

was born in 1777 in the Dutch Fork area of Newberry County. With brothers William and Joseph, Thomas came to Jefferson County, Georgia, in the latter part of the 1790s where the three brothers married three Vining sisters, the daughters of Shadrack and Phereby (Ratliffe) Vining, ca 1801.

Edwy Lyles Vardaman was born in Jefferson County, Georgia, February 2, 1804, and was raised in Putnam County, Georgia, where he married Lucinda K. Mauk, January 6, 1825. Soon after their marriage they moved to Meriwether County, Georgia, remaining there until 1849 when they moved to the Pinckneyville area of northwest Tallapoosa County, Alabama. Edwy's father, Thomas, preceded him to Alabama, moving to Coosa County in 1836 and settling near Mount Olive. See Edwy L. Vardaman in Clay County Heritage Book.

John F. had little opportunity to obtain an education during his boyhood years but at the age of twenty he attended school part of each year for four years and began teaching school in 1859. This was interrupted in 1861 when the Civil War began and he enlisted in the Confederate Army. In 1862, he joined Captain Martin M. Slaughter's cavalry company in Hilliard's Legion. At the end of the War he was with General Robert E. Lee's troops at Appomatox where he was paroled in April, 1865.

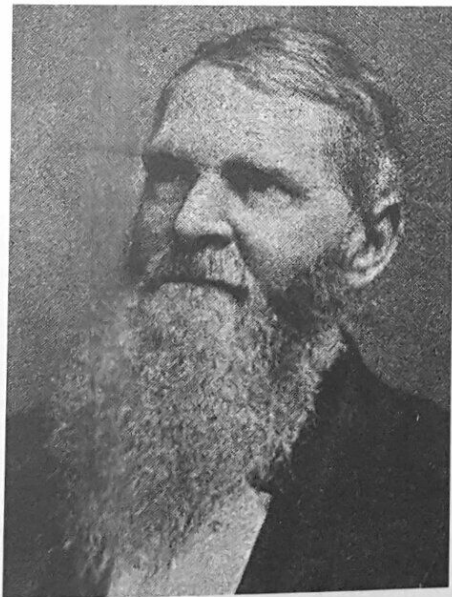
He returned home on May 17, 1865, and married Julia Ann Flynn of Nixburg, December 21, 1865, in Coosa County. Julia, born Thursday, October 29th, 1840, near Arbacoocha, then in Randolph County, Alabama, was the daughter of Benjamin Alexander and Susan (Watson) Flynn. Julia's father, a Randolph County Commissioner, died in the late 1840s while Julia was yet a young girl. During the 1850s, her mother moved the family to near Nixburg in Coosa County where Julia would later meet her husband.

John resumed his teaching career at Fishpond from 1866 to 1868. During this period two sons were born: Marshall Everett, Thursday, September 27, 1866, and John William Anderson, Monday, October 19, 1868.

In February 1868 John F. acquired property from his father in the northeast corner of Coosa County on both sides of the old Lineville Road about two miles north of Goodwater. He built a log cabin on this property, moved his family there on November 8, 1868, and taught school at nearby Smyrna in 1869. From 1870 to 1878 he interrupted his teaching career to devote full time to farming. During this period John and Julia's two daughters were born: Maggie Mae on Wednesday, September 28, 1870, and Ada Bell, Saturday, February 3rd, 1877, both in the log cabin home. Ada later changed her name to Adrian. In 1880-1881, on the same site, John built a larger, less primitive home more in keeping with his stature in the community.

In 1879 he resumed his teaching career, becoming the first school master in Goodwater, teaching there from 1879 through 1883 in a one room school. From 1884 through 1888 he taught at nearby Kellyton School and in 1890 was elected Superintendent of Education for Coosa County, a position he held until 1896 and again from 1898 to 1900.

