



FAMILY ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER **September 2005**

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Dues - \$10.00 per year

IF A RENEWAL FORM IS ENCLOSED YOU NEED TO PAY DUES

FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA, 2005

The 2005 reunion of the VVV Family Association was held July 14-16 at the Wingate Inn in Fredericksburg, Virginia. As always, several members arrived early in the week and enjoyed spending time touring the area.

Registration began on Thursday afternoon, followed by a reception hosted by our president, Garry Vawter. The executive and reunion site committees met after the reception.

The Friday morning business session was opened with the traditional ringing of the cowbell, with Luke Williams having the honor this year. Invocation was by John H. Vawter, and the pledge to the American flag was led by Austin Bugos. A report from the reunion site committee was given by Ellen Cummings, and her report is printed in this newsletter. An invitation was extended by Cheri Jex to have the 2006 reunion in Bear Lake, Idaho.

Invocation before the Friday dinner was given by Billy Mack Vawter. Entertainment for the evening was Irish dancing by Mayme and Emma Graubard.

Jim Vaughters and Georgene Jurgenson conducted two genealogy sessions on Friday and both were well attended.

At 9:00 a.m. Saturday, we departed for Vauter's Church. The Rev. Christopher Agnew gave a history of the church and told of the ongoing project of maintaining the building. Following a delicious lunch served by the ladies of the church, visits were made to Elmwood and the Glebe.

The Saturday dinner began with everyone playing Human Bingo. We learned several interesting and surprising facts about each other!

Entertainment after the dinner was by the VVV Singers under the direction of Kristy Glasgow. Special recognition was given to the following:

Youngest: Joshua Williams, age 3 ½ months.

Oldest: David C Vaughter, 84

Longest married: Robert L. and Donna Vawter, 58 years

Traveled the farthest: John and Aggie Vawter, Sacramento, California

The traditional roll call of the states showed there to be 23 states, plus the District of Columbia, represented. Oklahoma was the winner with 19 present at the dinner.

After the always popular door prizes, the meeting was adjourned.

On Sunday morning, many of the group attended the worship service at Vauter's Church.

MEMORIAL SERVICE

Each year at the Saturday night dinner, a memorial service is held to honor the memory of members and friends. The service was conducted by Laneil Vawter and Fred Wicker, with the assistance of Kaitlyn and Krista Johnston. Those remembered at the 2005 reunion were:

1. Maeona Clarkson Davidson, 81, Indianapolis, Indiana, died 15 September 2001
2. John M. Vawter, 82, Indianapolis, Indiana, died 22 September 2003
3. Louise Vawter Vanover, 83, Beaumont, Texas, died 19 October 2003
4. Ruth E. Smith, 89, Oxford, Ohio, died 21 December 2003
5. Ila Louise Vawter Gilmore, 70, Newago, Michigan, died 26 February 2004
6. Patricia Jane Vawter Flew, 76, Jackson, Tennessee, died 2 July 2004
7. Denise Doyle Vawter, 55, Winchester, Virginia, died 22 July 2004
8. Gladys Creasy Vawter, 95, Trenton, Tennessee, died 27 July 2004
9. Carl B Sanford, 86, Dawsonville, Georgia, died 17 November 2004
10. Samuel Ernest Vandiver, Jr. 86, Lavonia, Georgia, died 21 February 2005
11. Martha Jane Woolman Rankin, 78, Big Spring, Texas, died 5 March 2005
12. Clifford E. Vawter, 74, Bloomington, Illinois, died 24 March 2005
13. Charles Carlton Vaughters, 83, Buckhead, Georgia, died 18, May 2005
14. Wilma Vaughters, 87, Dawson Co., Georgia, died 6 July 2005

2006 REUNION INFORMATION FROM CHERI JEX

Bear Lake is in the extreme southeastern corner of Idaho, midway between Salt Lake City and Yellowstone. The 2006 VVV reunion will take place July 13, 14, and 15 at the Canyon Cove Inn and Convention Center in Garden City, Utah, where a block of rooms has been reserved for VVV members. Mention the VVV when making reservations at (435) 946-3565 or toll free at 1-877-232-7525. Rooms can also be reserved online at www.canyoncove.com, including R. V. hook-ups. The inn has an indoor pool and a conference room which will be at the disposal of the VVV.

This information is also on the VVV website www.vawterfamily.org, where you will find an outstanding data base of family research and all the past VVV newsletters.

Friday night reservations have been made at the Pickleville Playhouse where a delicious western cookout dinner of steak, BBQ beef or chicken with all the trimmings is followed by a hilarious musical melodrama in the comfortable theater seats in the playhouse. Those wishing to dine elsewhere can still catch the show. Final booking can't be made until April 1, 2006 at which time rates will be locked in. This is a popular attraction, and any unreserved spots will quickly be taken by the general public after July 1, 2006. For more information, check out the website at www.picklevilleplayhouse.com. The Shoshone-Bannock Native American Dancers have agreed to perform at the conference center free of charge. Theirs is the story of the first inhabitants of Bear Lake.

