



FAMILY ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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1992 REUNION HIGHLIGHTS

To tell everything about the reunion would take several pages, so we will simply touch on a few of the events.

The 1992 reunion of the VVV Association was held in Nacogdoches, Texas, July 30 - August 2. Hosts were John H. and Sue Vawter, J.W. and Kay Vawter, Danny and Renae Chaviers, and Melinda Vawter. It was evident that much time and effort went into the planning, and to them all we say, "Thank you."

On Thursday evening, following early registration, a car caravan made its way to "Catfish Junction" for an all-you-can-eat dinner. Not one person went away hungry.

With the ringing of the official VVV bell, the meeting was called to order by President John H. Vawter on Friday morning. Invocation was given by Rev. Roger Byler. The By-laws Committee, composed of Beth Melton, Connie Bugos, Cheryl Glasgow, Robert M. Vawter, and Ken Wicker, gave their report and read the proposed by-laws.

Once again, the ancestor charts were on the walls and each one was encouraged to sign their name in the proper place. The charts had been color coded by Sally Brown, with each child of Bartholomew and Winifred Hodgson Vawter being represented by a different color. Ribbons of that color were worn by each descendant.

Speaker for the morning was Mrs. Carolyn Ericson of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. Also making an appearance was a clown, "Lotta Buttons," aka Beth Melton. She and her father, Roger Byler, gave a talk on "Ancestors." Lotta Buttons stayed for quite some time after the meeting entertaining the children.

Several VVV items were displayed. Among them were two quilts brought by Charles Burt. One was made by his grandmother, Maggie Dora Vaughters, in 1910. It won 1st prize in the 9th District Fair in Gainsville, Georgia, and the prize was a pump organ. The organ is still in the family home in Dawsonville, Georgia. This quilt has been registered by the Georgia Quilt Project and will be on display in the Georgia State Capitol from October 1 - November 15 of this year.

The other quilt was made from blocks that had been signed by all those in attendance at a previous reunion. These blocks were then embroidered and made into a quilt by Betty Burt.

On Friday evening, following a buffet dinner, Bill Vawter, of Houston, Texas, gave a brief talk on how the VVV Association began. He introduced Carolyn Vaughter, also of Houston, as one of those who had helped organize the Association.

The program for the evening was "A Visit with Winifred Hodgson Vawter," presented by Sally Brown. Several people requested a copy of her presentation, and it is printed in this newsletter.

A memorial service was conducted by Fred and Wordna Wicker, with assistance from their granddaughters, Rebecca Cummings and Margaret Wicker. The service began with a violin solo, "Finally Home," by Ila Vawter. She was accompanied by Ellen Cummings. Those remembered were:

1. Clyde A. Beeman, 87, Columbus, Indiana, died 7 Dec 1991
2. James L. Vaughters, 69, Memphis, Tennessee, died 31 Dec 1991
3. Olga Vawter Bullington, 89, Atwood, Tennessee, died 18 Jan 1992
4. Dallas C. Pickett, 76, North Vernon, Indiana, died 15 Apr 1992
5. Elmer E. Vawter, 72, Shelbyville, Indiana, died 30 Jan 1990
6. Louise Brown Caine, 72, Greenville, S. Carolina, died Feb 1992
7. Mildred McClendon Childers, 83, Lufkin, Texas, died in 1991
8. Carl Benjamin Vawter, 77, Grand Rapids, Michigan, died 4 Jun 1992
9. Marie Jones Fearnow, 93, Circleville, Indiana, died Dec 1991
10. Charles Artis Bruce, 79, Dawsonville, Georgia, died 18 Mar 1992
11. Vertie Bell Harber, 88, Dawsonville, Georgia, died 7 May 1992

On Saturday morning, a number of people accompanied J.W. Vawter on a tour of the Jones Belgian Bleu Farm; others spent the morning shopping in the downtown area of Nacogdoches. The conference room was open all day to allow a time for the exchange of genealogical information and for the use of the copy machine.

Following the Saturday buffet dinner, the VVV Children's Chorus, under the direction of Ellen Cummings, entertained with four songs. This year the chorus was made up of twelve children, and it continues to be a highlight of the reunion.

Speaker for the evening was Mr. Bob Murphy, a local humorist and national and international speaker.

