

Martin Vannada's Escape From Indians

By Jerry Long
c.2024



A History of Owensboro and Daviess County, Kentucky, Hugh O. Potter
(Montgomery, AL: Herff Jones-Paragaon Publishing, 1974) p.165:

As late as 1790 Indians made life hazardous for hunters and surveyors in midwestern Kentucky. In that year a John McIlmurray was killed and Martin Vannada was captured while near the Green River. Vannada was tied to a tree but escaped and made his way to Hartford and safety.

Historical Sketches of Kentucky, by Lewis Collins
(Maysville, KY, 1847) Ohio County chapter, page 487:

In August, of the same year [1790], three men were attacked by a party of Indians, near the mouth of Greene river. John McIlmurray, one of the whites, was killed, a man named Faith was wounded, and Martin Vannada was made a prisoner. The Indians immediately crossed the Ohio river, and, after traveling for some days in the direction of their towns, struck, as they supposed, the trail of some white men. In order to pursue them with the utmost celerity and without impediment, they tied Vannada to a tree. With the view of rendering his escape hopeless, during their absence, they spread a blanket at the root of a tree, and caused him to sit upon it, with his back against the tree. His hands were then pinioned behind him, and fastened to the tree with one rope, while they tied another rope around his neck, and fastened it to the tree above. In this painful position they left him, and commenced the pursuit of their supposed enemies. But no sooner had they departed, than he commenced the work of extricating himself. With much difficulty he succeeded in releasing his hands, but his task appeared then only to have begun. He ascertained that he could not reach round the tree so as to get to the knot; and it was so twisted or tied between his neck and the tree, that it was impossible for him to slip it one way or the other. Without a knife, he made powerful efforts to get the rope between his teeth, that he might gnaw it in two. Failing in this, he almost regretted having made any effort to effect his escape, as, upon the return of the Indians, the forfeit of his life would, in all probability, be the consequence. At this moment he recollected that there were some metal buttons on his waistcoat. Instantly tearing one off, he placed it between his teeth, and, by great efforts, broke it into two pieces. With the rough edge of one of these, he succeeded in fretting rather than cutting the cord in two which bound his neck to the tree, and was once more free. But in what a condition! In a wilderness and an enemy's country, with no clothing save a shirt, waistcoat, breeches and moccasins!—no provisions, no gun, no ammunition, no knife, not even a flint to strike fire with! He did not, however, hesitate or falter, but instantly struck into the trackless forest, in the direction of home,— and, under the direction of a kind Providence, reached Hartford the ninth day after his escape, having subsisted upon such small animals and insects as he could catch and eat raw. He was nearly famished, and greatly emaciated; hut having fallen into good hands, he was soon recruited, and returned to his family in fine health.

[The preceding was also reprinted in the volumes, Collins' Historical Sketches of Kentucky: History of Kentucky, by Richard H. Collins (1874, pp.666-667) and Ohio County, Kentucky in the Olden Days, by Harrison D. Taylor (1926, pp.122-123).]

The Louisville Journal, Louisville, KY, Thursday, 15 March 1860, p.1:

EARLY TIMES IN KENTUCKY

Memoir of Stephen Stateler, Esq., of Ohio County,
Ky – Interesting Particulars.

By J. H. M'H., Jr.

[note – the writer's name was John Hardin McHenry, Jr. (1832-1893)]

Some time in the year 1856, there died in Ohio county, at his residence, six miles north of Hartford, Mr. Stephen Stateler, aged about 86 years. He was at the time of his death the oldest resident of that county, having first gone there in the spring of 1790. He was a man of most extraordinary constitution, and the writer of this remembers distinctly to have seen him in the harvest field on the 4th of July previous to his death, handling a scythe with the alertness of a young man.

He was from Pennsylvania and of German parentage. His original name was Stradler which, for he sake of euphony, was changed to Stateler.

The following account of his early trials and tribulations will, no doubt, be read with great interest by those persons who were acquainted with Mr. Stateler or with other persons whose names are mentioned in the narrative.

In "Collins' History of Kentucky" there is mention of several incidents, concerning which I have often heard this old gentleman speak, and from whom, no doubt, that interesting information was obtained.

Some years before his death, he gave an account of his adventures to a friend, who wrote them out for publication. His statement, for the truth of which it is scarcely necessary to vouch, is as follows:

Mr. Stateler's Account

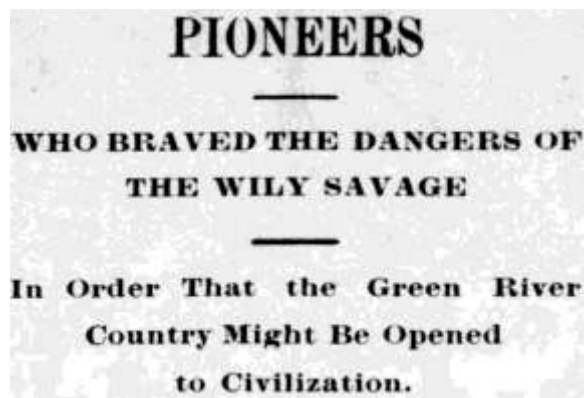
.... In the same month, August, 1790, the Indians attacked three men who were hunting near the mouth of Green River. The men were camping out when they were attacked. Two of the men, McIlmurray and Faith, were killed; the third, Martin Vannada, was taken prisoner. Taking their prisoner with them, they crossed the Ohio River and traveled several days toward the North. They came upon what the Indians considered the signs and tracks of white men, and in order not to be impeded by their prisoner, they determined to leave him. I have frequently heard Vannada relate that terrible adventure.

The Indians determined to leave him but at the same time to secure him so that he could not escape before their return. They spread down a blanket at the foot of a tree. With a thong of raw hides they pinioned his hands behind, him to the tree, and another they tied around his neck and around the tree, wrapping it and twisting it securely both before and behind, fastening his head back close to the tree, also lashing his feet together, and in this secure position they left him. Vannada immediately commenced his efforts to extricate himself. In the course of an hour he felt the knot which bound his hands behind the tree to loosen. Drawing his feet up, he untied the thong which bound them, but now his task seemed only begun. He could not reach around the tree to where the knot was, and it was so securely tied and twisted between his neck and the tree that he could not slip it, and as he moved around himself, the knots would also move so as to be exactly on the other side of the tree from him and always out of his reach; nor could he slip his head through, and in no possible way could he get to use his teeth upon it. Vannada used to say that he felt his teeth "on edge", so great was his desire to get a good gnaw at that rope; he had no knife to cut it with. He then sincerely regretted that he had made any attempt to rescue himself, believing that when the Indians returned and discovered it they would murder him.

