

## The Vandever Family

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John Vandever was typical of many of his North Carolina kinsmen and neighbors who left their native state to establish a new home north of the Ohio River. His children and their descendants in time spread into a number of southern Indiana counties, from whence some have gone out to serve their country in various capacities.

The first of the family to come to America was probably Cornelis Jansz van der Veer (from Zeeland) who settled in New Netherland in 1659.<sup>1</sup> The progenitor of the Indiana branch of the family was John Vandever, who married Amelia Speer in Rowan County, North Carolina, in 1773.<sup>2</sup> During the Revolutionary War it is believed that he and his wife's brothers fought under General Francis Marion, the "Swamp Fox."<sup>3</sup> After the war he received a grant of one hundred acres of land in Surry County, North Carolina, on the waters of Forbes Creek (the present Forbush Creek) which flows into the Yadkin River. He sold this land in 1797 to William Spillman, preparatory to moving to Kentucky. A George Vandever received a grant of fifty acres on the same creek in 1793; he too moved to Kentucky and was described as a resident of Lincoln County in that state when he sold his North Carolina lands in 1799.<sup>4</sup>

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\* Mrs. Baer, a resident of Washington, D.C., has done extensive research on the Vandeveres and is preparing a family genealogy for possible publication. The editors are indebted to Miss Dorothy Riker for editorial assistance.

<sup>1</sup> William J. Hoffman, "Van Der Veer," *The American Genealogist*, XXII (July, 1945), 22-26; "The Dutch Ancestry of the Van Der Veer Family," *The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, LXXIX (April, 1948), 76-81; Lester D. Mapes, "Early Generations of the Vanderver Family," *ibid.*, LXVIII (July, 1937), 202-216; Teunis G. Bergen, *Register . . . of the Early Settlers of Kings County, Long Island, N. Y. . . .* (New York, 1881), 323-325.

<sup>2</sup> Rowan County, N.C., Marriage Bonds, Part II, p. 441 (typed abstracts in Genealogy Division, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis).

<sup>3</sup> Letter from William T. Vandever, Taylorville, Ill., to author, November 22, 1921. General Marion's warfare was of the guerilla type and very few records regarding it were kept. John Vandever's Revolutionary War service has not been corroborated by any state or federal records.

<sup>4</sup> N.C., Department of State, Raleigh, Land Grants in Surry County; Surry County, N.C., Register of Deeds (filed in Courthouse, Dobson, N.C.).

John Vandever was on the tax list of Lincoln County, Kentucky, in 1803; he entered a tract of 166 acres on Wolf's Creek in Adair County about 1807; this he apparently lost to a prior claimant. By 1810 he and his children and related families had located in Henry County, Kentucky.<sup>5</sup> Four years later he purchased land in what is now Stampers Creek Township, Orange County (in Township 1 north, Range 2 east), where a number of North Carolinians and Kentuckians had already settled.<sup>6</sup> The land was within the bounds of Washington County until the formation of Orange County in 1816. John and Amelia (Speer) Vandever had a large family, all of whom came to Indiana. They were:

i. John, Jr., born 1783, married in 1804 in Adair County, Kentucky, Susannah French, daughter of James French of Cumberland County, Kentucky. (See below for their descendants.)

ii. Aaron, born February 7, 1785, died April 1857; married in Kentucky, Nancy French, sister of Susannah, and who died in 1871. They had six children born in Kentucky, four in Washington County, Indiana, and one in Sangamon County, Illinois. The family later lived in Christian County, Illinois, around Taylorville.

iii. George W., who married in Henry County, Kentucky, in 1812, Jane Eliza Speer. His second wife was Mrs. Nancy Kirkpatrick McWilliams, widow of Alexander McWilliams.

iv. Charles, who married in Lincoln County, Kentucky, in 1801, Hannah Jones.

v. Joel, born 1794, married Rachel Moore on October 4, 1815, in Washington County, Indiana. She was the daughter of the Revolutionary War soldier, William Moore, and his wife Rachel.

vi. Cynthia, born October 30, 1800, in Adair County, Kentucky; was married to Galvin Ralston, October 30, 1817, in Washington County, Indiana.

