

from 1771 Jefferson-Fry Map

THE RUCKERS  
OF ORANGE COUNTY, VIRGINIA  
AND THE SEATING OF RUCKERSVILLE

by  
JEAN BRYDON ROBINSON

1988



Descendants of Thomas Rucker 1919  
The lady in black on the front row is Sarah Rucker Durrer  
of "Friendly Acres" Ruckersville, Va.

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## Introduction

The reason I have called this booklet "Ruckers of Orange County" is because of the tremendous size of Orange County when it was formed. Peter Rucker and all of his progeny lived within "greater" Orange.

Much of the information on the Ruckers has come from Sudie Rucker Wood's The Rucker Family Genealogy. She did an excellent job of researching our ancestors and I did not attempt to do so here. What I have done is to try to interpret that research. I have tried to identify where our relatives live on today's map. Of course if a descendant still lives on the family homestead, my work is half done.

My tour of Ruckersville and the surrounding countryside was given by Anna Durrer Watson. My thanks go to her for her help with family information, as well as organizing the first National Rucker Reunion at Ruckersville. It was her idea!

It is very difficult to write family history without making mistakes. If you find any here or in my grandmother's, (Sudie Rucker Wood), book, please bring them to my attention so that they may be corrected for future generations.

We know very little of the history of Ruckersville, Virginia. The first building was the "Orange Church" built circa 1740. The site was surveyed by John Rucker, son of Peter, immigrant. The first Rucker resident was John Rucker, son of Thomas, grandson of Peter. Sudie Rucker Wood said was the second John was the founder of Ruckersville. Tradition says that he named it in honor of his Uncle and namesake.

For many years, this tiny village had a post office, general store, and a few houses. Today, Ruckersville, is a growing "bedroom community" of Charlottesville. Subdivisions are popping up all over and businesses are dotting Route 29. It's located on the main road from Charlottesville to Washington D. C. and is heavily traveled. If you like shopping for antiques, you'll love Ruckersville.

There are many descendants of John Rucker, founder, living there today, but none with the name Rucker. A new resident, Warren Rucker, has brought the Rucker name back to Ruckersville. He is the nephew of Dr. Anthony Warren Rucker, the county doctor during the 1960s and 70s.

This booklet is written in commemoration of The Rucker Reunion held in Ruckersville on October 1 and 2, 1988.

Jean Brydon Robinson, 304 Charmian Road, Richmond, Virginia 23226





The old Ruckersville Post Office



View of old Ruckersville

## PARISH/COUNTY DEVELOPMENT

To understand where our ancestors lived and to be better able to read the deeds that give clues to their lands, we must learn something of the development of parishes and counties.

When English settlers came to Jamestown, they brought the Anglican Church with them. The London Company provided that each new settlement would become a new parish. As the years went on, the General Assembly established parishes and fixed their boundaries often at the same time it created counties.

As the population grew, new parishes were created. At the same time Spotsylvania was formed in 1720, from the western end of Essex, King and Queen, and King William, St. George's parish was formed within the same bounds. In 1730, St. George's Parish was divided by a line "running from the mouth of the Rapidan to the mouth of Wilderness Run; thence southward to the Pamunkey River." (4 Henning 17) The new parish was called St. Mark's, which in 1734 became Orange County using the same bounds.

St. Mark's was divided in 1740 using the Rapidan River as the dividing line. The southerly portion, below the Rapidan, was called St. Thomas' Parish. St. Thomas' included the lands today that lie in the counties of Orange and Greene. In 1748, St. Mark's became Culpeper County.

