

F A L L E D I T I O N

# the RUCKER FAMILY SOCIETY

VOL. 21, NO. 3, SEPTEMBER 2010

## James River Batteaux Festival

see page 22



Batteaux Festival Participants

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## Rucker Family Society 2010 Reunion by Larry Black and Robyn Caldwell

As early as 1808, Ruckers have been coming to the Nashville area and we are at it again. The RFS Reunion will be held in Nashville, October 14-17, 2010. The Reunion Committee has secured great accommodations at the Holiday Inn Opryland-Airport (615-316-1056) for our reunion's second venue in the Nashville area.

The agenda is again overflowing with entertaining and informative activities involving places and topics relating to the descendants of Peter Rucker. As everyone arrives, they will be welcomed with a wine and cheese reception at the hotel at 8 PM. After a refreshing breakfast on Friday morning, we will take a short journey to the Hermitage, home of Andrew Jackson, our 7<sup>th</sup> president (term in office 1825-29). His adopted son, Andrew<sup>6</sup> Jackson, Jr., was born to Elizabeth<sup>5</sup> "Betsy" Rucker (James<sup>4</sup>, Benjamin<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>,

Peter<sup>1</sup>) and her husband Severn Donelson, brother of Rachel Donelson, President Jackson's wife. The relationship to the Rucker family is more than casual.

After lunch on the grounds of the Hermitage, we will journey to the home of our 11<sup>th</sup> president, James K. Polk (term of office 1845-49), in nearby Columbia, Tennessee. Dr. William<sup>5</sup> Reade Rucker (James<sup>4</sup>, Benjamin<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>) married Susan Childress, the only sister of Sarah Childress, the wife of President Polk. Much of what is known about the White House activity during his presidency is based on notes, letters, and diary of Dr. and Mrs. Rucker's daughters, Johanna and Sarah, who spend years visiting in the White House. A broach given to Sarah by the President, as well as a picture of William and Susan are on display at the home of President Polk.

At 8 PM on Friday, our own Mike Rucker will present a lecture on Col. Edmund<sup>6</sup> Winchester Rucker (Edmund<sup>5</sup>,

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Thomas<sup>4</sup>, Benjamin<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>) of  
Civil War fame.

Saturday morning we will take  
advantage of a great opportunity  
to see the actual battleground at  
the Battle of Franklin. Col. Rucker  
played a key role in the battle  
under the command of General  
Nathan Bedford Forest. Those not  
interested in the Civil War may  
wish to explore other historical  
Rucker sites. Saturday afternoon,  
we will have an informal  
genealogy discussion for those  
who are interested in sharing  
information, so bring your data.  
Saturday night there are tentative  
plans to visit the Grand Ole Opry  
near the hotel. Due to a recent  
flood, the Opry is scheduled to  
reopen while we are there with a  
grand event, and tickets are  
limited.

On Sunday morning, there will be  
a general session for discussion,  
photos, etc., at the hotel. Board  
members will meet twice to  
discuss current and future  
business.

This is a great opportunity for a  
fun, family-filled weekend that  
introduces younger Ruckers to  
genealogy and their heritage.  
Hope to see you there!

**Young Ruckers Experience  
Batteaux Festival**

**by Michael P. "Mike" Rucker**

As the annual James River  
Batteaux Festival cast off from  
Lynchburg on June 19 the  
youngest two crew members were

probably Sabrina, age 9, and  
Fiona Rucker, age 7, the two  
oldest granddaughters of Michael  
P. Rucker. Mike had been along  
on five previous trips down the  
James River and asked Mike Neal  
the owner of the batteau *Rose of  
Nelson* if he could bring his  
granddaughters along this year.

The girls and their grandfather  
were dressed in the requisite  
1800's costumes and a  
photographer for the *Lynchburg  
News and Advance* captured their  
photo as they waited for the  
batteaux to cast off on June 19.  
The photo appeared in the Sunday,  
June 20, 2010 issue of the paper.