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<sup>5</sup> Adair County, Ky., Deed Records, Vol. E, p. 795 (filed in Courthouse, Columbia, Ky.); U.S., Bureau of the Census, *Third Census of the United States: 1810*; information from Kentucky State Historical Society, Frankfort, Ky., and from the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

<sup>6</sup> Jeffersonville, Ind., Land Office Records (in National Archives, Washington, D.C.).

vii. Nancy, who was married to Jesse Elgin on January 28, 1819, in Washington County, Indiana.

viii. Polly, who was married to William Noblitt, son of John and Nancy Keys Noblitt of Virginia and Henry County, Kentucky. They lived a short time in Orange County, where he preached at the Rock Spring Church in 1826, then later moved to Martin County, and from there to Bartholomew County where he died in 1833.

ix. Amelia, born May 11, 1795, died March 2, 1860; married (1) in 1814, Abraham Noblitt, brother of William, and after 1840 (2) Mr. Hazelwood.

The father and three of the sons—John, Joel, and George—were listed as heads of households and living in South East Township, Orange County, in the 1820 Census. This township had been formed from Stampers Creek in 1817. The land that they had purchased lay along or near the trace or road that led from Louisville to Vincennes on the Wabash River. Wild buffaloes and Indians had passed this way in the early days; then the trace had been used by the first American soldiers and by the lonely mail carrier on horseback who had contracted to carry the mail between Louisville and Kaskaskia. It was one of the routes marked for improvement by the state legislature in 1820. Both Joel Vandever and his father served as overseers in improving the portion that passed their homes. Soon after this the trace was made a stage coach route. In the 1830's the state undertook to macadamize it, and again Joel Vandever was supervisor of the work from his house to Bosley's Springs. When state funds were exhausted, the further improvement and upkeep of the road was taken over by a private company and it became a toll road. Under such superintendents as John Frazier, 1844-1847, Michael Riley, 1848, and Joel Vandever, 1850, the toll collections were large enough to keep it in condition. Present Road 150 follows closely this same route.

There were other civic responsibilities, too, which the Vandeveres assumed in their new home. George and Charles Vandever served as constables for South East Township; Joel was a justice of the peace, township assessor, and trustee of school lands; and John (either Jr. or Sr.) served as overseer of the poor. Both John, Jr., and Charles were

officers in the Indiana militia in 1816, the former as ensign and the latter as lieutenant. Soon after moving to Indiana, George opened a school in a log cabin which had a dirt floor and no windows; he later moved the school to a residence, where he continued to teach the children of the neighborhood until 1829. In 1846 he was school examiner for Orange County. Joel was elected to serve in the lower house of the General Assembly from 1833 to 1838, and again from 1844 to 1846. He was a Democrat in politics and attended the state convention of that party in 1840. During the 1830's he had a store, probably in his home, where he was licensed to sell "spirituous liquors and foreign groceries." To obtain this privilege he not only paid an annual fee of \$5, but presented to the county commissioners a petition signed by twenty-four respectable freeholders, testifying that he was a man of good moral character.

The family had been affiliated with the Baptist Church in Kentucky, and on removing to Indiana the various members were active in the service of the church and in promoting its growth. The Stampers Creek Primitive Baptist Congregation was organized in 1818 and erected a church building four miles east of Paoli. Records are not available to show whether the Vandevcers were members of this congregation, but Rachel, wife of Joel Vandevcer, is buried in the cemetery adjoining the church. The Rock Spring Primitive Baptist Church group, which erected a meeting house near Valeene in South East Township, was organized in 1826 in the home of Charles Vandevcer. Charles, his brother Aaron, and brother-in-law William Noblitt were all licensed ministers in the Baptist Church.<sup>7</sup>

John Vandevcer, the father, died sometime before June 1, 1835. A deed executed on that date by George and his wife, Jane Eliza, mentioned Amelia Vandevcer as the widow of John, deceased.<sup>8</sup> John Vandevcer, Jr., purchased 160 acres adjoining his father's land in 1814; this he continued to hold until 1863. His wife's parents, James and Barbara French, also moved to Indiana and purchased land in the same area.

