

**OFFICERS**

**PRESIDENT:** Beth Melton, 1211 Casa Vale, Dallas, TX 75218(214) 328-9853  
**VICE-PRESIDENT:** Phil Vaughter, 1103 Newport Avenue, Austin, TX 78753 (512)  
836-3105  
**SECRETARY:** Joyce Carter, 5810 Par Four Drive, Houston, TX 77088  
(281) 448-0972  
**TREASURER:** Charles Burt, 743 Goodson Road, Dawsonville, GA 30534 (706)216-6103  
**ASST.TREASURER:** Cheryl Kelley, 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

**1997 REUNION - TOWNSEND, TENNESSEE**

A brochure from the Best Western Valley View Lodge and Convention Center in Townsend, Tennessee, states that Townsend is "on the quiet side of the Smokies." Another brochure calls it "the peaceful side." Better words could not be found to describe the location of the 1997 reunion of the VVV Family Association. This year's host, Judy Blanks of Maryville, Tennessee, is to be commended for choosing the site. It was a wonderful place to relax, meet newfound cousins and visit with those we had not seen since last year.

The activities available in the area are numerous. Free time could be spent visiting antique, craft and collectible shops; inner tubing; swimming; or walking on the trail that passed through the lodge grounds. A short drive from Townsend are Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg, and most members went to those towns at least once. Other popular attractions were Cades Cove, located in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park; the Arts and Crafts Community, which is an 8-mile loop of shops, studios and galleries near Gatlinburg; Cherokee, on the North Carolina side of the Smokies; and the "Dixie Stampede."

Although registration did not begin until Thursday, July 31, and the first meeting was Friday morning, members began arriving on Tuesday. Those "early-birds" were certainly glad for the extra time.

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

THURSDAY, JULY 31

The Association had the use of the entire convention center for the full length of the reunion. Registration began on Thursday afternoon on the upper level of the center. Exhibits of VVV memorabilia and family information were placed on tables to be enjoyed and used by members. As usual, the copy machine rented by the association was put to good use. Fruit and vegetable trays, cold cuts and cheese, soft drinks and coffee were provided by Judy Blanks throughout the evening.

A meeting of the officers was held at 7:00 p.m. Several items were discussed, including the location of future reunions. Also mentioned was the need to have a better count of those who will be attending in order to prepare for the food.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 1

Official opening of the reunion was on Friday morning by VVV President, Beth Melton. The traditional "ringing of the cowbell" was done by Julia Petree, granddaughter of Bill and Judy Blanks. Invocation was given by Billy Mack Vawter of Oklahoma City. The pledge to the American flag was led by Sims Meredith and McDaniel Wicker, both of Tupelo, Mississippi, and Frederick Cummings of Virginia Beach, Virginia. We were welcomed to Townsend by the mayor.

Minutes of the 1996 reunion in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin, were read by the secretary, Melinda Vawter, and the treasurer's report was given by Charles Burt. An audit committee, comprised of John H. Vawter, Ken Wicker and Lowell Vaughters was named by the president.

Joyce Carter brought genealogy charts, and asked that they be filled out and returned to her. Ralph Vawter announced that he was organizing two genealogy sessions on Saturday for those interested. Several in attendance at a VVV reunion for the first time were introduced.

Friday evening the group gathered again and enjoyed a meal of pork barbecue, baked beans, cole slaw, brownies and drinks. Prayer before the meal was by Fred Wicker. More than one person paid no attention to the barbecue sauce bottles and was surprised to learn there were two varieties!

Entertainment was by Vince Vawter of Evansville, Indiana, who played the guitar, and his son, Lemuel Vawter, who played the fiddle. Vince moved to Indiana from Tennessee about two years ago, and told several stories he had learned about Brown County, Indiana, artist Will Vawter and other Indiana Vawters.

Several of the many door prizes were distributed by Linda Vawter of St. Louis, with help from the children. Because this was the 20th anniversary of VVV reunions, a prize of Tennessee Moon Pies was given to the 20th person to register. That person was Ellen Cummings of Virginia Beach.

Before adjournment, Vince and Lem were persuaded to perform one more number, and they closed the evening with "Orange Blossom Special."

