

Our Stories



Rucker Migration
from VA to CA

Acknowledgement and Thanks to Roger Settlemyre

Good ideas should always be acknowledged and the Rucker Reunion Committee members would like to thank Roger Settlemyre for his excellent suggestion that we collect and publish brief historical sketches of Rucker ancestors' migration beginning in Virginia and ending in California, or points in between. He also suggests that we publish the sketches in the Rucker Family Society newsletter. That of course will have to be negotiated, but it sounds like a great idea.

Many thanks to Roger!

MIGRATION TO CALIFORNIA

Karen van der Werf

Peter Rucker, Thomas, Peter, Colby, William, Samuel, Aaron Dewitt, Simeon, Roy, Shirley Rucker Klein and Karen Rucker van der Werf

Peter was the first Rucker immigrant in America. His exact location has never been ascertained. His children: John, Peter, **Thomas**, Elizaeth, Margaret, William, Mary, James, Ephraim, Ann.

THOMAS was born about 1705. He married Elizabeth Reynolds. He became a founding father of Caroline County. He was a large landowner of the early territory. From his will we have found that he died in 1763. His children: Thomas **Peter**, Mary John, Elisabeth, Martha, William, Muldin, Isaac, Easter, Franky and George.

Peter was the 2nd son and third child of Thomas Rucker and Sarah Wisdom. Their children were **Colby**, Jonathan, William, Susanna and Catherine. Perhaps George was from a second wife?

Colby son of Peter Rucker (1712) was born 10 October 1760 most likely in Culpepper (now Madison County) Virginia. He was a soldier in the Revolutionary War. He died 20 January 1852 at the age of 92 and is buried in the Rucker Cemetery on Coffey Chapel Road. Colby Rucker was the first of his line in Tennessee where he later married, Sarah Robbins, raised his family and died. He also broke the mold by leaving his homeplace in Virginia after five generations of Rucker's who established homes and even towns in northwestern Virginia. Colby's children: Elizabeth, Margaret, Sarah, **William**, Nancy, Delphia, John and Jane.

William was born in Wilkes County, North Carolina. And married Rutha Dodson. When William was about sixteen years old, his father moved the family to Grainger, Tennessee. His descendants are now residing in Grainger County, TN. Their children were: Margaret. **Samuel**, Mary, Sarah, Claiborne, Simeon, William and Abner.

Samuel was also born and raised and buried in Grainger County where he farmed. Samuel served in the Confederate army, 12th Cavalry Battalion.

[The battalion was originally formed in September 1862. From June 1863 to March 1864, the period of Samuel's enlistment, the 12th and 16th Battalions were consolidated into a field organization known as Rucker's Legion. They were active in the battle at Chickamauga where the Confederate army forced the Union Army to retire to Chattanooga. Colonel Edmund Winchester Rucker, a distant relative, led the Legion.]

He first appeared on the company muster roll on July 27, 1863. He was enlisted at Thorn Hill for a period of six months. He was 47 years old, six feet, one inch tall and according to the record, he had red hair and blue eyes.

Samuel married twice. His first wife, Elizabeth Acuff, died leaving three young children. A short time later, Samuel married Manerva Jordan and together they had seven children. Their children: Claiborne, George, **Aaron DeWitt**, Margaret Charles, Mary and Samuel.

Aaron DeWitt was born 2 March 1861. He married Mary Jane Acuff 23 Nov 1879. When they were first married, they went west to Missouri and stayed there less than a year before coming back to the hills of Tennessee. Aaron was a stone mason by trade and could do anything with stone. He did a lot of good deeds and anyone was welcome at his home. They lived on a farm in Washburn, Tennessee and raised his family there. He died June 6, 1937. He married Mary Jane Acuff. Their children: James Parlan (died at age 5), Leonard Farlan, Vada, Ada, Nelson Barton, **Simeon**, Landon Carson, Lola (died as an infant), Mossie (her first husband, Kelly Frye, was killed by lightning, she then married Willis Idol) and Rosa their last child. Rosa took care of them until they passed away and then she married Elwood "Adolph

All of Simeon's other siblings remained in and around Grainger County. Only three of the eight living siblings had children of their own. Ada raised five children, Simeon six, and Landon had four children.

Everyone married and had lifelong companions. An eighth grade education was the norm. Barton (Nelson Bar-

ton) was a school teacher, then proprietor of a general merchandise store, Vada's husband was an attendant at a hospital, Rosa's husband was a miller in a flour mill, the others were farmers. All the women "kept house" -- keeping house with few conveniences was a full-time occupation. Nevertheless, they loved the hills of Tennessee. What a stark difference from the southern Arizona desert.

Simeon was born in Washburn on May 3, 1893 and grew up there for twenty years. He was sixth of ten children born to Aaron Dewitt Rucker and Mary Jane Acuff. Simeon and the rest of his brothers and sisters grew up in Washburn playing with hoops in the streets, climbing trees, climbing mountains, and playing other childhood games. He lived near the old country school and enjoyed going there to play. He received an eighth grade education there. One of his favorite pranks was tying horses' tails together. In order to get the horses separated, their tails had to be cut. It sounds like an idyllic childhood in a small town in the Clinch mountains of northeastern Tennessee.

Simeon and his older brother, Leonard were the only ones to leave Tennessee. Leonard left two years before Simeon. He went to Mitchell, South Dakota to find construction work. He gave his address as the Chamberlain post office in Brule County.

Most likely Barthena wrote to Leonard telling about the parties and activities of the young Mesa crowd. Shortly after he arrived, his childhood sweetheart, Barthena Coffman, joined him there and they eloped. They married July 9, 1911, in He was 29, she was 25. Her address was Mesa, Arizona. Both were born in Washburn, Tennessee. Mitchell, South Dakota was 1200 miles from Washburn, Mesa was over 1300 miles away. At the time of her marriage, Barthena was living with her oldest brother, William and his family in Mesa where he was a farmer. Her sister, Genelia and her family, were neighbors. It is interesting to consider how Barthena and Leonard eloped to Mitchell to marry. Time and distance could not separate these childhood sweethearts. They eventually made their home in Mesa, and then Chandler, Arizona.

It is easy to imagine that Leonard passed the news to his brother and Simeon was also encouraged to make his way west. As the pull of a new and different life developed in the Simeon's mind, other things may have pushed him from Tennessee. Was their father a stern taskmaster to cause the two oldest sons to go so far away? Was the land farmed out and no longer able to sustain a satisfactory living for four sons? Was farming becoming less and less desirable as a way to live when other options were available? Did Leonard and Simeon have a spirit of adventure that helped them change course so dramatically? Or was it the news Barthena sent from that west that made the trip across country compelling?

No one knew Simeon was gone until he was about half-way to Mesa, Arizona. He was twenty years old when he made his own arrangements and raised the money for a train ticket. He secretly bought a ticket to Mesa, Arizona and boarded a freight train. In 1913, it took five days for the train to travel 1800 miles across the United States from Washburn in eastern Tennessee to southern Arizona. He had one small, old, battered suitcase and reached Mesa with \$1.50 in his pocket. He found a place to stay, probably with his brother Leonard, and earned money by working around town doing odd jobs.

What compelled Simeon to leave his home in Washburn, Tennessee? Especially secretly? Leaving home must have been a big deal. Maybe he was afraid someone who talk him out of going. Maybe an idyllic childhood, but possibly not the best place for a young man to seek his fortune. Nevertheless, they loved the hills of Tennessee. What a stark difference from the southern Arizona desert.

When Simeon left the old homeplace in Tennessee he did not know what the future held but he was willing to make his way, marry, and raise his family there. He lived within a five-mile radius of the center of Mesa his entire life. It would be only weeks or months after arriving in Mesa until he met, Eula Lee Smith, a wonderful woman in the First Baptist Church. He married Eula one year later. Each had about \$150 to buy furniture and other necessary things for their new home. Simeon applied and was hired at The Evans Ranch School. Eventually he became foreman. He worked there for 22 years. Later the School was used for a prisoner of war camp, now it belongs to the Water Users Association.

Simeon must have had fond ties to his family in Tennessee. In the early 1930s, he borrowed his son, Louis' Model A Ford with a rumble seat and took Eula, Roy, Bud, and Ruth to Tennessee to visit. The older brothers, Herb and Louis, stayed home in Mesa to run the 25-acre farm. Roy was about ten years old. At the end of the visit, Roy remembers tying their trunk full of clothing on the running board. Somehow it was lost on the way home; this must have been a tremendous loss. This was Roy's first and only visit to Tennessee until after he married, but it must have been eventful to experience his roots -- the outdoor privy and the abundant farm produce, meat, eggs, and dairy. It was a timely visit as Aaron died four years later on 5 June 1937 at age 76. Simeon obviously wanted his children to know his parents and siblings to make such a long trip by car. Simeon and Leonard immediately traveled to Tennessee together for their father's funeral.