During the business portion of the evening, the proposed by-laws were read for the second time. They were voted on and approved. The Audit Committee, Joe Melton, Sandra Robinson, and Billy M. Vawter, reported that the books had been examined and found in order. The 1992 Nominating Committee report was given by Fred Wicker. Nominated as president was Billy M. Vawter of Oklahoma City. Robert L. Vawter, Newaygo, Michigan, was nominated as vice-president, and all other officers to remain in office. These nominations were unanimously approved.

Special recognition was given to the following:

Traveling the farthest - Bob and Donna Vawter, Middletown, Delaware
Omer and Helen Johnson, Fullerton, California

Youngest - Stephanie Chaviers (5) and Kristen Glasgow (5)

Oldest - Bill Vawter (84)

Longest Married - Robert C. and Margaret Vawter (62 years)

J.W. and Kay Vawter, with the help of most of the children present, distributed the always popular door prizes.

The 1992 reunion was adjourned by out-going president, John H. Vawter. New president, Billy M. Vawter, and his wife, Dorothy, will host the 1993 reunion in Oklahoma City.

A VISIT WITH WINIFRED HODGSON VAWTER
Researched and Written by Sally Brown

"My name is Winifred Hodgson Vawter and I am the wife of Bartholomew Vawter. It is the year 1710. This is the third week in May and our black people and white indentured men have just finished planting all the tobacco seedlings in small mounds in our fields. That is very tedious work and Bartholomew and I are always glad when it is done. In about six or seven weeks the plants will flower and then they must be topped off by pinching off the new shoots on each plant so that all of the plant's strength will go into the leaves. Tobacco requires painstaking care all through the hot summer months with lots of stooping and bending to tend each plant so that each one will thrive. We raise premium, sweet-scented tobacco because it brings the best price. Tobacco is not as profitable a crop as it was some years ago, but it is still the best cash crop today. So many more men are raising tobacco now. Many indentured men who served their time on tobacco plantations have stayed on in Virginia after their time was up. They secure a land patent and begin to raise their own tobacco, so the market is full.

"Tobacco is harvested in the fall and the leaves are hung in the barn to dry. After that the men tie the leaves in small bundles that we call "hands." When the weather turns wet we pack the hands tightly in small bundles called "hogsheads." The hogsheads are sent down the river to be marketed on consignment for us in England.

"Here in Virginia we use tobacco for money. Did you know that? We have never yet minted any money of our own. I guess we have been so busy just living that our government has not made any coins of our own. Once in a long while I get a gold or silver coin. They usually come in change when Bartholomew buys something for us from a ship captain. When I get a coin, especially a gold one, I always save it to buy something special because they are worth more than tobacco.

"Tobacco is very popular here in Virginia and in Europe as well. More and more people are enjoying it all the time. Both men and women smoke as well as boys and girls as young as seven. On Sunday morning people gather before church service begins for a smoke and then again after the service to smoke and to visit.

"Would you like to know a little bit about my dear husband and how we met? Bartholomew was born in England and came over here about 1685 from Plymouth. I was born here in Virginia. My grandparents on both sides of my family, both the Hodgsons and the Paiges, came over from England in the 1650's, so my family has been here for more than 50 years. Bartholomew and I met after he had received this land patent where we live now, which is near some land my father owned. He knew my father, and before long I met him at a gathering on our plantation. Leisure is rare on the frontier, but we make the most of free time when we have it. We love to dance, and to sing, and to just be together and visit. These times soften the lonely hardships of everyday living here on the frontier. It was at one of these get-togethers on my folk's plantation that Bartholomew and I met. I remember how strong and handsome he looked that day when he came riding up on a horse from his land. All the girls were flirting with him and I was afraid that he would never see me. He loved to sing, and he still does, and he was such a good dancer. He still is. He especially like to dance the Virginia Reel. And best of all he loved the good food that the women brought because he had been doing his own cooking for quite some time.

"After a courtship of almost a year, we were married in the little Anglican Church where I had gone to church all my life with my parents. That seems like a long time ago because now Bartholomew and I have six living children. Our oldest is John, a fine, responsible young man. Then next is William, and then David. Then comes Margaret and she is our only daughter. She is my comfort and joy. I love our sons very much, but I would be disappointed not to have a daughter. After Margaret are our two young sons Edward and Benjamin. We have an Englishman who lives with us and is the tutor for the children. They generally do well with their lessons. We are proud of each one of them.