The Saturday banquet will be catered by the Trapper Steak House and served at the conference center. Details of menu choices will be forthcoming, but this establishment is known for quality meals at reasonable prices.

The National Oregon/California Trail Center in nearby Montpelier, Idaho, features a living history of immigrants on the Oregon Trail. Several Vawters made the journey, and Greg Gruman has agreed to present a session about these pioneers in the theater of the museum. Museum visitors actually pack for a journey complete with a ride in a covered wagon behind a team of live oxen while actors in period costumes retell accounts of real people who made the journey. The museum was built over the actual trail which can be seen inside.

Bear Lake has all sorts of recreational features such as water sports, biking, hiking, horseback riding, swimming and cruises across the lake on the Bear Lake Monster, said to be a distant relative of Nessie in Scotland. Minnetonka Cave in St. Charles, Idaho, is a fairyland of rooms with gleaming rock formations. Fossil Butte National Monument just over the border in Wyoming is one of the richest fossil beds in the world. Fifty million ear old fish, insects, birds and reptiles are nearly perfectly preserved in limestone. The historic Paris Tabernacle erected by pioneers is open for tours in Paris, Idaho. Other area attractions can be seen at www.bearlake.org and pictures of the area on www.bloomingtonidaho.com.

A side trip to Jackson Hole can be planned at www.jacksonholdwy.com or Yellowstone at www.YellowstonePar.com in Wyoming. Salt Lake City is the nearest airport (but Bobby can land his small plane right in Bear Lake County at the Paris Airport). Travel would be north through Logan Canyon. The inn is located on Highway 89 in Garden City, Utah.

Salt Lake City is home to many fine attractions. The Family History Center in the heart of historic downtown houses the world's largest collection of genealogical and vital records in the world. Library staff assist patrons tracing their roots be they beginners or experts.

Join us in beautiful Bear Lake the home of cowboys, Indians and pioneers also known as the Carribean of the Rockies!

I can be contacted at www.schatz@jex.org or (304)264-2017.

SITE COMMITTEE REPORT FROM ELLEN CUMMINGS

I would like to thank Cheri Jex for her invitation to host the 2006 reunion in Idaho. She set a new standard with her slide presentation, and I encourage all of us to make plans to get together at Bear Lake next summer, July 13, 14, and 15.

The members of the sight committee (Georgene Jurgensen, Cheri Jex, Karla Quigley, Ted Vawter, Phil Vaughter, Ellen Cummings) would like to propose that we have a three-year reunion plan. We feel this will be helpful to our membership in the long run. A multi-year plan will assure better accommodation rates and more time for organizing and scheduling events.

We welcome your input. We are trying to compile a data base of reunion possibilities for future use. If you are interested in hosting a reunion, please let us know. So far we have had one offer, which I will cover in a few paragraphs.

Our aim is to provide a variety of different geographic locations and diverse experiences. We are a nation-wide association, and, therefore, we feel our reunion sites should reflect this diversity. By holding our reunions in different geographic areas, we hope to draw new members each year, and thus increase our membership and our scope.

Our recommendation is as follows:

July 20, 21, and 22 of 2007 – Blackwater Falls, West Virginia. I have come to believe that West Virginia is one of the best kept secrets in the country. It is a beautiful state. Blackwater Falls State Park is located in central West Virginia on a mountain top in the Appalachian Mountain range. The back patio of the lodge overlooks a gorge carved by Blackwater River and Blackwater Falls itself. It has slide projectors, overhead projectors, flip charts, screens, TV/VCR units, internet access, and risers, to name a few amenities.

The lodge restaurant offers breakfast, lunch and dinner, serving the best of regional fare. It frequently caters banquets for meetings and family reunions. There is an indoor pool, along with picnic shelters, horseback riding, miles of hiking and walking trails, some of which are handicap accessible. There is a camp-ground, there are cabins, and best of all, in my opinion, a lodge with 54 rooms. We would have the whole place to ourselves.

July 19, 20, and 21 of 2008 – We have been invited to Flagstaff, Arizona, by Jordan Johnston. There is much to see and do in this area. One item of immediate interest is a train ride to the Grand Canyon, which we could take as a family. Jordan will have more on this location next year.

In a newsletter a few years ago, I wrote an open letter to our membership, in which I quoted from a conversation I had with my son, as we drove back from Pensacola, Florida, in 2003. We were both discussing the reasons we come to this reunion year after year, regardless of where it is located. We finally condensed our feelings to this – Our family association is like Brigadoon. Most of us have no communication with each other from one year to the next. But when we get together, we step easily back into each other's lives as if no time had elapsed.

To the new members among us, I hope you will come to have the same feelings for this Association as we who have known each other for years. I encourage you to plan your vacations around this reunion as so many of us have done, and along with us, reap the blessings of Brigadoon.

