

OFFICERS

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TREASURER: Sue Vawter, Route 6 Box 370, Nacogdoches, TX 75961
HISTORIAN/ARCHIVIST: Norma Vawter, 1075 Oaklawn Drive, Milan, TN 38358
NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Bonita Welch, 4145N 900W, Scipio, IN 47273
ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Sally Brown, 2374 E 73rd Place, Tulsa, OK 74136

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TUPELO, MISSISSIPPI - 4-7 AUGUST 1994

Tupelo, Mississippi, is known as the birthplace of Elvis Presley, and many who attended the 1986 VVV reunion in that city will remember seeing his former home. However, there is more to Tupelo than Elvis Presley.

An article in the 3 March 1994 The Wall Street Journal tells of Tulepo's "success at attracting a steady inflow of investment over the years," and of the eighteen Fortune 500 companies located in the area.

This August, Tupelo will attract a steady flow of Vawter, Vauter, Vaughter(s) as once again the VVV reunion is held there. Fred and Wordna Wicker and their family have been making plans for the 1994 reunion, which will be at the Ramada Inn, Tupelo, on August 4-7.

The general format is as follows:

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|--------------------------|--|
| Thursday Evening, Aug. 4 | - Registration and
Early Bird Supper |
| Friday Morning, Aug. 5 | - Registration; official
opening of reunion |
| Friday Evening | - Fish fry and country music |
| Saturday Morning, Aug. 6 | - Picture taking; free time |
| Saturday Evening | - Banquet; memorial service;
business; VVV Children's
Choir; door prizes |
| Sunday Morning, Aug. 7 | - Chapel Service; adjournment |

Optional tours will be available for Tupelo's renovated Downtown area, art gallery, museum, Natchez Trace Visitor's Center, and Barnes Crossing Mall. Complete information will be included in the June newsletter, along with reservation details and prices.

VVV CHILDREN'S CHOIR

A favorite part of recent reunions has been the VVV Children's Choir, directed by Ellen Cummings. All children in attendance are invited to be a part of this choir. They usually practice on Friday and Saturday during a time when the adults are having meetings, and then perform Saturday night at the banquet. Not only does this give the children something to do, it gets them involved in the VVV Association and insures another generation of reunions. Everyone is urged to bring their children or grandchildren; special prices will be provided for them.

QUERIES

From: James R. Terry, 7024 S.W. 80th Court, Miami, FL 33143

Sally Vaughters married Jordon Hall in Patrick County, Virginia, 27 Feb 1821. Who were Sally's parents? Three other Vaughters women married in Patrick County during the period 1821-1830. Martha Vaughters married Adam Hall (brother of Jordon) 21 Jan 1827, Margaret Vaughters married Tyre Bowman 10 Jan 1821, and Drucilla Vaughters married Ewell Smith 26 Nov 1830. Were these women sisters? Clement Vaughters, age 45, was living in Patrick County in 1850. Was he a brother?

A Clement Vawter married Sarah Johnson 17 Sep 1788 in Cumberland Co., Virginia (teste Edward Vawter.) In 1819, a Clement Vaughters died in Patrick County (Inventory of Estate 20 Feb 1819.) The only Vaughters listed in the 1820 Patrick County census is Sally Vaughters. Could this "Sally" be Sarah, widow of Clement? Are they the parents?

From: Ann Montgomery, 409 Paddock Lane, Montgomery, AL 36109

Need information on Reuben T. Vawter, his wife, Harriet M. Transu, and their three daughters, Martha A., Josephine, and Harriet.

BETTER DAYS AHEAD

During the past year, many, if not all, VVV members have experienced various extremes in the weather. We've had floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, ice storms, sub-zero temperatures, blizzards, and probably other things best forgotten. A few weeks ago, a card was received from Norma Vaughters of Southaven, Mississippi, on which appeared this very appropriate quote: "Tomorrow shines with promise of joys yet to be."

One of those joys could be attending a VVV reunion. As you begin to make summertime plans, consider spending August 4-7 in Tupelo.

VVV ASSOCIATION IS INTERNATIONAL

Most VVV Association members are aware the family is spread "from sea to shining sea," but did you know we have members in other countries as well? Our international members are: Wallace Read Vawter, Ajijico, Jalisco, Mexico; Virginia Vawter Storr, Willowdale, Ontario, Canada; Thomas C. Taylor, Nairobi, Kenya; and Steven and Candace Pike, Cameroon, West Africa.