SATURDAY, AUGUST 2

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The annual Saturday banquet and memorial service began at 6:30 p.m. with a welcome by VVV President Beth Melton, and prayer by Bruce Vawter.

Following the dinner, Fred and Wordna Wicker, with the assistance of Jason Vawter, grandson of Bruce and Linda Vawter, and Jesse Vawter, son of Mary and Robert L. Vawter II. The service began with a solo, "Will You Love Jesus More," by Mark Beasley. As each name was given and a brief obituary read, family members stood and a carnation was placed in a vase by Jason and Jesse. Closing the service was a violin solo, "He Opened Mine Eyes," by Ila Vawter, accompanied by Bonita Welch. This song had been written by the late Charles T. Parker, a former member of the association.

Again this year, entertainment was by the VVV Family Singers under the direction of Ellen Cummings. This group began several years ago as the VVV Children's Chorus, and continues to grow in popularity and numbers. Soloists were Kristi Glasgow, daughter of Cheryl Kelley, and Jackie Howard, granddaughter of Martha Hudson.

Ken Wicker reported for the audit committee that the books are in order and thanked Charles Burt for doing an excellent job.

Election of officers was held with Fred Wicker, chairman of the nominating committee, making the following recommendations: Joyce Carter as secretary, to replace Melinda Vawter who had resigned, and all other officers to remain. All were elected by acclamation. Other members of the committee were Shirley Beasley, Robert L. Vawter, Norma Wicker and Duncan Brown. This same committee will serve in 1998.

Ralphe Vawter reported on the genealogy sessions, and he stated two goals for the future. One is to make the European connection from Valletort to Vawter, and the other to further establish ourselves to Bartholomew Vawter, thought to be the immigrant. It is believed Bartholomew had six children, and we need to add documentation for each of the children.

Special recognition was given the following:

Oldest: Emery Mayer, age 86

Youngest: Andrew Petree, age eight months

Traveled farthest: Glenn, Marjorie and Garry Vawter,  
Norwalk, California, 2196 miles

Longest married: Glenn and Marjorie Vawter, 65 years

The roll call of states found there to be 17 states represented at the banquet, with Tennessee having the most at 24.

On behalf of the VVV Association, Beth Melton thanked Judy Blanks and her family for everything done to make the reunion a success. She also announced there would be a worship service at 9:00 a.m. Sunday conducted by the Rev. John H. Vawter.

To close the evening, the remaining door prizes were distributed by Vince and Betty Vawter, Linda Vawter, and, of course, the children.

## MEMORIAL SERVICE

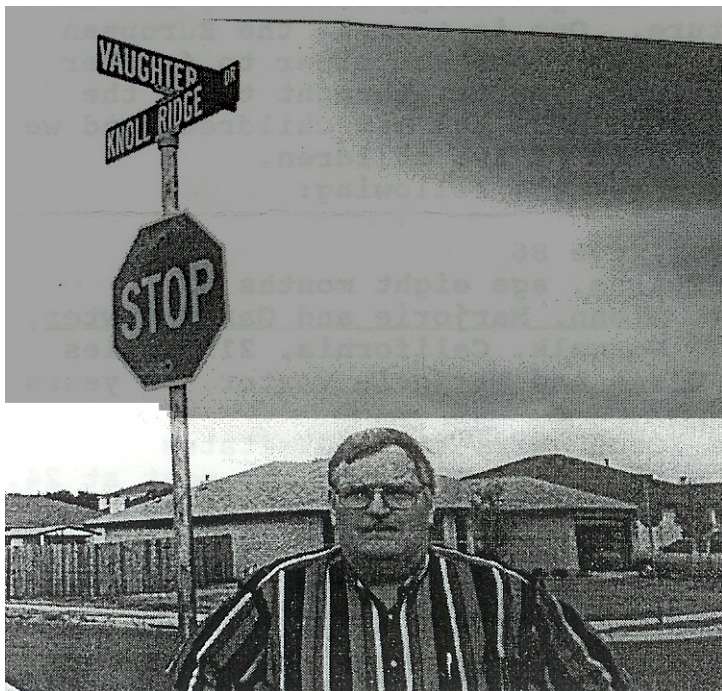
These VVV members and friends were remembered:

1. Lamar Gamage "Bill" Vawter, 88, Houston, TX, d. 24 Sep 1996
2. Clarice Vawter Mayer, 81, Blue Springs, MS, d. 11 Sep 1996
3. Thelma Shattuck, 89, Nacogdoches, TX, d. 26 Sep 1996
4. John Carlson Jr., 71, Colbert, GA, d. 15 Sep 1996
5. Ethan James Reynolds, 25, Commiskey, IN, d. 3 Nov 1996
6. Robert H. Dart, 77, Glendale, CA, d. 25 Apr 1997
7. Retha Crook Vaughters, 79, Madison, GA d. 21 May 1997
8. Mamie L. Vaughter, 96, Toledo, OH, d. 26 Mar 1997
9. Edna Opal Reynolds, 84, Butlerville, IN, d. 12 Jun 1997
10. Marjorie Vawter Mellon, 76, Glendale, CA, d. 22 May 1997
11. Howard Edgar Dunn, 73, Sibley, IA, d. 26 Jul 1997
12. Irene Read Pavey, 89, Oklahoma City, OK, d. 24 Mar 1997
13. Dale Vawter, 84, Tipton, IN, d. 21 May 1997
14. Vilas Vincent Vawter Jr., 78, Memphis, TN, d. 6 Nov 1993 (1996 ?)
15. Charles T. Parker, 90, Oklahoma City, OK, d. 9 Jan 1997

## THANK YOU

Those who have hosted or helped organize a VVV reunion know that it is time-consuming and takes much planning. However, the end result is always worth the effort. Many of us had been to the Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge area several times, but had never visited Townsend. To Bill and Judy Blanks we say, "Thank you!"

## VAUGHTER STREET IN AUSTIN, TEXAS



In an effort to prove a statement he made at the 1995 reunion in Virginia, Phil Vaughter stands in front of a street named for him in NW Austin. Phil comments: "Keep your nose clean, don't steal any horses, serve your community and church for 30 years and they will name a street for you."

## 1998 REUNION

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An invitation has been extended to the VVV Association to hold the 1998 reunion in Austin, Texas. Hosts will be Phil and Peggy Vaughter, assisted by Beth Melton and her daughter, Beverly Cowen. Watch for more information in future newsletters.

### JOHNATHAN ANDREW WELCH

Alan and Kyong Welch of Kailua, Hawaii, are the parents of a son, Johnathan Andrew, who became a part of their family in August. Johnathan is eighteen months old, and traveled from Seoul, Korea, with his new parents to their home. On August 31, a belated traditional Korean first birthday party was held in his honor at Sorabol Restaurant in Honolulu.

Alan was discharged last March from the Marine Corps after twelve years of service.

Proud grandparents Joseph and Bonita Welch look forward to meeting Johnathan in January.

### WAYNE AND CAROLE VAWTER

Wayne and Carole Vawter of Lake Mills, Wisconsin, celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary on 23 June 1997. They were married in Casper, Wyoming.

Dr. Vawter has been a pastor for over 25 years, serving churches in Minnesota, Illinois and Wisconsin. Since 1986, he has been pastor of Rock Lake Baptist Church in Lake Mills. In addition to his ministry, he is an EMT and serves as a volunteer with the Lake Mills Emergency Medical Service.

Mrs. Vawter teaches music education and private piano lessons at Maranatha Baptist Bible College in Watertown and is active in church and community groups.

They have five children. Their oldest son, David, lives in Lake Mills with his wife, Melissa. He is employed at WISCO Farm Cooperative and is a student at Maranatha College. Another son, Ben, is also a student at Maranatha. Paul, Andy, and Abigail live at home with their parents.

Wayne is the son of May Vawter of Normal, Illinois, and the late Glen Vawter.

### SHIRLEY VAWTER BYLER

Shirley Vawter Byler of Sweeny, Texas, has been selected as a Life Service Award recipient for 1997 by Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Missouri. This is the highest alumni recognition bestowed by the University. She will be honored on Friday, October 24, 1997, during Homecoming weekend.