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ROY was born 4 June 1923 at The Mesa Ranch School to Simeon Rucker and Eula Smith Rucker. Roy grew up on the Rucker farm in Mesa, Arizona mowing hay with horses, raking and staking hay and feeding pigs from whey and grain as well as milking cows. He moved from the Ranch School about 1938 to a 25-acre farm at the corner of Southern and Horne in Mesa. He and his neighbor, Mary Johnson, fell in love at 12 years of age and married right after they graduated from Mesa High School. In April 1943 Roy was inducted at Ft. McArthur, San Pedro, California and sent to Camp Claiborne, Alexandria, Louisiana. He never had basic training and applied for the Air Force Cadet Program. Out of 200 men he was one of two accepted to the program. Shirley was born during his two years in the Air Force Cadet service flying B-29 Bombers. The war ended just before he was to go to Europe. He was given the choice to fly helicopters or go home. He chose to go home to his family. He worked for his brother and Les Small driving tractors. Eventually he bought his own tractors and started his own land leveling business in Tucson, Arizona.

MOVE TO CALIFORNIA!!!!

Roy put his name in a government land drawing. His name was one of 12 from 5,000 names submitted to receive 120 acres of raw desert (sand) in Mecca, CA. He had to improve it by putting a house on it and planting half the land. It cost \$600 to move an old 2-bedroom house to the sand. Shirley, Chuck, Karen Barbara, Bruce and Mary (pregnant with Richard) moved in 1955 to the Mecca. We had no phone, running water from a canal, had to haul our own drinking water for the next 40 years. Roy bought a 54 Piper Tri-Pacer and flew over from Tucson most weekends, landing on a sandy runway he built next to the house. After fulfilling the Homestead Act and chopping up sidewinders, playing by the children, Mary was glad to return with the children (Richard was born 3 weeks later) to Tucson. Roy served as a member of the Amphitheater School Board for many years. He even personally presented Karen her high school diploma. In their later life, they lived in California in the winter, and Payson, Utah in the summer. Eventually they lived fulltime in Utah where they both passed away and are buried in the Payson, Utah Cemetery.

The Rucker Homestead had 120 acres of citrus for years until Roy planted Red Flame seedless grapes on half of the land. His son, Bruce, eventually bought the farm and produced the BEST organic grapes and citrus. The Rucker Homestead remained until after Roy passed away and Bruce sold the farm. All the citrus and grapes were removed and now it is a vegetable farm in the Coachella Valley. Currently, Roy's son Bruce and three of his five children live in Temecula and Rancho Mirage.



Top Row: Simeon, Rosa, Landan, Vada, Barton, Mossie, Leonard
 Bottom Row: Ada, Betsy Emeline Nicely (Mary Jane's mother), Aaron, Mary Jane



Some of Roy Rucker Posterity at Mary's Funeral, October 2010

Virginia to California

Kenny Pierce

My father, Kenneth Ray Pierce Sr., descends from the Rucker line via William Pierce, Jr. (William Pierce/Elizabeth Rucker, William Pierce, Jesse Pierce, Calvin Pierce, Jesse Pierce, Herman Botts Pierce). That line of Pierces left the Orange County area of Virginia for the Wytheville area of the Shenandoah Valley. They first made incursions into Pulaski County, Kentucky (near Somerset) in the early 1800s. My great grandfather Jesse Pierce was one of two children born to his father Calvin's second marriage to a much younger Minerva Criswell (28) when he was in his 50s. They left Wayne County, Kentucky for Wayne County, Iowa where Calvin's elder sons resided. Jesse and his older sister were born in Wayne County, Iowa. Upon Calvin's death in Iowa, Minerva Pierce brought her children back to Wayne County, Kentucky. She died within a few years and not much is known of her passing. Her two children were placed in the Louisville Baptist Children's home but were apprenticed by Strother Cook, a Baptist church planter in Burgin, Kentucky, near Harrodsburg. This is how my Dad's line ended up in that beautiful part of Kentucky.

My father left his hometown of Burgin, Kentucky in the 1950s, after begging my grandfather Herman to let him enlist in the Navy at the age of 16 to travel and see the world. After doing Boot Camp at Fort Erie, PA, my father was stationed at Norton Air Force Base in San Bernardino, CA. It was there that he met my mother, Helen Espinosa, who worked as a secretary to the Base Commander for many years. Dad decided to call the Inland Empire area of Southern California home. He lived in Loma Linda and Redlands, CA, raising his five children as he worked as a salesman at BMW of Riverside until his death in 2007.

There may be other Pierce/Rucker affiliated family lines in California but this is how my neck of the family tree found its way west. Though I am a native Californian, our family roots are pretty strong in Colonial Virginia and Kentucky.

Julius Rucker to California by 1853

Alice Rucker

Virginia immigrant, Peter Rucker's son John died just after his last son Anthony was born so Anthony never really knew his father. Anthony (co-inventor of the Batteaux) participated in the Revolutionary War and as a result, obtained land in Woodford Co., Kentucky. He married Rebecca Burgess and six children. Son Abner moved to Woodford Co., KY to look after Anthony's land while Anthony remained in Virginia.

Abner married Nancy Morton and they had seven children. Son Julius was born in 1804 in Woodford, Kentucky. His mother died after 1814. Abner fought in the War of 1812. When he returned he married Mrs. Nancy Miller in 1818, but lore has it that it didn't go well with the step mother for Julius and his siblings. As a young adult Julius left Kentucky to go be with an aunt in St. Louis, Missouri. He never returned to Kentucky. Abner died in 1837 and what inheritance was left for Julius never got to him because no one ever heard of him again.

Julius purchased different parcels of land in Illinois, marrying Sarah Kirkpatrick in 1837, in Morgan Co., Illinois. Later they relocated to Clark Co., Missouri and homesteaded in Lewis County. During the late 1840s the gold rush was on in California and many single men went prospecting. California became a state in 1850 and that brought on full-families settlers equipped to stay. Julius and wife sold out and in the Spring of 1853, they loaded their belongings and five children, and joined a wagon train headed for California. No known trail diary has surfaced. One of Julius' daughters married a scout who had previously served with the ill-fated Donner Party.

The 1860 U. S. Census indicates Julius and Sarah were living in Santa Cruz Co., near the Pajaro township but their post office was in Watsonville. So technically he was in Monterey Co., but enumerated in Santa Cruz Co. Julius was a woodsman and a farmer. It is thought Julius was squatting hoping to purchase a parcel of land on the Rancho San Cayetano (belonging to the Vallejo family) when the ranchos were breaking up because of California's statehood in 1850. But that didn't work out. So they moved about 40 miles south to Slacks Canyon, Cholame Valley, San Benito County. Cattle ranching was very important to them. Julius' daughter married into the Wayland family, and daughter Sara married into the Imus family, who later had the descendant who became the infamous "Radio Shock Jock" broadcaster Don Imus.

When tax laws changed and ranchers were forced to fence in their cattle, many folks left the Cholame Valley for Kingman, Mohave Co., Arizona where cattle could roam and be easily shipped for sale. Julius' sons became "well known" as cattlemen – never stealing a cow, just "keeping even."

By 1871 son Richard traveled east again and saddled up with his new bride, Emily and they made their home on 200 acres in Williamson County, Texas where Richard was a respected member of the community and was appointed a judge for a short time. He was also a stone cutter.

Next, Richard and Emily moved to Coleman Co., TX and homesteaded for a time. Then by 1880 Richard headed for Gila River area in New Mexico. He bought "The Butterfly", the "Frisca" and the "Young America" mines. He also hauled iron ore for others. His homestead may have been a stop off for the stage coaches where folks could get rest and food. This was a wild area where many stories about Indians and settlers fighting are repeated.

Richard's father Julius died in 1884 on the homestead, and there is a large and beautiful headstone. Julius' widow went back to Kingman, AZ to be with her daughter and some other sons who were cattle ranchers there.

All but one of Richard's sons were hard-core cowboys. Sometimes they got accused of cattle rustling. One of Richard's sons said "we never stole a horse – we just kept even!" So Richard and family moved [run out of town?] to Disappointment Valley, Dolores, Colorado. It was a hidden away place where Civil War dissidents and those hiding from the law gathered. In some kind of unknown "accident" Richard sort of "fell off" horse and died in 1904. In all, Richard and Emily had eleven children.