A MISSISSIPPI HOMECOMING by

Candice Pike

"Living in Africa with the nearest archival depository several days and thousands of miles away, across the Sahara and beyond, I am a bit limited in access to primary sources for my genealogical research. Yet I have found even from the remoteness of the bush that patience is rewarded and much can be accomplished via the mail. Granted, an air mail letter takes anywhere from three to six weeks to reach us and a packet of documents up to six months by air. Even so, it is a happy day when it all comes together after months or years of research and the long-missing piece is suddenly snapped into place.

"My happy day arrived with the delivery of a large brown mailing bag from the state archives, postmarked, "Jackson, Mississippi." I was ecstatic. It was to provide the basis for another happy day a year down the road while we were on home leave in Alabama from our medical missionary post here in Cameroon. Census records, correspondence with a county historian, and the thorough research of a former courthouse employee all pointed to two things: James Tilford Pike was my husband's great-great grandfather and he was from Tishomingo County, Mississippi. James T., or "Jackie," as he was known, had been among the first white settlers in that county and when he and Mary Jane Vawter took their vows in November of 1841, the first to have been married there as well.

"Owing to a major break in the family, it had taken me years to reach this point. For after Mary Jane died in 1870, Jackie, at the behest of family and friends, moved to Texas. It was there that he was to commit what was to some of his grown children, nothing less than a crime. He married an Indian. I doubt his son Rufus, my husband's great-grandfather, who also relocated to the Lone Star State, ever spoke his name again. Rufus moved further west.

"When eventually Jackie left his Indian wife and returned to Mississippi, it was too late. Rufus had by then severed all ties to both his father and home state. He passed on no names, no

places, no dates, no genealogy. Where was the family Bible? The great aunts, uncles, cousins? The faded family photographs, tintypes, and sepia prints of weddings, babies and family reunions? Only a vague story of a grandfather who had married an Indian remained. To succeeding generations, scattered far and wide, it seemed almost as if, as I often teased my husband, their family had been beamed down from another planet. Nonetheless, even if its members had become "alien"-ated from one another, at least now access was being gained to their coordinates.

"And so the question became, could I find any living descendants? It was Irene Barnes, unofficial county historian in Iuka, Mississippi, to whom I turned next. Extemporaneously questioned on the Pikes, she hesitated. But at the mention of the Vawters, she became a font of information.

"I was referred to local Vawter relations, Judge T. Fred Wicker and his wife, Wordna, in Pontotoc. I called. They were home. Lovely people. Yes, they knew the Pikes - Carey and Trana and daughter Martha Jean in Booneville. I called. They were home. What to say? I babbled on about Rufus and James T., whom they called "Tif," and his other son, Jasper, their great-grandfather, whom they called "Cephus" (very confusing) until we finally got it all sorted out and the startled family in Booneville patiently answered all my questions. No one there knew what had happened to Rufus. It was presumed he had died young. And then dear Carey's words of confirmation, "I believe we're kin. I believe we're from the same tree." And so we are.

"I couldn't believe it. Years of research from Africa and then three phone calls from the states and it all fell into place. Long lost cousins began calling from Mississippi and Texas. We filled each other in on the past century. And in so doing allowed ourselves the enjoyment of being saturated with amazement.

"One hundred and twenty years after Mary Jane Vawter's son left home, her great-great-grandson came back to Mississippi. To a family he never knew he had, who looked just like him. To the family homestead and Jacinto courthouse where his forefather had served as one of the county's early Justices of the Peace. To an album of photos of familiar faces he had never seen. And lastly, to stand beside Mary Jane's grave. It was a grey, blustery day of intermittent rain. But at that moment the clouds parted and the sun shone down on them. And as we listened to long remembered stories of a family torn apart, yet with bonds so strong, it was as if she had reached across the Atlantic and beyond the Sahara into the horn of Africa to reclaim her own."

Thank you, Candace, for contributing this.

Please send your research stories to the news editor.

A WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT

The following appeared in the November 1993 issue of the Vintage Tulsan. Albert C. and Frances Josephine Churchwell Vawter were the parents of Shirley Vawter Byler of Sweany, Texas.

"Remember when life was simpler and more gracious and communities were closer? In this 1891 wedding announcement, we will remember even when the union of two people made the community glad.

"MARRIED: On Sunday, July 26, 1891, at the residence of the bride's parents, by Elder L. S. Hale, Mr. Albert C. Vawter and Miss Josie Churchwell, both of Shelby county [Missouri.]

