

News, Updates, & More

Varner Family Genealogy

IN THIS ISSUE:

George Varner at Ft. Bowyer.....	1
From the Administrator.....	3
Questions.....	3
News.....	4
- Varner/Riggs Update (New!!).....	5
-George Varner Line DNA.....	5
-A George Varner Line.....	5
-2014 Reunion.....	6

GEORGE VARNER AT FT. BOWYER

George Varner's time spent at Ft. Bowyer, Alabama during the War of 1812

Dee Bremer was able to visit the site of old Ft. Bowyer this summer and I thought it would be appropriate to review the place where George Varner spent some of his enlistment time during the War of 1812. Ft. Bowyer no longer exists. The earthen structure was replaced after the War of 1812 by Ft. Morgan which sits on the exact same location.

George was part of the 2nd US Infantry all during the War of 1812. George was under the command of Andrew Jackson. George's regimental officer was Major Lawrence. Troops under Major Lawrence staffed and took part in two battles at Ft. Bowyer. Though specific records of George's exact location during this timeframe have not been found, records do indicate that George was at the fort sometime before the battles and sometime after the battles. It seems logical that being under the

command of Major Lawrence, George would have participated.

Excerpts from the Battle of Fort Bowyer website at Explore Southern History.

“Begun in 1813 at the western tip of Mobile Point, Fort Bowyer was a log and sand work designed to sweep the channel leading into Mobile Bay with artillery fire. Its channel face was built in the form of a semi-circle to allow its cannon as large of a field of fire as possible. Its land face was bastioned as a defense against an infantry assault.

By the end of the summer of 1814, the little fort was still not finished yet it was all that stood in the way of the initial British plan to take New Orleans. If the British navy could bombard Fort Bowyer into submission, it would be easy to take Mobile as well. Mobile Bay could then be used as a base for land operations against both Baton Rouge and New Orleans.

.....Captain William Henry Percy of the Royal Navy set sail from Pensacola in early September 1814 with a squadron of four warships and several tenders. The lead vessel and flagship was HMS Hermes.

The ships landed a force of around 80 Royal Colonial Marines and 120 trained Creek and Seminole Indians east of Fort Bowyer. About twenty of the Marines took up a position to block the passage from Bon Secour while the others, along

with their Native American allies, marched west and placed a (British) battery in the sand dunes just east of the fort.....

On September 15, 1814, Percy cleared for battle, formed his ships in line and closed on Fort Bowyer. The fort was then held by an effective force of 120 men from the 2nd U.S. Infantry under Major William Lawrence. He and his men stood by their guns as the British ships drew closer:..... The battle raged with great intensity for over two and one-half hours.....The leading ship... mounting twenty-two 32-pound carronades, having anchored nearest our battery, was so much disabled, her cable being cut by our shot, that she drifted on shore, within 600 yards of the battery, and the other vessels having got out of our reach, we kept such a tremendous fire upon her that she was set on fire and abandoned by the few of the crew who survived. At 10 P.M. we had the pleasure of witnessing the explosion of her magazine.

The vessel that exploded within easy cannon range of Fort Bowyer was Percy's flagship, the Hermes. The other warships, one of them heavily damaged, withdrew beyond the range of the fort's guns and the battle came to a close.

A comparison of casualties between the two forces is startling. The Americans reported a loss of only 4 men killed and 5 wounded. The British, on the other

hand, lost 32 killed and 40 wounded, as well as their flagship.

Major Lawrence and his men were hailed as heroes across the United States. Andrew Jackson even recommended that every one of the fort's officers be promoted."

This short excerpt about the second Battle of Ft. Bowyer is from the National Park Service:

"The second British attack on Fort Bowyer was made early in February 1815, just before the ratification of the Treaty of Ghent, by 5,000 British troops, who had been defeated 1 month earlier at the Battle of New Orleans. Landing 3 miles from the fort, they captured it but soon abandoned it when they learned that the war was over. It then fell into ruins."

Major Lawrence and his troops were driven from the fort and walked to New Orleans where General Jackson was located. Shortly thereafter George Varner was mustered out having completed his five years of service.

Fort Bowyer no longer stands. It was demolished when Fort Morgan was built on the same spot beginning in 1819.

FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

Additional Varner Related Family Members

<http://home.kc.surewest.net/btvarner/VarnerGenealogy.htm> is the Varner Family Genealogy Website. Some of the files require a password to open. That password is: VarnerFamily. Please do not provide this password to anyone else. Send them to me so I can keep track of who might access the information. A password is required to prevent unauthorized changes to those documents.

QUESTIONS

On question continues to be asked. This question should be asked, as the more people who question assumptions, the more likely that a definitive answer will be determined.