In this dilemma it occurred to him that his vest had metal buttons on it. He pulled one of them off, and with his teeth broke it in two. With the rough edge of this piece of button he succeeded finally in fretting, rather than cutting the cord, which bound his neck. He finally released himself and was once more free. But in such a condition! He was in a wild wilderness hundreds of miles from any human habitation that he knew of, with no clothes save his pants, vest, shirt and moccasins, nothing to eat, no gun, no ammunition, no knife, not even a flint to strike fire with. He had his choice between certain death when the Indians returned, and his chances for life in the wilderness. He chose the latter alternative, and started with the determination to reach his friends at Hartford or die on the way. No human being ever suffered more than did Vannada before he reached Hartford, which he did on the evening of the ninth day after his escape. During this time he subsisted entirely upon berries, roots, nuts, worms, snails and such things as he could find in

the woods. For the last day or two he several times despaired of ever reaching his destination, and two or three times laid himself down to die. He was almost famished, and his intimate friends scarcely recognized him. He said that he would stop to rest, or rather forced by the gnawing of his ravenous appetite, would stop to look at a squirrel or a deer and imagine in what way it was best to cook them, and think of times past when he had more than he could eat. He spent whole days in picturing to himself visions of fine dinners, nice delicacies, &c., to eat. He could think of nothing else, and when on the ninth day he staggered into Hartford, he first asked for something to eat. He was treated very kindly by the people there, and his appetite was relieved by small and repeated supplies of soup and gruel at first, and afterwards by meat and bread. It was more than a week before he was allowed to pursue his journey toward home, where he found his distressed family and friends mourning his loss, as they had heard of his capture and of the death of his companions, and they had given up all hopes of ever seeing him again. Vannada, however, lived many years afterward, and was an intimate acquaintance and friend of mine.

Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 7 April 1898, p.2:



Delaware. April 6. – Some time last year there appeared in the Messenger some reminiscences and historical facts of the heroes who first settled Daviess and McLean counties, which I thought very interesting. There were many other things that happened in the early settlement of Kentucky which ought not to be lost to history – events that give it the appellation of the "Dark and Bloody Ground." So by your kind permission I will give you some facts as I have heard them related by the old people who have now gone to their reward.

My grandfather, William Faith, Sr., was born in Virginia in 1775. His father moved from Virginia to Kentucky at an early day and settled where the city of Louisville now stands. He was a surveyor by profession, and took up a league of land lying immediately below Bear Grass creek, on the Ohio river.

One day while returning to his home from surveying he was captured and shot by Indians and killed. His widow, becoming alarmed for her own and her children's safety, sold her 640 acres of land for a trifle, just enough to take her back to Virginia. She took the hands of her children and hers and signed away the rights to the property. How long she remained in Virginia know not, but about the year 1790 William Faith, one of the heroes of this story, turned up in Old Virginia, being fifteen or sixteen years of age. At that time it was very dangerous to hunt near the forts, as the Indians were lying in wait to pick up horses and cattle, and to capture, any one that might be

wandering outside the forts. So the hunters for the most part went fifteen or twenty miles from home to kill their meat.

In about the year 1790 a Mr. Macklemurry, Martin Vernada and William Faith, a lad fifteen, or sixteen years of age, went to the mouth of Green river to kill meat for the fort of Vianna, where Calhoon now stands. They arrived at their hunting grounds on Sunday evening and went into camp for the night. Just at daybreak Monday morning Mr. Macklemurry, an old and successful Indian fighter, discovered that they were surrounded by Indians. They, the white men, succeeded in getting under the river bank, near the water, and were trying to get a shot at the Indians, who were on the bank above them, how many they knew not. While in this position the Indians fired down the bank at them, shooting Mr. Macklemurry through the body and Mr. Faith in the shoulder. Mr. Vernada, not knowing that they were hurt, advised them to swim the river, both being expert swimmers, and make their escape, but he (Vernada) could not swim, as he would have to take his chances with the Indians. They started into the water, when Mr. Macklemurry exclaimed: "My God, Billy! I am a dead man!" He turned and fell dead at the water's edge.

There being a heavy fog on the river, Mr. Faith swam across and made his way toward Red Banks, now the city of Henderson. After traveling for several hours, and being almost overcome with weariness and loss of blood, he heard skiff oars on the river. The occupant of the skiff proved to be a white man, who took him in and carried him to Red Banks, where fever set up in his wound, and he lay hovering for a long time between life and death. But, being young and vigorous, he finally recovered. The Indians managed to draw the fire of Mr. Vernada's gun, made a charge, and captured him. After relieving him of his gun, knife, and all of the fixtures that a hunter carried in those days, they tied him to a tree with his back to it, in a sitting posture, with rawhide thongs. They carried water to him in his hat and made signs to him to drink a great deal, as they were going away to be gone three days.

Mr. Vernada said the Indians, of whom there were but two, were not out of sight before he was trying to get loose, which he succeeded in doing after quite a while. After he had freed himself from the thongs, he started to make his way back to Old Vianna. The weather became cloudy, and there were no roads in those days, and he became lost and bewildered in the interminable forest. After wandering for eleven days he succeeded in reaching the fort where Hartford now stands. All that he ate during the eleven days that he was lost was a part of an opossum's liver, uncooked. When he got to Rough river, opposite Hartford, he was so weak from tramping and doing without food, that after wading the river he was discovered by some of the people, trying to crawl up the river bank on his hands and knees. After several days of careful nursing he was brought back to health.