"The above marriage was solemnized at the residence of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. F. M. Churchwell, 2 miles south of this place at 9:30 in the morning, witnessed only by a few of the near relatives and friends. Miss Josie is the eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Churchwell, and is an accomplished and talented young lady, and a great favorite among her girl friends. She has had the advantages of good parental influence all her life, and accepted and improved them, making her indeed a model young lady, and a prize worthy the greatest love and respect from her husband.

"Mr. Albert is the youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Vawter, of this place, and is an exemplary young man, full of energy and industry. Has no bad habits, but is indeed a Christian young man, and respected and esteemed by all.

"Work has already begun on a residence for the newly wedded pair, to be located in the north part of town across the street from Dr. Carson's residence, and as soon as completed will be taken charge of by Mr. Albert Vawter and wife, where we hope and believe their wedded life full of joy and hopes will begin; and may these blessings attend them all the days of their lives is our wish.

"AND EXCERPTS FROM A NEOSHO, MISSOURI, PAPER FIFTY YEARS LATER:

Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Vawter will celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary at their home in Neosho...all their family and a few close friends will be present.

"Albert C. Vawter and Frances Churchwell were married at the home of the bride's parents near Shelbyville, Missouri, July 26, 1891. To them nine children were born, seven of whom are still living. There are also 32 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

"Mr. and Mrs. Vawter have spent most of their 50 years of married life farming in Shelby, Shannon and Newton counties of Missouri. However, they spent several years in Washington and Idaho, having a homestead in the latter state. For the past 12 years, they have been running a tourist camp at the west edge of Neosho."

*****PLEASE NOTE*****

Is there a renewal form enclosed with your newsletter? If so, then you need to pay dues. Your promptness will insure that you continue to receive the newsletter.

ADDITIONS TO THE FAMILY

Megan Elizabeth Vawter was born April 28, 1993, to Brian Lyle and Tammie Vawter of Fresno, California. Grandparents are Esther Vawter of West Sacramento and the late Virgil Vawter.

Dylan Christopher Tatum was born November 2, 1993 to Christopher and Melissa Bennett Tatum of Horn Lake, Mississippi. Grandparents are Gregory F. and Karen Vaughters Tatum of Southhaven, Mississippi; great-grandparents are Norma Vaughters of Southhaven and the late James L. "Jimmy" Vaughters.

Congratulations to all of you!

AN 80th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Alice Glenn Ricks, of Brady, Texas, celebrated her 80th birthday on February 17, 1994. An Open House was held in her honor on February 19, hosted by her children, Elizabeth Ricks Langston, Robert Ricks, and James Ricks.

Alice Glenn was born February 17, 1914, in Merkel, Texas, the daughter of James Edwin and Willie Elizabeth Bigham Young. She graduated from Lampasas High School in 1930, and from the University of Texas at Austin in 1934 with a degree in home economics. For the next six years she taught at Mesquite and was Home Demonstration Agent in Coleman and Hunt Counties, Texas.

On August 3, 1940, she married Glenn H. Ricks M.D., and has been a resident of Brady since that time. Her husband died November 21, 1968. She is a member of the First Christian Church, McCulloch County Historical Commission (V.P.), Texas Medical Association Alliance, American Medical Association Auxiliary, and Daughters of the American Revolution.

Alice Glenn's line of descent from Bartholomew Vawter is as follows: Alice Glenn Young Ricks⁸ ; James Edwin Young m Willie Elizabeth Bigham⁷; James Glenn Young m. Mandana Salome Thrasher⁶; Robert Young m. Elizabeth (Betsy) Vawter⁵; William Boulware Vawter m Margaret (Peggy) Henderson⁴; William Vawter m. Anne Ballard³ Edward Vawter m. Elizabeth Boulware²; Bartholomew m Winifred Hodgson¹.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Dorothy Marie Vawter, 65, of Oklahoma City, died January 12, 1994, of heart failure. She was born November 4, 1928, in Chandler, Oklahoma. Dorothy enjoyed genealogical research, and was a master of the Scriptures. She dedicated her life to the devotion of family, friends, and church. She served in many capacities in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and concluded her service as a temple worker in Dallas, Texas.

Surviving are her husband of 44 years, Bishop Billy M. Vawter; three children, Diana L. Loch and William Dwight Vawter, both of Moore, Oklahoma; and Kenny Vawter of Roy, Utah; a sister, Juanita Munhollon of Oklahoma City; and eight grandchildren.

Dorothy will be remembered by the VVV for being a gracious hostess at the 1993 reunion in Oklahoma City.