GET READY FOR WEST VIRGINIA IN 2007

Imagine a place that is peaceful and removed from the interruptions and stresses of everyday living. Imagine a place that provides a cool respite from summer heat and humidity. Imagine a place that creates an atmosphere conducive to productive and family friendly functions in a mountaintop setting. Blackwater Falls State Park, located in the scenic, mountainous Potomac Highlands area of West Virginia, is just such a place.

Blackwater Falls State Park is named for the falls of the Blackwater River whose amber colored waters plunge five stories, then twist and tumble through an 8-mile-long gorge. The “black” water is a result of tannic acids from fallen hemlock and red spruce needles. Numerous observation points afford panoramic views of the half-mile wide canyon. Stairways and boardwalks lead to the base of the falls for an awe-inspiring, close-up view.

Over 20 miles of trails meander through the park’s unspoiled alpine scenery. These trails range in difficulty from beginner to intermediate, and “The Gentle Trail” provides easy access to an overlook of the falls for visitors in wheelchairs and the elderly.

Blackwater Lodge sits on the canyon’s south rim, providing a sweeping view of the densely forested gorge. Each of the 54 air-conditioned guest rooms has a private bath, phone and color television. The lodge also features a game room, sitting room, indoor pool, workout room, and gift shop. A large restaurant overlooking the canyon serves regional cooking and a variety of mouth-watering entrees.

Pendleton Lake is open during the summer for swimming and boating. Tennis courts, a volleyball court, riding stables, a bicycle center, and nature programs are just a few of the amenities available to guests.

Situated in a lovely wooded area about one mile from the lodge are 25 deluxe year-round cabins. All are of modern design with handsome wood-paneled walls and stone fireplaces, and fully furnished. A 65 unit tent and trailer campground has individual sites with centrally located hot showers, laundromat and dumping station. A variety of nearby attractions will be covered in subsequent newsletters.

For the genealogy buffs among us, family history is plentiful. William Vawter and his son went to West Virginia and had lots and lots of children. Families from these lines were instrumental in settling several areas of Monroe County, where churches and graveyards still bear evidence of these early settlers. William Vawter left a wonderful diary, which chronicles life in the early 1700s. This information is from Georgene Jurgensen, who will provide additional West Virginia family history in future newsletters.

Blackwater Falls Lodge has given us an \$86.11 tax inclusive rate for a room for two guests. Providing we book at least 25 guest rooms, there will be no charge for the use of the conference center.

All 54 lodge rooms have been reserved for the 2007 reunion. This block of rooms will be held until January 1, 2007. Any room not rented by that date will be released. Folks, it's a considerable hike down the mountain to the closest alternate lodging.

I encourage all members remotely considering attending the 2007 reunion to make reservations well in advance. Cancellations with full refund will be accepted up to 48 hours prior to previously stated arrival time. A few members of the site committee have already booked rooms for the 2007 reunion. Let's fill this lodge with VVV family members!

www.vawterfamily.org

Have you visited the association website? If not, this is something you should do today! The site was built by Jordan Johnston of Goodyear, Arizona, and is maintained by his mother, Patricia Vawter Renton of Pipe Creek, Texas.

On this site you will find a database of over 7,000 names, association newsletters since 1977, *The Vawter Family in America* by Grace Vawter Bicknell, and works by Georgene Jurgensen and others. There is also reunion information and a bulletin board.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Virginia Wooden Modell of Annapolis, Maryland, who celebrated her 96th birthday on August 22. A descendant of Jesse and Elizabeth Watts Vawter, Virginia has attended two reunions and was the oldest person at both.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Earl Fitch, Jr., 65, of North Vernon, Indiana, died July 19, 2005, at Columbus Regional Hospital.

Mr. Fitch was a veteran of the U. S. Marine Corps and the Indiana National Guard. He was a security guard at Jefferson Proving Ground for 30 years, retiring in 1993. Prior to that he was an attendant at Muscatatuck State Developmental Center for five years. In January 2005, he began working as a security guard at N.V.I.C. in North Vernon, where he was currently employed. He had operated Earl Fitch Lawn & Garden Care since 1993.

Mr. Fitch was a member of First Church of the Nazarene and the Mid-way Café Breakfast Club, both in North Vernon. He enjoyed landscaping, camping and traveling, and collected eagle memorabilia.

The funeral was at 10:00 a.m. Saturday, July 23, at Dove-Sharp & Rudicel Funeral Home in North Vernon with the Revs. Tony Conley and Ray Taylor officiating. Burial was at Vernon Cemetery with military graveside honors by North Vernon VFW Post 2021.

Born December 24, 1939, in Jennings County, Indiana, Mr. Fitch was the son of Earl Roy and Florence Beatrice Clarkson Fitch.

Surviving are sisters, Juanita P. Speer of Coral Springs, Florida, and Brenda K. Bennett of North Vernon; nephews, Dennis Speer of St. Cloud, Florida, David Speer of Reddington, Indiana, and Chris Bennett of North Vernon; and nieces, Darla Fish of Coral Springs and Gina Conley of Columbus, Indiana.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and a niece, Jennifer Penegar.

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