Could a Riggs other than Edmund Riggs, have fathered John Lawrence Varner & now William Owen Varner?

DNA results from myself and Warren Varner do prove that Riggs fathered John & William.

DNA does not prove exactly which Riggs is the father. Until such a time that many more Varner's and many more of this line of Riggs are DNA tested, the

answer requires deductions based upon evidence.

To make such a deduction requires an understanding of:

- The Riggs of Miller County, Missouri
- The Riggs family further back than those in Missouri at the time of John & William's conception
- The location of male Riggs family members at the time of conception
- Which male Riggs family member where in proximity to Nancy Ann Varner's location at the time of conception
- Any other associated facts that might provide useful details
- Any known facts that contradict assumptions used to base the conclusions (This one is very important!)

We should not set out to prove or disprove any theory or belief. If this is the goal, it is easy to overlook facts that do not "fit" the theory. We are trying to make logical deductions based on available evidence.

Continuing to question theories, or suggest alternative possibilities causes researchers to look at evidence from a different perspective. New perspectives can produce new answers.

NEWS

Varner /Riggs Connection Update

As stated in the last newsletter, Warren Varner, grandson of William Owen Varner has submitted a DNA sample. Warren has finally received the results for the Y37 DNA tests conducted.

As suspected, Warren and I are a zero deviation match to each other. As important, we are both a match to the exact same Riggs DNA submitters.

I think it can now be safely conclude that both John Lawrence Varner and William Owen Varner were fathered by the same Riggs.

To me the evidence allows for the conclusion that Edmund Riggs was the father of both.

Nancy Ann Varner appears to have remained in close proximity to Edmund Riggs during the entire period that the children were conceived. Other male Riggs family members in contrast, appear to have not been nearby during this whole period of time.

The above taken in totality would seem to support the conclusion that Edmund Riggs was indeed the father.

We have now proven through DNA that the Riggs connection involves more than one on Nancy's children. We still cannot

say, and likely will never be able to prove for sure, that the two girls were also fathered by Riggs.

However this does not end the need for additional male DNA submissions from other Varner's. These other submissions will not currently help prove the Riggs connection. But, such submissions will very likely help in the future to narrow down links between the families. Please think of additional DNA submissions as providing input now (While you are still around) that could help years down the line.....

George Varner of Missouri Direct Line DNA

The summer has been a busy time. I have not worked on obtaining George Varner DNA candidates. This would include any male to male direct descendants of:

John D. Varner (1854-1929)

Glenn Varner (1852-)

Francis Marion Varner (1847-1904)

Samuel Philip Varner (1846-1896)

Edward Varner (1839-1916)

George Washington Varner (1838-)

Thomas J. Varner(1836-)

If anyone is aware of any male descendants from any of the above, please let me know. I am aware of three candidates through Samuel Philip, but none through any of the others.

A George Varner Line

This month we will outline one line down from Samuel Philip Varner, one of George's sons. One of the reasons for highlighting this line next is because of the possibility that Raymond Walter might be willing to contribute DNA to establish the direct George Varner line.

I am not sure I have all the descendant facts correct. If you see anything that you know not to be correct, please let me know!

George⁴ Varner (Fredrick³, John², Hans¹)

b. abt. 1789 – d. abt. 1861

Married *Harriet Owen* (b. abt. 1817 – d. abt. 1861)

Samuel Philip⁵ Varner (George⁴,

Fredrick³, John², Hans¹)

b. 1846 – d. 1896

Married 1. *Lucretia Irwin* in 1870 (b. 1854 – d. 1875). Married 2 *Charlotte F. Barnhart* in 1876 (b. 1855-d. 1933)

Francis Logan⁶ Varner (Samuel⁵,

George⁴, Fredrick³, John², Hans¹)

b. 1874 – d. 1939

Married *Missouri Elsie Allen* (b. 1877 – d. 1942)

Norman Walter⁷ Varner (Francis⁶,

Samuel⁵, George⁴, Fredrick³, John², Hans¹)

b. 1912 – d. 1997

Married *Lela Cornett* (b. 1920 – d. 1992)

Raymond Walter⁸ Varner (Norman⁷, Francis⁶, Samuel⁵, George⁴, Fredrick³, John², Hans¹)

b. 1942 –

Married *Christine Elizabeth Swilliun* (b. 1948-)

As always, If you know of facts that pertain to any of the persons listed please let me know so such details can be captured.

2014 Newton/Varner/Riggs? Family Reunion

Location has yet to be determined, but the 2014 family reunion will be held on Memorial Day weekend, Saturday 24 May, 2014.

Some arrive as early as about 10 am. Most others closer to lunchtime. More to come as the date approaches.

Please help me with topics of interest for future issues. I will attempt to include any received in future issues.

Bruce Varner