This was the 25<sup>th</sup> year for the  
event and 25 batteaux cast off for  
the week long trip down the river  
to Maiden's Landing just  
upstream from Richmond. This  
design of batteaux was the  
invention of brothers Benjamin  
and Anthony Rucker in 1776.  
Thomas Jefferson was present at  
that first launch and recorded the  
event in his only published work,  
his *Notes on the State of Virginia*.  
Jefferson's account reads:  
"Rucker's battoe [sic] is 50 f. long,  
4 f. wide in the bottom & 6 f. wide  
at the top. She carries 11 hhds.  
[hogsheads of tobacco] & draws  
13 1/2 [inches] water."

Benjamin was the fifth great-  
grandfather of Sabrina and Fiona.  
Hundreds of batteaux of the  
Rucker brothers' design plied the  
James carrying tobacco and other  
goods down to Richmond until the  
James River and Kanawha Canal  
was completed to Lynchburg in  
1840 and put the batteaux men out  
of business.



The Rucker girls greatly enjoyed their day on the *Rose of Nelson* and spent a lot of time in the water as the day became hot. When the batteau became hung up on the first rapids and some of the men of the crew jumped out to push it over the rocks. Seven-year-old Fiona prepared to jump out, as well, asking, "Can I help?" She was told to stay in the boat. However, Captain Mike Neal did let the girls handle the front sweep (rudder) during a passage of smooth water, a privilege not permitted by many batteaux captains.

Note: The words *batteau* and *batteaux* refer to the flat-bottom vessels invented by the Rucker brothers. The word is derived from the French term for a boat, *bateau*, singular, and boats, *bateaux*, plural. The spelling variant with two t's has become the acceptable spelling for such watercraft. Jefferson's spelling *battoe* reflects the lack of standardization in spelling for the time period.

Amazingly, Sabrina and Fiona have seven lines of relationship to Peter Rucker (four through their grandfather Mike and three through their grandmother Harriet): (1) Derek<sup>11</sup> Rucker [Fiona<sup>12</sup> and Sabrina's<sup>12</sup> father], Michael<sup>10</sup> P., Henry<sup>9</sup> C., Jr., Henry<sup>8</sup> C., Sally<sup>7</sup> F. Parks, Paulina<sup>6</sup> Davis, Elizabeth<sup>5</sup> R. MacDaniel, Lucy<sup>4</sup> Rucker, Benjamin<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>; (2) Derek<sup>11</sup> Rucker, Michael<sup>10</sup> P., Henry<sup>9</sup> C., Jr., Lillian<sup>8</sup> E., William<sup>7</sup> A., Mary Ann<sup>6</sup> D., Ambrose<sup>5</sup>, Reuben<sup>4</sup>, Ambrose<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>; (3) Derek<sup>10</sup> Rucker, Michael<sup>9</sup> P., Henry<sup>8</sup> C., Henry<sup>7</sup> C., Benjamin<sup>6</sup> L., Benjamin<sup>5</sup> J., Isaac<sup>4</sup>, Ambrose<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>; (4) Derek<sup>10</sup> Rucker, Michael<sup>9</sup> P., Henry<sup>8</sup> C., Jr., Lillian<sup>7</sup> E., William<sup>6</sup> A., William<sup>5</sup> B., George<sup>4</sup>, John<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>; (5)

Derek<sup>11</sup> Rucker, Harriet<sup>10</sup> A. Jones, John<sup>9</sup> R. Jones, Margaret<sup>8</sup> V. Rucker, Daniel<sup>7</sup> H., Mary Ann<sup>6</sup> D., Ambrose<sup>5</sup>, Reuben<sup>4</sup>, Ambrose<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>; (6) Derek<sup>11</sup> Rucker, Harriet<sup>10</sup> A. Jones, John<sup>9</sup> R. Jones, Margaret<sup>8</sup> V. Rucker, Maryanna<sup>7</sup>, James<sup>6</sup> M., Jonathan<sup>5</sup>, George<sup>4</sup>, John<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>; and (7) Derek<sup>10</sup> Rucker, Harriet<sup>9</sup> A. Jones, John<sup>8</sup> R. Jones, Margaret<sup>7</sup> V. Rucker, Daniel<sup>6</sup> H., William<sup>5</sup> B., George<sup>4</sup>, John<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>.

For a pedigree chart of this lineage, consult the *RFS Newsletter* Vol. 2, No. 1, February 1991 ([http://www.theruckerfamilysociety.org/V2\\_N1.pdf](http://www.theruckerfamilysociety.org/V2_N1.pdf)).



