

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: Lowell Vaughters, 4569 Meadow Lake Drive, Tupelo, MS 38801  
(601) 842-3081  
VICE-PRESIDENT: Beth Melton, 1211 Casa Vale, Dallas, TX 75218(214) 328-9853  
SECRETARY: Melinda Vawter, 817 Evelyn Street, Nacogdoches, TX 75961(409) 569-1640  
TREASURER: Charles Burt, 743 Goodson Road, Dawsonville, GA 30534 (706)216-6103  
ASST.TREASURER: Cheryl Glasgow, 3715 Fir Dr, Buford, GA 30518 (770) 271-9823  
HISTORIAN/ARCHIVIST: Ralphe Vawter, 3996 Bay Pointe Dr. Gulf Breeze FL 32562 (904)  
932-1651  
NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Bonita Welch, 4145N 900W, Scipio, IN 47273 (812) 392-2149  
e-mail: xfgs62a@prodigy.com  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Sally Brown, 2374 E 73rd Place, Tulsa, OK 74136(918) 496-1538

Dues - \$7.00 per year

A VISIT TO TREMATON CASTLE 1994

by John T. and Aggie Vawter

6815 SW Capitol Hill Road, Portland, OR 97219

With our travel packs on backs and enthusiasm high, we left Portland, Oregon, on July 18, 1994. Via San Francisco, we arrived at Heathrow about noon August 19. After a couple of days in the wonderful city of Bath, we headed for Plymouth to visit the ancient Trematon Castle, arriving on August 22.

The weather was beautiful and we walked through the Barbican, the old section of Plymouth a couple of blocks from where the pilgrims and probably the Vawter brothers (1680) embarked for the New World. We took a B & B in this part of town which goes back into early English history and is rich in exciting places, some of which were almost certainly visited and used by Sir Francis Drake and various Valletort/Vawter family members.

Plymouth, a city of a half million, is located in Devon on the south coast facing the English Channel and the Tamar River West. The Tamar separates the counties of Devon and Cornwall. Trematon is located in Cornwall, about ten miles west of Plymouth, through the small city of Saltash and to the south edge of St. Stephens village, St. Stephens Church being the chief landmark nearby.

Since we had no auto, we studied the Plymouth city bus routes, finding that buses #1 or #2 run within a block or two of St. Stephens church. From the church we walked to Trematon via St.

Stephens Road, a distance of about one half mile. This is a very beautiful walk through scenes of architecture and landscapes much like centuries past.

This road heads downhill into a valley and then climbs back up to a point somewhat higher than St. Stephens village. Just as we wondered whether we were still on the correct road (it would be hard to get off) we looked up and to our right and there was the wonderful round crenellated wall of the Trematon castle keep.

Forgetting how our legs felt from climbing the hill, we hurried on up around the hill, coming to a round stone cottage almost in the road. We felt that this building may have been located there centuries ago to help intercept and monitor various traffic approaching Trematon. As a matter of fact, we stopped at the cottage to inquire about proceeding to the castle area. A fine looking Englishman in his golden years informed us that we should go to the manor house and ask permission to visit.

A hundred yards or so farther we were inside the great wall and on to the large Georgian residence. We "knocked up" the master who answered the door immediately, so it was obvious that the gateman had phoned ahead of our arrival. It was 10:30 a.m. and he was dressed in a morning coat and stated that he was just eating breakfast. He very graciously invited us to make our way around wherever we wanted to go. The mansion, the person and the setting told us that one would have to be very rich to afford to lease the property. (When Dorothy Vawter visited around ten years ago, the home was between leases and was being renovated for the next tenant.)

At this point, we began a two-hour experience in and around the walls and grounds and other structures. Actually, there are two barns built against the outside of the main wall. These are still in good repair, and represent a practice started many centuries ago. The main advantage is that only three walls need be erected.

Before going farther, we must say that the whole property has been marvelously restored, including the grounds which are still in process. Prince Charles is the owner and began restorative measures ten years ago. The leasee is responsible for keeping the grounds and is doing a wonderful job, taking great pride in having a show place. We talked at length with the gardening contractor who had the keys to the gatehouse, which is the only reason we were able to see inside that remarkable structure.