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Joseph L. Bullard, 78, of Seymour, Indiana, died January 25, 1994. He was born December 19, 1915, in Indianapolis, the son of Homer and Jessie Holsclaw Bullard. He was a member of Calvary Baptist Church, and retired in 1986 from Swifty Oil Co., where he worked 23 years.

Surviving are sons James, William A., and Thomas J. Bullard, all of Seymour, and Dennis Wayne Bullard of Annapolis, Maryland; daughters, Nancy Hundley of Charleston, South Carolina, and Robin Toppe of Indianapolis; sisters, Edith Jones of Scipio, Indiana, and Ruth Morrison of North Vernon, Indiana; 18 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

Preceding him in death were his wife, Dolores L. Butts Bullard; a son, Laurence Michael Bullard; a brother, Wilmer Bullard; and a sister, Mabel Prather.

He was a descendant of Indiana pioneers Jesse and Elizabeth Watts Vawter.

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Hannah Grace Roseberry was stillborn January 26, 1994. She was the daughter of Rick and Amy Martin Roseberry of Terre Haute, Indiana. Other survivors include grandparents, Richard K. and Marge Roseberry of Columbus, Indiana, and John and Sandy Martin of Hope, Indiana; great-grandparents, Richard Roseberry of North Vernon, Indiana, and Ada Clarkson of Butlerville, Indiana.

Hannah was a descendant of Indiana pioneers Jesse and Elizabeth Watts Vawter.

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Roxie Jessie Vawter, 84, of Greensboro, North Carolina, died December 28, 1993. She was a native of Stokes County, a member of Community Baptist Church, and retired from American Tobacco Company.

Survivors include daughters, Tinnie Festerman and Billie Gladwell, both of Greensboro, and Jo Ann Lasker of Brown Summitt, North Carolina; a son W. Ray Vawter of Raleigh; nine grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.

This obituary was sent to Wordna Wicker by a Wicker cousin in North Carolina. Does anyone have more information on this family?

Annie Willard Nixon, 97, of Iuka, Mississippi, died January 9, 1994. She was a homemaker and a Baptist, and was an excellent seamstress for her family. She was born in September 1896 in Iuka, the daughter of James Loving and Laura Isabell Lambert Robinson.

Surviving are two daughters, Mildred Nixon Hill of Ashland and Iuka, and Helen Marguerite Nixon of Huntsville, Alabama, and Iuka; a daughter-in-law, Dorothy Diescha Nixon; a granddaughter, Louise Nixon Casavant, and two great-grandsons, John Richard and David Michael Casavant of Signal Mountain, Tennessee.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Clinton Kelley Nixon; sons James Clinton Nixon and Edward Kelley Nixon; and two grandchildren, David Duncan Esler, Jr., and Katherine Ann Hill.

Mrs. Nixon attended the reunion at Brady Mountain, Arkansas, and was the oldest person present at the 1986 reunion in Tupelo. She was a descendant of John and Rhoda McGuire Vawter of Tishomingo County, Mississippi, through their daughter, Cynthia Vawter, who married Joseph Robinson.

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Rev. Paul Hiram Vaughter, 82, of Houston, Texas, died January 23, 1994. He was born March 13, 1911, in Ada, Oklahoma, the son of Thomas and Minnie Louise Ray Vaughter. He was an ordained minister, and started three Baptist churches in Oklahoma city, two of which remain. He spent 30 years with the government, and ended his career as Property Administrator for the entire European Theater. Memorial services were held at College Park Baptist Church in Houston, and Brookwood Baptist Church in Oklahoma City.

Surviving are his wife Carolyn Smith Vaughter; two sons, Phil Vaughter of Austin, and Dr. Paul H. Vaughter, Jr. of Minneapolis; a sister, Gordie; a brother, Odie; six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by a son, Patton Courtney Vaughter, and a sister, Opal.

Paul was one of the founders of the VVV Association. A more complete account of his life can be found in the Summer 1986 newsletter.

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Mabel Edith McWillis Vawter, 96, died January 5, 1994, in Saskatchewan, Canada. She was the widow of Charles Ralph Vawter, who died in 1981 in Victoria, B.C. They were married June 30, 1915, in Flora, Oregon, and spent most of their married life in Canada.

Surviving are five children; Isabel and Ralph, both of Senlac; Floyd, of Regina; Wilbur, of Nanaimo; and David, of Vancouver.

Mabel's husband was the son of Cyrus Beverly Vawter and the grandson of James Crawford Vawter of Illinois.

Thank you to all who continue to send obituaries, birth announcements, marriage information, etc., for the newsletter. The job would be very difficult without your help!

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