The two Indians, after leaving Mr. Vernada tied to the tree, started toward the Yellow Banks (Owensboro). They soon came across the trail of a hunter who had gone out to kill some meat for the fort. They followed his trail, and somewhere below Bon Harbor they came upon him dressing a deer that he had shot. After having captured him they tied him to a tree and gathered dry wood and piled about him. While they were applying the torch to the wood two white men, who were out hunting, and had been trailing the Indians, came in sight. The Indians were so absorbed in their fiendish work that they did not know that the avenger was in sight, but the report of two rifles sounded and the two Indians fell, pierced with bullets. The names of the two white men who figured in this last tragedy are forgotten by the writer. If any of the old settlers who read this can call them to mind they will confer a favor on the readers of the Messenger by making known.

In conclusion I will say that some of the descendants of Mr. Vernada now live in Daviess county, near Spottsville, and have always been a creditable family. As to the descendants of William Faith, Sr., they are scattered everywhere In the Green river country.

J. T. FAITH

[The preceding article by J. T. Faith, was also published in the Courier-Journal, Louisville, KY. Saturday, 9 April 1898, p.9]

Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 4 April 1943, p.1B:

Story Of Indian Encounter With Pioneers And Saving Of Man From Burning Told In Letter

By Mrs. Ida F. Cockriel, Owensboro Messenger Staff Writer

(EDITOR'S NOTE – The accompanying story was brought to the attention of The Messenger by a reader of the historical articles that have been appearing in this newspaper on Sundays. It comes from a letter which the late Joseph Thomas Faith sent to a newspaper editor in an effort to learn the identity of two men who prevented a pioneer hunter being burned to death by Indians in Bon Harbor Hills. It was found among Mr. Faith s possessions when he died.)

Many romantic tales, true and otherwise, are to be found in the early history of Bon Harbor Hills, below Owensboro, on the Ohio river. Probably the earliest narrative is one found among the papers of the late Joseph Thomas Faith, after his death. It tells of the danger to the early settlers, from lurking Indians. Faith, who died years ago is a brother of Mrs. Jennie Waltrip, 87, of St. Joseph.

William Faith, great-grandfather of Joseph Thomas, came to Kentucky shortly after the Revolutionary war and took up 640 acres of land below Bear Grass Creek, on the Ohio river, which is now part of the city of Louisville. One day while William was out surveying, which was his vocation, he was shot and killed by Indians. His widow, because of the maurading bands of red men, sold her land and returned to Virginia with her young son, William, Jr.

Indians Near Fort

The son did not fear the redskins, and in 1790 young William came to Fort Vienna, now Calhoun. At that time the settlement included only the fort. ' It was considered very dangerous to hunt for game near the fort. Indians were always lurking nearby for the purpose of stealing horses, picking up women or children that might unfortunately fall into their hands, so when there was any hunting to be done the men would steal away into the distance before starting the hunt. In the year 1790, William Faith, grandfather of Joseph Thomas, together with two residents of the fort, Martin Vernada and Mr. Mucklemerry went down Green river to the Ohio river to hunt. They arrived at the hunting ground on a Sunday evening and camped for the night. At daybreak the next morning, Mr. Mucklemerry who was considered an old and successful Indian fighter, discovered the three men were surrounded by Indians. They succeeded in taking cover under the river bank, near the water, all the time trying to get a shot at the Indians, who were on the bank above them. They did not know how many Indians there were in the band.

While in that position, the Indians fired down the bank at the three white men, shooting Mr. Mucklemerry through the body. Mr. Faith was shot in the shoulder. Mr. Vernada, not knowing either man had been hit, advised them to swim the river as they were both expert swimmers, and thus make their escape. Vernada himself could not swim and he told them he would have to take his chances with the Indians. As the two men started into the water Mucklemerry turned and exclaimed, "My God, Billy, I'm a dead man," and he fell dead at the water's edge.



fell dead at river's edge

There being a heavy fog, Faith escaped by swimming the river, and making his way to Red Banks, which later became Henderson. Fever set up in his wound and he hovered between life and death for many days, but being young and vigorous he finally recovered. The Indians managed to draw the fire of Vernada's gun and making a charge on him, captured him. They relieved him of his gun and knife and all his equipment, then tied him to a tree with his back to it, in a sitting posture. They carried water to him in his hat, and made signs to him that they would be gone for three days. There were only two Indians, according to the story, so as soon as they were out of sight, Vernada started to free himself, which he eventually accomplished.

He started to make his way back to Fort Vienna, but there being no trails in the unending forest, after wandering for eleven days, he finally reached the fort where Hartford now stands. All that he had to eat during those eleven days was part of an o'possum's liver.

Indians Reach Bon Harbor

The two Indians after leaving Vernada, started in the general direction of Yellow Banks, coming onto the trail of a hunter who had gone out from Yellow Banks. They followed the trail until they came upon him as he was dressing a deer he had shot, just below Bon Harbor Hills. They captured him, then tied him to a tree and gathered dry brush and piled it about him. It was while they were setting fire to it that two white men from Yellow Banks who were out hunting and had come across the trail of the Indians, came in sight of what was taking place. The Indians were so absorbed in their fiendish work that they did not know a white man was near, until the report of the rifles of the two hunters. Both redskins fell dead, and the white man was rescued.

Joseph Thomas Faith who kept the story in his possession, tried in vain during his lifetime to find out the names of the white men connected with the Bon Harbor incident, but to no avail.

The preceding article was reprinted in the Messenger-Inquirer's special Daviess County Sesquicentennial edition (5 October 1965, p.3C), the reprint included the following drawing:



History of Gibson County, Indiana,
Jas. T. Tartt & Co. (Edwardsville, Ill., 1884) p.178:

Solomon Van Nada

Martin Van Nada, the original ancestor of the Van Nada family of whom there is any knowledge, was a native of Germany. He emigrated to America in 1765, and settled on Green River, in Kentucky. His son Solomon, the grandfather of the subject of this sketch, was born in 1787, on the same place where his father originally settled. He came to the territory of Indiana, in 1811, and settled in Warrick County, and there died in 1850. He participated in the Indian wars of the Northwest, and was a soldier under Harrison. He married Nancy Carr, who was born in 1874 [sic], in Kentucky. After her death he again married, but there was no issue by the latter marriage. By the first marriage there were three sons and one daughter. Two of the sons, George S. and Martin L., have survived the parents. George S. Van Nada is the father of Solomon. He was born in Warrick County, Sept. 18, 1819. He remained a resident of his native county until 1854, when he moved to Gibson and settled in Barton Township and there engaged in merchandizing, which he subsequently abandoned for farming. He afterward removed to Vincennes to take charge of an agricultural implement business which had been organized under the auspices of the granger movement. At present he is a resident of Petersburg, in Pike County. He married Miss Jane,

daughter of John and Elizabeth (Bell) Kilpatrick. She was a native of Gibson County, born in 1818, She is now dead. There were eight children by that union; three sons and three daughters are still living. Solomon is the third in the family. He was born in Warrick County, Ind., Sept. 20, 1846. He was raised on the farm and remained at home until in December, 1863, when he enlisted (although a mere boy of seventeen years) for three years in Company F of the Thirty-third Regiment Indiana Volunteer Infantry. The Regiment was attached to, and formed a part of, the Twentieth Army Corps under the command of Gen. Hooker. The first battle in which it took part was at Marietta, Ga., after which the command passed through the Atlanta campaign, then went with Sherman's army to the sea, and from there through the Carolinas to Washington, D. C, where it participated in the Grand Review, and was mustered out of the service and discharged July 25, 1865. After his return home from the army he engaged in farming, in which he continued until his removal to Princeton.

On the 27th of April, 1869, he was united in marriage to Miss Jane V., daughter of John and Mary Smith. She was born in Gibson County, Dec. 3, 1846. Her parents were natives of South Carolina, and came to this county in 1845. Mrs. Van Nada died Nov. 3, 1883. There were five children by that union, four of whom are living. Their names in the order of their births are:—Elsie J., George John, (died in infancy,) Charles and Frederick. Politically Mr. Van Nada comes from an old line Whig family. He cast his first presidential vote for U. S. Grant in 1868, and since that time has been a Republican. In 1882 he was nominated and elected recorder of the county, and at present is discharging the duties of that office in a manner that is a credit to himself, and an honor to those who gave him their suffrages. He is a member of Prince Lodge, No. 231, A. F. and A. M., and Princeton Chapter No. 75; also a member of Oakland City Lodge I. O. O. F., No. 308, and Archer Post, No. 28, G. A. R.

Living with Vanada's; (vonNeida's, vonNida's, Vannada's), Harpole's, Caswell's, Hartley's, Boone's, Schulz's, Daussman's, and Wambach's, by Betty Ray Vanada (Newburgh, IN, 1981) pp.1-4, 19-25 & 32-33:

Living With Vanada's
(vonNeida's,
VonNida's,
Vannada's)..
Vanada, Betty Ray



Compiled by Mrs. Chester *Betty Ray) Vanada, RR 1, Newburgh, Indiana.

It is with a great deal of satisfaction and pleasure that I have compiled this collection of my husband's family for the use of interested persons and so that generations to come may be able to identify their ancestors.

There is a lapse of time from the beginning to end, so that some descendants since 1976 are not included.

This collection has been possible with help and advise, along with encouragement, from my husband, family and relatives to whom I am most grateful.

To my knowledge and findings, all here-in is a correct copy and all that is available.

Betty Ray Vanada

VANADA FAMILY HISTORY

- 1st generation A. Teilman vonNuett--sold land in Aachen, Germany May 15, 1391
 B. Judocus vonNuett
 C. Jost vonNuett
 D. Johannes vonNuett
 One of these had a son Zillis
- 2nd generation Zillis vonNuett -- owned property in Aachen, Germany
 he was a Catholic and died 1461
 A. Zillis vonNuett
 B. Johann vonNuett
 *C. Heinrich vonNuett
- 3rd generation Heinrich vonNuett lived at the time of Leonardo Da Vinci
 *A. Heinrich vonNuett
- 4th generation Heinrich vonNuett sold a house in 1510. He lived at the time of Martin Luther.
 A. Gillis vonNuett
 B. Urban vonNuett
 *C. Eberhard vonNuett
- 5th generation Eberhard vonNuett b. 1506 he took up the Martin Luther faith, which
 forced him to give up his wealth and move. He moved to Landau,
 Germany
 *A. Abraham vonNuett
- 6th generation Abraham vonNuett m. Anna Seyler 2-18-1566
 he d. 1597 or 1598
 A. Abraham b. 1575
 *B. Johannes b. 1584
 C. Joere (Gregorius) b. 1591
 D. child (no name)
 E. Katharine b. 1588 d. in childhood
 F. Elizabeth b. 1566
 G. Barbara b. 1576
 H. Margarete b. 1578
 I. Marie b. 1580 m. Tobias
 J. Anna b. 1586
 K. Katharina b. 1593
 L. Appollonia b. 1572 m. Anton Ranspach 1592
 M. Anna b. 1568 d. in childhood

- N. Abraham b. 1569 d. in childhood
 O. Barbara b. 1573 d. in childhood
 P. Johannes b.1579 d. in childhood
 Q. Anna b. 1582 d. in childhood
- 7th generation Johannes (Hans) vonNuett (nidda) b. 1584 d. 1633
 m. Anna Marie Cullman 1603 she d. 1616 he re-married
 A. Anna Margarete b. 1603
 B. Johannes Casper b. 1606
 C. Abraham b. 1608
 D. Johann Thomas b. 1612
 *E. Adolph b. 1615
 F. Johann Peter b. 1618
 G. Jakob b. 1618
 H. Anna Katharina b. 1628
 I. Magdalena b. 1630
- 8th generation Adolph vonNida b. 7-23-1615 He was a farmer
 A. Hans Peter b. 1643
 *B. George Peter b. 1649
- 9th generation George Peter vonNida b. 1649 moved to Kleinfishlingen
 *A. Hans Martin
 B. Johannes had two sons
 C. Hans George b. 1688 d. 1751 had three sons
- 10th generation Hans Martin vonNida b. 8-20-1671 d. 10-3-1756
 Over a barn door in Kleinfishlingen, Germany he carved an
 inscription HM 1722 VN
 *A. Johannes b. 1691
 B. Johann Sebastian b. 1700
 C. Katharina Barbara b. 1708
 D. Anna Margarete b. 1709 d. 1789
 E. Hans Michael b. 12-2-1711
 F. Hans George b. 1712
 G. Hans Simon b. 6-6-1721
- 11th generation Johannes vonNida b. 1691 d. 11-22-1760 m. Anna Margaretha Kaufmann
 He was a Master Carpenter in Weingarten, Germany .All his
 children emigrated to America. He remained in Germany
 A. Johann Simon baptized 1-17-1738
 B. Anna Eva baptized 2-14-1740
 C. Marie Barbara baptized 12-6-1741
 D. Johann Phillip b. 11-17-1743 came to America 1764, lived in Penn.,
 had many descendants
 E. Johann George b.1-6-1744 has descendants in Penn.
 F. Anna Margarete b. 5-20-1749 d. 1767
 *G. Johannes Martin b. 1-17-1752