Mike, Fiona & Sabrina Rucker at the James River Batteaux Festival

### Belle Grove Redux by Bill Smith

It all started on June 29, 2010 with an email from RFS Newsletter Editor Jeannie Brydon who had received a lovely brief letter from Marjorie Wilkerson, the widow of Hylton Wilkerson whose obituary appeared in the March 2010 issue of the Newsletter. Accompanying the obituary was an article about Belle Grove, their restored late 18<sup>th</sup> century home near Middletown, Frederick Co., Virginia. In the letter she gently tells me that "he has the wrong Belle Grove." What else can I say? "*Mea culpa*." This short phrase says it

all – an acknowledgment of personal error. Little did this native-born Californian know that Virginia contains not one, but two beautiful historic properties named Belle Grove. There were also obituary errors concerning the names of Marjorie and Hylton Wilkerson's children. Their children are: Ms. Janet L. Smith, Mrs. Susan C. Werner, Mrs. Sandra E. Manuel and Ms. Mary Wilkerson.

What I related in the article about Belle Grove in Frederick County is correct, but it is not associated with the Wilkerson family. The Wilkerson's Belle Grove is in "Fauquier County, on Route 17 about one mile south of Paris, at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains." It is described as an 1812 Federal-style manor house and has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition to the manor house is a circa 1812 meat house, circa 1830 barn, and the 1826-1940 Edmonds-Settle-Chappelear cemetery where Isaac Settle, builder of the manor house, is buried. Isaac sold Belle Grove to his son-in-law, Lewis Edmonds in 1842. Lewis had married Isaac's daughter Elizabeth "Betsey" in 1825. In 1870 John Armistead Chappelear (1853-1916) married Amanda Virginia "Tee" Edmonds (1839-1921), the daughter of Lewis and Betsey Edmonds. "Tee" was a vigorous journal writer during the historic 1858-1868 period, and her grand-niece Nancy Chappelear Baird (1918-2002) edited and published those journals in 1984 (*Journals of Amanda Virginia*

*Edmonds: Lass of the Mosby Confederacy, 1859-1867*). Nancy spent part of her childhood living at Belle Grove with her uncle, Benjamin Curtis Chapplelear. The happenings near and around Belle Grove were certainly among the most interesting in its long history.

In January 1863, Confederate General John Singleton Mosby rode in Fauquier County with his rangers. He knew that if they were to stay in a camp, sooner or later they would be discovered by Federal troops. "Instead he requested that patriotic Virginians board his men in their home." Tee and her husband were one of these families who provided for Mosby's Rangers in allowing soldiers to stay at Belle Grove. Later Tee wrote in her journal "Much to our surprise, mortification, and sorrow the slumbers of the household were aroused by the rattling of swords and the clatter of horses, which fortunately made known to our dear soldiers that something was wrong. Bud jumped from his bed, and there to our surprise were Yankees dashing up ... They dashed to their secret hiding place followed by overcoats, pistols, and everything I could grab ..." They were not discovered, but obviously there was great risk had they been. This is but one of hundreds of family stories told about the exploits of the Gray Ghost and his men.

Belle Grove stayed in the Settle/Edmonds/Chapplelear families until 1967, when the widow of Benjamin Curtis Chapplelear, who was a son of Tee and Armistead,

sold it. Hylton Wilkerson bought it in 1969 and sold it in 1986. Interestingly, it was only with the Wilkersons that Belle Grove gained bathrooms, closets, indoor plumbing, and heating.

Just to add yet another layer of connection, Jeannie Brydon, RFS President Chris Rucker, and frequent RFS Newsletter contributor Mike Rucker all share Annie Chapplelear, sister of the above mentioned John Armistead Chapplelear, as one their great-grandparents inasmuch as she married William Ambrose Rucker, whose photograph was featured in the March issue of the RFS Newsletter.



Belle Grove, Fauquier Co., Virginia

## **The John Rucker Family Angus Scholarship**

**by Michael P. "Mike" Rucker**

The Rucker family of Hill Crest Farm in Fauquier County, Virginia has established an exemplary reputation among America's premier Angus breeders. This family of Ruckers has owned and farmed the land for nearly 150 years and since 1924 have concentrated on raising award-winning Angus cattle. Their animals have won numerous top awards to count including a number of grand champions.