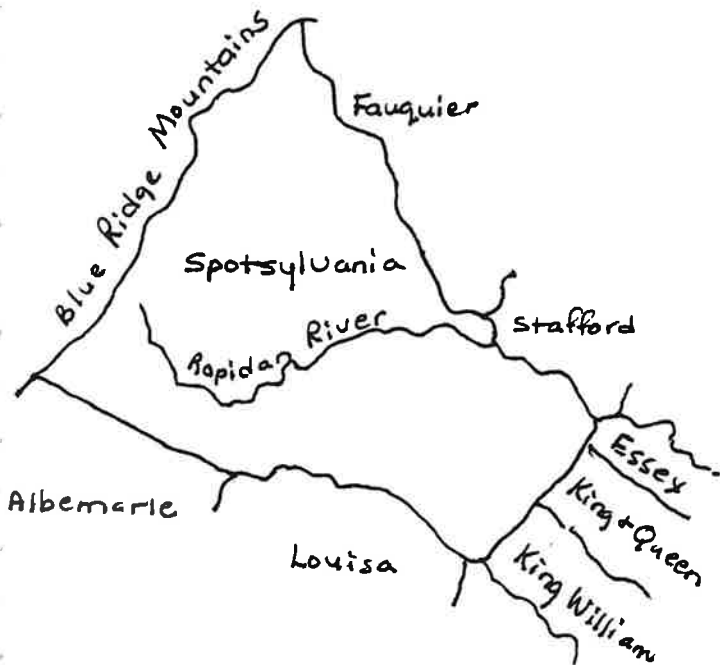
In 1752, the parish of Bromfield was created from St. Mark's in Culpeper County, and was situated in the western part of the state. In 1793, it became Madison County. Bishop Meade called it "old Bloomfield Parish." (Vol. II, p.103) Dr. Slaughter said the name is Saxon and means Broomfield. He hoped the original spelling would be restored.

In summary:

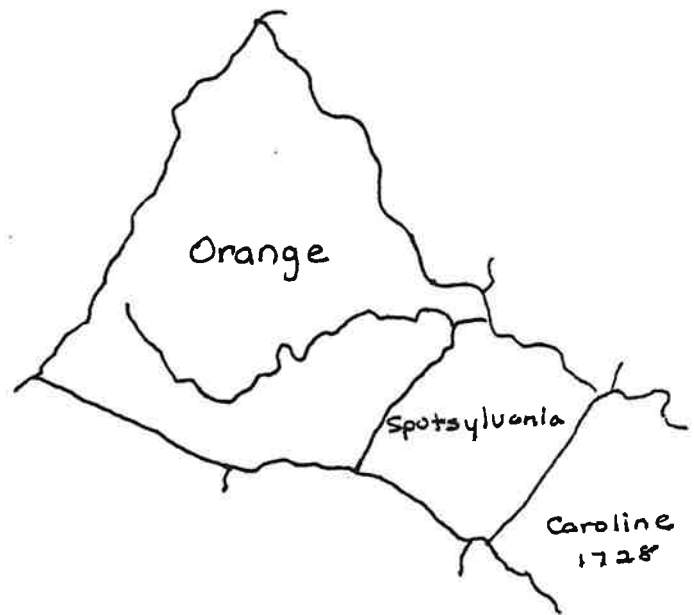
St. George's	Essex 1714-1720 Spotsylvania 1720-
St. Mark's	Spotsylvania 1730-1734 Orange 1734-1752 Culpeper 1748-
St. Thomas'	Orange 1740-
Bromfield	Culpeper 1752-1793 Madison 1793-

On the following page is a series of maps showing the development of counties in the area of our Rucker ancestors.