"The children spend part of each day with their tutor. He is teaching them to read and to write and to cipher. They are learning some Latin and some history, too. Then John and William and David spend the rest of the day with their father. Sometimes they oversee the tobacco fields, sometimes they go into Hob's Hole to take care of business, sometimes they hunt. Whatever Bartholomew is doing, they do with him. Margaret works with me. She is becoming a good cook and is also learning to preserve food. Sometimes we card wool or flax or weave or sew or make quilts or knit. Sometimes she helps with the washing and last year for the first time she helped make candles and soap. I want her to know how to keep a proper home. Edward and Benjamin have chores in the house or outside near the house. They gather the eggs and feed and water the chickens. They help with the kitchen and herb gardens. They are still so young that it is hard to get them to stick with one task for very long. Most of the time they play with the children of our black people.

"As I said, Bartholomew secured this large land patent where we live a number of years ago before we were married. It is west of Hob's Hole. Incidentally, the Court is trying to change the name to Tappahannock, but no one calls it that. Living along the river is convenient because it is the safest way to get our tobacco to market and to travel as well. Almost no one travels overland down to Yorktown or Williamsburg or to any of the plantations in between because of the danger of Indians and wolves. No one travels west of our land very far even by the river because there are so few settlers. Most of the land is unclaimed by white men. Indians live out there.

"Back in 1676 Indian warriors struck within a few miles of our land to the west and killed 36 settlers and burned plantations. That was a long time ago, but we are still cautious even though most of the Indians we see now are friendly.

"About that same time, a group of men from around here and two Indian guides traveled west overland through the uncharted area to explore the land. They traveled until they came to some great, tall mountains. They eagerly climbed one mountain believing that from the top they would be able to see the Pacific Ocean. Much to their disappointment, all they could see from the top was more mountains. We still haven't found the Pacific over there yet.

"The summer months are the hardest here. The weather is usually very hot and humid and there is almost no breeze blowing. The swamps are always full of water and the mosquitoes are terrible. Nearly everyone gets the summer complaint and it is especially hard on the children.

"But there are benefits to living right here on the Rappahannock. It is full of many kinds of fish that are delicious to eat. There are lots of shad that measure 36 inches long. The drumfish are often 6 feet long, and sturgeon

are anywhere from 3 to 12 feet long. Oysters are often 12 inches in diameter. Some days I keep a couple of the black men out of the fields and send them down to catch fish for dinner. Bartholomew loves shad, and oysters are the children's favorite.

"In addition to tobacco, we grow enough corn and flax for our own use here on the plantation. We also have a kitchen garden where we raise vegetables, and an herb garden so I can make simples to keep us well. We have a few cows, and some sheep, and some hogs for our own use. We let the hogs run wild in the swamps. Everyone does that because there is enough food for them to eat there and then we don't have to feed them. In the woods around us there are elk, buffalo, deer, and flocks of wild turkeys. Some of the turkeys weigh as much as 50 pounds. There is plenty of meat for everyone.

"In the summer and fall the woods are full of fruit and nuts. We find delicious wild grapes, strawberries, persimmons, plums, and mulberries. The kitchen help and I preserve as much as we can of all the fruit for the winter. The woods have many kinds of beautiful trees. There are tall, stately oaks, maples, sweet gums, chestnut, pecans, birch, towering pines, and iridescent holly.

"Some of the biggest events on the frontier are weddings. We all look forward to them. People gather from far and near when there is a wedding, and they stay for several days. One of these days before long I imagine our son John will be getting married. After the ceremony is over we always have a huge feast. The men all go hunting and bring back the meat. The women each make their special dish. After the feast is over there is dancing, singing, smoking, and drinking. We always make a special punch for wedding feasts out of 3 jugs of beer, 3 jugs of brandy, 3 pounds of sugar mixed with nutmeg and several sticks of cinnamon. You stir and mix it all together until the sugar melts and then it is ready to drink. Mmm, it is good!

"Because travel is so difficult, people stay several days at weddings. Everyone pitches in and helps with the work while we visit. At night the women sleep in the beds and the men sleep on the floor. It is a time for catching up on each other's lives, a time for showing off new babies, and a time to share the joys and sorrows with one another. Oh, I love weddings!

"Other occasions are celebrated when the Courts sponsor parties for the entire area. I remember when King Charles II had a new son, the Court declared a public celebration. The Court feels that these parties are an important way to keep we colonists contented and to help dispel the loneliness of frontier life.

