

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: Phil Vaughter, 1103 Newport Avenue, Austin, TX 78753  
(512) 836-3105 prv37@aol.com  
VICE-PRESIDENT: Ken Wicker, 607 Magnolia Drive, Tupelo, MS 38801  
SECRETARY: Joyce Peterson, Rt. 1 Box 625 C, Hockley, TX 77447-9771  
lynpete@earthlink.net  
TREASURER: Charles Burt, 743 Goodson Road, Dawsonville, GA 30534 (706)216-6103  
ASST.TREASURER: Cheryl Kelley, 2271 Shoal Creek Road, Buford, GA 30518  
(770) 271-9823  
HISTORIAN/ARCHIVIST: Ralphe Vawter, 3996 Bay Pointe Dr., Gulf Breeze, FL 32562 (904)932-1651  
vawter@pen.net  
NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Bonita Welch, 4145N 900W, Scipio, IN 47273 (812) 392-2149  
bwelch@seidata.com  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Sally Brown, 2473 E 73rd Place, Tulsa, OK 74136(918) 496-1538

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

VERNON, INDIANA

One of the places to be visited during the 1999 VVV Reunion is Vernon, Indiana, the county seat of Jennings County. The town was platted in 1815 by John Vawter, the son of Jesse and Elizabeth Watts Vawter, and is registered in its entirety on the National Register of Historic Places. John Vawter first saw the place where Vernon now stands in 1813, when he was a United States Surveyor for a portion of the Northwest Territory.

Vernon was a planned town, with spaces set aside for schools, churches and recreation. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of each lot was used to finance a county library. The elevated railroad and underpass were the first west of the Alleghenies, and are still in use. The track, which was laid from Madison to Vernon, was finished in 1838, and the underpass was built in 1837. Because of being almost completely surrounded by the Muscatatuck River, the town has not grown, and has the distinction of being the smallest county seat in Indiana.

Indiana firsts include the first Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); the first public playground, called the "Commons;" and the first all-women jury trial. The Clionian Club, organized in the 1850s, is still active in the community.

Vernon operates by a charter adopted in 1851, and holds elections in March when no other town does. Elections are held every two years instead of every four, with no primary. Anyone who wants to run chooses one of three parties - Republican, Citizen's or People's; there is no Democratic Party. Any number of candidates can file, and residents don't have to register to vote.

During the Civil War era, Vernon was an important Underground Railroad depot. A place near the river where militia and Vernon townspeople repelled General John Hunt Morgan's raiders represents the northernmost penetration of the Confederate Army into Indiana.

John Vawter helped establish Vernon Baptist Church and served as pastor for several years. He also owned the first newspaper, *The Vernon Visitor*, and was treasurer of the county for a time.

Several other members of the Vawter family were also prominent early citizens of Vernon. Smith Vawter, a son of John, was a pork packer, a dry goods merchant, and had a woolen mill and a flour mill. His home is still standing in Vernon. Achilles Vawter, a brother of John, was tavern keeper and postmaster.

John Vawter left Vernon in 1848 for Morgan County, where he was one of the first settlers of Morgantown. He died 17 August 1862. Although he has a monument at the Vernon Cemetery, he is buried at Morgantown.

#### EARLY PURCHASERS OF LOTS IN VERNON, INDIANA

The following is a list of some early purchasers of lots in Vernon, Indiana, who were either Vawters or Vawter kin:

John Branham	Lot 5
Linsfield Branham	Lots 40, 47, 85, 107
Sanford Branham	Lots 41, 46
William Sanford	Lots 25, 26, 28, 29, 120
James Stott	Lots 39, 42, 54, 75, 203-206
Richard Stott	Lots 123, 196, 217-219
William T. Stott	Lots 79,80, 161, 168, 188, 194
George Stribling	Lots 16, 62
Thomas Stribling	Lot 33
Willis C. Stribling	Lot 122
Achilles Vawter	Lots 19, 76, 86, 183, 209-212
David Vawter	Lot 77
James Vawter	Lots 20, 89, 01,106, 159
Jesse Vawter	Lots 1, 2
John Vawter	Lots 52, 69, 72, 78, 67, 68, 70, 149
William Vawter	Lots 4, 14

ACHILLES J. VAWTER

Achilles J. Vawter, a son of William and Frances Vawter, was born 12 September 1823 in Jefferson County, Indiana. When Achilles was about six years old, the family moved to Jennings County, Indiana, to a farm about three and a half miles north of Vernon.