First we snapped a few photos of the wall from the inside. Then, over to a section of the twenty foot high wall up ancient steps to the walkway. The wall is six feet wide on top with the parapets above. Centuries ago a moat surrounded the walls and the remains can still be seen in some places. Perhaps the wall

was built by the Romans to protect a signal station on this key hillside overlooking various seaward approaches to the area. Evidence for this is that a section of wall was found to be covered by a type of plaster that was used only by the Romans. Since the Cornish people lived there before the Romans and since Trematon is a Cornish term for place (town) of the king, perhaps they were the ones who began the ancient building program on this wonderful hill overlooking rivers and bays of SW Cornwall.

Looking at the wall, one can see various arrow slots that from a distance resemble a Christian cross symbol. However, the slots are hollowed (beveled) on the inside so that a bowman could aim his arrow toward a wide range of targets either vertically or horizontally. The design of these arrow slots varied over time so that historians can use them to help date a structure. Trematon has at least three historical periods; the wall being the oldest, then the round keep, and lastly the gatehouse. We do not know when the wall or original castle were built since there has never been an archeological examination.

The original castle has been replaced by a Georgian style manor house (1807), built of stone from the castle ruin. It has been said that the castle was allowed to deteriorate over a long period and was in extreme ruination by the 17th century. It is to be assumed that the early Valletorts resided in the castle because they built the keep and the gatehouse, and perhaps more. From this, one could assume that the castle was in use through the 14th century and probably longer before being abandoned.

The keep, meaning place to keep things, was built around 1190 by a grandson of Reginald de Valletort. This was designed for defensive reasons, but also for animal shelter and housing for soldiers and others during time of danger. This structure is unique, being about thirty feet high and around seventy feet in diameter. The doors were very massive, probably of oak, and were mounted into the walls with great hinges and bolted with timbers at least four by eight inches.

From the keep ramparts one can survey the surrounding area of river, town, forest and meadow. It is difficult to imagine any enemy getting into this round fortress from any direction. We understand that Sir Francis Drake stored some of his booty in the keep following one of his round-the-world trips. He was going to see Queen Elizabeth, and needed a secure storage. So perhaps the keep was functional even after the castle was in ruins.

Having thoroughly climbed and perambulated the keep, we ambled down to the gatehouse. This building (c.1250) is around thirty feet square and three tall stories high. The "gates" are the portcullis type, a sort of giant trellis of four inch square oak: that can be lowered when an attack is imminent. There is an outer gate on one side and an inner one in the other side of the

structure. These gates have been quite authentically and beautifully restored.

The ground floor contains small side rooms for gatekeepers and an arrow slot is provided on one side wall to give visibility and defense toward the approach road. (The present road approaches from the opposite side of the grounds.)

The second floor is reached by a narrow winding stone stairway. This is basically a one room apartment about 15' by 20', with a fireplace on the side wall and a window opening at one end. The wall is about three feet thick at this elevation. This area is in good repair with a solid board floor.

Access to the third floor is by the same winding stair which continues upward. This living area is about the same size and design with walls still three feet thick. The fireplaces in both apartments are carved from solid stone, and are some of the oldest of this type in England.

In the days when the wall was operational as a defensive structure, the third floor apartment had a doorway leading directly onto the parapet walkway. This opening has been filled, but suggests that soldiers occupied these quarters at one time.

From our reading we understand that the "Black Prince," one of the leading generals of the "Hundred Years War" and the father of Richard II, stayed in the gatehouse apartments on occasion during some of his activities. His father, Edward VI, gave him the castle in 1336 and thus, the Duchy of Cornwall was established.

The spiral stairs terminate on the roof of the gatehouse. This is a very interesting place from which to view the castle area as well as the general surroundings. The roof and tops of walls have recently been rejuvenated using slate and lead sheeting in a style typical of antique and Victorian structures. Slate overhangs walls to keep rain from running down their sides, and lead is used because it is very durable and can be easily bent and twisted to fit any shape required for flashing.

Having accomplished our tour and having no more film, we descended into the grounds to chat with the gardener. He is developing and refurbishing some very beautiful English Gardens within the walls. As we dislike doubling back on our walks, we inquired as to another way to walk back to St. Stephens. He directed us around the castle wall and down the ancient unused road down the hill and through the forest. Going back by this route was a great thrill. The road is about ten feet wide mostly reduced down to a pathway and covered by a canopy of wonderful hardwood trees. As we strolled this quarter mile we could almost see and feel the heartbeat of activity that must have been related to the castle area eight hundred years ago.