It was Bayard Ambrose Rucker who began to raise Angus in 1924 and his son, John William Rucker, who followed in his footsteps. John married Marjorie Virginia Thompson (1922-2004) in 1946. John and Marjorie's three daughters, Marjorie "Connie" Connor, Joyce "Penny" Pendleton and Susan "Sue" Pritchard, have continued the family's Angus-raising tradition to this day. John died July 30, 2007, and today Connie's husband Jerry Hall manages the farm.

John<sup>8</sup> William Rucker's lineage is: Bayard<sup>7</sup> Ambrose Rucker, William<sup>6</sup> Ambrose, William<sup>5</sup> Ballanger, George<sup>4</sup>, John<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>.

To honor the family's Angus rearing tradition a scholarship fund has been established by family friends and Angus breeders Dwight and Carolyn Houff. Shane Clary of Brodnax, Virginia was the 2010 John Rucker Family Angus Scholarship.

*1949 Article about "Hill Crest Angus"*

The Rucker's Hill Crest Farm has long been recognized as one of the premier Angus breeding farms in the country. The lead article in the January 27, 1949 issue of *Farm & Livestock*, a publication that served the agricultural communities of Virginia, Maryland and West Virginia, was entitled "Hill Crest Angus." A portion of this article by a reporter named Don Henderson follows:

"There are not many with the record of the Ruckers. It is founded on the fourth generation right on the same spot. The fertile rolling lands back of Upperville to



the north of Hill Crest and the little rail stop of Delaplane down south a piece. To the east of the road is the old home place and to the west of the same road the new house stands top of the hill looking down over as good a holding of some 543 acres as is to be found thereabouts.

About 20 years back they came to a few breeding cows, Aberdeen-Angus, that was the start of the fine herd that they now keep so well and manage so understandably. Before that it was mostly a case of steers for the market. John Rucker, who with his dad, says that by dint of land improvement practice they graze almost twice as many head as they did 10 years back. They were one of the first to go into the TVA program.

Today they run some fifty breeding cows, all registered, and they practice calfhoo vaccination. Buying from this source you have that protection as well as buying from one of the most popular families of this breed. They are always seeking to buy individuals of the best families.

--- It's an impressive layout, as you drive up the hill and go into the yard back of the house. At once the feeling is that it's someone's home and a mighty comfortable one. You know right away that no one or nothing goes hungry. Fat spaniels, big and fat hens, pigs growing for butchering, and they laughingly say there's always a hog killing at the place. Plenty of little paddocks and lots around the yard, each with its own complement of an Angus

youngster in some state of being processed to make a better animal of him or her by reason of especial attention. Stick your nose into most any part of the big old barn and you will run into one of the blacks, getting the specials of one sort or another. --- There can be no "production line" method when the best of a good breed has to be brought out for the needs of a highly critical market.

V.P.I. [Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University at Blacksburg, VA] has a hand in this thing. B. A. Senior [Bayard Ambrose Rucker, Senior (1877-1951)] was of the famous State University of Blacksburg. B. A. Junior [Bayard Ambrose Rucker, Junior (1914-1985)] is from it, and he today is probably the most noted manager or handler of Aberdeen-Angus cattle on the east coast. I know its saying a lot and it's controversial, but it's one man's opinion and I'll stick to it. Just watch the years of accomplishments to come on top of that handling, three Grand Champions in Chicago already. And B. A. is a young man still.

But B. A. Senior has a wise head, the youngest son, John, also of V.P.I., is with the farm and his wife graces the nice home to keep things happy and cheerful. Mrs. Rucker Senior is there to contentedly look back over the years of reaching this landing field of accomplishment. And the whole picture is painted with a Virginia brush. There is no imported monies imported from some factory bonanza, or other source in no way connected with the good earth. It's 100% Virginia,

and it's one of the several spots there round Upperville which are in that category. But perhaps the Ruckers of Hill Crest are a wee bit farther along the beam from the rest. Reaching a high standard with a great breed of purebred cattle as well as bringing on and adding to a fine farm is a noteworthy accomplishment.

