

W I N T E R E D I T I O N

the RUCKER FAMILY SOCIETY

VOL. 21, NO. 4, DECEMBER 2010

More Fantastic Old Photos

see page 40



Rucker Ambulance Wagon

Table of Contents

RFS 2010 Reunion.....p. 31-33

Rucker Ambulancep. 33

Ahmed Rucker - Pt 2p. 33-34

Childhood Memoriesp. 34-37

In Memoriamp. 37

The Day I Discovered.....p. 37-38

RFS Newsletter Indexp. 39

Fabulous Old Photos.....p. 40

Rucker Family Society 2010 Reunion

by Larry Black

The Rucker Family Society Reunion for 2010, held in Nashville, Tennessee, has passed into history to give rise to the next reunion to be held in Richmond, Virginia in 2012.

The reunion was attended by nearly fifty Rucker cousins and "almost Rucker" cousins from eleven states. In spite of the fatigue of travel, the Wine and Cheese reception on the opening evening was well attended. The camaraderie continued for over two hours and was finally declared over by hotel personnel.



The Hermitage, home of President Andrew Jackson, Nashville, Tennessee.

The first full day began with a walk in the footsteps of President Andrew Jackson and his adopted son of Rucker lineage, Andrew Jackson, Jr. The quaint modest home of President James Knox Polk was pleasantly surprising to most who attended on the second leg of our tours of the first full day.



Home of James K. Polk, Columbia, Tennessee

A bonus to the Polk home was an exhibit of American flags which chronicled the development of the flag as new states were added over the years and a number of original flags from the Civil Wars and World Wars I and II. The reunion schedule was altered when Mike Rucker, who was to give a presentation on Col. Edmund Winchester Rucker, was unable to attend.

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The presentation was salvaged when an Pvt. William Ambrose Rucker appeared in Confederate uniform and gave the presentation even better than was expected.

A small group ventured to Murfreesboro, where Benjamin Rucker's children originally settled in Tennessee. They were accompanied by Mary Estes and her father, John Rucker, organizer of the first Rucker Reunion in Nashville. Day two was a "free day" with some exploring sites of Rucker interest and others visiting historic Carter House, the Union headquarters, and Carnton House, the Confederate field hospital, in the Battle of Franklin. Col Edmund W. Rucker commanded Rucker's Brigade under the command of Bedford Forrest in the Battle of Franklin, nicknamed the "bloodiest five hours of the Civil War" because there were over ten thousand wounded and



Interior of the Grand Ole Opry

killed. It was an emotional moment to see one of the outbuildings at Carter house preserved with over two hundred bullet holes still remaining and the blood stained floors from amputations at Carnton House.

The evening of the second day included a board meeting and the The final day began with a second Board meeting and brunch later in obligatory visit to the Grand Ole Opry for those not native to the area. the morning. The lineage tally showed Peter's son John with the most descended attendees; William and Thomas were second and third. The usual auction generated considerable money for



Attendees at the 2010 Rucker Family Society Reunion, Nashville, Tennessee

the society and sibling rivalry-like competition.

If you were unable to attend the 2010 Reunion in Nashville, you will have a chance to redeem yourself in 2012 at the Richmond, Virginia Rucker Family Society Reunion.

The Rucker Ambulance Wagon

by Bill Smith

Recently Jeannie Brydon sent me an article written by Nolan Connelly from the Charlottesville *Daily Progress* published July 31, 2010. The article concerned itself with Ted Hughes, of Piney River, Nelson County, Virginia. Mr. Hughes owns Chalklevel Carriage and Buggy Works, and for the past 19 years he has been restoring and rebuilding horse-drawn buggies, carriages, and sleighs. His last project was a replica of an 1861 Rucker Ambulance, which was the Union Army's most popular Civil War ambulance. The Rucker after whom the ambulance was named is General Daniel Henry Rucker (a not infrequently mentioned Rucker who is not a descendant of Peter Rucker, the immigrant), of the Army's Quartermaster department. This replica is nine feet tall and weighs an astonishing 3,500. It was designed to hold up to eight wounded, or four dead, soldiers. According to Hughes, he needed

up to six horses to pull the ambulance, but could be pulled by as few as two, as the Civil War-era photograph below shows.

