great-grandson, Benjamin Brand Burton; and two brothers, Ernest Taylor and Orval Taylor.

Although not a Vawter descendant, Mr. Taylor was proud of his family's Vawter heritage. His wife was a descendant of Jennings County pioneers William and Frances Vawter through their son Jesse R. Vawter. Her grandmother was Elizabeth Vawter Clarkson, a daughter of Jesse R. and Sara Parks Vawter.

A personal note from the news editor: My dad had many challenges during his long life. Among them were the Depression; the loss of a leg; a telegram during the Korean War that a son had been wounded, and not knowing for days the seriousness of the injuries; strokes; caring for his aged parents; the death of his wife and nearly twenty years of widowhood. At the age of 90, he faced the death of his oldest son, followed seven weeks later by the death in an auto accident of that son's 19-year old grandson, and then nine months later the death of his 88-year old brother. All of this he faced with dignity and a positive outlook, and that is how he passed away. I share this with you because over the years, many of you have known of my increasing involvement in helping Dad remain independent in his home, and have shown an interest in him. I want to thank everyone for being patient with me when the newsletter was late or correspondence was not quickly answered. I also want to thank those who knew of his death and sent expressions of sympathy. Your kindness is appreciated by my family.

The following tribute written by his six-year old great-grandson was read at the funeral service:

MY GREAT-GRANDPA TAYLOR

When me and Anna went to his apartment, he let us have chocolate pudding.

When I was one, he held my hands so I could stand up.

When I was three, he made me smile.

He is very, very, very special.

He is 94.

I love him.

By William Welch

MEMBERS AND FRIENDS REGISTERED AT THE 2002 REUNION

California

Garry B. Vawter
Marjorie Vawter

Colorado

James C. Vaughters

Delaware

Robert L. and Donna Vawter
Robert L. and Mary Vawter
James Jesse Vawter

Florida

David C. Vaughter
Ralphe and Caroline Vawter

Georgia

James G. Adams
Dorothy Vaughters Ayers
Helen Vaughters Bearden
Betty Burt
Jimmie Chester
Sara D. Coffey
Ralph and Virginia Fall
Richard Greene
W. J. Hall
Glenn and Pat Herndon
Cheryl Kelley;
Tim and Kristy Glasgow
Mary Sue Kimberly
Nick and Gladiola Nickerson
John and Pam Schlesinger
L. Neal and Eva D. Smith
Ernest and Betty Vandiver
Brice Vaughters
Doug Vaughters
Silvey Brice Vaughters
Flara Waters
Jo Waters

Illinois

Paul and Connie Bugos

Indiana

Joseph and Bonita Welch

Maryland

William L. Clark

Michigan

Patricia Vawter Klein

Mississippi

Judith Crawford
Martha Hudson
Fred and Wordna Wicker
Ken and Norma Wicker

New York

Richard and Dorothy Vawter

North Carolina

Lisa Strandberg;
Eric and Meredith Strandberg
Hank and Evelyn Woodward

Oklahoma

Bill and Virginia Vawter

Tennessee

Judy Blanks
Caroline Vawter Scarlett
Barbara Vawter;
Emily and Jake DeFur
Norma Jean Vawter

Texas

Roger Byler
Beth Melton
Jay and Karla Quigley;
James
Patricia Renton
Joy Richter
Phil and Peggy Vaughter
J. W. and Diannia Vawter
Jesse and Laneil Vawter
John H. and Sue Vawter

Virginia

Ellen Wicker Cummings;
Frederick Cummings

Washington D.C.

James Gordon Vaughter

(There are others who attended some of the ceremonies, but did not register)

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