Of the eleven, son Thomas Loren [T. Loren] struck out on his own and relocated to Aztec, New Mexico where at 29 years old, he married 13-year-old Nina (yes, I said 13!) and they had six children by the time she was 20! They worked their 160 acre homestead. He ranched and farmed – she did everything else. T. Loren got sick, and they sold out and went to Nevada and lived south of town in the mountains in a place called Blue Diamond Mine. The children sat watch for the law because they ran a still up there. As the Depression wore on, one of T. Loren's brothers got caught stealing cattle to feed his family and spent some time in the pok-ey.

After Las Vegas they moved over to Prescott, AZ. But by 1940 they divorced. T. Loren kept his youngest son so Nina brought the sheriff over to the opposite edge of the river and T. Loren told the sheriff if he tried swimming across to get the boy, he would shoot his head off. Son stayed with Papa!

In Prescott, T. Loren's son Harold worked part time as a butcher but by the age of 14 he enlisted in the U. S. Army. Just before he turned 18, the Army realized he was underage and booted him out. As fast as possible, he joined the Marines and became a decorated WWII hero. After the War he returned to California to be with his father, who had relocated there. Harold met and married Lorraine and had three children. Harold was a tile contractor but just couldn't stay in one place very long. They moved frequently to such places as Hawaii, Montana, Santa Rosa, CA, and in interims returned back to the San Fernando Valley, Los Angeles, CA.

Firstborn son Loren Delmar Rucker (1947-201) remained a resident of Southern California although he and his family traveled extensively. Loren also did tile work, but he became one of the largest commercial tile contractors in southern California. He was a huge fan of fishing, both the ocean and the Sierra Nevada Mountain lakes and streams. When once asked if the fish didn't feel pain

as they were being dragged in, he said “No.” When asked why not, he said “that’s because he could think like the fish and they don’t hurt.”

Like Julius, Richard, and T. Loren, being “Fiddle-footed” was just in the Rucker genes. So Virginia to California was never a straight shot. Think of all those miles traveled with a horse and buggy!

Go or Stay # 2

The Estes Family

Go or Stay? We know how our ancestor Peter Rucker answered that question. We are here because he left from wherever he was. We don't know exactly when he arrived in the colonies, but we have the record of when he was Naturalized as a British citizen in 1704. He came to Virginia but maybe that was not his intention. There are stories of a shipwreck.

Peter's son John moved several times along the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

John's son Benjamin had much land that he acquired near present day Lynchburg, Virginia.

Benjamin's sons, James, Thomas, Gideon and Bennet all went to Tennessee. They became large land holders near Murfreesboro.

I descend from James's son, Joseph Burrus Rucker. Unfortunately, Joseph Burrus never was in a position to make a decision to go or stay. He became unable to make his own decisions and his son, my great-grandfather, Benjamin became responsible for him.

Civil War impacted Benjamin's opportunities. He was a Confederate soldier. After he returned home from war his parents' 300-acre farm was sold off to pay debts piece by piece. Benjamin Rucker had no other inheritance and moved his family to various other farms. My grandfather, John Edmondson Rucker was the youngest of 11 children. As a young man he sought new opportunities in retail sales in Nashville.

When I was born my parents were living in an apartment in my grandparents' house. It was in a fast-growing area of Nashville but my grandfather wanted more land for his expanding family. It was his dream for his son and daughter to have homes in the country neighboring each other. My dad, John Willson Rucker, told me when he was growing up he and his dad spent many Sunday afternoons looking for property. In 1934, soon after my mother and father married, my grandfather found what he was looking for - 16 acres 5 miles south of Nashville. My dad's sister, Enola, had plans to marry the next summer. Her fiancé had financial sources that my 21-year-old dad did not possess and they started building a substantial house that they and my grandparents would share. My grandfather gave my dad 4 acres of his property and my father started building his own house doing most of the work himself. I grew up in this family of not only my younger siblings, but with cousins, an aunt, uncle, and grandparents next door.

My father, John Willson Rucker, loved building houses and moved several times throughout his long life. He had an uncanny sense of when it would best to make a move. He never left the vicinity of Nashville though. He was too devoted to his church and the deep roots he had there. He lived to be a 100 and left his 6 children a considerable inheritance. He said he hoped each of his children would pay off the mortgage on their homes.

I married a law student from a small west Tennessee town, Milan. We were open to whatever opportunities would come our way. All seemed temporary. When he graduated, we moved to his home county to practice law. He was elected to the Tennessee State Legislature for one term. We had a daughter. A position in Nashville offered better income which we needed. Nashville felt like home. Three years later a bigger offer took us to Savannah, Tennessee. Wayne's job was with a large paper mill, Tennessee River Pulp and Paper Co. His title was Assistant to the Vice President. He did a little bit of everything during the twelve years we were there. The duties evolved and eventually he was named Industrial Relations Director. His position gave him a certain prestige both in town and at work.

Savannah is a charming small town. We became part of it and enjoyed it and the people there. Our son, Robert Wayne Estes Jr. was born there. Our daughters, Dixie and Carol, who were 2 and 4 when we moved there went through school there. We built a house. I was a Girl Scout leader 10 years. Wayne taught a large Sunday School class for twelve years. Yet we left. Why? Perhaps we never lost the sense that we were temporary. The paper mill changed ownership. We wondered if Wayne might be transferred to somewhere else. Wayne was not totally satisfied with the kind of work he did.

The Dean of Pepperdine Law School contacted him about a teaching position in 1973. Wayne came out to California for an interview. There was an offer, but he felt he could not leave because of already scheduled meetings that he was obligated to attend.

However, in 1974 he was contacted again. Wayne thought he would like teaching. Our daughters certainly did not want to go. They were 17 and 15, completely immersed in high school. Our 10 year old son knew about Los Angeles from Dragnet shows and was leery. We made the decision to go.

We left Tennessee with our house unsold and empty. Wayne's 76 year old mother decided to come with us, and sold her house in Milan. We set out the first of August with the three kids, Nanny, and Honey the dog, in a big Ford station wagon, pulling a tent-top camper. It took us 4 days. We had bought a house in Orange, California quickly on a fast three-day house hunting trip a month earlier. This fledgling law school was located in Anaheim across the street from Disneyland in a rented building. Everything was temporary. We thought we might go back.

We were in Orange 4 years. I worked for a temporary agency and learned Orange County freeways. We found a church we liked. Our daughters graduated from Villa Park High School and entered Pepperdine. We socialized with the other faculty members' families. Pepperdine decided on moving the law school to the main campus at Malibu and that meant we would have to move too. A new building was under construction.

Our daughter, Dixie, would marry and leave for Massachusetts before that summer. We sold our house quickly and was faced

with a wedding and a move. Again, we made a rushed choice and thought Thousand Oaks met most of our needs. This house has met many a need for us for 44 years.

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Though we have experienced many changes and accomplishments we stuck. Children move out. Children move back in, at least temporarily. Nanny, moved in. Grandchildren visit. Wayne added being a labor arbitrator to his teaching duties. I earned a BA from Pepperdine. We were part of many organizations and participated in many church activities. We gave parties and planted gardens. We remodeled and added to our house.

In many ways we did not leave Tennessee. We went back for weddings, funerals, graduations, and reunions. We took our children and our grandchildren to places we loved. I've written about where we came from. I still speak "Southern." Unlike our ancestors, we were not hindered by distance so much in keeping touch.

We spent our money on airline tickets. We used the telephone, then the internet, then social media. We send pictures and recipes back and forth. We learned Zoom. We still take the weekly Savannah Courier newspaper. I'm not sure we made a decision to stay. It was always the most practical choice, and too, we would miss many wonderful things here in California, such as our daughter, Carol, who lives nearby. Thousand Oaks is a lovely place to live. We have been very happy and blessed



Estes Family 1975



Estes Family 2013 We now have 7 great-grandchildren!

West, but not too far West

Nina Clay

My grandparents, William Henry Clay and Mary Elizabeth Rucker were 18 and 20 years old when they were married in Andis, Ohio in 1865.

In 1866 they move to Kentucky. He owned a lumber mill the years they lived there. In 1870 they move to Missouri where they lived 14 years in a farming community.

In 1887 stories of the prairie grasslands of Nebraska and the acres of land available drew them West again, and the promise of “a good life.”

On their way West they stopped at Ansley, Nebraska, a small village near Muddy Creek and decided to stay. They purchased 160 acres of farm and pasture land. Their first house was constructed of sod and later, when lumber was available, they built a wood house.

This was to be as far West as they would go. Clays still live in the area.