The space between the upper surface of the lower and the lower surface of the upper stretchers was about twenty-one inches. This space was ventilated by lattice openings on each side of the body of the ambulance wagon. A water-cask was located under the driver's seat. According to an on-line article about the Rucker ambulance, the weight was about 1,120 pounds. Detailed specifications of this ambulance wagon will be found on page 48 of the *Report of a Board of Officers to decide upon a Pattern of Ambulance Wagon for Army Use*, Washington, 1878. Excerpts from this report can be found at the website <http://www.civilwarhome.com/ambulancewagons.htm>.



The plans Hughes used to build his replica were obtained from the U.S. Army Quartermaster Museum in Fort Lee, Prince George County, Virginia. The museum has an original Rucker ambulance, though Hughes maintains it is not complete.

Much to his credit, Hughes built all of the parts for his replica, except for the wheels and the axles, at his Carriage Works. That included the forty pounds of horsehair that he used to fill the cushions in the back of the wagon where the wounded would have rested. He does admit in the article that his use of power tools did shorten the amount of time he took to complete the project.

The Trials of Ahmed Rucker - Part II

by Bill Smith

This article relates two legal proceedings from the life of Ahmed Rucker.

Ahmed Rucker's next dealings with the law concerned loaning \$452.76 (over \$10,000 in today's dollars) to his first cousin John Rucker and two of John's sons, James Willis and Isaac Rucker. The loan was made on October 19, 1825 and was to be repaid by October 15, 1828. The loans were not repaid and so Ahmed brought suit on October 17, 1831 in the Caldwell County, Kentucky Circuit Court. In addition to the loans being repaid, Ahmed asked for \$500 in damages. Though it is not clear if the judge in the case made any ruling on the request for damages, he did rule in Ahmed's favor concerning the repayment of the loans.

Since John and his sons did not repay the loans to Ahmed, the Sheriff of Caldwell County attempted to bring them into custody. The sheriff was not successful and the Ruckers never appeared in court. The judge then required the sheriff to sell John Rucker's slave William or Bill, who had been a gift to John from his father. William was sold on July 6, 1832 for \$376. This amount, plus \$100 from John Rucker's brother Morton, still left some of the loan unpaid. Before the July sale of William, Ahmed and John agreed to try to keep William in the family, and John's son Thomas, who was also the son-in-law of Ahmed, bought William.

In February 1833, John went to court and attempted to have the judge change his mind about the previous rulings. The judge did not change his mind and ordered John to pay his debts to Ahmed. In July 1836 John took a transcription of the Caldwell County court proceedings to the Chancery Court of Sangamon County, Illinois, in an attempt to recover his slave or the monetary equivalent. John told the court that he entered into an agreement with Ahmed and Thomas Rucker that William would work off John Rucker's debt at \$60 annually until the debt was completely repaid, and that this agreement was the only reason William was given to Ahmed and Thomas. In

March 1838 a transcription of the case was prepared when the trial was transferred to Schuyler County, Illinois, after the judge in Sangamon County acted as counsel for one of the parties.

Depositions were given by supporters of John Rucker's description of what took place concerning the slave William and from supporters of Ahmed Rucker. These depositions were taken between March 4 and June 19, 1837. And so ends our knowledge of the stormy relationship of Ahmed Rucker and his first cousin John Rucker. The unfortunate part of this story is that the court records that would show the outcome of these proceedings have been lost or misplaced by the Schuyler County Recorder's office. It is possible that they will "turn up" in the future, but in November 2007 they remained misfiled or lost. There is no mention of William, the young slave, in Ahmed's will dated July 11, 1839, nor in the later census records for John or Thomas Rucker.

As an historical note, in the 1830 United States Census, there were nearly 26,000 slaves in the North Central Census Region (Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan Territory, and Missouri – with the majority in Missouri), but there were 747 slaves in the state of Illinois, and even 331 in 1840.

Alice Rucker supplied transcriptions of these court record proceedings for this article.