H. Johannes Jakob b. 8-29-1754 has descendants in Penn. b
I. Johann Daniel b. 4-2-1757

100. JOHANNES MARTIN vonNEIDA (vonNIDA, VANNADA) b. 1-17-1752
in Weingarten Germany d. ca. 1826 in Henderson Co, Ky. He came from Pfalz, Germany
to Pennsylvania with two brothers, Johann George and Johannes Jakob. They arrived from
London on the ship "Amerika" on July 27, 1771. He lived in the area of Lancaster, Pa. from
1771 to 1787 when he came down the Ohio River with his family which included sons
John and Solomon, to the wilderness of the Southern Indiana Territory, now Warrick Co,
Indiana. (Newburgh area) In the spring of 1790 he moved his family across the Ohio River
into Kentucky. Several Kentucky histories record his capture by the Indians near the mouth
of Green River in August 1790. He later escaped and made his way back to his family.
(This detailed account is found at the conclusion of the Vanada family history) He was a
farmer and miller and acquired several hundred acres of land along the Ohio River in the
northeast corner of Henderson Co, Ky and the northwest corner of Davies Co, Ky. Deed
Book D, page 88 in Henderson Co, Ky. records his will for the division of his land, slaves
and personal property among his children in 1819. (copy follows). A letter written in 1849
and one in 1850 from Pennsylvania relatives to Indiana and Kentucky relatives follow this
history. An extensive account of the Vanada family dating back to the late 1300's is in the
possession of Chester S. Vanada of Newburgh, In. Several of Johannes Martin's brothers
and sisters migrated to the United States and settled in Pennsylvania. where there are
numerous descendants today.
- a. John b. d. owned land in Kentucky 1810 and in Indiana in 1818
 - b. Margaret b. (101)
 - c. Barbara b. d. 1838 never married; she left a will that freed a colored
boy, Thorton, when 21 Emancipation Proclamation Deed Book N pg 33
Henderson Co, Ky.
 - d. Solomon b. ca 1780 (102)
 - e. George b. d. m. Lucretia Harris 6-21-1833
 - f. Samuel b. d. 1825 never married
 - g. Elizabeth b. d. m. Nathan Bunn in Kentucky 1820 - had a daughter Sarah
 - h. Martin b. 3-7-1799 (141)
101. MARGARET VANNADA WINIFREE (100b) b. d. m. Charles Winifree 12-30-
1807 at Harford, Ky.
- a. Charles b. d. 1864 never married. He died mysteriously during the Civil
War, presumably because of slave holdings. \$20 thousand in gold and silver also
disappeared.
102. SOLOMON VANNADA (1011d) b. ca 1780 probably in Pennsylvania d. ca 1849 in
Warrick Co, In. m. Nancy Karr, she was b. 12-2-1783 d. 8-20-1838. He moved to Warrick
Co, In. in the early 1800's. He built the first water mill in the county in 1818 on Cypress
Creek in SW ¼ of NE ¼ of Sec. 6 Twp 7S R8W. Goodspeed's History of Warrick Co. says
"this was a good mill for its time and was provided with one set of buhrs. The early settlers
were not afforded the advantage of such a thing as a flouring mill and if they had their corn

ground at all they had to go to the Vannada mill." He was a farmer and miller, served as Justice of the Peace 1818 and as County Commissioner in 1831.

- a. Margaret Karr b. 8-23-1810 (103).
- b. Martin Luther b. 12-4-1815 (106)
- c. George S b. 9-18-1819 (133)

103. MARGARET KARR VANNADA ARNOLD (102a) b. 8-23-1810 d. 7-20-1852 , m. William Arnold 10-15-1833 he was b. 5-10-1810 in Ky son of Joseph, d. 2-12-1862 in Mo.

- a. Nancy Ellen b. 1834 d.
- b. Martha b. 1837 d.
- c. William Jackson b. 1840 d.
- d. Anthony Webster b. 1841
- e. Minerva Ann b. 1843 (104)
- f. George W. b. 7-24-1844 (105)
- g. Margaret Jane b. 1846 d.
- h. Mary Winifred b. 1848 d.

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This is a true story as told to me by my father George S. VanNada (133) who was born and lived in Warrick County, near where Newburgh is now located.

John B. VanNada (136)

In the year 1789 three VanNada brothers came west from their home near Lancaster, Pennsylvania. They located in the wilderness of Southern Indiana Territory, now Warrick County, Indiana. The names of the three brothers were Martin Luther VanNada, John VanNada and Solomon VanNada.

(Note inserted by Chester Vanada --This must have been Johann Martin von Neida(100) who came from Germany to Pennsylvania in 1771 with his two brothers Johann George von Neida and Johann Jacob vonNeida. He undoubtedly married in Pennsylvania and when he came to Indiana in 1787 brought with him two sons --John Vannada and Soloman Vannada (100 a &d). According to Lafayette Vannada (130) the original Martin Vannada, when he came to the Indiana Territory, cleared a plot of ground in the NE corner of the SW ¼ of Section 6 Twp 7S Range 8W, Warrick County.)

In the spring of 1790 Martin Vannada crossed the Ohio river into the State of Kentucky. He built for himself and family a block house, built of blocks of wood with small window on each of the four sides. This house was built to protect the family from attack by the Indians. The farm or small tract of land where this building was located was a few miles north of Calhoun, Kentucky, on Green River. After this building was completed and occupied by Vannada and wife they began to clear a small field for corn and vegetables. Game of most all kinds was plentiful through the wilderness in that day.