Their 104 year old Granddaughter

Nina Clay



Virginia to California

By Roger Settlemyre

My family sketch would start off with Peter and John Rucker, Col. Ambrose Rucker, and daughter Sarah Rucker (the sketch could include the full line of descent). Sarah was one of three Rucker sisters marrying three Marr brothers. Their father, Alexander Marr, may have fought in the Battle of Culloden in Scotland, and was transported (exiled) to Virginia shortly afterwards, as an indentured apprentice tailor. A Marr and Rucker group then migrated from Orange County to Western Tennessee. John Marr's daughter Susan Marr (my mother's great grandmother) eloped with Billy Sloan (born in 1802, Lincoln Co, Kentucky), a flatboat man, who picked up cotton at landings on the rivers to take down the Mississippi River to Natchez and New Orleans. The couple settled in northwest Mississippi, just south of Memphis.

During the Civil War, the Yankee army came through and took their livestock, provisions and everything else of value. But Billy Sloan was most upset that they took his supply of whiskey. My mother was born in western Tennessee and was raised across the river in northeast Arkansas. She married my father in Iowa.

He was very patriotic and enlisted in the Army in WWI, expecting to go to France. Instead, he was assigned to a "regular" army unit (like "From Here to Eternity"), then sent to the Mexican Border to quell the disturbances that Pancho Villa was causing. After that he was sent to the Philippines in the tropical heat of the summer and then to Vladivostok, Siberia in the winter, where he almost died of pneumonia.

He came back, married my mother, and moved to the "promised land" of Los Angeles in the 1920:s. He was a barber with his shop on Hollywood Blvd. He lived to be 99 years old. I was raised in LA and graduated from UCLA Law School. I moved the family to Northern California (Chico, Chester/Lake Almanor, and Quincy). I practiced law and became a Superior Court Judge. I'm now enjoying retirement in Quincy, in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, about 100 miles north of Lake Tahoe.

BRIEF MIGRATION HISTORY: LINEAGE OF THOMAS ALVIN RUCKER III

Migration from Virginia to the West Coast

By Phyllis Rucker

When I met my husband Thomas Alvin Rucker III, I asked him to tell me a little about his family. He knew quite a bit about his mother's side. When it came to his father's side, he knew very little. His parents were divorced when he was two years old. He told me that he wished that he knew more about his father and his family. Hearing that, I got excited and told him that I would help him find out more about his father's side. I suggested that he take an Ancestry DNA test and I volunteered to research his family and build a tree. What seemed to be an easy task has been a nearly two-decade journey to find out about his Rucker lineage.

We have been members of the Rucker Family Society for nearly two decades. Our research made significant progress after joining the Rucker DNA project and taking the BigY 700. We recently found out through DNA that Tom descends from Ephraim³, James², Peter. We now know much more about Tom's Rucker ancestors. Through DNA and extensive research Tom's full lineage is as follows: Thomas Alvin III⁹, Thomas Alvin II⁸, Thomas Alvin I⁷, John Thomas⁶, Royal Edward⁵, Lemuel⁴, Ephraim³, James², Peter. I will begin our story with the fourth generation – Lemuel.

Lemuel was born in Virginia in about 1765 to Ephraim and an unknown woman prior to Ephraim's marriage to Elizabeth Randall. Lemuel married his cousin Polly Rucker (Joshua³, William², Peter) in 1792 in Amelia, Virginia. They made their home in Amelia and started a family. Lemuel was a shoemaker by trade. One of their many children, Royal Edward Rucker was born in about 1801. The family lived in Amelia until they moved to Green County, Kentucky around 1818. Around 1825, Polly passed away and Lemuel married a woman by the name of Martha. After Martha passed away, Lemuel went to live with his daughter Sarah and her husband Lott Phillips in Green County. Lemuel passed away in 1849 of lung inflammation.

Royal followed in his father's footsteps and became a farmer. He married Malinda Rogers in 1827 and had 9 children. His son John Thomas was born in 1843. Royal stayed in Kentucky until shortly after his sister Sarah's death in 1858. After her death, he moved the family to Blue, Jackson County, Missouri and passed away around 1860. His wife Malinda passed away in 1879.

John Thomas grew up in Missouri, became a farmer and never left Missouri. He married Susan Catherine Nolen in 1873. They had two children and she passed away in 1876. In 1879 he married Malissa Frances Stubbs and they had 10 children, among them was Thomas Alvin Rucker I, born in 1890. John died of acute myocarditis in 1923 at the age of 79.

Thomas I lived close to his father John Thomas in Hickman Mills, Jackson County, Missouri and was also a farmer. He married Julia May Green in 1923 and they were blessed with 4 children. Their son Thomas II was born at Hickman Mills in 1928. Farming in the 1930's was rough in the western part of the state (Jackson County). They were impacted by a devastating drought as was any Missourian living close to the Dust Bowl. In 1937, Thomas sold his house, retired from farming and moved the family to Glendale, California. Most likely he heard about opportunities in California from his two siblings – Lucille, who moved to Orange County and got married in 1933 and Alfonso, who moved to Los Angeles in about 1934. While living in California, Thomas became a carpenter to support the family. He passed away in 1968 of hypostatic pneumonia after falling and breaking a hip.

Thomas II married Barbara Lee Hanson in 1952. He was a small business owner (gas station) and a long-haul truck driver. Thomas II and Barbara Lee had one child – Thomas Alvin Rucker III born in Van Nuys, California in 1953. Thomas II and Barbara Lee divorced in 1955. Thomas II married Barbara Jean Ayers in 1959 and had two children. Thomas II had a heart attack followed by a stroke in 1977 and became an invalid. Barbara Jean decided to move Thomas II (her invalid husband) and their two children from

California to Kennesaw, Georgia to be close to his family. Thomas II passed away in Kennesaw, Georgia in 1987.

Thomas III (Tom) lived with his mother and graduated from high school in Simi Valley, California. He graduated from Cal State Northridge with a degree in Recreation. He started working at Northrup and became interested in business. He went on to the University of Redlands and earned a BA in Business Administration. After about 14 years of a successful career at Northrup he was laid off. His mother had just moved to Washington state to be closer to her daughter (Tom's half-sister) and bought a restaurant in the small town of Ione, Washington. She asked Tom to move to Washington state and manage the restaurant. Tom agreed and moved to Washington in 1996 and began managing the restaurant. After about a year, his mother lost interest in the restaurant and Tom yearned to live and work in his field of Finance and Accounting. Tom moved to Seattle, Washington and met Phyllis Rucker – his favorite researcher – and they were married in 1997. He retired from Aerojet/Rocketdyne as a Finance/Accounting Manager in 2017.

Tom was also thrilled to discover that he is related to the “Fathers of Everett, Washington,” Bethel and Wyatt Rucker (3rd cousins 3 times removed)! This was discovered by aligning the results of his BigY 700 test with the Everett Rucker's family tree that has solid documentation to James².

Tom learned another very interesting fact from analyzing the results of the BigY along with documented genealogical research. The marriage of Lemuel Rucker and Polly Rucker in 1792 means that Tom descends from two sons of Peter: James and William.

In summary, Tom's line tended to “stay planted” in one location and moved very little. His line started in Virginia and moved to Kentucky, Missouri, California and finally Washington state. Tom loves the west coast - the trees, the ocean and all his favorite activities – especially golf! Tom cannot imagine living anywhere else. We suspect each of his ancestors felt the same about where they lived!

My saga starts with a 52 year old farmer named William Campbell and wife Agnes, four sons, one daughter living in Saline County, Missouri in 1846.

American destiny that year turned with one million square miles of additional territory. Annexing Texas, conquering the Mexican territories including California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico and then a treaty with Great Britain for Oregon.

What would make a man sell the farm, pack up his family to undertake a 2,000-mile trek across arid and Indian infested Great Plains to unknown land of California? With his sons almost adults moving into the frontier would give them a much better opportunity to acquire good farmland at low prices. The impression in California was land of "perpetual Spring" where you never had to build a fire except to cook! Oats grew eight feet tall, and wheat yielded more than 70 bushels per acre.

William's family, two of his brothers James and Thomas, and several other close friends found a large gathering of about 250 wagons when arriving in Independence, Missouri. Due to the size of the wagon train, they subdivided into groups with William made first captain of the Campbell Party with Kit Carson as guide. Another Party/Group was the Donners.

In late 1846 William established a wheat farm on 160 acres 2 miles south of what would become the town of Santa Clara. In late 1847 with the help of his sons David and Benjamin began the construction of a sawmill on today called Saratoga Creek.

In 1851 Benjamin Campbell made his way back to Missouri to marry his sweetheart Mary Louise Rucker taking a steamship through the Isthmus of Panama. In 1852 Mary Louise and her whole family made the long trip to California. Her father William Taliaferro Rucker (born 1809 Orange, Virginia) succeeded in bringing through 200 milk cows, no small undertaking in that day but very profitable as he had purchased them for 10 dollars a head and was able to dispose for from \$150-\$200 a head. William T. and Verenda Stigler Rucker were parents of eleven children including Mary Louise' brother Joseph E. Rucker (born in 1831 Howard County, Missouri and who is my ancestor).