In 1844, Achilles left home to attend Franklin College, which at that time was called "The Indiana Baptist Manual Labor Institute. "The college is located in Franklin, Indiana, about 40 miles north of Vernon. He would attend school for a session, and then work to earn enough money to return for another session. One job he held was as a clerk at his Uncle John Vawter's store in Morgantown. He also chopped wood, worked on his father's farm and taught school.

During the 1844-45 school year, one of his classmates was James Suggett Read, son of Samuel and Nancy Threlkeld Read, who was born in Vernon in 1826. Samuel Read and three of his seven sons were contractors for the Jennings County Courthouse in 1859. This courthouse is still in use today.

In September 1845, Achilles J. Vawter was living in Morgantown, not far from Franklin, and working at his uncle's store to earn money for further study at Franklin College. The following letter was written by Achilles to his friend, James S. Read. This letter, along with several others, was found several years ago stuffed under the attic rafters in the house where the Read family lived in the mid-1800s in Vernon.

VVV member, Stanley Read of East Lansing, Michigan, visited Vernon in 1996. He and his wife were invited to the home of the family who found those letters. Stanley was given a copy of the letter from Achilles J. Vawter to James S. Read, and sent us this transcript and a copy of the original.

Stanley Read is a descendant of Hiram T. and Catherine Smith Vawter Read. Hiram is another son of Samuel and Nancy Threlkeld Read. Catherine is a daughter of Achilles (uncle of Achilles J.) and Martha Smith Vawter.

LETTER FROM ACHILLES J. VAWTER TO JAMES S. READ

Morgantown September 18<sup>th</sup> 1845

Dear and much esteemed Brother,

It is with the greatest of pleasure I take my pen to reply to your epistle, which came to hand on Tuesday last. I feel my self some what reproved for not writing sooner. I know that I might have written sooner if I had just thought, so consequently I have no excuse to render.

Taking into consideration the intimacy and friendship that has existed between you and my self I feel it not only a duty but a great pleasure to correspond with you by letter in as much as we are not permitted to converse face to face.

I have the pleasure to inform you that my health is very good. I have gained several

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lbs of flesh since I left Franklin. I am thrown almost entirely out of the society in which I delight the most.

You would not imagine the great difference between this place and Vernon or Franklin although there are some of as fine people here as any where but there lacks that kind of society which exists only where the community are intelligent and moral. There are but few who are to be considered intelligent and the majority of the citizens are of that class who have the hardihood to at all times and on all occasions to take the name of God in vain or in other words it is a place (where) religion has the least influence of any place in which I have any acquaintance.

When I came here I did not expect to remain here long but it seems that providence has cast my lot here and perhaps to remain here all winter. George Treisbach has returned but to my disappointment as well as his own he has returned not to take the store but to suffer with the ague. My expectation was to return home this week but I cannot now. I expect to teach school here this winter. I think there is but little doubt but I shall get a school of 25 or 30 scholars at \$2.00 per scholar.

I have not been to Franklin yet and do not know when I shall go but I have seen Hoagland, Bland & Stout since I have been here. All well and Bland doing some better than the rest. He had come here to visit his girl. Stout is teaching school. Hoagland is gaining his health very much and intends to return to school.

I hope that your Bible class will prosper and prove a blessing to your town and church. And also I hope that you may be successful in establishing a sabbath school in Vernon that will prove a blessing to the church.

Give my best respects to all my friends at Vernon.

I am happy to learn that you have resumed your studies and hope that you may have the blessing of God on all of your undertakings that all you do may honor and glorify him. For dear brother we are placed here to honor and glorify him and it should be our meat and drink to do his will when we look around and see the world that lies in wickedness it is enough to stimulate us to the most powerful exertions for the foundation of the Redeemers kingdom here on earth.

I am now placed in a situation where I have not the privilege even on the sabbath of listening to the sound of the gospel. I regret very much that I am not permitted to resume my studies with you but still I do not despair although fortune has been more favorable to you than me. Yet I feel that I do not improve the opportunities that I have as I should. But I feel that it would be a glorious thing to spend and be spent in the cause of Christ. I hope you may prepare your self to enter soon as a laborer in the vineyard of the Lord. I ask you to remember your unworthy brother in your prayers that the Lord would sustain him and lead him in the way of duty.

Your unworthy Brother in Christ,

Achilles Vawter

J. S. Read

Please write often as you can make it convenient.

#### WILLIAMSON DUNN VAWTER

Williamson Dunn Vawter was born in Jefferson County, Indiana, on 28 August 1815 to William and Frances Vawter. By the time Williamson was twelve years old, the family had moved to a farm in Jennings County, Indiana. Williamson had no desire to be a farmer, and went to Kentucky soon after to live with a Stapp cousin for a time. He then returned to Indiana, and lived with his Uncle John Vawter in Vernon.