"How do you like my new dress? Margaret and I carded the flax, spun the thread, and wove the material. After we got the material woven, I dyed it this lovely blue with the paper that our new shipment of sugar was wrapped in. You know that we get refined sugar in 10 pound cones from the West Indies. It is expensive, but it is good. The cones of sugar come wrapped in the prettiest blue paper and I always save it to use to dye material. This shade of blue is my favorite color.

"We don't raise sugar here in Virginia, so the only sweetener we have is honey. That is good for most things, but I do love to use real sugar for some of my special recipes."

"When I was thinking about how I'd make this dress, Bartholomew went on a trip to Williamsburg to see about our tobacco shipment. When he came home he was telling me about the new kind of dresses that the women are wearing there. The skirts have some things in them called hoops that make the skirts stand way out all around. He said they look real pretty. Now, can you imagine me working around here on the plantation in a hoop skirt! I didn't even think seriously about making this dress that way.

"It seems to me that our strong faith in God has helped all of us persevere through the many trials of life on the frontier. Next to plain survival and fair government, the worship of God is our most important priority. Government and church are completely entwined here. The Church of England is the only legal religion in Virginia right now. There is always a shortage of capable priests since all clergy must be ordained in England. We have a fine new priest at our church. We are paying him the standard wage of 16,000 pounds of tobacco a year. Many men who serve on vestries are also judges of the court. Vestrymen serve for life and they usually choose their own successor. Vestries have the right to levy taxes and these are usually high since the vestry is responsible for the poor and the orphans, for many public works, and for supervising property lines. Vestries proudly say that Virginia needs a united church and state so the gentry could lead us in government as well as religion. I suppose they are right, but I often have my doubts about this since the blending of church and government frequently has led to feuds between the two, and that interferes with my worship.

"Well, it's time for me to go see if Bessie has gotten dinner started. I'm glad we live here in Virginia. Life is good, most of the time. Bartholomew says we have much more land than we could have ever hoped to own in England. There is plenty of food for everyone. People on the frontier are friendly and very willing to help one another. Best of all, there is a bright future for our children here. They can always move west and claim new land for themselves."

SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE

On Sunday morning of the reunion, a non-denominational service was held in the conference room. The service was led by our host, John H. Vawter, who is an ordained Methodist minister. The text used for John's message was Genesis 9:11. Song leader was Frank Robinson and pianist was Sandra Robinson. Ushers were cousins Matthew Loch and Keith Smith. An offering was taken to be given to the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. The service closed with the singing of "Blest Be the Tie."

GET WELL WISHES

Col. James S. and Alliene Corbitt and their daughter, Betty Callis, spent a few more days in Texas after the reunion. On the way home, Col. Corbitt became ill, but continued on to his home in Tennessee. He underwent by-pass surgery in Jackson, Tennessee, on August 11, and was in the hospital for about ten days. He is now recuperating at his home at 118 Gardner Ave., Martin, TN 38237.

CARDS WERE APPRECIATED

Thank you notes were received from Beth Sabel and Esther Vawter for the cards that were sent to them from the reunion. They both appreciated being thought of.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Frances Buchanan Piatt Guynes, 84, died on Saturday, 9 November 1991, of leukemia. She was born in San Antonio, Texas, and had been a resident of E1 Paso, Texas, for 80 years. Her mother was Ella Keithley Buchanan, and her grandmother was Jane Vawter Keithley. She was the widow of William McCoy Piatt and James Fillman Guynes.

Frances had been editor for the monthly E1 Paso Garden Club newsletter, was a charter and life member of the E1 Paso County Historical Society, and had been active in many other organizations and civic groups.

Surviving are two daughters, Jane Piatt Emmett of Rancho Mirage, California, and Keithley Piatt Wagner of San Antonio; six grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

She was a member of the VVV Association, and had attended several reunions.

* * * * *

Catherine Bloom Vawter, 50, died on Tuesday, 21 April 1992, at her home in Aurora, New York, following an illness of several months. She was born in Washington, D.C., the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Bloom of Chevy Chase, Maryland. Her mother survives. She was a graduate of the University of Vermont with a degree in nursing.

In addition to her mother, she is survived by her husband, A. Thomas Vawter, Aurora, New York; two daughters, Anne E. Vawter of St. Louis, Missouri, and Alison R. Vawter of Ithica, New York; two brothers, Stephen C. Bloom of Media, Pennsylvania, and Thomas R. Bloom of New York City. Memorial services were held at All Saints Church in Chevy Chase.