--- There are no clocks to punch at Hill Crest, they don't need them really. Yet they have done what millions would like to able to do. They are making a comfortable livelihood and a nice surplus to boot, doing the things they would do anyway, as their choice of living. It's a bit of the Old Dominion at its best. Go look see for yourself."

Bayard Ambrose Rucker, his son John and Hill Crest Farm were written about in the Vol. 4, No. 4 (December 1993) issue of the *RFS Newsletter*.



Jim Silver, Bayard Ambrose Rucker, John Rucker and their famous Black Angus cattle facing north toward Upperville, Virginia.

## An Inventive Streak

by Louann Mattes Brown

It appears there's an inventive streak running through the greater Rucker family. About a month ago, I attended a book launch hosted by a friend, Tara McAndrew McClellan. Tara is a freelance history writer for the *Illinois Times* and the *Springfield*

*Journal* in Springfield, Illinois. Her new book, *Stories of Springfield: Life in Lincoln's Town* (The History Press Charleston, SC, 2010), features famous characters and lesser-known citizens who according to press releases "deserve to be famous." When I read through the book, I found the following paragraph on page 24:

*Presley H. Rucker -  
Burglar Alarm*

*You wouldn't think the small central Illinois town of Pleasant Plains (located just northwest of Springfield) was a hot bed of criminal activity in 1893, but something made resident Presley H. Rucker think he needed a burglar alarm then. So he developed a multifunctional alarm, according to his May 16, 1893 Patent. The device was not only "cheap, simple and effective," but could also serve as a door stop "to prevent the marring of the plaster and woodwork."\**

\*The Patent number for his burglar alarm is 497347, filed Nov. 12, 1892, issued May 16, 1893.

Since I am a descendant of another Rucker inventor, James Monroe Rucker of the Air Forcer Pump, I decided to do a little research on Presley H. Rucker and see what, if any, connections he had to our Rucker family. Using my account at Ancestry.com I quickly discovered that Presley Holland Rucker, born April 6, 1854 in Illinois, was the youngest son of Presley William Rucker and Sarah Garrett Rucker. According to census records the Rucker family lived along Indian Creek in Morgan Co., Illinois

until 1870 when they moved to Arcadia, Morgan Co., Illinois. Presley lived with his mother in Arcadia in the 1880's. On Dec 27, 1887, when Presley was thirty-three he married Emma C. Welsh in Cass Co. IL. The young couple moved to the small town of Pleasant Plains, Illinois, where on May 16, 1893, he applied for the patent on his Burglar alarm. The next time he shows up on census records, he is living in Toronto Center, Ontario, Canada where he alone appears in the 1911 Canadian census.

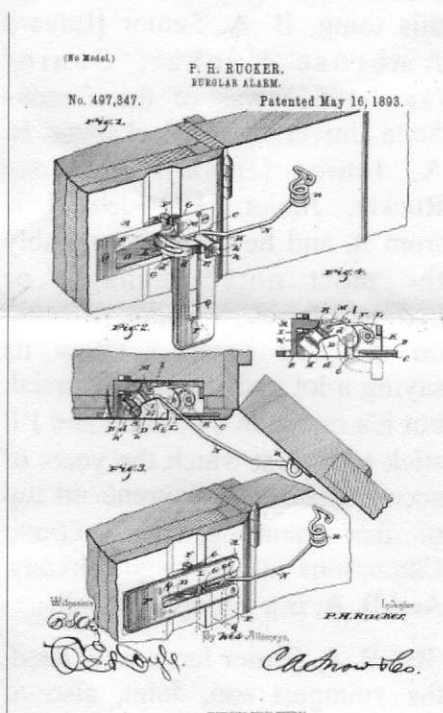


Image of P. H. Rucker's Burglar Alarm (1893)

*(Author's note: A Mrs. Emma Rucker married Benjamin F. Brown in Morgan Co. IL in 1904. Was this Presley's Emma? More research needed.)* According to Canadian records, Presley died in 1916 in York, Ontario, Canada. His body was returned to Illinois where he was buried in the Rucker Family Cemetery in Morgan Co., Illinois, alongside his parents and other members of his family. Presley

Holland Rucker had no known descendants. Presley<sup>7</sup> Holland Rucker's lineage is: Presley<sup>6</sup> William, John<sup>5</sup>, John<sup>4</sup>, John<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>.