As we approached St. Stephens, we noticed a neighborhood pub nearby. As it was past 1:00 pm we stopped in for a sandwich. In addition to the wonderful food there was much conversation with the locals who filled us in on various aspects of modern life around Trematon castle. Actually, we found pubs to have excellent food and good prices throughout England.

Lunch finished, we walked a couple blocks, caught our #2 bus back to Plymouth to our Victorian room on the Barbican.

We would especially like to thank Jean Vawter Robinson for her preview photos and the actual address of Trematon, Bonita Welch for maps and Dorothy Vawter for her interesting review from a few years ago. This sharing made our trip much more efficient and enjoyable. We regret not having a couple more days to research and visit other Valletort/Vawter history. However, we shall return!

#### CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Darren Welch and Kristina Swenson of Columbia, Missouri, on the birth of their son, William Frederick Swenson Welch. Will was born 14 December 1995, and weighed 7 lbs 3 oz and was 20 inches long at birth. He is the couple's first child. Darren, a graduate of North Carolina State University and University of Indianapolis, is employed in Columbia as an actuarial analyst at Shelter Life Insurance Company. Kristina, a graduate of Duke University and University of Indianapolis, is employed at Unlimited Opportunities in Boonville, Missouri, as program manager in supported employment. Proud first-time grandparents are Joseph and Bonita Welch.

#### T--SHIRT UPDATE

At the reunion in August, there was considerable interest expressed in having t-shirts made with the family name and crest. By show of hands, approximately 85 "unofficial orders" were given. Because of this interest, Ralphe Vauter contacted a company about making the shirts, and got a price of \$10.00 for sizes small, medium, large and extra-large; and \$11.50 for extra-extra-large. Forms for ordering from Ralphe were enclosed with the October 1995 newsletter.

As of now, Ralphe has received requests for only 41 shirts. The prices quoted were based on a minimum order of 200 shirts, so anyone planning to buy shirts needs to contact Ralphe as soon as possible.

#### DUES

If a renewal form is enclosed, you need to pay dues to be assured of continuing to receive the newsletter.

Page 6 - January 1996

From: David L. Hancock, 296 Hidenwood Drive #12, Newport News, VA 23606 Phone 804-591-0128

"I am a descendant of Henry Vaughters (ca. 1820- .) My great grandmother was Laura Vaughters(1855 - 25 Sep 1940.) This branch of the Vaughters family resided in Charlotte County, Virginia. It is said that we were moved to Charlotte County after being in Port Royal, Virginia in Caroline County. We were sold to many other places throughout Virginia (Buckingham, Louisa, Appomattox counties and others.) I am in need of any records that any of the descendants of the Vaughters have on slave transfers (property.)"

From: John E. Vawter, 1511 Birch Drive, Elkhart, IN 46514  
John is looking for descendants of his uncle, Carl Emmett Vawter, b. 29 January 1881, d. 19 Jul 1947. Carl married Lila Phillips, and went to Genoa, Texas (now a part of Houston) about 1907. Their children were: Clyde Vawter, Martha Vawter, and Evelyn Vawter. Carl and Lila were divorced, and he married Frankie (?). This marriage also ended in divorce. John would like to have cemetery listings and monument inscriptions giving information about this family.

From: Ann Montgomery, 409 Paddock Lane, Montgomery, AL 36109  
Phone 334-271-1687

"What was the maiden name of Elizabeth, second wife of John Vawter (b.1778.) Their daughters, Elizabeth Ann and Harriet were in Marion County, Alabama, in 1850, as was John, who had married wife number three, Peachy Hazel. Harriet was my great-grandmother. I would appreciate any information on this family."

From: Glee Krapf, 215 Washington St., Tamaqua, PA 18252

Glee needs information on Edward and Catherine Dwyer, parents of Pamela Dwyer Vawter, first wife of John Taylor Vawter. John and Pamela were married 10 May 1835 in Jennings County, Indiana, and went to Iowa in 1839. A few years later, they became part of a German colony being organized in Bethel, Shelby County, Missouri.

From:  
Roxanne Mann, 4955 S Co Rd 675 W, Coatesville, IN 46121

In Index to Marriages of Old Rappahannock and Essex Counties, Virginia, 1655-1900, Roxanne found this marriage: William Walden and Sally Vawter, 7 November 1810, Book J, page 226. Who were the parents of Sally?