My Childhood Memories of My Grandparent's Farm

By Martha Rucker Diggle

In the fall of 1949 my parents lived outside of Washington, D.C. in Arlington. My father was home from serving in the Second World War in Europe and families were beginning to put their lives back together. Because of the anticipation of an overwhelming number of school children, teachers were called back to the classrooms. My mother answered the call and I went to live with my grandparents, Dr. Henry Cowles Rucker and Lillian Rucker at Elk Hill Farm in Amelia County, Virginia. For me it would be a magical year.

I was only five years old and would not start first grade until the following year. My brothers remained in Arlington to attend school. I was thrilled to be the only kid in the house. I would watch my grandmother light the wood burning heaters in the mornings to keep us warm. Then she would mix and roll out the dough for biscuits, cut them and brown them in the wood burning oven as the wonderful odor pervaded the house. Sometimes, she would make me knots from the scraps of dough. She always said that electric ovens do not make good biscuits.

Later in the morning we would walk up the gravel road to the vegetable garden. I would dance among the rows of green as she collected our dinner. Then we would head for the hen house to collect eggs among the cackling and pecking of hens and astonishing crows of roosters. When chicken was on the menu I would watch with great alarm as my grandmother would hold the chicken by the feet as she whirled it around her head. Then she would slam the chicken onto the chopping block stump while she swung the axe toward its neck with her right arm. Then we would dip the chicken in boiling water so we could pluck the feathers in the midst of the steamy unique odor of chicken feathers. We then fed the remains to the voracious pigs.

My grandmother's bachelor brother, Uncle Claude, was called the farm manager, but it was clear that Grandmother really ran the place. Warner, the hired hand, worked hard every day on the farm. Among many other chores he milked the cows twice a day and poured the milk into an electric cream separator which made a delightful humming sound on the back screened porch, morning and evening. When my brothers Benjamin Ambrose (Ben) and James Cowles (Jim) would visit, we would play in the old barn while Warner milked the cows. We would jump from bale to bale and squeal with delight.

It was fun being my grandmother's shadow that enchanting year. On the days when she had a bridge engagement, I would go along and sit in the corner and quietly play with my paper dolls. I would also make houses out of the white prism-like pillboxes that housed the pills that my grandfather prescribed for his patients. Sometimes she would take me in her red Ford to Richmond for lunch at Miller & Rhodes where models would parade the latest fashions as an organ played beautiful music. This was a real treat.



Dr. Henry C. and Lillian E. Rucker with grandchildren (L to R) Henry C. III, Michael P., Benjamin A., and Martha A. (in arms) at Elk Hill Farm, June 1944.

All day long every weekday and every Saturday morning there would be a line of cars in the circular driveway of folks waiting to see my grandfather, Dr. Rucker. Some of these neighbors enjoyed picnics on the beautiful lawn as they awaited their turn to see the doctor.

Directly in front of the house was a very tall perfectly conical holly tree. At the end of the yard was a great weeping willow. These were my first and most perfect climbing trees. The Guinea hens roosted in the willow but laid their eggs in the wheat field. One chore for us kids was to find the Guinea nests and collect the eggs – especially the day before the wheat was harvested. A croquet set was arrayed in the lawn between these great trees. Another tree I remember was a huge sourwood tree in which the bees would congregate in huge humming legions when the tree was in bloom. That very tree is now listed as the world's largest sourwood tree. A white fence enclosed the large front yard.

After climbing trees and imagining what it would be like to fly, collecting sweet smelling pedals, from Grandmothers' flowers and catching and releasing lightning bugs, I would run upstairs after dinner and jump into the large four-legged iron bathtub in the bathroom.

The farmhouse had four bedrooms and a bathroom on the second floor. One day I found a saddle in one of the closets and was told that it was used by my grandfather back in the days when he made house calls on horseback. In the 1940's and '50's he still made house calls, but in his car of course.

There were three hand-cranked telephones at the bottom of the

stairs just outside the doctor's office. Since party lines rang a lot, my Grandmother asked the children to always be quiet whenever the phones rang so she could determine if the call was for our family. Three phones were necessary because the doctor served patients in each of those party line areas. I remember when the call was from a patient, others on the party line would listen in to find out who was ill or had had an accident. Grandmother would become very angry with that because the extra listeners on the line would weaken the volume of the caller's voice and she would shout, "Whoever is on the line – Get off, so I can take the message for the doctor!"