Shirley is married to the Rev. Roger Byler. They are the parents of VVV President Elizabeth Melton of Dallas, Texas; the Rev. David Byler of Paris, Tennessee; and Susan Byler, who died in 1946 at the age of three.

### COLONEL VAWTER DAY

The 10<sup>th</sup> annual Colonel Vawter Day was held in September in Morgantown, Indiana. Activities and entertainment included game booths, an antique tractor exhibit, clowns doing face painting, cloggers and gospel singers throughout the day. A street dance was held in the evening.

This event is named in honor of John Vawter, an early settler of the town. John moved to that area from Vernon, Indiana, in November 1849. He was a son of Jesse and Elizabeth Watts Vawter.

### IN REMEMBRANCE

Vilas Vincent Vawter Jr., 78, died 6 November 1993 (1996 ? )in Memphis, Tennessee. He was born 2 March 1918 in Carroll County, Tennessee, the son of Vilas Vincent and Caroline Jane Vawter. He had been a Certified Public Accountant in Memphis. His wife was the former Susan Ilene Woodward.

Surviving are a son, Vilas Vincent Vawter III of Evansville, Indiana; a brother, Billy Vawter of McKenzie, Tennessee; three sisters, Betty Harris of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Caroline Scarlett of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and Judy Blanks of Marysville, Tennessee; and two grandchildren, Lemuel Page Vawter and Julia Blythe Vawter, both of Evansville.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dale Vawter, 84, of Russiaville, Indiana, died 21 May 1997 in Tipton, Indiana. He was born 1 April 1913 in Tipton County, Indiana, the son of William Joseph and Lula Haskell Vawter.

He was a retired farmer and had worked at Cabot-Haynes Corp. in Kokomo. He was a member of Eagles Lodge No. 255, Steelworkers Union No. 2958, and was a former member of Forest Volunteer Fire Department. In December 1933 he married Crystal Ratcliff; she preceded him in death 5 January 1937. He married Iona VanBriggle 24 August 1937 and she survives.

Also surviving are four sons, William Vawter of Tipton, Jerry Vawter of Windfall, Indiana, Chester Vawter of Bringham, Indiana, and Claude Vawter of Russiaville; two daughters, Beulah Chandler of Kokomo and Sue Orem of Forest; two brothers, Victor Vawter and Ralph Vawter, both of Sharpville, Indiana; a sister, Violet Unger of Tipton; 15 grandchildren; 27 great-grandchildren.

Dale Vawter's father, William Joseph Vawter, was the son of Samuel and Katie Etherington Vawter. Samuel's parents were James Madison and Irena Vawter, who left North Carolina and moved to Switzerland County, Indiana, about 1838 and then on to Tipton County, Indiana, about 1848. James Madison Vawter was the son of Russell Vawter who left Virginia and went to Stokes County, North Carolina. Russell's father was Richard Vawter, the son of John Vawter. John was a son of Bartholomew Vawter.

Thanks to Georgene Jurgenson for identifying Dale Vawter for us. Ila Vawter also sent information on Dale's family.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Howard Edgar Dunn, 73, of Sibley, Iowa, died 26 July 1997. He was born 9 February 1924 in Logansport, Indiana, the son of George and Martha Waterstradt Dunn. An Army veteran of World War II, he was in the Battle of the Bulge. He was in law enforcement for eight years, being a deputy sheriff in Oceola and Lyon Counties, Iowa, and also operated a lunch wagon for twenty years. He was an avid collector of clown posters and figurines, and model and miniature trains, and was a member of the United Methodist Church and the American Legion. On 22 October 1949, he married Phyllis Zahn. She survives.

Surviving with his wife are three daughters, Dee Klassen of Harris, Iowa, Roxie Reekers of Lake Park, Iowa, and Candy Robinson of Humboldt, Iowa; two brothers, George Dunn of Sioux Falls, South Dakota and Ralph Dunn of New Ulm, Minnesota; nine grandchildren; three foster grandchildren; and one great-grandson. Burial was at Union Cemetery in Harris, Iowa.

Howard's grandparents were John and Ada Ann Vawter Dunn of Tipton, Indiana. His Vawter descent was through the line of Bartholomew to John to Richard to Russell to Chadwell to George Taylor to George W. to Ada Vawter. He was the uncle of VVV Association member Georgene Jurgensen.