QUERY

From: Jane Vawter; 36 Rossmore Court, Park Road; London, NW1 6XX United Kingdom Phone 44 171 258 1899

Jane is currently living in London and is researching the Vawter family in England prior to the mid-seventeenth century.

She writes: "I am trying to establish the origins of the Vawter family in England as well as to verify the truth of the De Valletort story. There were certainly De Valletorts in Devon who were Norman and who were titled nobility. The question to be answered is how and when the name became Vawter and what happened to the family between 1300 and the emigration in the seventeenth century. I would like to establish how a titled noble family later emigrated to Virginia as indentured servants, if this is in fact what happened.

"At this point in my research, I can only say for sure that the family came from Devon. I have located records of many Vawters in Devon, going back to 1515. I cannot say which, if any, are our relations.

"It seems that *The Vawter Family in America* is riddled with errors, some of which are now taken as fact. Among these errors are the emigration date of the Vawter "brothers" of whom there seems to be evidence of only Bartholomew. I need to clear up some of these mysteries in order to begin searching for the family in England."

Jane needs help in answering the following questions:

1. "What is the proof that Bartholomew Vawter was born in 1660 or 1640? Are these dates just estimates made given the 1685 emigration date?"
2. "What is the source of information stating that his birth place was Plymouth England? Is this just an assumption based on where early Virginians came from or some other historical guesswork?"
3. "Does anyone know who the other two "brothers" were – John and Angus? (I am told that because Angus was almost exclusively Scottish at that time, it was highly unlikely that any good Englishman would name his son Angus!)"
4. "Is there a more exact emigration date with source?"
5. "Has anyone checked ships records?"
6. "One book states that Bartholomew Vawter had two wives. Does anyone know who the first wife was?"

Jane is eager to receive any verified piece of information with sources given. She is the great-granddaughter of Merrill Vawter, granddaughter of Paul Edward Vawter, and daughter of Paul Edward Vawter, Jr.

**IN REMEMBRANCE**

Helen A. Jones, 86, of North Vernon, Indiana, died 12 October 1995 at Jennings Community Hospital. She was born 30 September 1909 in North Vernon, the daughter of Oscar Elvin and Sarah Grace Holsclaw Beeman, and was married to Ernest Jones on 18 October 1936. He survives. She was a member of the North Vernon First Baptist Church, the Order of Eastern Star, and enjoyed writing poetry. In 1974, she retired after 20 years with Farm Bureau Insurance.

Surviving in addition to her husband are a son, John P. Jones of Scipio, Indiana; four daughters, Marilyn Stuckwisch of Lexington, Kentucky, Rebecca Ann Cornette of Niceville, Florida, Ruth Hansen of Columbus, Indiana; and Martha Jones of Louisville, Kentucky; nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by brothers Clyde, Homer and Wilber Beeman, and sisters Florence, Alice and Mary Beeman. Burial was at Vernon Cemetery.

Helen was a descendant of Jennings County, Indiana, pioneer settlers, William and Frances Vawter. She had been a member of the VVV Association for several years.

\* \* \* \* \*

Harry L. Vawter, 81, of Farmington, Illinois, died Sunday, 26 November 1995 at his home. He was born 13 August 1914 in Bevier, Missouri, the son of Alva Elroy and Pearl Cornelson Vawter, and was married to Edith Gilstrap on 27 April 1935 in Macon, Missouri. She survives. He was a member of Farmington First Baptist Church, and retired in 1974 after working for 35 years as a machinist for Caterpillar, Inc.

Surviving in addition to his wife are two sons, Richard Vawter of Farmington and Donald Vawter of Canton, Illinois; one daughter, Connie Bugos of Farmington; eight grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren. Preceding him in death was his stepfather, Matthew Gray; and a sister, Belva Berniece Vawter Gilstrap. Burial was at Oak Ridge Cemetery.

Harry was a longtime member of the VVV Association and attended the reunions regularly. His father was the youngest child of John S. and Elizabeth Grinstead Vawter, who moved from Jennings County, Indiana, to Keota, Missouri.

\* \* \* \* \*

Julius Vawters, 80, of Kosse, Texas, died Monday, 5 September 1994. He was born 7 February 1914 in Kosse. He was a retired pipefitter and rancher, and a member of Oletha Baptist Church.

Surviving are his wife, Royce Vawters; a son, Clyde B. Vawters of Santa Fe; three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Burial was at Kosse City Cemetery.

Julius had been a member of the VVV Association for several years.



This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.daneprairie.com>.  
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.