Williamson first drove a team of oxen between Vernon and Madison delivering merchandise for his uncle's store. He later became a clerk in the store and later was a partner in the store for forty years with his cousin Smith Vawter, a son of John. He was also postmaster of Vernon for a number of years.

In 1875, Williamson Dunn Vawter and his family moved from Vernon to Los Angeles County, California. They were members of the "Indiana Colony" that settled where Pasadena now stands. From that area, Williamson went to Santa Monica and became a prominent member of the community. He was a founder of the Presbyterian Church in Santa Monica; owned and operated, with his two sons, the first street railway; and was an organizer and first president of the First National Bank of Santa Monica.

The home where Williamson Dunn Vawter lived in Vernon with his wife and family is now a bed and breakfast and will be visited during the 1999 VVV reunion.

#### WILL VAWTER

John William Vawter, known best as "Will", was born 13 April 1871 in Boone County, Virginia, the son of Dr. Louis A. Vawter and Emma Mary Dameron Vawter. The family moved to Greenfield, Indiana, when Will was about six years old.

Will married Mary Howey Murray in 1902. They moved from Greenfield to Nashville, Indiana, in 1908 and located on a hill overlooking Salt Creek, south of town. Many of his paintings feature the paths leading through the woods to his home. About 1919, Will and Mary Vawter were divorced, and in 1923, he married Ola Lackey Genolin of Nashville.

As a young adult in Greenfield, Will became a friend and admirer of Indiana poet James Whitcomb Riley, and through the years would illustrate many of Riley's books of poetry. He was hired by *The Indianapolis Sentinel* as an artist in 1891, and in 1897 he wrote and illustrated a series of verses for the *Cincinnati Gazette*. He also made illustrations for *Judge*, *Life* and *St. Nicholas* magazines. In 1899, he and his sister, Clara Vawter, produced a children's book, "Of Such Is the Kingdom." He was a member of the Brown County Art Gallery Association, Hoosier Salon and Chicago Galleries Association, and received many prizes for his paintings.

Will died 11 February 1941 at St. Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis. His funeral was held in Nashville and burial at Park Cemetery in Greenfield.

The Brown County Art Gallery in Nashville will have an exhibit of Will Vawter paintings during the VVV Reunion.

JULIAN AND SWIFT VAUGHTER

The Friday night program at the VVV reunion will be presented by Jim Vaughters of Englewood, Colorado. He will give information on the late Julian and Swift Vaughter of Elbert County, Georgia. Both brothers are now deceased, and the story of what is now happening with their property is one you will not want to miss.

CONGRATULATIONS

From Connie Bugos comes word of a new granddaughter. Brooke Ellen Bugos was born 14 April 1999 at Sioux Valley Hospital in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Brooke is the daughter of Chad and Susan Bugos, and weighed 9 lbs. 2 oz. at birth and was 22" long. She has a brother, Austin, who is 2 1/2. The family now lives in Derby, Kansas. Proud grandparents are Paul and Connie Bugos of Farmington, Illinois. Great-grandparents are Edith Vawter of Farmington and the late Harry Vawter.

QUERY

From: William A. Robertson, 209 Lee Avenue, Ashland VA 23005  
From: Marigay Holloway, 3911 Terrace Drive, Annandale VA 22003  
rootdigr@erols.com

William and Marigay do not know each other, but both have sent the same query. They are looking for information on the family of Daniel G. and Peggy Reynolds who are shown on the 1850 Orange County, Virginia census:

Daniel G. Reynolds	48 M	b. Virginia
Peggy Reynolds	62 F	b. Virginia
Mary Clarke	25 F	b. Virginia
William G. Reynolds	20 M	b. Virginia
Richard Clarke	30 M	b. Virginia
Mary Vauter	45 F	
Frances Vauter	43 F	

William is trying to determine the maiden name of Peggy Reynolds. He is wondering if Mary and Frances Vauter could be sisters or nieces of Peggy Reynolds, who is referred to as Margaret in Daniel's will. He has identified all the others listed.

Marigay sent a similar query, with the addition of the dates 1802-1859 for Daniel G. Reynolds.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Walter Earl Reynolds, 86, of Butlerville, Indiana, died 8 May 1999 at King's Daughters' Hospital in Madison, Indiana. He was born 10 February 1913 in Jennings County, Indiana, the son of James A. and Flora Belle Wilson Reynolds. He married Edna Opal Wilson in May 1933.

