



Felix A. Vann family, 1928

born, three sons, Robert M., Enos Truss, and Jasper Lemuel, and three daughters, Jane Elizabeth, Sarah Ann, and Alice M. Vann.

Joel King Vann had a farm in Vann Valley, north of Trussville. One day a little piglet wandered onto his farm. No one claimed it so he put it in with his hogs. But in the fall a neighbor came by and claimed the grown hog saying that he recognized a spot on its ear. Joel King Vann said the hog was more his corn than it was the neighbor's piglet and refused to give up the hog. The neighbor brought charges against him in the Cahaba Baptist Church. The church trial resulted in a finding that he had to return the hog. Instead of doing so, he angrily resigned from the Cahaba Baptist Church, and joined the Methodist Church. He sold his farm near Trussville, and bought another farm in the nearby village of Oak Grove, in the fork of the Oneonta Road and Gadsden Road.

He donated the northwest corner of his new farm to the Methodist Church where the Oak Grove Methodist Church was built, now the Huffman Methodist Church. His brother, William J. Vann, bought the farm on the other side of the road, and donated the northeast corner to the Baptist Church. The Huffman Baptist Church stands there today, across the road from the Huffman Methodist Church.

Joel King Vann, a successful farmer in the Huffman area, had thirteen children. One, Leonard L. Vann, was Principal of the Huffman High School, and served as the President of Fairview College in Bessville, Miss., from 1894 until 1899 when he became the superintendent of the Bessemer City Schools. He later served as Secretary-Manager of the Bessemer Chamber of Commerce.

Another son, Felix A. Vann, was in the real estate business in old Elyton when with a group of businessmen there raised about \$6,000 and persuaded the Methodist church to start a Christian college which opened in 1897 as the North Alabama Conference College.

The name was changed to Birmingham College about 1910 and it was merged with Southern University in Greenville in about 1919 to create today's Birmingham-Southern College. Felix A. Vann, became a Methodist Minister in 1894 and served Wylam Methodist Church and eleven other churches before his retirement from the Fruithurst Methodist Church in 1924.

A cousin, James A. Vann, son of Dr. Byrd Vann, helped organize Young & Vann Supply Company, still active in Birmingham.

One of Felix's sons, Clyde Harold Vann, after his graduation from the North Alabama Conference College in 1902, served as Principal of the High School then associated with the college, until he went to the Law School at the University of Alabama in 1909; He later served as Circuit Judge of Fifth Judicial Circuit in East Alabama from 1931 until his death in 1934.

One of Felix's grandsons, David J. Vann, son of Clyde Harold, served as a Law Clerk to Mr. Justice Hugo L. Black for the 1953 Term of the Supreme Court of the United States, practiced law in Birmingham from 1954 to 1997, led the petition election to change Birmingham's city government from a three man Commission to

the present Mayor-Council form of government in 1962, negotiated with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the end of the Birmingham Racial Demonstrations in 1963, served on the Birmingham City Council 1971-1975, and as Mayor of Birmingham 1975-1979. His daughter, Ruth Vann Lillian, has been a member of the North Alabama Conference of the United Methodist Church. He also adopted a Vietnamese war orphan named Michael Lee Vann, now a student at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa.

All in all, since 1824, members of the Vann family have served the Jefferson County area governments, operated small businesses, practiced law and medicine, taught in its schools, worked in its industries, and its sons and daughters have raised many children in the Vann name, and in the married names of daughters and granddaughters.

Included in the accompanying picture, taken before August, 1928, of the family of Mr. and Mrs. Felix A. Vann are, left to right, back row: Felix Monroe Vann, Clyde Harold Vann, Eugene Ellis Vann, Felix Huffman Vann, Ruth Johnson Vann (Mrs. Clyde Vann), Margaret Catherine Haigler Vann (Mrs. Monroe Vann); front row: Rose Elizabeth Vann, Robert Joel Vann, Felix A. Vann, Emily Ruth Vann, Melissa Rose Huffman Vann (Mrs. F. A. Vann), Clyde Harold Vann, Jr., and Augustus Monroe Vann; and upfront row: Eugene Newhall Vann. Youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. Clyde A Vann, David Johnson Vann, was born in August of 1928.

Submitted by: David Johnson Vann, 4201 Cliff Rd., Birmingham, AL 35222. Sources: family history and personal knowledge.

Jesse Harris Vardaman

Following in the footsteps of his grandfather, John F. Vardaman, the first school teacher in Goodwater, Alabama, Jesse Vardaman began a long and distinguished career as an educator when he became the first Automotive Mechanics Instructor at Bessemer High School in Bessemer, Alabama.

Jesse's father, Marshall E. Vardaman, had moved his family from Goodwater to Wood County in east Texas ca 1892-93, where, on Christmas Eve, December 24, 1896, Clara "Odie" (Carlisle) Vardaman gave birth to Jesse Harris Vardaman. The family returned to Goodwater in 1902, and it was there, and in nearby Sylacauga, that Jesse was raised and received his elementary education. In 1916, he left for the north to enter the automobile industry.



John Harris Vardaman

Jesse eventually arrived in the small Amish farming community of Millersburg, Holmes County, Ohio, where he met and married Elsie Lorraine Bell, the daughter of Lewis George and Stella (Calhoun) Bell, on October 1, 1919.

The newlyweds then journeyed south to Ocilla, Georgia, where