In August 1790, Martin Vannada, John McIlmurray and a young man by the name of Henry Faith went to the salt-well where the Green River empties into the Ohio River. They had to take two days for the trip. They camped for the night on the bank of Green River. After they had retired for the night, McIlmurray told Vannada he thought he heard a noise and was afraid it might be Indians. Vannada told him there was no danger and they were as safe as if they were in the city of

Philadelphia. No doubt McIlmurray was right when he thought it was Indians for about midnight of that fatal night two Indians charged their camp. McIlmurray was the first one to his feet, he was killed instantly. Vannada and Faith rolled down the bank of Green River. Vannada could not swim he told Faith to swim to the other shore and run to Red Bank s(Henderson) six miles away. This place was then located where Henderson, Kentucky now stands. Faith, after swimming the river and running for help, felt a smarting in his shoulder and for the first time discovered he had been shot. However, this did not hinder him from giving the news of the attack.

In the attack the Indians came in so suddenly Vanada was unable to get to his gun. The Indians soon located him and the larger of the two came at him with his tomahawk raised above his head ready to strike him down. Vannada being a very strong man grabbed the Indian by both wrists and hold him fast. The other Indian which proved to be more friendly of the two took no part in the scuffle. After the friendly Indian saw that Vannada was too. much for his partner he came and said something in their language after which the Indian shook his head and dropped his tomahawk.

The Indians then collected the blankets, guns and camping outfit of the three white men and with Vannada as their prisoner they went up the Ohio River a short distance where they had left their raft hidden in undergrowth of bushes. They then loaded their equipment and started for the Indiana Territory. Vannada said the first information he had of the death of his friend McIlmurray was when they got on the raft and the Indian he had the scuffle with pulled from his belt the scalp of McIlmurray (who was red headed) and threw it under a blanket. They then tied Vannada's hands behind him and the three started across the river for the Indiana shore where they landed very early in the morning and started walking in a northerly direction through the wilderness. In the meantime Faith reached Red Banks and had given the news of the attack. Several men well armed were soon on their way to the mouth of Green River, but when they arrived at the camp there was no sign of Indians or white man. They found blood on a log near the camp which not doubt was where they had scalped McIlmurray and had thrown his body in the river. Since they found no trace of the missing men, they came to the conclusion they had been murdered. They sent this news to their people at Calhoun, Kentucky.

Vannada going along with the Indians as a prisoner said no doubt they had been over this old Indian Trail before as they traveled fast in a northerly direction. They made no effort to kill any game which was in sight and plentiful Their reason for this was to make no noise as they were afraid of being followed. They took a short time for breakfast, eating dried meat and a cake of tallow. Vannada said they divided their lunch giving him the same amount of food they had for themselves. At this point they started traveling rather slowly, stopping quite often and listening and appeared to be uneasy. Late in the evening they came to a high hill (thought to be Ditney hill) where they camped for the night. They had about the same rough food they had left from their last meal. In preparing for the night they spread a blanket and had Vannada lie down on this, they then covered him with a blanket with an Indian on each end of the blanket, this way they kept their prisoner between them. Vannada said he slept very little and one of the Indians was awake all the time. When morning came they were up early, ate some of the tallow and dried venison and started on their way north.

The second night out the blankets were arranged the same but that night both Indians went to sleep and slept all night. Vannada who usually carried a hunting knife did not have it on this trip, otherwise he could have escaped by slitting the blanket. The next day they had not traveled far when they came to where someone had camped. Vannada said the large Indian began to investigate the camp. He went to where they had left white ashes from their camp fire, raking his

hand through the ashes he found some real live coals which burned his hand. The other Indian laughed quite heartily. Vannada said he wanted to laugh, but kept quiet. The Indians had to talk and one of them climbed to the top of the tree where he sat for several minutes looking out over the low lands. This Indian left his gun at the foot of the tree loaded. Vannada who had his arms tied but left his hands free said he thought of grabbing the gun and shooting the Indian on the ground. He would have the other one up the tree, but he knew if he failed in this attempt it would mean death to him. After the Indian came down the tree, he and the other Indian had a short conversation, They then took Vannada and after spreading a blanket between two dogwood trees where they bound him with rawhide thongs which were very strong. They both then started, no doubt, to find the parties that had camped at that place the night before. No sooner had they left and were out of sight Vannada commenced to work freeing himself. With the utmost difficulty he succeeded in releasing his hands to some extent, but his task then appeared to have only begun. He found he could not reach around the trees and get to the knot, and the thong was so twisted or tied around his neck and the tree that it was impossible to slip it over his head (due to a large nose), but he did succeed in getting it into his mouth but was unable to gnaw it in half. Failing in this, he almost regretted having made any effort to escape as a return of the Indians would in all probability mean death. At this moment he remembered there were some metal buttons on his waistcoat. Tearing one off he placed it between his teeth, and by great effort broke it in two pieces. With the rough edge of one of these he succeeded in fretting rather than cutting the cord which bound his neck to the tree and was once more free. But what circumstances; in a wilderness and as enemy's country, with no clothing but a shirt, waistcoat, breeches and moccasins, no provisions, no gun, and no ammunition, no knife, not even a flint for a fire. He did not, however, hesitate or falter, but instantly struck into the trackless forest in direction of home and under the direction of a kind Providence he made his way through the wilderness the best he could. Coming to a creek he waded for some distance so as to leave no tracks. After two days and nights, trying to reach the Ohio river, he became bewildered and wandered for nine days in the forest. The sun did not shine for this entire time and he lost all sense of direction. All he had to live on during this wandering was such small animals and insects as he could catch and eat raw. He was nearly famished when on the ninth day, late in the evening, he came to the Ohio River opposite from where Hartford, Kentucky was then located, but having fallen into good hands he was soon recruited and returned to his family who had mourned him as dead.