# Development of Orange County



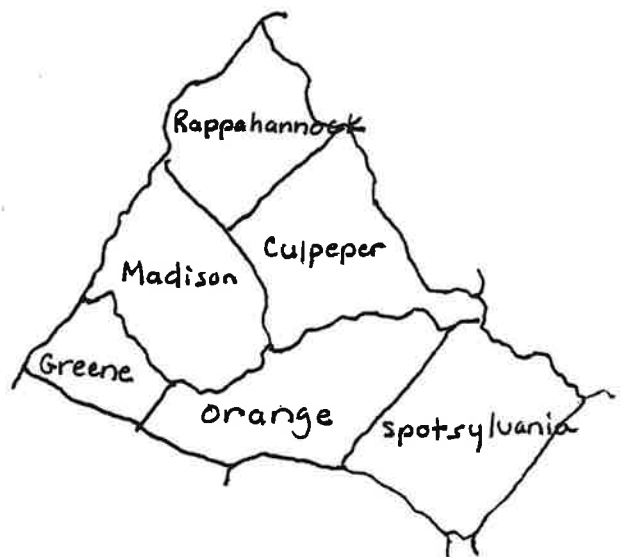
1. Spotsylvania - 1720  
formed from Essex, King  
and Queen, and King William



2. Orange - 1734  
formed from  
Spotsylvania



3. Culpeper - 1748  
from Orange  
Madison - 1793  
from Culpeper



4. Rappahannock - 1833  
from Culpeper  
Greene - 1838  
from Orange

## SETTLING ORANGE COUNTY

Orange County, as it was created in 1734 from Spotsylvania County, contained a vast area. Orange was named in honor of William, Prince of Orange in Holland, who became King William III of England. The General Assembly set the bounds as "southerly by the line of Hanover County, northerly by the Grant of Lord Fairfax (Rappahannock River) and westerly, by the utmost limits of Virginia." It contained the present counties of Orange, Culpeper, Madison, Rappahannock, and Greene in the area east of the Blue Ridge Mountains. To the west it contained all of Virginia plus the present states of West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. The Ruckers first lived in Essex County, but soon moved to this beautiful land, east of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

The first settlement of white men in this area was at Germanna, where Gov. Alexander Spotswood, in 1714, brought over a group of German artisans to work in his iron mines and furnaces. Spotswood is noted for helping to develop this area that would soon be named Orange County because of his 1716 expedition to the crest of the "great mountains" (Blue Ridge). "The Knights of the Golden Horseshoe," as the fifty or more members of this expedition have been called, and other Tidewater planters immediately began to patent extensive lands above the falls of the Rappahannock River. Spotsylvania County was named for this influential man.

To induce settlement in the frontier land, the patent system was created. The patents of seventeenth century Virginia required "seating and planting" of the designated tract within three years or forfeiture of the land. As this rule was often abused it became necessary in 1666 for the General Assembly to define the terms of "seating and planting" a patent: They said "building an house and keeping a stock one whole yeare upon the land shall be accounted seating; and that cleering, tending and planting an acre of ground shall be accounted planting."

As you can see, it was very easy to seat a plantation. To protect his patent, a person either built a small cabin, grazed a few cows or hogs, or planted as little as one acre. The yeoman farmer was interested in a few hundred acres to support his family. The wealthy plantation owner was interested in making a quick profit and patented