The front door of the house opened directly into the dining room. The living room was to the right and the kitchen was to the left with maid's quarters adjacent to the kitchen. The house had a tin roof and I loved to hear the sound of rain and the clawing of tree branches across that tin roof. A porch ran the full length of the front of the house. The doctor's office was a large room that had been added for that purpose onto the right side of the house.

The farm buildings themselves comprised what appeared to be a small village. Along the lane behind the house were arrayed on either side of the lane eight additional buildings: garage, chicken house, tool shed, smoke house, a long farm equipment

shed, two barns and a storage shed attached to the main house.

Martha Rucker, the author of this article, was born in Richmond, Virginia in 1944. Her parents were Martha Cosby Rucker and Benjamin Ambrose Rucker, Sr. Her brothers are Benjamin Ambrose Rucker, Jr. and James Cowles Rucker. Martha grew up in Arlington, Virginia and graduated from Radford University and later Ohio State University. She married Raymond Herbert Diggle, Jr. in 1966. They had three children. Laura Anne Diggle, age 35, lives in Indianapolis, Indiana. Douglas Scott Diggle, age 34, lives in Miami, Florida. Jennifer Lynn Diggle died in 1999 at the age of 22 years. Martha was a school teacher for 36 years, and recently retired from teaching high school math in Daytona Beach. Ray, her husband, died of pancreatic cancer in 2007. Martha lives in Ormond Beach, Florida and is spending her retirement traveling, dancing, playing tennis and playing bridge.

Martha Ann (Rucker) Diggle has four lines to Peter Rucker:

Line 1: Martha⁹ Ann Rucker, Benjamin⁸ Ambrose, Dr. Henry⁷ Cowles, Benjamin⁶ Lindsay, Benjamin⁵ Jennings, Isaac⁴, Ambrose³, John², Peter¹

Line 2: Martha⁹ Ann Rucker, Benjamin⁸ Ambrose, Lillian⁷ Eliza (married Dr. Henry⁷ Cowles Rucker), William⁶ Ambrose, William⁵ Ballenger, George⁴, John³, John², Peter¹

Line 3: Martha⁹ Ann, Benjamin⁸ Ambrose, Lillian⁷ Eliza (married Dr. Henry¹ Cowles Rucker), William⁶ Ambrose, Mary⁵ Ann Dawson (m. William⁵ Ballenger Rucker), Ambrose⁴, Reuben³, Ambrose², Peter¹

Line 4: Martha¹⁰ Ann, Benjamin⁹ Ambrose, Dr. Henry⁸ Cowles, Sally⁷ F. Parks (married Benjamin Lindsay), Paulina⁶ Davis, Elizabeth⁵ MacDaniel, Lucy⁴ Dawson, Benjamin³, John², Peter¹

Rucker Farm, Amelia Co., Virginia

By Jeannie Brydon



Cabell Willis on Rucker Farm, Amelia Co., Virginia

My grandson, Cabell Willis, was a member of Boy Scout Troop 400, joining at the age of twelve and becoming an Eagle Scout at the age of fourteen. He stayed a member of this troop until he graduated from high school in June 2010.

One of the most unique things about this troop was the unusual places that they camped out. Camping was a once-a-month activity, rain or shine, freezing weather or nice. The place they camped in January was Rucker Farm in Amelia Co., VA.

Rucker Farm was the home of Mike Rucker's grandparents, Dr. Henry⁷ Cowles Rucker (Benjamin⁶ L., Benjamin⁵ J., Isaac⁴, Ambrose³, John², Peter¹) and Lillian⁷ Eliza Rucker (William⁶ A., William⁵ B., George⁴, John³, John², Peter¹ and Wm. B.'s wife Mary⁶ Ann Dawson Rucker, Ambrose⁵,

Reuben⁴, Ambrose³, John², Peter¹). Lillian was the sister of Sudie Rucker Wood who had a summer home two miles down the road. Lillian ran the farm while her husband doctored the people of Amelia. He was the beloved country doctor and was paid for his services with produce, chickens, or some other thing the person could spare. Times were hard and money scarce and Dr. Rucker never charged for his services.