(The above account appeared as a footnote in "The History of Kentucky" by Collins published about 1847. A similar account appears in a book entitled "Ohio County Kentucky In the Olden Days" by Harrison D. Taylor published by John P. Morton and Co. at Louisville, Kentucky in 1926)

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MARTIN VANADA to BARBARA VANADA, ET AL
DEED DATED: Jan. 21; 1819
FILED: Jan. 26, 1819
RECORDED: D.B. D page 88
HENDERSON COUNTY COURT
CLERK'S OFFICE

To all to whom these presents shall come

Be it known and hereby made manifest that I Martin Vanada of Henderson County Kentucky for and in consideration of the sum of Ten Dollars paid by Barbara Vanada Solomon

Vanada George Vanada Samuel Vanada, Elizabeth Vanada Martin Vanada Junr & my Grandson Charles Winfree Junr, that is to say – ten dollars by each one of the persons aforesaid to me in hand paid, as also for the further consideration of the Tender Love and affection I bear to each one as their natural Father Have Given Granted, Bargained, and Sold and by these presents do Give Grant, Bargain Sell and Confirm unto the said. Barbara Vanada Solomon Vanada George Vanada Samuel Vanada Elizabeth Vanada Martin Vanada Junr and Charles Winfre_ Junr, the following tracts of Lands Slaves and personal property to each as herein designated & described both as to quantity situation & Value viz:

To Solomon Vanada I do hereby Give Grant sell and confirm one hundred acres of land in lot No 4 in Hendersons Grant to begin on the Ohio River at 3 sugar trees upper corner to John Fuquas land thence to run up the River 62 poles & thence South 290 East to the Back line of the said Martin Vanada 260 poles

To the said Samuel Vanada I do hereby Give Grant Bargain Sell and Confirm one hundred acres of land and Beginning at Solomon Vadda upper corner on the Ohio River thence running up the river 62 poles & thence South 290 West 260 poles to the back line of the said Martin Vanada

To the said Barbara Vanada I do hereby give Grant Bargain sell and confirm one hundred acres of land beginning at Samuel Vanadas upper corner on the Ohio River thence running up the River 62 poles & thence South 290 West 260 poles to the back line of the said Martin Vanada also one Mulatto Girl named Charlotte, one negro Girl named Marie, Two Mares, three sows & four calves, two feather beds and furniture & one half of all the household & Kitchen Furniture.

To Martin Vanada Junr. I do hereby Give Grant sell & confirm one hundred acres of land Beginning at Barbara Vanada upper corner on the Ohio River thence running up the river 62 poles & thence South 29 degrees West 260 poles to the Back line of the said Martin Vanada.

To George Vanada I do hereby give Grant Bargain sell & confirm all the Land lying and beign in the bounary & metes, viz: Beginning at the upper corner of Martin Vanada Junr on the Ohio river thence up the river to Charles Winfrees corner thence on Winfrees South 29 degrees West 260 poles to his corner in his & Vanadas back line thence on the Back line North 61 degrees West to the corner of Martin Vanada thence with his line North 29 degrees East 260 poles to the Beginning.

To Elizabeth Vanada I do hereby give Grant sell and confirm one half part of a tract of land lying and being in the County of Daviess the whole tract containing 385 acres purchased of John Handley & by him conveyed by Deed Bearing date November 17th anno 1804 & recorded in the Court of Ohio County July 9th 1805 the other Moeity or half part being herein sold & conveyed to Charles Winfre upon division and assignment of which the said Elizabeth is declared entitled to her choice of tract also one negro Girl by name Jennys one Mare Three Cows and Calves Two Featherbeds and furniture and one half part of the Household & Kitchen utensils & Furniture

To my Grandson Charles Winfrey Junr, I do hereby Give Grant Bargain sell and confirm one half part of the Tract of land purchased of John Handley of 385 acres as discribed in the description made to Elizabeth Vanada & under the Limitation in the sale to her

To George Vanada Samuel Vanada and Martin Vanada Jr I do hereby sell give and Grant all the Horses Cattle Hoges & Farming utensils of which my estate at the signing and delivery of these presents does in my concept.

To Have and To Hold the aforesaid tract of land slaves and cattle unto the said Solomon Vanada, Barbara Vanada George Vanada Sam Vanada Martin Vanada Jr. Elizabeth Vanada & Charles Winfre Junr with all their appurtenances rights issues & profits, unto them & their Heirs and assigns forever Warranted free from me the said Martin Vanada my Heirs & free from the

claim or claims of all and every other person for and in consequence of the consideration herein expressed.

In Testimony whereof I the said Martin Vanada have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal this 21st day of January 1819

Martin Vanada (Seal)

Witness Samul Hopkins, L. G. Hopkins, Saml H. Davis

Henderson County ss

This Deed of Gift was presented to me in my office the 26th day of January 1819 & acknowledged by the said Martin Vanada to be his hand and seal act and deed & at the instance of the said Barbara Vanada, Solomon Vanada, George Vanada, Elizabeth Vanada, Martin Vanada Junr & Charles Winfree is admitted to record

Teste A. Barbour CHCC

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copied from the Evansville Courier dated Friday May 28, 1909

DEATH OF WARRICK COUNTY PIONEER
MARTIN VANNADA REMEMBERED EVANSVILLE
WHEN IT WAS A HAMLET OF LOG HOUSES

Martin Luther Vannada was born Dec. 4, 1815, near Newburg, Ind., died May 24, 1909 aged 93 years, 5 months and 20 days. He was married to Elizabeth Harpole May 2, 1837. Mrs. Vannada was closely related to Ratliff Boon, for whom the city of Boonville was named, and who was governor of Indiana. Mr. and Mrs. Vannada were the parents of eight children--five boys and three girls. Five still live and are Mrs. W. T. Stone of Lamed, Kan.; Mrs. Harvey Johnson, Emporia, Kan.; Mrs. L. T. Gudgel, Princeton, Ind.; Lafayette Vannada, Prun, Ark., and Geo. Vannada, with whom he made his home three miles east of Newburg. He is also survived by fourteen grandchildren and twenty great-grandchildren. His wife preceded him to the grave twelve years ago. He has one brother George Vannada, living at Petersburg, Ind., aged 89 years That he might have reached the century mark is most probable but for a fall sustained two weeks ago, dislocating his hip and which was the direct cause of his death.

"Uncle" Martin, as he was familiarly known was a man of winning personality and highly esteemed in this locality where he was born and practically spent his entire life. He was a man of great intellectual ability, and his memory of the early pioneer days was clear and accurate.