In 1853 Joseph E. Rucker acquired 80 acres of land on which he farmed until 1855 when he bought a dairy farm near Gilroy, and married Miss Susan Brown. In 1874 he went into the real estate business in which engaged during the remainder of his life. In 1883 he took his son Joseph H. into partnership, the firm becoming J. E. Rucker and Son. This company eventually became foremost among the realty and insurance concerns of the Santa Clara Valley. My grandfather Dewitt Rucker and his father both kept the business alive. Joseph H. Rucker's son Samuel Newton Rucker (born 1862) elected to California State Legislature at age 23 and four years later became Mayor of San Jose from 1890-1894. I could go on with many Rucker accolades.

Maurine's Branch from Frankfort

My branch of the Rucker family is from Frankfort, Kentucky. My great grandparents, Joseph William Rucker (1827-1902) and Lucy Jane Rucker (1837-1922), came from there. Lucy's maiden name was Rucker. She and Joseph William were 5th cousins! They descend from Joseph William Rucker [Joseph William's father was Joshua Plunkett Rucker] on Joshua's side and from Jeremiah Rucker b. 1802 and Susan A Morton, b. 1815 on Lucy's side.

Lucy's siblings were William (1840-1903), Tandy (1842-1909), George 1844-), Nancy (1846-1873) and Agnes (1851-1901).

Joseph's siblings were Susan (1817-1885), and Josephine (1834-1915) *Joseph's father was Joshua Plunkett Rucker.*

Joseph and Lucy went first to San Francisco, California. Their son Joshua (my grandfather) (1862-1935) remembered going to high school there. But after some time they moved into the Central Valley of California. Joseph was a cabinet maker and worked at that trade in SF. They were members of the CC Colony—an agricultural community in Fresno.

Eventually they moved to Tulare and it was there that my grandfather Joshua met and married Dora Sue Clark, my grandmother. They had a long and eventful marriage as Josh was an experienced builder and knew how to make lovely things out of meager materials.

Woodwardia (near Santa Cruz, CA): This was a resort and their home. They rented out cabins to guests and served meals in the main house. This was before a train went in between San Francisco and Santa Cruz.

Rucker Heights:-Eventually they gave up the resort and Josh built a home for them in the Santa Cruz mountains, that still stands and is in use. I visited there with my sister Carole in 2017 and could remember rooms I saw last in 1934, when I was 3 years old.

A California Rucker's Story

Gary T. Rucker

When asked to write a story to describe our family, I decided to start with myself and work backwards instead of starting with our ancestors. While I enjoy studying the genealogy and history of our family, I've come to realize that it takes time . . . time that I don't have enough of these days. But when I think of our family, there are a few words that come to mind: pride. When I think of our ancestors and what they went through and had to endure for our generations to enjoy, I reflect with pride on being a Rucker. Also, after reading up on our earlier Ruckers, and comparing the current generation with the past, the word that comes to mind for current and past generations is that our family is a family of "do'ers." Allow me to try and explain my thoughts starting with myself and our immediate family.

Gary T. Rucker - June 2, 1954 and Leslie Ann Fekety Rucker - June 8, 1955

We met here in Merced, California back on May 22, 1977 and have been together ever since. Leslie was here visiting her brother Eugene who was stationed at Castle Air Force Base, 7 miles away. We met at a local disco parking lot on our way to the cars. We met again the next day and after persistence and perseverance I eventually talked her into staying. Les had a BS in Social Work from California University of Pennsylvania. Her father was a coal miner for 40 years and her mother was a home maker before going to work and studying crafts. They eventually moved to Merced in retirement and have since passed. We were married in her hometown church in Grindstone, PA. Leslie taught 1st grade for 30 years and once the Chromebooks were brought into teaching she decided it was time to retire. I have been a Farmers Insurance Agent for 34 years now and am in the process of retiring effective October 1, 2022. Before insurance I had a few good jobs, working for Sun Chemical Corp., General Printing Ink for 8 years as a ink technician. Once our company was sold to Dainippon of Japan, they made me a parttime worker, so I decided to change jobs, studied insurance, got licensed, and have owned my agency for 34 years. With the constant change in technology I've decided to join my wife in retirement. I also sold real estate back in the 70's during Jimmy Carters years with interest rates climbing to 18%, need I say more. I've been a Master Mason of Hornitos Lodge #98 since 1989.

Four Offspring; Christopher Thomas Rucker and Amy Marie Wade Rucker

is Morgan Stanley born November 1, 2001. Morgan is currently enrolled at UC Davis with a major in Forensic Science. Morgan played 4 years in high school band as did her brother Josh and is quite the board games player.

Amanda Jane Van Vliet Rucker is our third child born on our anniversary September 6, 1982. Amanda is married to Nathaniel Van Vliet and have purchased a home in Roswell, Georgia where Nathan is an engineer for BASF, while Amanda is employed by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. Before moving to Atlanta, Amanda served 2 years in the Peace Corp in Namibia, southern Africa. Before the Peace Corp Amanda graduated from Cal Baptist University of Riverside, then on to Loma Linda University, graduating with degrees in Global Health and Biology. They are the proud parents of a very active 11/2 year old Abby Jane born February 1, 2021 and for the most time are now working from home. Nathan is a board game extraordinaire and collector and has the force with him from *Star Wars* and the Marines.

Lisa Eileen Watkins Rucker is our fourth child born February 23, 1984, and is married to Carl Watkins, a journeyman carpenter specializing in home remodels. They are the proud parents of a two-and-a-half-year-old, very excitable boy Nicholas Thomas Watkins born January 2, 2020. Lisa graduated from Fresno State with a BA and then earned her master's degree in Exercise Science and Health Promotion in 2012 from California University of Pennsylvania, her Mother's alma mater. Lisa has just accepted a position with Valley Children's Hospital in Madera that started in late August.

Siblings

Robert Eastin Rucker - April 25, 1947 and Michelle "Micki" Rucker - October 22, 1952

Brother Bob was the first of five children born to Robert F. and Patricia L. Rucker. He was born on

our mother's birthday so they had many birthday celebrations together. Bob started in real estate back in the 60's and was always a go-getter, specializing in agriculture real estate. Eventually he became a General Contractor and started developing subdivisions along with commercial buildings.

When there was a downturn in the real estate market, Bob got into politics as Chief of Staff for California State Senator Dick Monteith. After years in Sacramento, he went into national politics as District Director for Congressman Jeff Denham for 6 years. After politics Bob returned to real estate and golfs when he can. Bob is also a Master Mason of Hornitos Lodge #98 serving as lodge Master twice. His wife Micki was also in General Contracting and real estate and over the years has opened various retail stores and consignment stores, the latest venture was Funky Junk in downtown Sonoma, California. These days they love to travel and spend time in their motor home down at Pismo Beach, California. They have two children from Bob's previous marriage to Cathy Flansberg, son Bob Rucker who is a Fire Chief in Scottsdale, Arizona, and his wife Toni is retired. They have two children, Trevor Rucker and Morgan Rucker. Bob's daughter is Sharon Rucker an attorney in Merced practicing family law and real estate law. She's engaged to Rick Scotto, a local farmer. Sharon has two children from a previous marriage, Reese Wade Williams and Carlen Williams who just graduated from Fresno State and is helping Sharon in her law firm.

Gregory Burke Rucker – June 21, 1948 – March, 6, 1976 (from complications from diabetes).

Cynthia Louise Rucker November 23, 1950 – March 5, 2021 (from kidney disease). She had 3 children, Stefani, Keesha, and Donnie Hiser and many grand- and great grand children.

William Anthony Rucker 7/4/1962-12/26/2021 Cocaine laced with Fentanyl. A Navy man who served in the 1st desert storm on the USS Gompers. Leaves behind Daughter Courtney and Grand Daughter Zayla.

Parents

Robert Franklin Rucker and Patricia Louise Burke Rucker

Our father Robert(Bob) was born in his parents' home in Merced, California on January 5, 1911 and our mother was born in Newkirk, Oklahoma on April 25, 1923. Dad was born Thomas Newton Rucker and Ethel June Eastin Rucker. He was a very active student at Merced High, graduating in the class of 1929. He lettered in all 4 sports, was student body president his senior year. He loved his high school years and told me he once cried when he learned it was time to leave. He went on to play tight end for Riverside JC. He served in the World War II in Europe (Italy specifically) and Africa, mainly as a radio man, before re-enlisting for the Korean War. He served 12 years total and retired a Master Sergeant. He was a man of many talents, serving as Merced Volunteer Fire Department, car sales, investigator for a prominent attorney's office, was very active after the war in American Legion and later years in the Elks Lodge where he received their first Lifetime Membership. He was commissioner of the Merced Little Guys Baseball Association which used to take all the Little Leaguers to a game at San Francisco's Candlestick Park, 125 miles away. I remember one year he was in charge of shepherding 22 school buses of little leaguers, their coaches and chaperons, stopping once in Tracy for a rest room break and cup of Pepsi Cola.