Other Rucker inventors have been mentioned in the Rucker Society Newsletter. Notably, Anthony and Benjamin Rucker inventors of the James River Batteau, George Napoleon "Nap" Rucker, inventor of the "Knuckle Ball" and James Monroe Rucker, inventor of the Air Forcer Pump. Surprisingly, a quick search of the United States Patent Database revealed that since 1790 to the present, no less than *two hundred eighteen* United States Patents have been attributed to inventors named Rucker ranging from patents for George Rucker's door bumpers to David N. Rucker's timed food-filled toy dispensers and even a bra with hot and cold inserts co-created by Donna Rucker. Though additional research would be needed to determine if these Rucker inventors are all descendants of Peter Rucker, but given the number of patents attributed to inventors named "Rucker" it appears as if there truly is an inventive streak in the family! Louann promises further tales of Rucker inventors.

Louann<sup>10/11</sup> Brown's lineages are:

(1) Betsy L. Rucker<sup>9/10</sup>, Reginald<sup>8/9</sup> Rochester, Waller<sup>7</sup> Jonathan, James<sup>6</sup> Monroe, Jonathan<sup>5</sup>, George<sup>4</sup>, John<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>; (2) Betsy L. Rucker<sup>9/10</sup>, Reginald<sup>8/9</sup> Rochester, Russelle<sup>8</sup> Mary McDaniel, John<sup>7</sup> Edwards, James<sup>6</sup> Pendleton, William<sup>5</sup>, Margaret<sup>4</sup> Rucker, John<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>; and (3) Betsy L. Rucker<sup>9/10</sup>, Reginald<sup>8/9</sup> Rochester, Russelle<sup>8</sup> Mary McDaniel, John<sup>7</sup> Edwards McDaniel, James<sup>6</sup> Pendleton McDaniel, Elizabeth<sup>5</sup> Pendleton, Sarah<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Rucker, John<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>.



## The Trials of Ahmed Rucker - Part I

by Bill Smith

This article relates two legal proceedings from the life of Ahmed Rucker. Ahmed Rucker was a great-grandson of Peter Rucker, the immigrant, and he appears to have been the only man in the United States, at least those mentioned in 19<sup>th</sup> century census records, who had the given name Ahmed. Ahmed, and all its derivatives (Ahmad, Muhammad, Mahmud, Hamid and Hamdi – which have at their root a word that means *more commendable* [to God, Allah]), have been among the most popular names in Muslim countries, then and now, but Ahmed Rucker seems to have been a unique use of the name among native-born males in the United States until after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ahmed did name tenth child and last son Ahmed Harris, but he seems to have preferred to be known as Harris.

Ahmed was born November 17, 1775 on Tate Creek, Campbell County, Virginia, and died in Winchester, Scott County, Illinois on June 20, 1840. His Rucker ancestry is: Ahmed<sup>5</sup>, John<sup>4</sup>, John<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>. In November 1798 Ahmed married a great-granddaughter of Peter Rucker, Eleanor “Nelly”<sup>5</sup> Rucker, but since they shared John<sup>3</sup> Rucker as their grandfather, they were first cousins. Ahmed and Nelly had eleven children: Lucy (1798-1858) married Moses Clampit; Nancy (1800-1829) married James Smith; Patsy (1805-1850) married Josiah Wickersham; Deadema (1806-1863) married Thomas Rucker; Rebecca (1809-1858)

married Dr. Elijah Knox; Mary “Permilia” (1812-1837); John De La Fletcher (1815-1819); Rev. James Cook (1817-1900) married Rachel Howard and, later, Mrs. Harriet McCord; Zarilda (1818-1857) married Ornsby Haynie; Ahmed Harris [also known as Harris A.] (1821-1877) married Sarah Fletcher Rucker; and Elizabeth Ellen (1824-1829). The habit of marrying cousins was prevalent in Ahmed’s part of the Rucker family in as much as his brother Isaac<sup>5</sup> married Agnes<sup>5</sup> Rucker, a second cousin, as did Ahmed and Isaac’s sister Milly<sup>5</sup> marry not one but two Rucker first cousins, brothers James<sup>5</sup> and, later, Jeremiah<sup>5</sup> Rucker. Two of Ahmed and Milly Rucker’s children continued the practice of marrying Rucker cousins as well, when their son Ahmed<sup>6</sup> Harris Rucker married his first/second cousin Sarah<sup>6</sup> Rucker (first cousin through John<sup>4</sup> and Sarah Rucker, and second through John<sup>3</sup> and Eleanor Rucker), and Diadema<sup>6</sup> married her first/second cousin Thomas<sup>6</sup> Rucker (first cousin through Rev. James<sup>4</sup> and Nancy Rucker, and second through John<sup>3</sup> and Eleanor Rucker).