Born one year before Indiana was admitted to the union, he was able to relate much of the trying times of the early settlement days. His father, Solomon Vannada, and his grandfather, Martin Vannada, lived for many years in this neighborhood and had many thrilling attacks with the Indians and wild animals. He often pointed out the spot within a hundred yards of his present home where he killed a huge bear. Such were the surroundings under which he was reared.

He was an offspring of the sturdy German family of the same name which emigrated from Pennsylvania into the territory about 1787. This part of the state was then a forest, populated with Indians and wild beasts. He could remember the time when Evansville was composed of a few log houses scattered here and there which he saw as he floated down the river on his flat boat loaded with his farm products, corn, pork, and potatoes, on his trips to New Orleans. He made the trip to that city from his home many times, and after selling out his produce purchased sugar, coffee and rice and returned to gather another flatboat load. During the civil war he was one of the chief workers against the "Knights of the Golden Circle" in his county. He had the courage to secrete

himself right under a school house where the knights held a meeting to talk over plans and listened to all they had to say, and lost no time in working out plans to defeat their movements. In so doing he helped Governor Morton to detect and capture the "Sunday School books" during the war. The first president he voted for was William H. Harrison, and the last was Roosevelt. He was always a staunch republican.

When Mr. Vannada was young and until he was 50 years old, he was said to be the best wrestler in this part of the state, being very active. In the last years he delighted to talk of this feat and his eyes would twinkle with pleasure when memory reproduced before his mind these stirring times and he would say with pardonable pride, "I was the best man in Indiana for my weight and age". Until three years ago he was able to read without the aid of glasses. His mind was stored with rich knowledge of men and affairs, and it was indeed a privilege to converse with him. He possessed all the attributes essential to a noble useful life and was noted for his extreme charitable nature. Indeed so great was this tendency that none were refused his aid worthy or unworthy, and he ministered alike to good and bad. He was especially fond of little children and his face would light up with joy at the touch of a baby hand. He made companions of them and in the last years of his life he often distributed candy among them, and would feeble make his way to the roadside or to a neighbor's house where the little ones gathered about him to receive the accustomed treat.

He was a man of strong religious faith. He held to the optimistic belief in the triumph of right over wrong. He loved life but did not fear death. One might safely emulate the example he has left of a life well spent.

The funeral was held Tuesday May 25, at the home of his son George with whom he has lived for a number of years, and was largely attended. His passing away was serenely peaceful, a fitting close to a most worthy life.

Records of Martin Vannada (1752-c1826)

Nelson County, KY Deed Book 1, p.89:

On 11 April 1787 Larkin Dorsey, of Baltimore town, Maryland sold a lot in Vienna (formerly Rhodesville) and an out lot of 8 acres, to Martin Vandae, of Vienna, Nelson County, District of Kentucky, , agreeable to Jacob Myers, late proprietor of said town, who sold same to Dorsey.

Nelson County, KY Tax Lists:

1785 [Martin Vannada not found listed]
1786 Martin Vanader [list of tithables for Rhodesville]
1791 Martin Vanader [far western Green River area including Fort Vienna – also in list John McElmury, David McElmury, Henry Rhodes]
1792 Martin Vanadal

Hardin County, KY Tax Lists:

In 1792 Hardin County, KY was created out of Nelson County, KY
1797 Martin Vannadey

Ohio County, KY Tax Lists:

In 1799 Ohio County, KY was created out of Hardin County, KY. Martin Vannada, under various spellings is listed in the Ohio County tax lists of 1799-1808. In the 1803 list he was taxed on 300 acres on Lewis Creek; in 1804 taxed on 300 acres on Indian Creek; in 1805 taxed on 300 acres on Indiana Camp Creek and 375 acres on Panther Creek; in 1806 taxed on 300 acres on Indian Camp Creek and 375 acres on Panther Creek; 1807 taxed on 3 tracts of 385 acres, 300 acres & 1000 acres and 400 acres in Henderson County, KY; in 1808 Martin was taxed on 5 tracts. Also appearing in the 1806-1808 Ohio County tax lists is Daniel Vannada; not listed thereafter in Ohio County tax lists.

Ohio County, KY Order Book 1:

Court of 7 May 1804 – Martin Vanado the executor of the last will and testament of Daniel Holt, returned an inventory and appraisal of the estate of Daniel Holt, deceased

Court of 7 August 1804 – Martin Vanado, David Glen, William Glen, William B. Smith and William Galloway were ordered to view the nearest and most convenient way for a way to lead from W. B. Smith's Ferry to the Yellow Banks

Court of 15 March 1805 – ordered that Martin Vanado be exempted from paying one levy listed in 1804 to be collected in 1805

Court of 10 June 1805 – on the motion of Martin Vando, ordered that his stock mark which is a swallow fork in each ear be recorded; on the motion of Barbara Vanado, ordered that her stock mark which is a swallow fork and under bit in each ear be recorded; on the motion of Lusanna Vanado, ordered that her stock mark which is a swallow form and upper bit in each ear be recorded

Court of 11 November 1805 – on a list of insolvents who have failed to pay their county levy for the year 1804 ... Martin Vanado (remitted by the court)

Ohio County, KY Marriage

Margaret Vanada to Charles Winfree, 30 December 1807, bond by John Vanada

Henderson County, KY 1810 Federal Census, p.348:

Martin Vaineada 3 males 10-16 1 male over 45 3 females 16-26

Henderson County, KY Deed Book D, p.88:

On 21 January 1819 Martin Vanada, of Henderson County, transferred land & property to Solomon Vanada, Samuel Vanada, Barbara Vanada, Martin Vanada Jr., George Vanada, Elizabeth Vanada and grandson, Charles Winfrey, Jr.

Henderson County, KY Tax Lists:

Martin Vanada not listed in 1807-1809 tax lists. Martin in 1810 tax lists (taxed on 1000 acres in Ohio County, 384 acres on Green River in Ohio County, and 850 acres in Henderson County. Martin Vanada is in the 1810 thru the 1825 list; he is not in the 1826 list; beginning in 1827 "the estate of Martin Vanada" appears.

Martin Vannada, Sr., born 1752 died during 1825-1827