Many kids would later say those were the only times they could go to a big league game. Our mother was born to Harold S. Burke and Queen B. Rice Burke in Oklahoma. They left for California during the Dust Bowl. Her father was a attorney then judge and her mother was a home maker. Mom was a home maker until us kids were in grammar school, then went to work as a bookkeeper for First Western Bank, UCB Bank, then First Interstate Bank – it was the same bank and just kept changing names. She worked over 30 years at the bank before retiring.

Grandparents

Our Grandfather Thomas Newton Rucker was born in Merced in 1887 and Grandmother Ethel June Eastin Rucker was born in Madera, California in 1888. They had 2 children, Robert Franklin Rucker in 1911 and Gwendolyn June Rucker in 1912. Our Grandfather was a fireman/engineer on the Yosemite Valley Railroad (the YV) and our Grandmother was a home maker, and then went to work at a women's clothier "The Sterling" after her husband's death from a heart attack at age 49 in 1936. He also had Rucker Automotive Electric after his years on the railroad.

Great Grandparents

William Anthony Rucker and Sarah “Sally” Boulware Rucker were two of our great grandparents. William was born in Hannibal, Missouri in 1845, and married Miss Lucy Saunders in 1868, who died about a year later. He came to Merced in 1871, engaged in farming. He later established an express and draying business. In 1872 he married Miss Sarah Boulware who passed away in 1911. To this union were born eleven children. After Sarah's death, William later was married to formerly Mrs. Polly Thomas in 1916. I wish I had more information to share about Sarah Boulware and Polly Thomas. I think Polly's maiden name was Saunders, but I haven't verified.

Great Great Grandparents

Anthony George Rucker born April 13, 1814 in Virginia and his wife Temperance M. Sharp was born March 8, 1819 in Kentucky. They were married on February 25, 1836 and were blessed with 11 children, the 5th child was William Anthony Rucker (born July 19, 1845) and is our Great-Grandfather. Anthony George and Temperance migrated to Missouri around 1836. The 1830 census of Howard County, Missouri, shows William (Anthony's father) and John Rucker, possibly Anthony's grandfather. Anthony George and Temperance had settled in Marion County, as shown in the 1850 census of Warren, Marion County, Missouri. They were living next door was Mary Sharp, 61 years, born in Virginia who could be Temperance's Mother. We believe that Anthony George, Temperance, along with their children then migrated to California between 1868-1870 in as much as they were in Santa Clara County, California register in 1870. Anthony George and his wife Temperance are the earliest Ruckers buried here in the Merced County District Cemetery in the “Old Masonic Section” where our family plot is, next to the Saunders Family Plot where Mary Catherine (Anthony's eldest daughter) is buried with her husband, J. J. Saunders who also migrated from Missouri to California. There was a close tie between the Rucker families and the Saunders families as evidenced by at least three marriages, possibly four, between those two families.

That's all I pretend to know for now. Thank you, Gary T. Rucker.

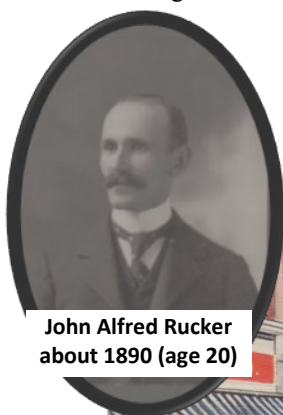
My Westward Migration

Carol Gavette

Nope, it wasn't a covered wagon, a horse, or a stagecoach; it wasn't even a steamship through the Panama Canal, a steam train or a greyhound bus! It didn't take 4 or 5 months, like a stagecoach; 45 days on a steamship or a miraculous 4 weeks on the train.

Our Family Background: My Rucker ancestors stayed in Virginia; William², Joshua³, Pleasant⁴, John Harvey⁵ lived in Amelia. Even my grandfather, John Alfred⁶ (son of John Harvey Rucker and his second wife, Henrietta Perrin) lived his life in Virginia. When he was about 12 he drove his first wagon of tobacco to market; perhaps this encouraged him to see what was beyond farming in Amelia.

As a travelling salesman, buttons and notions became his trade. He met Emma Virginia German in Baltimore while traveling and they were married in 1900. From 1903-1911, they lived in Elizabeth City, North Carolina where he founded the Rucker and Sheeley Department Store. Family was very important to John Alfred, and when his half-brother Wallace encouraged him come to Rucker Dry Goods Company, he left North Carolina and moved to Petersburg, Virginia. Wallace was the son of John Harvey and his first wife Martha Hendrick.) About 1929, the Rucker brothers expanded their store joining forces with Louis Rosenstock to create Rucker Rosenstock. This beautiful store was a high-end department store – the only one in the Petersburg area at that time.



John Alfred Rucker
about 1890 (age 20)



Alfred Morgan Rucker



Rucker Rosenstock, circa 1950

John Alfred loved his work so much that he went to his office every morning at Rucker Rosenstock until he was 90 years old! Truly, he loved Virginia and lived in Petersburg until his death in 1963.



Morgan & Alberta
Rucker about

My father, Alfred Morgan⁷ served as Manager of Rucker Rosenstock from 1939 until 1949 He met Alberta Faris of Crewe, Virginia when she was visiting friends in Petersburg – yes, it was a blind date! They were married in October 1940. In 1949 Dad and his father purchased McKenney Furniture Company, also in downtown Petersburg. They renamed the store to Rucker's Incorporated and moved their store to the Walnut Hill area of Petersburg about 1957. In 1962 our family moved to Virginia Beach, Virginia. "Dry Goods" and furniture were definitely in his blood, so he worked for Willis Furniture Company in Virginia Beach as the manager of the drapery and linen departments until he retired in 1985.

So that's my background, now here's my story.

Alright, so just what happened? Why did I leave Virginia – I love it there and thought I would never leave. How on earth did I get to California? Ok, here comes the romantic part...I met Bob Gavette in 1973...best pick up line ever ... "Will you type my divorce papers?" Well, we were married in 1974 (we = not just Bob and me; it was my 2 children, Sydney and David Wilson, too!) So, on a warm and sunny afternoon on October 20, 1974 we piled into my...wait for it...



Yes, a 1973 yellow Volkswagen 412!
That's it—that was our overland migration transportation!

We hitched our own "covered wagon" aka 5X8 U-Haul trailer and like those Ruckers who migrated many years before us, it had almost all of our worldly possessions (Marie Kondo has nothing on me!) Oh my, what a "grueling crossing" - our migration took seven whole days – traveling a full 8 hours a day! Stopping only for necessities and pushing westward. We didn't have time for

any of that frivolous sightseeing or evening campfires; but, we did get to visit Dinosaur City and see the Giant Sloth Toe stuck in the wall of the cavern – now you know, you just can't beat that! Every couple of hours we stopped (travelling with children – need I say more?) Our daughter could “read” 2 books and we had 2 cassette tapes to play...for 3,000 miles – coast to coast – over and over... Friends gave us a cooler stocked with the essentials - Coca-Cola (for me) and we picked up breakfast and sandwich ‘fixin’s every day (and of course juice and milk for the kids – I wasn’t sharing my Coke!) Doesn’t this sound just like a regular wagon train? My employer had been Holiday Inn in Virginia Beach; so with our traveling papers (a letter from Holiday Inn) we pulled our “overland migration transportation and covered wagon” trailer into the local Holiday Inn every night –the kids ate free and we slept much better (and safer) than those who traveled in real wagon trains!

We settled in San Jose, California; not the first Rucker family to settle in that area. The next family migration in 1984 brought, my brother, Alfred Morgan Rucker⁸, Jr. and his wife and daughter moved to Berkeley, California followed in 1985 by my parents who moved to San Jose, as well. My nephews, Chris and John came westward a few years later and also settled in Berkeley for a while. My parents Alfred Morgan and Alberta Faris Rucker lived in San Jose the rest of their lives. Dad passed away in 1987 and Mom in 2008, both active in their church, and mom with Opera San Jose and the Merola program at the San Francisco Opera. They are buried at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in Los Gatos.

So where are we all today? Well, Bob and I now live in Clovis, California (central valley of California), Sydney moved to Salt Lake City, Utah and David and his wife, Cindy live in Scotts Valley, California; their son Dorion and grandson Julian live in Livermore, CA

Just to prove that not all migrations are Westward, my brother and his family lived in Berkeley, California for a number of years, then they all moved back East. Today, my nephew, Christopher (yes, another Christopher Rucker) now lives in Massillon, Ohio, his brother John (yes, another John Rucker) lives in Glen Allen, Virginia. My brother and his wife now live in Denver, Colorado; their daughter, Anna and her daughter, Lillian also live in Denver.