The farm house was torn down a few years ago and the land is owned by grandson, James Cowles "Jimmy" Rucker (Martha's brother and Mike's 1st cousin). He has let troop 400 camp there for the last few winters.

In Memoriam

Mary Charlotte Johnson Rucker, 86, died on October 25, 2010. Mary was born in Hayden, Arizona April 6, 1924 and raised in Gilbert, Arizona. Mary was the oldest child of Charles and Clara Schroeder Johnson. Their two other children were Betty and Charles. Mary was proud of her Johnson heritage which included Joel Hills Johnson who wrote the popular LDS hymn "High on a Mountain Top."

When she was in 7th grade, Mary's family moved to Mesa, Arizona, and across from their farm lived Roy Leonard Rucker. They became best friends and did everything together. They eventually were married in spring

following their graduation from Mesa High School, when she was 17 and he was 18. When Roy joined the Army, Mary followed him around the country. Shirley, their oldest child, was born in San Antonio. After the war the family moved to Tucson, Arizona where their other five children were born. Roy was one of 12 GI's to win 120 acres of sand in Mecca, California in a GI lottery in the 1950's. There, pregnant Mary and their five children homesteaded, while Roy flew over in his plane to Mecca on the weekends and landed on the sand runway he had made next to their house. This land became known as "The Rucker Homestead" which eventually grew citrus and grapes.

While raising her younger children, Mary earned a Bachelor's Degree in Special Education from the University of Arizona. Roy eventually sold his business in Tucson and the family moved to their farm in Mecca. They spent the winters in Mecca and summers in Payson, Utah. When Roy retired, their son Bruce bought the farm and continues to run it today.

Funeral services were held on Saturday, October 30, 2010 in the West Mountain Ward Chapel in South Payson Utah and interment was in the Payson City Cemetery.

Mary and Roy have 6 children, 31 grandchildren, and 53 great-grandchildren for a total of 124 descendants. Their children are: Shirley and Mike Klein of Orem,

UT; Charles and Vickie Rucker, of Gila Bend, AZ; Karen and Ray van der Werf, of Gilbert, AZ; Barbara and Richard Tarwater, of Payson, UT; Bruce and Marcy Rucker, of Palm Desert, CA; and Richard and Deborah Rucker, of Maricopa, AZ.

Roy Rucker's lineage is: Roy⁹ L., Simeon⁸ H., Aaron⁷ D., Samuel⁶, William⁵, Colby⁴, Peter³, Thomas², Peter¹.



Roy and Mary Rucker in Roy's Plane

The Day I Discovered I was a Rucker by Paul Mize

Several years ago I began attending local Scottish Games. What a great group of people! For some reason I just felt at home around the Scottish Clans and that wonderful Gaelic music.

During one of the events I was fortunate enough to meet Alice Fairhurst. Alice is the recording Secretary of the Southern California Genealogical Society and the DNA Interest Chair. Of course at the Scottish Games you talk about your clan and I was wearing my Clan Gunn t-shirt because of my momma's lineage.

Alice asked about the Gunn lineage and I shared with her the fact that my great-grandfather Clayton Mize had been born out of wedlock. She immediately urged me to take a DNA test to see if I would match anyone. I ordered the test the following week. The kit showed up in the mail in a few days. I swabbed the inside of my cheeks and sent it back to Family DNA immediately. By now my personal curiosity was way out of whack with what anyone would consider normal. The two or three weeks of waiting for the results were excruciating. But they did show up, the date was August 6, 2009. The first 12-marker results were mostly innocuous. Just a bunch of generic names one would find in any American phone book. There were about 60 matches and I was mostly interested in the ancient history on the website.

A week later on August 13, the 25-marker results came in. I had seven matches and OMG (oh my God), those results were jaw dropping. All seven surnames were spelled R-U-C-K-E-R. Yes, Rucker.

I grabbed the phone and called my Mom and Dad. Mom answered the phone and when I told her the results a slight gasp came across the mobile phone connection. From the pause it certainly seemed as though some of my

family members had some stories that they had not shared with me.