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<sup>7</sup> Information regarding the activities of the family in Orange County was obtained from the Commissioners Records and from Goodspeed Bros. & Co. (pub.), *History of Lawrence, Orange, and Washington Counties, Indiana* (Chicago, 1884).

<sup>8</sup> Orange County, Ind., Deed Records, Vol. E, p. 323.

John and his wife Susannah had a number of children. The names of seven are known:

i. James, born March 10, 1810, in Cumberland County, Kentucky, married Caroline Brown on September 2, 1832, in Washington County, Indiana; (see below for their children):

ii. Perry, born 1821; married Sarah Malina \_\_\_\_\_ and lived in Stampers Creek Township.

iii. Harriet, married \_\_\_\_\_ Hockman.

iv. Lewis W., born 1825, died July 31, 1863, and is buried in Rock Spring Cemetery, Orange County. Sarah J. Vandever, who died March 12, 1906, and is buried in the same cemetery, is identified as "wife of L."

v. Bennett, born 1826; married Sarah C. Carlisle on May 7, 1859, in Orange County.

vi. Joel, born 1829; married Jemima Ann Monk; practiced medicine in Crawford County.

vii. Tandy, the youngest son, born 1833; married Martha Beckham; moved to Clay County, Illinois, and later to Taylorville, Illinois, where they died in 1883 and 1891, respectively.

James, the oldest son of John and Susannah Vandever, purchased land adjoining that of his father in 1834. He sold this four years later and lived for a time in Greenfield Township, Orange County, and later in Warrick and Pike counties, Indiana; after 1865 he moved to Clay County, Illinois, and lived near his brothers Bennett and Tandy. He died in 1869, and his wife Caroline in 1877; she is buried in Warrick County. James and Caroline Vandever had the following children, the first six of whom were born in Orange County and the last three in Warrick County:

i. Harriet, born 1836, married John F. Wire, Warrick County.

ii. John W., born September 11, 1837, died May 13, 1908; served in the Civil War as corporal and sergeant in the Ninety-First Regiment of Indiana Volunteers, Company B; married Elizabeth Ober Smith, born 1841 and died 1913. Both are buried in Selvin Cemetery, Pigeon Township, Warrick County.

iii. Stephen B., born 1840, died 1922, married Cordelia Mack; they were living in Clay County, Illinois, in 1870 and 1880; he served in the Civil War as private in the same company as his brother John W.

iv. Temperance, born 1842, married Louis Robinson in Warrick County.

v. Perry, born 1844, died 1914; married (1) Sarah M. Hanks; (2) Elen Monical, in Clay County, Illinois, 1874; (3) Martha A. Beard Slagley.

vi. Susanna A., born 1846, married Nathan Tomlinson about 1872.

vii. Joel, born 1848, was living with his widowed mother in 1870 in Clay County, Illinois.

viii. Josiah, born 1850, died 1912; married Florence \_\_\_\_\_ and was living in Gibson County in 1880.

ix. Louis Bennett, born 1856 in Boonville; died 1915; married Mary Ellen Gwaltney, daughter of Harris and Harriet (Barr) Gwaltney, born 1868 in Gibson County, died 1945. They are buried in Liberty Cemetery, Cynthiana, Indiana. Their children were: Welzie Wellington, William Harris, Curtis B., Stella, Nora, Ocie, Alva Lee, Harley A., and Clara Helen.

Welzie Wellington Vandever, the oldest son, was born near Haubstadt in 1887. After teaching school for three years he was employed by the Western Union Telegraph Company, the Goodrich Tire and Rubber Company, and the American Petroleum Products Company prior to 1925, when he founded his own company, Allied Oil, Inc. During his twenty-three years as president he built Allied Oil into a major business enterprise. After its merger with Ashland Oil and Refining Company in 1948, he turned his attention to a new enterprise, Vanson Production Corporation, which produces and distributes natural gas in the southwestern states. During World War II, as director of the Second Petroleum District of the United States, he was able to perform a valuable service in the government's program of oil conservation and distribution. In recent years he has served as a member of the National Petroleum Council, an advisory group which helped to overcome the acute oil shortage in Europe while the Suez Canal was closed.