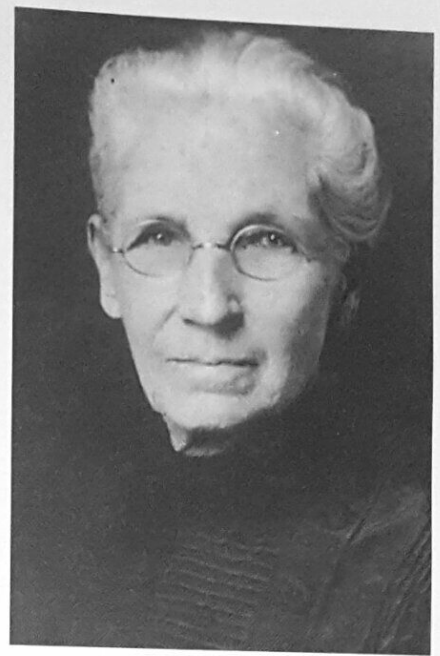
During his final years John F. developed severe arthritis which confined him to a wheelchair. He died at his home near Goodwater, Tuesday, July 17, 1906, at the age of 71, and is buried with other family members at Smyrna Cemetery near Goodwater. After John's death, his widow, Julia Vardaman, lived with her daughter Maggie, who had married Thomas Jefferson ("Jeff") Webb of Kellyton, and later moved with them to Alexander City. Julia died Sunday, November 22, 1931, at the age of 91, at her daughter's home in Alexander City and is buried with her husband at Smyrna.



*John Forsythe Vardaman of Goodwater, Alabama (1835-1906)*

Other Vardaman family members buried at Smyrna include Julia's mother, Susan (Watson) Flynn, who lived with her daughter and son-in-law from the time of their marriage in 1865 until her death, July 8, 1902 and John F.'s parents, Edwy L. Vardaman who died at the age of 75 on July 25, 1879, at his home in Clay County and Lucinda K. Vardaman who died at the age of 56 on April 17, 1862, at her home then in Tallapoosa County.

Also buried at Smyrna are their son, John W.A. Vardaman, who died unexpectedly of complications from appendicitis on



*Julia (Flynn) Vardaman wife of John F. Vardaman (1840-1931)*

May 3, 1911, at the age of 41 at Lafayette, Alabama, where he was Judge of Probate for Chambers County, and their youngest daughter, Ada/Adrian Vardaman Gwin who died, a widow, at her home in New Orleans, Louisiana, on February 26, 1954, at the age of 77.

Ada/Adrian was married in 1909 to James Bassett Gwin, a railroad conductor, who died in 1921 in a train accident in Green County, Alabama. He is buried at Live Oak Cemetery in Selma, Alabama. John W.A. Vardaman was unmarried at the time of his death.

John and Julia's older son, Marshall Everett, married Clara Owen (Odie) Carlisle in 1888 at her father's home in Mount Olive, Coosa County. Marshall left Alabama ca 1917 never to return. He died of a stroke at the home of his daughter, Maggie McCranie, in Douglas, Georgia, on February 20, 1927, and is buried with his wife and several of his children at the Douglas City Cemetery. He was 60 years old at the time of his death.

Their older daughter, Maggie Vardaman Webb, died at her home in Alexander City, October 6, 1952, at the age of 82, and is buried with her husband at the Alexander City Cemetery. *Submitted by: J.H. Vardaman, 361 Wrights Mill Ct., Alpharetta, GA 30004.* Sources: Family History and Bibles; Memorial Record of Alabama, Vol. I; Records of Guy Vining of Hurtsboro, AL; Vardaman Records in Coosa County Historical Society Museum.

### **John Lafayette Vardaman Family**

John Lafayette Vardaman was born August 26, 1862, in the Mount Olive community of Coosa County, where he lived his entire life, except for a short period while attending a junior college in Mississippi. He was the youngest of five children and only son born to Thomas Jefferson and Nancy Newman Vardaman. When John Vardaman was two years old his father died while serving in the Confederate Army during the war.

John Lafayette was very fortunate to obtain more education than most males in rural areas during that period of our history. He was well versed in the Bible, knew higher mathematics, and had a deep interest in history and the political life of his country.

As a young man traveling to a church meeting between Goodwater and Alexander City one day, he stopped at a house to get a drink of water and to water his horse. While at the house he noticed a young lady, but did not meet her. After making some inquiries during the meeting as to who lived at the house, he stopped there for water when returning home and met the lady, Lucy Priscilla Durden, born January 22, 1869.

On December 28, 1892, John Lafayette Vardaman and Lucy Priscilla Durden were married. From that union, six children were born: Annye Myrtle (12-19-1896), Ila Jane (6-10-1899), Thomas Franklin (5-8-1901), Claude Ollious (7-29-1903), Cora Grace (1-31-1907), and Mary Fannie (11-22-1909). All children received music lessons and four of the six children attended college. A son, Claude