A week later on Friday the 20th of August 2009 the 37-marker matches came in. The matches had email addresses and I emailed my newest cousin Loren Rucker who I matched a perfect 37 for 37. Lo and behold in the morning before breakfast I had a response from his lovely wife, Alice Rucker, welcoming me to the family with a salutation of "Hello Cousin." Since Alice Rucker is a fine genealogist, she knew exactly where to point me so that I could find some sort of paper trail. She told me which of Peter Rucker's descendants had moved to Georgia. I was able to determine through Census records that the Rucker and Mize land was in the same Georgia Militia District. In fact they were next farm neighbors. It also appears that both families were relatively wealthy since they were the two largest slaveholders in the entire county.

One young Rucker gentleman had left the family farm during the Civil War. When he returned it appears his eye was attracted to my lovely great-great-grandmother Melissa Jane Mize. Obviously a tryst occurred or I would not be here writing this short story. It also seems that this young Rucker gentleman left lovely Georgia and probably

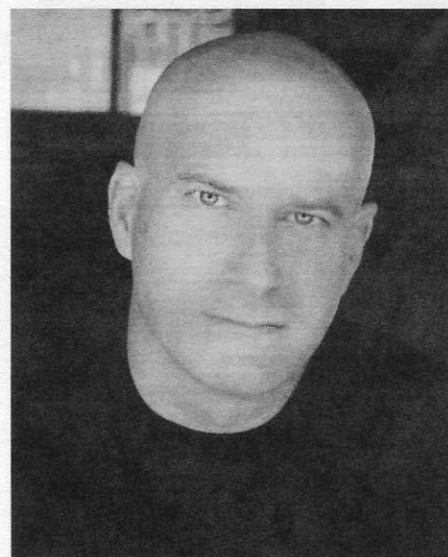
moved to Arkansas very shortly after Clayton was born.

Through my research I reacquainted myself with a former high school teacher who was a granddaughter of Oscar Rucker from Banks County Georgia. We had a lovely conversation and she shed some light on the subject. My Dad noted that the Civil War Veteran's brother used to come by and visit my great grandfather Clayton on weekends.

The knowledge gained has been extraordinary. The greatest benefit has been the new friendship with Loren and Alice Rucker. That new friendship has been the most wonderful part of the day I discovered I was a Rucker.

Paul Mize is an actor who lives and works in southern California. His website is www.paulmize.net

Paul¹⁰ Mize' Rucker lineage is: Edward⁹ Mize, Paul⁸, William⁷ C., —⁶ Rucker, Wyly⁵ Rucker, George⁴ Jr., George³, Thomas², Peter¹.



Paul Mize, Actor and Peter Rucker Descendant

Index to RFS Newsletters

Over the next several issues we provide an index for the issues of the Rucker Family Society newsletter.

Page	Article
December 1997, Vol. 8, No. 4	
43	Confederate Ruckers Update
44	Letter from the President
45	Rucker Reunion 1998
46	1998 Rucker Reunion Friday Night Visit to the Grand Ole Opry; Update of the Rucker Family Genealogy
47	Notice of Publication: <i>Terry and the Tractor</i> ; Wilkes Co., North Carolina, Genealogical Society, Inc.
48	Table of Contents
March 1998, Vol. 9, No. 1	
1	Samuel Burks Rucker—"A Confederate Cavalryman, A Virginia Tobacconist"
2	Continued Samuel Burks Rucker
3	Continued Samuel Burks Rucker
4	Continued Samuel Burks Rucker
5	Continued Samuel Burks Rucker
6	Point Lookout Ruckers
7	Continued Point Lookout Ruckers; Letter from Stephanie Routon Tayloe
8	In Memoriam: Izetta Rucker Toten, Willie "Maude" Hudson Sutherland; 50 th Wedding Anniversary-Robert and Marilyn Williams
9	Update of the Rucker Family Genealogy Deadline for Submitting Material
10	1996-1998 Board of Directors; Reunion Committee
Summer 1998, Vol. 9, No. 2 & 3	
11	Jean B. Robinson-A Personal Profile on Our New President
12	Continued Jean B. Robinson
13	Continued Jean B. Robinson
14	Continued Jean B. Robinson
15	Continued Jean B. Robinson; Rosedown Plantation and Historic Gardens
16	Photograph of Rucker Family Reunion 1998