Ahmed became a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The M. E. Church was established in the United States in 1784 and is a direct descendant of the church founded by John Wesley in the United Kingdom. The M. E. Church became a major component of the United Methodist Church in 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ahmed, a nephew of Rev. James Rucker of Clear Creek Baptist Church, KY, built the first Methodist Church in Mortonsville, Woodford Co., KY in about 1800. That church burned

and was replaced by the current structure in about 1850.

Reverend Rucker’s first trial, in the “ecclesiastical court” of the M.E. Church that took place during the Illinois Conference’s annual meeting, on April 20, 1836 (when Rev. Rucker was 60 years old). Seven violations of the discipline of the church were lodged against Rucker by Richard Smith. Testimony was given by Ahmed and Nelly concerning the fact that James Smith, father of Augustus Smith, gave Augustus to Ahmed and Nelly to raise as if he were their own son, until Augustus reached the age of twenty-one (assuming Augustus Smith and Ellen Rucker were about the same age since their mothers’ were nursing them at the same time, Augustus would be 21 in about 1845 – which means Augustus was about fifteen years old at the time of the trial), at which time Augustus should receive a horse, saddle and bridle worth \$100 (about \$2,400 in today’s dollars). Smith didn’t sign an agreement at the time he parted with his son, but the agreement was witnessed by four of Ahmed and Nelly’s children. After all the testimony was given, Ahmed was found guilty of fighting on Sunday, and therefore guilty of breaking the Sabbath; guilty of offering to pay a dollar to anyone who would accompany him to “kidnap” Augustus Smith on the Sabbath; and guilty of “extorting” a sum of money from Smith himself to support Augustus. Because Ahmed Rucker was found guilty of these three charges, he was expelled from the church until the next quarterly church conference.

To be continued in the next issue.

## In Memoriam

**Vesta Marie Rucker**, 96, died Tuesday, June 15, 2010, after a long illness. Vesta was born in Alamogordo to Luther and Ruth Ragsdale. Vesta's grandparents, Francis and Susan Evans came to New Mexico in 1884 to homestead in James Canyon where her mother, Ruth Evans, was born. Ruth grew up in the mountains and married Luther Ragsdale in 1912. Tragically, her father died in 1918 during the flu epidemic. Vesta grew up in south Texas after her mother married Charles Hardy. Vesta went to high school in Bay City, Texas, and graduated from Mary Hardin Baylor College in 1935.

Vesta taught in various schools in New Mexico, including Cloudcroft where she met and then married Edwin Deane Rucker in 1938.

Vesta was predeceased by her husband Deane, who died in 1973, and her brother Luther Ragsdale. She is survived by her five daughters, Jackie Rucker of Pueblo, CO; Margaret Cost of Los Lunas, NM, Doris and Bill Milne, of Loudon, TN, Iladene Hollenberg of Grafton, WI, and Lila Rucker of Vermillion, SD. Vesta has eleven grandchildren, twenty-two great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild.

Funeral services were held June 26, 2010, at Alamogordo Funeral Home, and funeral services were at James Canyon Cemetery with burial immediately after.

Edwin<sup>8</sup> Deane Rucker's Rucker lineage is: John<sup>7</sup> P., Lindsey<sup>6</sup>, Jephtha<sup>5</sup>, George<sup>4</sup>, George<sup>3</sup>, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>.