Catherine and Thomas attended the 1990 reunion of the Association in Richmond, Virginia, and are pictured in the reunion book. Their daughter, Anne, attended the 1991 reunion in St. Louis.

* * * * *

Virgil D. Vawter, 75, died on Wednesday, 26 August 1992, at his home in West Sacramento, California. He was born 1 December 1916 in Stevens County, Kansas, the son of Vernon and Renabelle Cope Vawter. He was a World War II veteran, and retired in 1977 after 33 years as a ticket clerk for the Southern Pacific Railroad. Following his retirement, Virgil began volunteer work in his community at Kaiser North Hospital, West Sacramento Church of the Nazarene, and California State Railroad Museum.

Surviving are his wife, Esther Barker Vawter; a daughter, Lynette Allen of Medford, Oregon; two sons, Dale C. Vawter of Rohnert Park, California, and Brian L. Vawter of Fresno, California; three grandsons; five sisters, Frances (Beth) Sabel and Alberta VanderMei, both of Portland, Oregon, Eleanor Spink of Boring, Oregon, Bertha Craft and Dorothy Vawter, both of Covina, California; three brothers, Earl Vawter of Bransford, Missouri, James B. Vawter of Springfield, Missouri, and Charles Vawter of Crooked River Ranch, Oregon. Preceding him in death was a brother, Harry C. Vawter.

His wife, Esther, is a member of the Association, and for many years served as editor of the newsletter.

YOU CAN HELP

Please send news about your family for inclusion in the newsletter. Items of interest are obituaries, marriage announcements, birth announcements, awards, graduations, etc. Also send queries and research findings. These items should be sent to the newsletter editor. Thanks!

VVV ITEMS

There are now several VVV related items available, but space does not allow listing them this time. Watch for a list in the next newsletter.

VVV MEMBERS AND FRIENDS ATTENDING THE 1992 REUNION

ARIZONA

Bobbi Vawter Meek

CALIFORNIA

Omer Dee and Helen Johnson

DELAWARE

Robert L. and Donna Vawter

GEORGIA

Charles and Betty Burt

John Carlson Jr.

Cheryl Glasgow

Timothy

Kristen

Bud and Vivian Stephens

Myron

Lula V. Thompson

Flara V. Waters

ILLINOIS

Paul and Connie Bugos

Tadd

Harry and Edith Vawter

INDIANA

Bonita Welch

MICHIGAN

Robert C. and Margaret Vawter

Robert L. and Ila Vawter

MISSISSIPPI

Lowell Vaughters

Norma S. Vaughters

Fred and Wordna Wicker

Fred and Norma Wicker

Margaret Wicker

OHIO

Joseph V. and Martha Hendricks

Krista Keir

Lucille Keir

OKLAHOMA

Edna M. Bowers

Duncan and Sally Brown

Matthew Loch

Billy M. and Dorothy Vawter

TENNESSEE

Betty Corbitt Callis

James S. and Alliene Corbitt

Barbara Vawter DeFur

Emily

Jake

Frank and Sandra V. Robinson

Robert M. (Pete) and Norma Vawter

Lynn Weekly

TEXAS

Gloria Albinesi

Juanita M. Baker

Earl and Lula Bolerjack

Celia Burnett

Roger and Shirley Byler

Danny and Renae Chaviers

Eric

Stephanie

Rubyann Darnell

Patti Darnell

Richard and Natalie Howard

Robyn

Austin

Andy Jasper

Annette Joseph

Larry and Jo Lacy

Joe and Beth Melton

Alice Glenn Ricks

Bill and Thelma Shattuck

Ernie and Bess Shoemaker

Keith Smith

Louis Vanover

Carolyn Vaughter

Phill and Peggy Vaughter

Courtney

Bill and Erma Vawter

Della

Athena Johnson

Bill and Sally Vawter

Gary and RaJean Vawter

J. W. and Kay Vawter

Misty

Tiffany

James E. and Mary Vawter

John H. and Sue Vawter

Lewis and Evelyn Vawter

Melinda Vawter

Mike and Ann Vawter

Julie

Steve

Herbert & Hannah Williams

VIRGINIA

Ellen Cummings

Rebecca

Frederick

Vawter, Vauter, Vaughter(s) Family Association Membership - \$7.00 per year

Send to: Sue Vawter RR 6 Box 370 Nacogdoches, TX 75961

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