RUCKER-CAMPBELL

" AND NOW, YOU KNOW THE REST OF THE STORY" , , ,

By Verona Flint

We have all been quite impressed with the Travel Memoirs chronicled by **Newton G. Finley** about the migration of the Campbells, Ruckers and related families coming West across the country in 1852. I feel an earlier story needs to be shared which lends itself to the success of this 1852 crossing.

Years ago, two Campbell sister descendants, members of our Gabilan DAR Chapter, presented a program about the migration history of their Campbell family coming West. I found it very interesting and recognized the Rucker surname at that time, but hadn't yet begun serious research on my Rucker lines. In their presentation they shared a book, "CAMPBELL the Orchard City", authored by Jeanette Watson, a direct descendant of the same family as the sisters.

Campbell is a city in Santa Clara County, California, about an hour and a half North of Monterey. This city was founded by, NONE OTHER, than young **Benjamin Campbell** who was the future husband of our **Mary Louise Rucker**.

Many people are unaware that young **Benjamin Campbell** had come across the plains with his father, **William Campbell** (1793-1885), in an earlier wagon train in 1846!

In 1845, the **William Campbells** in Missouri, began their preparations to head West. Early in 1846, three generations of the Campbell family gathered in Independence, MO, adding to the provisions they would need for this westward journey. William's first wife had passed in 1821 and he had remarried, to a woman named **Agnes Hancock**. Their children were **Sarah, David, Benjamin (age 19), William G., John F., and daughter Agnes**. Their ages ranged between twenty-two and two years old.

At the height of this westward journey, there were approximately 150 wagons, in all. This migration was headed for different western destinations and included the ill-fated **Donor Party**. I am quite familiar with this story because my paternal **grandfather Flint's brother, Benjamin Flint II, married Mary Catherine Breen**. Her grandparents, **Patrick and Margaret Breen** were part of the Donor Party.

The Campbell journey took six months from Missouri to their Santa Clara Valley destination, arriving about 25 October 1846. Unfortunately, **Agnes** died on 26 November 1846, only one month after their arrival.

Those were treacherous times for migrating pioneers. The plains presented interaction with ferocious Indians, not to mention water and food shortages, deaths, weather inconveniences and wagon accidents along the route. California wasn't a state yet and it was estimated that there were only about 800 Americans here. The Western territory was under Mexican rule, having recently won its independence from Spain in 1833. The Mexican War raised havoc from 1846 to 1847, then GOLD was discovered at Sutter's Creek in January of 1848. That certainly introduced new disruptions and successes. On 9 September 1850, California became the thirty-first state.

The years between the original trip in 1846 to 1852, saw the California Campbells establish themselves in many areas of ranching, farming and cutting timber for their mills which furnished the much-needed timber for settlers. They also mined in Kentucky and continued to be in close contact with their Missouri relatives. They were hard working and not afraid of attacking new ventures. There is not enough room, in this short story, to name their many successes!

Early in 1851, **Benjamin Campbell** had returned to Missouri and fell in love with a young lady named **Mary Lousie Rucker**. He was 25 years old and she was 17 years old when they married on Christmas day in Saline County, Missouri, in 1851.

Now that we have traveled the full circle and are back to the Memoirs written in 1852, we have **Mary Louise Rucker Campbell's** father, **William T. Rucker**, seeking information from his new son-in-law, **Benjamin Campbell**, about HIS family going to California! It was then decided that the families related to **William T. Rucker** would prepare for this journey to California, which included 200 cows and 8 covered wagons. This party started with 36 adults and children, all related. With hired teamsters and cooks, the group totaled to forty-three (per the "Campbell" book).

I am sure that this 1852 westward journey was done with more ease than the first journey taken by young **Benjamin** in 1846. He had amassed quite a bit of knowledge and success under his belt in those few short years which would have been very beneficial for the 1852 migration crossing. Benjamin had quite a load to carry with his new family members, all trusting him to take them safely to California.

**“AND NOW, YOU KNOW THE REST OF THE STORY”,
WHICH WAS REALLY THE BEGINNING!**

- - - - -

MY RUCKER STORY

Peter Rucker, James Rucker, Lemuel Rucker, Lemuel Booton Rucker, Frances Emmaline
Rucker Gulick, Charles Francis Gulick, Neah Gulick Flint, Walter Gulick Flint,

By Verona Flint

My “coming to California” Rucker story is far less elaborate than most.

My closest ancestor to have the Rucker surname was my great-great grandmother, Frances Emmaline Rucker (1834-1891), known as Emmaline. She never set foot in California due to her death in 1891.

In 1853, Emmaline married widower Thomas William Gulick (1826-1924) who had previously been married to another Emily Rucker, Emmaline’s first cousin, once removed. Interestingly enough, both wives had fathers with the name of Lemuel Rucker.

Thomas and his first wife, Emily, had a son John in 1851. Emily (wife #1) died in May of 1852 and young John died in September of 1852.

Emmaline (wife #2) died in Gentry County, Missouri, at the home of a relative according to an obituary in in the “Darlington Record” newspaper, page 4 July 1891.

The second Rucker/Gulick marriage produced five children. Two died as infants. The other three grew into adulthood, having families. Her only child to come to California was her son, Charles Francis Gulick (1856-1938). His father, Thomas William Gulick married a third time to Elizabeth Rachel Cook Clelland who died in 1906. After Elizabeth’s death, Thomas then came to California to live near his son.

Nothing significant has been found as to “what or why?” Charles F. Gulick came to California. The first document of notation I found of him in California was the 1878 Butte County Voter Registration. At that time, he was 22 years old and was a teacher. He went on in life to become a well-known school principal in Alameda County, California, and a life-long Mason. After his retirement, he tended his pear orchards in Alamo, Contra Costa County, California.

He married California born Elizabeth Montague Sharrer in 1880 and they had 3 daughters, one passing away in infancy and the other two living well into their nineties! My grandmother Neah, the second daughter, always had a good story to tell, plus a jug of “Old Fashions” ready in the refrigerator for any visitor who stopped by to watch sporting events on television!

Generations of us have enjoyed gardening and growing things, drawing and painting, working with various fabric art, writing and we have always been very patriotic.

A family cannot be more ordinary than this family.



Thomas Wm. Gulick



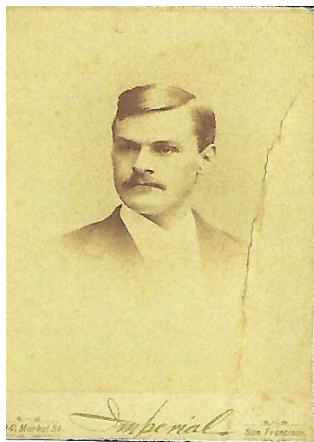
Gravestone of 1st wife Emily Rucker Gulick



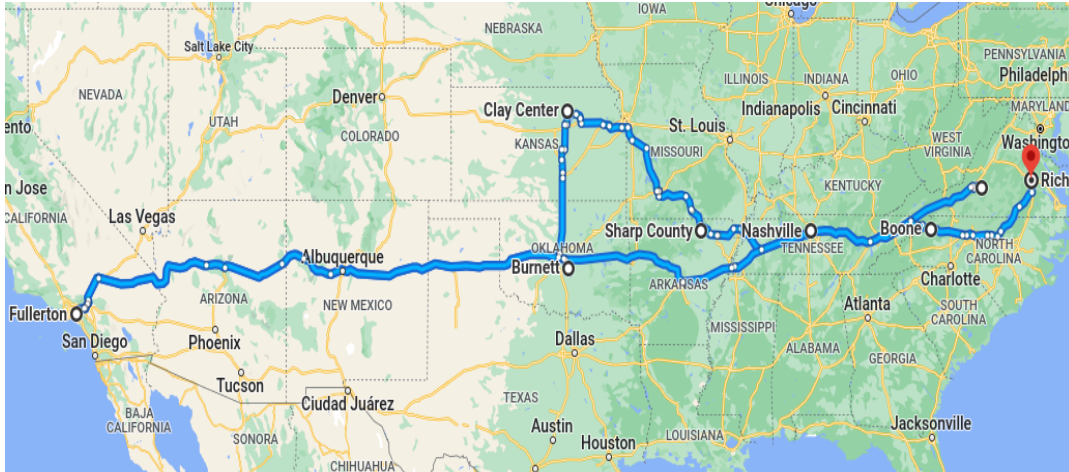
Gravestone of 2nd wife Emmaline Rucker Gulick

(Below) Surviving children of F. Emmaline Rucker Gulick and Thomas Wm. Gulick

Charles Francis Gulick (1856-1938) Jessie Cora Gulick (1871-1963) and Nettie Estella Gulick (1868-1917)



Rucker Westward Migration - From Virginia to Southern California and Back to Virginia



My Peter Rucker lines went from the East Coast to West Coast.