The complete obituary was published in the *Alamogordo Daily News* from June 22 to July 22, 2010

**Charles King Rucker, Jr.**, 85, of Groves, Jefferson Co., Texas died Wednesday, July 7, 2010 at Christus St. Mary Hospital in Port Arthur, Jefferson Co., TX. He was born November 4, 1924 to Viola Turnbull Rucker and Charles K. Rucker, Sr. in Port Arthur. He graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School in 1943 and served in the United States Air Force during World War II. He retired as a carpenter after 65 years of service. Charles was a lifelong resident of the area and a member of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Groves. Funeral services were held at 10:00 A.M. Saturday, July 10, 2010 in the Thompson Memorial Chapel at Clayton Thompson, and burial followed in Memory Gardens.

Mr. Rucker was preceded in death by his parents and his son, Larry Rucker. He is survived by his loving wife, Margaret Mae Rucker of Groves, his sons, Tommy Rucker and wife Angela of Nederland, TX, Jerry Rucker and companion Lee of Port Neches, TX, and Grady Rucker and wife Marla of Groves. He is also survived by his grandchildren, Megan Rucker, Scott Hughes, Mallorie Rucker, Abbie Rucker and Charles K. Rucker, III, Rusty Campbell and his sister, Muriel Havens of Port Arthur.

Charles<sup>9</sup> King Rucker's Rucker lineage is: Charles<sup>8</sup> K., Charles<sup>7</sup> A., William M.<sup>6</sup>, Rev. Robert Thornton<sup>5</sup>, William<sup>4</sup>, John<sup>3</sup>, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>.

The complete obituary was published in the *Port Arthur News* on July 9, 2010.

**Mary Barger Rucker**, 87, died on January 21, 2010 in Cumming, Georgia. She was born in Waynesboro, Burke Co., Georgia on October 20, 1922, the eldest of the three children of Pearl Heath Odom Barger and Henry Grady Barger. After graduating from Waynesboro High School, she went to college and then taught in Toombsboro, Claxton and Monroe, GA. She moved to Cumming in 1951 as the bride of Walter Harrison Rucker, Sr. She taught for over 30 years in Forsyth County. She retired from teaching and began her next "career" working at Cumming Library before becoming a bailiff for the Forsyth County Courts.

She is survived by her children, Kim and Phillip R. Davis of Jefferson, GA, Walter H. Rucker, Jr. of Athens, GA, Ann and Richard Buice of Cumming; her grandchildren, Dr. Megan D. and Justin Seabolt, Clermont, GA, Christian P. Gill and Casey M. Gill, Cumming, step-granddaughter Charity Lee, Winder, GA; her great-granddaughter Katelyn Seabolt.

Funeral services were held Sunday, January 24, 2010 at The First Baptist Church and interment followed at Sawnee View Memorial Gardens, Cumming, Elbert Co., Georgia.

Mary's husband, Walter H. Rucker, Sr., died February 13, 2009. Walter<sup>9</sup> Harrison Rucker's lineage is: James<sup>8</sup> H., Jr., James<sup>7</sup> H., Elbert<sup>6</sup> M., Joseph<sup>5</sup>, John<sup>4</sup>, Cornelius<sup>3</sup>, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>.





# **LAST CHANCE!**

## **RUCKER FAMILY SOCIETY REUNION**

### **NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE**

### **OCTOBER 14-17, 2010**

Reunion Committee - Larry Black and Robyn B. Caldwell



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**There are two ways to make your reservations for the reunion:**

**1 - Go to the Rucker Family Society website, and then to the Society reunions and meetings and click on the link at the bottom of the page**

**2 - Type the following URL into your browser**

<http://www.ichotelsgroup.com/h/d/HI/1/en/cwshome/DPRD-822RTN/BNAOP>





## Rucker-abilia Needed for Reunion Auction

During the banquet at each Rucker Family Reunion I auction things related to the Ruckers, or objects of interest to Ruckers. If you have such items of interest, could you please bring them to the reunion? It could be a book by a Rucker, Rucker artwork, foodstuffs made by a Rucker, Fort Rucker memorabilia, or an object autographed by a famous family member such as Mike Rucker, the All American defensive end for the Panthers, Darius Rucker of Hootie and the Blowfish, or Sparky Rucker, the folk singer. Come to think of it, it doesn't even have to have any actual connection to the Rucker family other than the fact that you owned it.

Michael P. (also known as Mike) Rucker

The RUCKER *family* SOCIETY



Rucker



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