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Irene Read Pavey, 89, of Oklahoma City died 24 March 1997 at Baptist Medical Center in Oklahoma City. She was born 31 July 1908 in Lindsey, Oklahoma, the daughter of John Robert and Elizabeth Vawter Read.

Survivors include a daughter, Deanie Strickland of Oklahoma City; four sisters, Velma Tidwell of Yukon, Oklahoma, Vera Rose of Oklahoma City, LaVerna Murray of Bethany, Oklahoma, and Lois Chapman of Anderson, California; a brother, Emery Read of Jacksonville, Florida; a grandson, Kenny Chuculate; and cousins, Fred Wicker of Pontotoc, Mississippi, and Ken Wicker of Tupelo, Mississippi, and Martha Hudson and Judy Crawford, both of Blue Springs, Mississippi.

Irene was a descendant of John Vawter IV, of Tishomingo County, Mississippi.

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Charles T. Parker, 90, of Oklahoma city, died 9 January 1997. He was born 21 October 1906 in Union County, Mississippi, the son of Whitfield and Cordelia Vawter Parker. The family moved to Oklahoma when Charles was four years old.

Charles was a bus and taxi driver by profession. He taught himself to play the piano, and his hobby was church music. He wrote and published at least one song, "He Opened Mine Eyes." When attending VVV reunions, he always shared copies of his song.

Surviving are his wife, Joy; daughter, Caroline; brother, Ben Parker; and cousins including Fred and Ken Wicker, Martha Hudson and Judy Crawford.

He descends from John Vawter IV of Tishomingo County, Mississippi.

MEMBERS AND FRIENDS ATTENDING THE 1997 REUNION

CALIFORNIA

Garry Vawter  
Marjorie and Glenn Vawter

DELAWARE

Matthew Hall  
Donna and Robert L. Vawter  
Mary and Robert L. Vawter II  
    Robert, Amanda, Jesse

FLORIDA

Ty Harris; Carrie and Jamie  
Georgene and  
    Russell Jurgenson  
Caroline and Ralph Vawter

GEORGIA

Betty and Charles Burt  
Richard Green  
Cheryl Kelley;  
    Tim and Kristy Glasgow  
Flara Waters  
Johnny Waters

ILLINOIS

Mark Beasley  
Shirley Beasley  
May Vawter

INDIANA

Charlotte and Milton Pickett  
Betty and Vince Vawter; Lemuel  
Lois and John Vawter  
Bonita and Joe Welch

LOUISIANA

Melinda Vawter

MICHIGAN

Patricia Vawter Klein  
Margaret Vawter  
Ila and Robert Vawter

MISSISSIPPI

Judith Crawford  
Jackie Hudson  
Martha Hudson  
Emery Mayer  
Allyson and Lowell Vaughters;  
    Sims and Megan Meredith

Norma and Ken Wicker  
Wordna and Fred Wicker

MISSOURI

Linda and Bruce Vawter; Jason

NEW YORK

Dorothy and Richard Vawter

OKLAHOMA

Virginia and Bill Vawter

SOUTH DAKOTA

Cathy and Trevor Jurgenson;  
    Amanda and Alicia

TENNESSEE

Judy and Bill Blanks  
Eloise and Nolan E. Bradley  
Mary K. and David Cockrill;  
    Dacey and Kathryn  
Donna and Tom Harris;  
    Andrew and Amanda  
Caroline and Stan Petree;  
    Andrew and Julia  
Caroline Scarlett  
Beth Smith; Becky  
Suzanne and David Snow  
Barbara Vawter;  
    Emily and Jake DeFur  
Elizabeth and Gene Vaughter  
Norma Jean Vawter

TEXAS

Marge Baskin  
Joyce Carter  
Eric and Stephanie Chaviers  
Beverly Cowen  
Beth Melton  
Peggy and Phil Vaughter  
Sue and John H. Vawter

VIRGINIA

Ellen and Ned Cummings;  
    Rebecca and Frederick

WISCONSIN

Judy and Jerry Aue; Sarah  
Maxine and Evert Joling



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