Peter Rucker¹ (abt 1660-1743) migrated from Europe to Eastern Virginia in Orange Co., Virginia

His son, **John Rucker**² (abt.1680-1742) settled in St. Mark's Parish, Orange Co., VA.

From here I show two lines:

John Rucker ³ (1720-1780) Near Ruckerville , Orange Co., VA	Benjamin Rucker ³ (1730-1810) b. Orange Co., d. in Amherst, VA.
William Rucker ⁴ (1756-1826) b. Orange Co. VA., d. Williams Co., TN	Thomas Rucker ⁴ (1759-1836) b. Orange, Co, VA, d. Rutherford Co, TN
James B. Rucker ⁵ (1785-1884) b. Rutherford Co., TN, d. TN	Katherine Rucker ⁵ (1795-1838) b. TN; d. Sunken Creek, near Bedford, TN, m. J. N. Porter
James M. Rucker ⁶ (1822-1859) b. Bedford Co, VA; d. Maury Co. TN	Thomas N. Porter ⁶ (1822-1848) d. in Bedford, TN
Mary Rosanna Rucker ⁷ (1851-1929) married John Nathaniel Porter ⁷ (1847-1927) b. Hickman Co,TN, d. Fullerton, CA b. Marshall Co., TN; d. San Antonio, TX	
Tabitha Gentry Porter ⁸ (1885-1966) married Eric Gustav Swenson ⁸ (1879-1924) b. Marshall Co.TN, d. Fullerton, CA b. Sweden, d MT, buried Clay Center, KS	
Paul Oscar Swenson ⁹ (1910-1961) married Myrel Loretta Fineth ⁹ (1915-1963) b. Clay Center, Kansas d. Fullerton, CA b. Eugene, Oregon d. Fullerton, CA	
Loretta Jane Swenson ¹⁰ (1952-) married David Brian Sable ¹⁰ (1959-) b. Fullerton, CA; lives in Boone, NC b. Los Angeles; lives in Boone, NC	
Nathan Paul Sable ¹¹ (1987-) married Rebecca Leigh Thornton ¹¹ (1989 -) b. La Palma, CA; lives in VA b. Richmond, VA; Lives in Richmond, VA	
Averett Paul Sable ¹² (b. July 3, 2020)	
Mae LeCompte Sable ¹² (b. April 19,2022)	

My most interesting ancestors were Rosanna Rucker and her daughter Gentry Porter. Rosanna married John Nathaniel Porter in 1868 in Hickman Co., Tennessee. They had 12 children. About 1900 they moved to Hardy, in Sharp Co., Arkansas where their children, John Alfred Porter and Gentry Porter met their spouses. John Alfred chaperoned Gentry on group outings where he met and married Nelly Gray, married her, and moved to California. Gentry must have met Eric Swenson at a dance. They married in 1906 in Sharp Co.,

Arkansas and moved to Kansas first and then Oklahoma. Story has it, she did not like her mother-in law because she made her do all the ironing and sometimes made her re-iron the load!

After that, they moved to Oklahoma, to get out of in-law's house! After third son was around 6, Eric bought land from his uncle in Missoula, Montana and died there getting the ranch ready for the family to move there. Eric was buried in Clay Center, Kansas, 1924. Gentry sold the home in Burnett, Oklahoma and moved to Fullerton, California where her brother and his wife lived with their 2 sons.

The Porters raised Carl "Pony" Swenson, who was 6 when his dad died. My dad and Uncle Harold were 13 and 14. Both finished 8th grade and both went to work in 1925 and 1926. Grandma Gentry went to work and rented a small house. Her mother, Rosanna, and brothers, Melville and Thurmond, eventually moved to Fullerton and later, died there. Rosanna divorced John Nathaniel Porter prior to her move to Fullerton. She traveled to see each of her children scattered across the US where as John N. Porter went to live with son, Hardin Quincy Porter in San Antonio, Texas.

Rosanna (Rosa) was only 4 feet 10 inches and her son, Thurmond was 6 feet and 4 inches! He loved to pick her up like a child and swing her around and I have pictures! The oldest of the 12 children was Mary Frances Porter who married and settled in Clarksville, Mississippi. She also came and visited Her mother and family in Fullerton, California. I have heard stories that in spite of hard times, the family always had a great sense of humor and loved family gatherings and pulling pranks.

My dad worked the oil fields in Los Angeles and Orange Co., California. He married my mother when she was just 16 and 6 months pregnant. He was 21. My mom had Larry in August 1931 and in September she returned to High School to finish 11th and 12th grade and graduated from high school while married and raising Larry. The twins, Bud and Sis were born in 1937 and when the war broke out Uncle Carl "Pony" Swenson, along with all his college seniors, joined the military after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. My dad had health restrictions so could not enlist. Instead he was a Warden making sure curfew and all lights out and shades pulled during black outs in Southern California.



Myrel "Pat" Swenson, Cecile Swenson, and Gentry Swenson in the top right, laughing at the antics. Fullerton, CA c. 1942. Myrel is my mother, Cecile my aunt and Gentry my grandmother.



Thurmond Porter holding his mother Rosa. Thurmond's sister Francis "Fanny" in back. Fullerton, CA - c. 1927



Back row: T. Gentry Porter (Swenson), Alice Thurnell, Unknown, Blanch Davis, Alice Gray, Osie Davis, Unknown, Nellie Gray (Porter)

Middle row: Mark Davis, Silas Thurnell, Walker Lloyd, John A. Porter, George England

Floor: Melvin Davis, Leo Gray. Notice the women are with brothers or male cousins in the portrait. Nellie Gray married John Alfred Porter who is Gentry Porter's brother. Hardy, Arkansas, circa 1905-6

Gwynn Rucker and Glynda Rucker Rathwick

Our Rucker Heritage:

Rucker Parent: Joseph Herman Rucker, Jr
Grandparent: Joseph Herman Rucker
Great Grandparent: Joseph Moore Rucker
2nd Gt Grandparent: Reuben Rucker
3rd Gt Grandparent: Reuben Rucker
4th Gt Grandparent: Peter Rucker
5th Gt Grandparent: John Rucker
6th Gt Grandparent: Peter Rucker

Our grandfather, Joseph Herman Rucker, was born in Alabama, and moved with his family to Texas when he was 10 years old. When he grew up he married Mary Ophelia Fuller. They were farmers, and later owned/ran a dairy farm in Abilene, TX. Our dad, Joseph Herman Rucker, Jr, was the oldest of 9 children. Our grandfather paid for all 9 of his children to go to college (McMurtry College in Abilene) by trading their tuition for milk from the dairy. 8 of the 9 children remained in Texas. Our grandparents had 26 grandchildren.

Our father, Joseph Herman Rucker, Jr was born in Tyler County, TX in 1916. He met our mother, Mary Ruth Longbotham, after he graduated from college, and they were married in 1940. He had a degree in mathematics. They lived in Texas for several years after marriage, and had 3 daughters. Gayl, Gwynn, and Glynda. In 1959 they moved to California. Initially we landed in Wasco, CA with our maternal grandmother. We stayed with her for several months until our dad got a job teaching high school math in Fresno, CA. My sisters and I all grew up in Fresno, and Gwynn and I both graduated from CSU Fresno. Gayl moved to the Bay Area (Pittsburgh, CA) on the 1980s. Gwynn moved to Seattle, WA in the 1980s (she is currently in the process of moving back to Texas), and I moved with my husband and 4 children to Paso Robles, CA in 1996. Our father passed away in April 1994 in Fresno, CA.

When we first moved to Paso Robles, one of my daughters came home from her first day of school and said she had met someone with the last name of Rucker. She wondered if we were possibly related. I told her I was sure we weren't, because all of my relatives were in Texas. A few months later I met the girl's mother and told her my maiden name was Rucker. She said, "I'm sure we're not related, my husband is from Texas". As we talked, I told her my grandfather had moved to Texas from Alabama, and she said "so did my husband's family". At this point I knew we had to be related, but I didn't know how. My aunt, Alice Rucker Allen (a charter member of Rucker Family Society) had written a book on Rucker genealogy called Rucker Heritage, so I went home and looked up these Paso Robles Ruckers, Juan Dean and Jeannine Rucker. I found we are in fact related. We are both descendants of Reuben Rucker, my 3rd great grandfather.