17	The Rucker Family Society Minutes of Board Meeting, June 12, 1998
18	Board Members
19	The Rucker Family Society Minutes of the Members Meeting
20	Continued the Rucker Family Society Minutes of the Members Meeting
21	William Rucker Cemetery, Arno, Williamson Co., Tennessee; Letters to the Rucker Family Society Members
22	Jeannie-alogy
23	Land of Col. Ambrose Rucker
24	WWI Letter from Edward Walter Rucker II
25	In Memoriam: Lewis F. Powell Jr.
26	Continued In Memoriam: Winston Kelly Rucker, Eldon DuPree Rucker, John M. Rucker, Sr.
27	50 th Wedding Anniversary-Sudie Rucker Mann and Thomas Eugene Wilson, Norma Jean McClure and John M. Rucker Sr.; Civil War Descendants Society
28	Questions and Answers; update of the Rucker Family Genealogy Deadline for Submitting Materials
29	Burial of James Rucker
30	Table of Contents
December 1998, Vol. 9, No. 4	
31	Ancestor Quest-Mary Ann Rucker and Robert W. Watts Sr.
32	Continued Ancestor Quest-Mary Ann Rucker and Robert W. Watts Sr.
33	Continued Ancestor Quest-Mary Ann Rucker and Robert W. Watts Sr.
34	Questions and Answers; Unknown Rucker Burials; Obituaries: Harold L. Rucker
35	Obituaries: Martin Willis Rucker, Jr.; Another William Rucker; Rucker Home Sale; In Memoriam: Hannon George Rucker
36	Continued In Memoriam: William "Erin" Wood, Nellie Rucker Coffey, Mary Rucker Cole

37	Success Story-Web Site for Unclaimed Civil War Medals; In the News-Meet Dr. Peggy Rucker; The Rucker Family Society Board of Directors
38	Note from Sid Dewberry; President's Letter
39	Announcements
40	A James River Tobacco Batteau
March 1999, Vol. 10, No. 1	
1	Jeannie-alogy: Who was Tavenar Rucker of Greenbrier Co., WV?
2	Continued Jeannie-alogy
3	Continued Jeannie-alogy; Spring Cleaning in Amherst Co., Virginia
4	Continued Spring Cleaning in Amherst Co., Virginia; Questions and Answers
5	Continued Questions and Answers
6	Continued Questions and Answers
7	Continued Questions and Answers; Reunion Announcement; \$300 Reward; President's Note
8	Obituary: Claude Lee Rucker, Jr.; 50 th Anniversary: Doyle and Dorothy Bloomer
9	Information
10	Helpful Web Sites
June 1999, Vol. 10, No. 2	
11	Ambrose L. Rucker of Bedford Co. VA and Franklin Co., MO; Early Williamson Co. TN Ruckers Honored
12	Continued Ambrose L. Rucker
13	Continued Ambrose L. Rucker
14	Rucker Chapel
15	All Present and Accounted For
16	Continued All Present and Accounted For
17	Questions and Answers; Obituaries: James Rucker Wiggins
18	Continued Obituaries: Walter Earl Chessmore, Willena Rucker Blackstock
19	Continued Obituaries: Ramona L. (Watts) Rucker; Corrections and Updates; President's Letter
To be continued in the next issue.	

More Fantastic Old Photos



While researching the brief article on the Rucker Ambulance Wagon, I ran across this picture of Daniel H. Rucker (front row, on the left). It was taken the day after Christmas in 1866, in the Masonic Temple, Santa Fe, New Mexico Territory. The gentleman sitting next to Rucker is none other than Christopher H. "Kit" Carson. Next to Carson is James H. Carleton, the adjutant general of the New Mexico Territory. The men standing were all soldiers who served at Fort Union, New Mexico (built to protect the Santa Fe Train in 1851). They are, from left to right: E. H. Bergmann, Charles P. Cleaver, Nelson H. Davis, Herbert M. Enos, Basil K. Norris, and John C. McFerran. The original photograph is in the Museum of New Mexico.

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