Walter was a 1933 graduate of Butlerville High School, and worked most of his life as a carpenter. In the early 1940s, he owned and operated a lumber mill in Prescott, Arizona. After retiring, he started his own business of sharpening carbide saws. He was a member of AFL-CIO, and a member and past trustee of Butlerville United Methodist Church.

Survivors include sons, James Reynolds of Commiskey, Indiana, Hugh Reynolds of St. Francis, Indiana, Miles Reynolds of Smithtown, Indiana, and Brian Reynolds of Greensburg, Indiana; daughters, Enid Henry of Madison, Indiana, and Ann Caslan of Muncie, Indiana; brothers, Cecil Reynolds of Bellville, Illinois, and Adrian Reynolds of Trafalgar, Indiana; 10 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Edna Wilson Reynolds; a brother, Lester Reynolds; and a grandson, Ethan Reynolds. Burial was at Butlerville Cemetery.

Walter and Edna Reynolds were longtime members and supporters of the VVV Family Association. They hosted the 1982 reunion in Madison, Indiana. Edna and her sister made possible the 1969 reprint of *The Vawter Family in America*.

\* \* \* \* \*

Susan Woodard Vawter, 81, of Memphis, Tennessee, died 19 June 1999 at Baptist Memorial Hospital in Memphis.

She was a member of Merton Street Church of Christ, Pilot Club of Memphis, and a founding member and past president of Harding Academy Mothers Club. She was a retired realtor.

Survivors include a son, Vince Vawter of Newburgh, Indiana; a sister, Ondine Wright of Jackson, Tennessee; a brother, Paul Woodard of Memphis; and two grandchildren, Lemuel R. and Julia B. Vawter of Newburgh. Burial was at Hopewell Cemetery in Lavinia, Tennessee.

Preceding her in death was her husband, Vilas V. Vawter, Jr.  
Mrs. Vawter's son, Vince, is a member of the VVV Family Association.

\* \* \* \* \*

Effie Magnolia Watson Vaughter, 90, of Indianapolis died March 23, 1999. She was a homemaker.

Survivors include sons, William Hale, James Miller and Mark Williams; a daughter, Martha Washington; a brother, Lester Watson; 26 grandchildren; 69 great-grandchildren; and three great-great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, William Vaughter. Burial was at New Crown Cemetery in Indianapolis.

This obituary was sent by Esther Vawter of Fresno, California. She received it from a cousin who lives in Indianapolis.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Lucille C. Walker, 99, of Big Spring, Texas, died 7 September 1997 at her home. She was born 12 February 1898 in Dyersburg, Tennessee. She first married R. L. Price in 1933 in Oklahoma, and he preceded her in death in 1938. She married C. A. Walker 14 April 1941 in Colorado City. He preceded her in death 19 May 1983.

Mrs. Walker and her husband owned and operated Walker Drug Store for over 30 years. She was a member of First Christian Church of Big Spring and World War I Auxiliary.

Survivors include several nieces and nephews including James and Frances Walker and Burl and Evelyn Dennis, all of Big Spring. Burial was at Mt. Olive Memorial Park.

Mrs. Walker was member of the association for many years and always enjoyed sharing the newsletters with her family.

\* \* \* \* \*

Smith Julian Vaughter, 90, of Elberton, Georgia, died 1 March 1999 at St. Mary's Hospital in Athens. He was born in Elbert County, Georgia, the son of James Benson and Mary Beulah Sanders Vaughter.

Julian was a 1929 graduate of Centerville High School, and a Navy veteran of World War II, serving on the U.S.S. Callaway Troop Carrier in the Pacific Theater. He was retired from Western Electric Telephone Company and a member of Harmony Baptist Church.

He was the last surviving member of his immediate family. Burial was at Harmony Baptist Church Cemetery.

Many who attended the VVV reunion in Gainesville, Georgia, will remember visiting Julian and his brother, Swift, at their home. This obituary was sent by Charles Burt, who also sent a copy of Swift Vaughter's will. We plan to use the will in a future newsletter.

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Frank Milton Vawter, 77, of Indianapolis died 1 November 1998.

He had been a self-employed master electrician 45 years, and was a Navy veteran of World War II. He was a member of American Legion Post 155 and Moose Lodge 17.

Survivors include sons, Frank Paul Vawter, the Rev. Vencil Leroy Vawter, Larry Edward Vawter, and Robert Roy Vawter; daughters, Mary Jo Crouch and Terry Lee Marsella, 12 grandchildren, and his former wife Jo Anna Bader. Burial was at Calvary Cemetery.

THANK YOU

Thanks to all who continue to contribute information for the newsletter. If you see an obituary or other item of interest, be sure to send it to the news editor. All help is greatly appreciated.

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