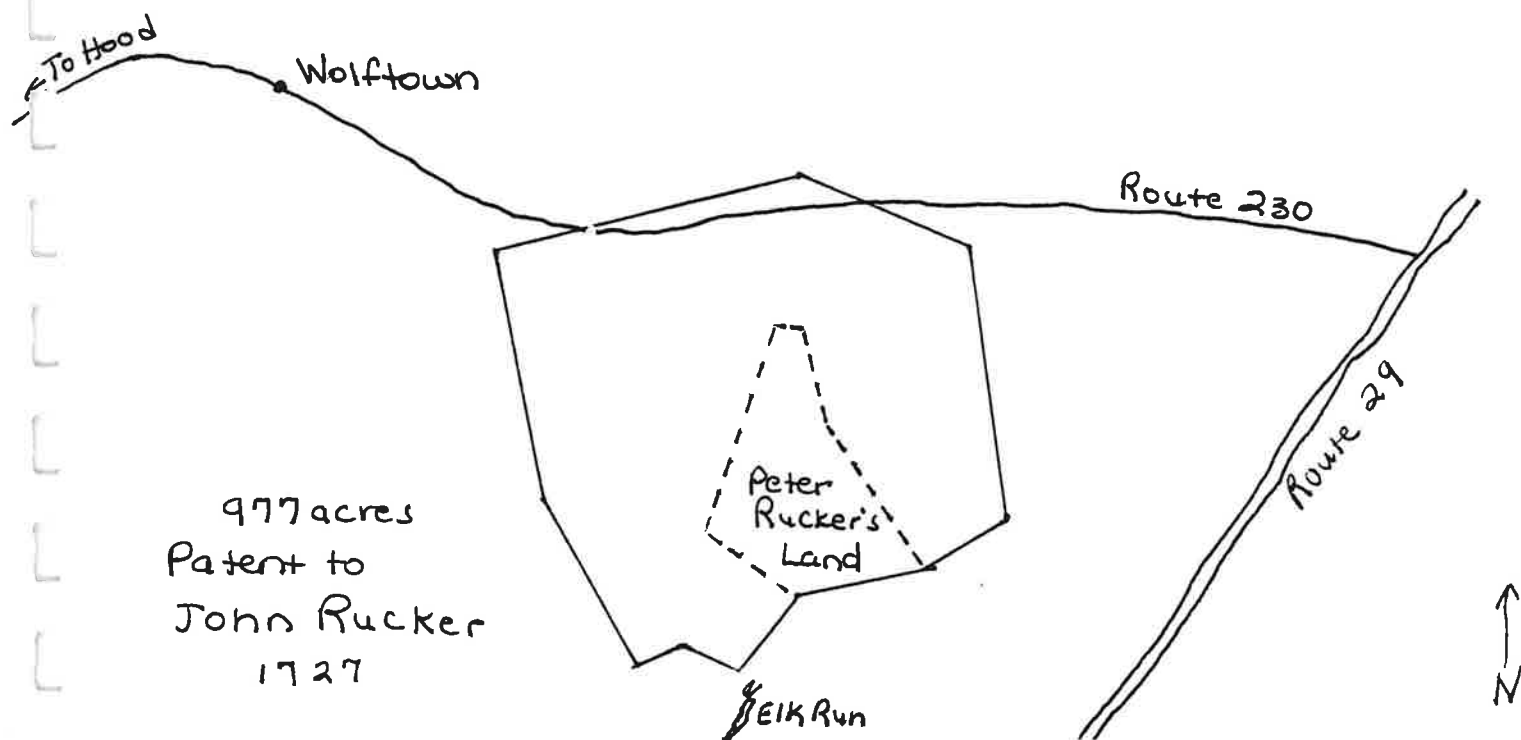


huge acreage. Spotswood himself took out a 28,000 acre grant which included the settlement at Germanna, and a 40,000 acre grant west of Germanna. Another large grant was the "Octonia Grant," issued in 1728, containing 24,000 acres. (see Octonia Grant).

The majority of the grants averaged about 10,000 acres and were quickly resold for a profit. It was part of such a grant that John Rucker purchased in 1727 to be divided among his family.

After studying early maps and deeds of the Ruckers, I have determined that our ancestors lived in the area bounded on the south by the Rapidan (named Rapid Anne by Gov. Spotswood) on the east by the Robinson River (called Robertson River on early maps) and on the west by Elk Run in today's Madison County. The only evidence today, other than court house records, of Ruckers in that area is the grave of Angus Rucker.

A big help in identifying these patents and early Rucker deeds is a new book, just printed by Ben H. Coke, of Lexington, Kentucky: The Underwood Family From Madison County, Virginia. He has researched all the early deeds of Madison County and drawn them on a topo map. It is fascinating and gives us clues to the whereabouts of our early ancestors.



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THE OCTONIA GRANT  
Sometimes known as the "Beverley Tract"

The Octonia Grant contained an area of land about two miles wide and eighteen miles long with the Rapidan River and the South River as its northern boundaries. It extended along the south banks of the Rapidan from Laurel Run, just north of the Town of Orange, to Stanardsville in present day Greene County.

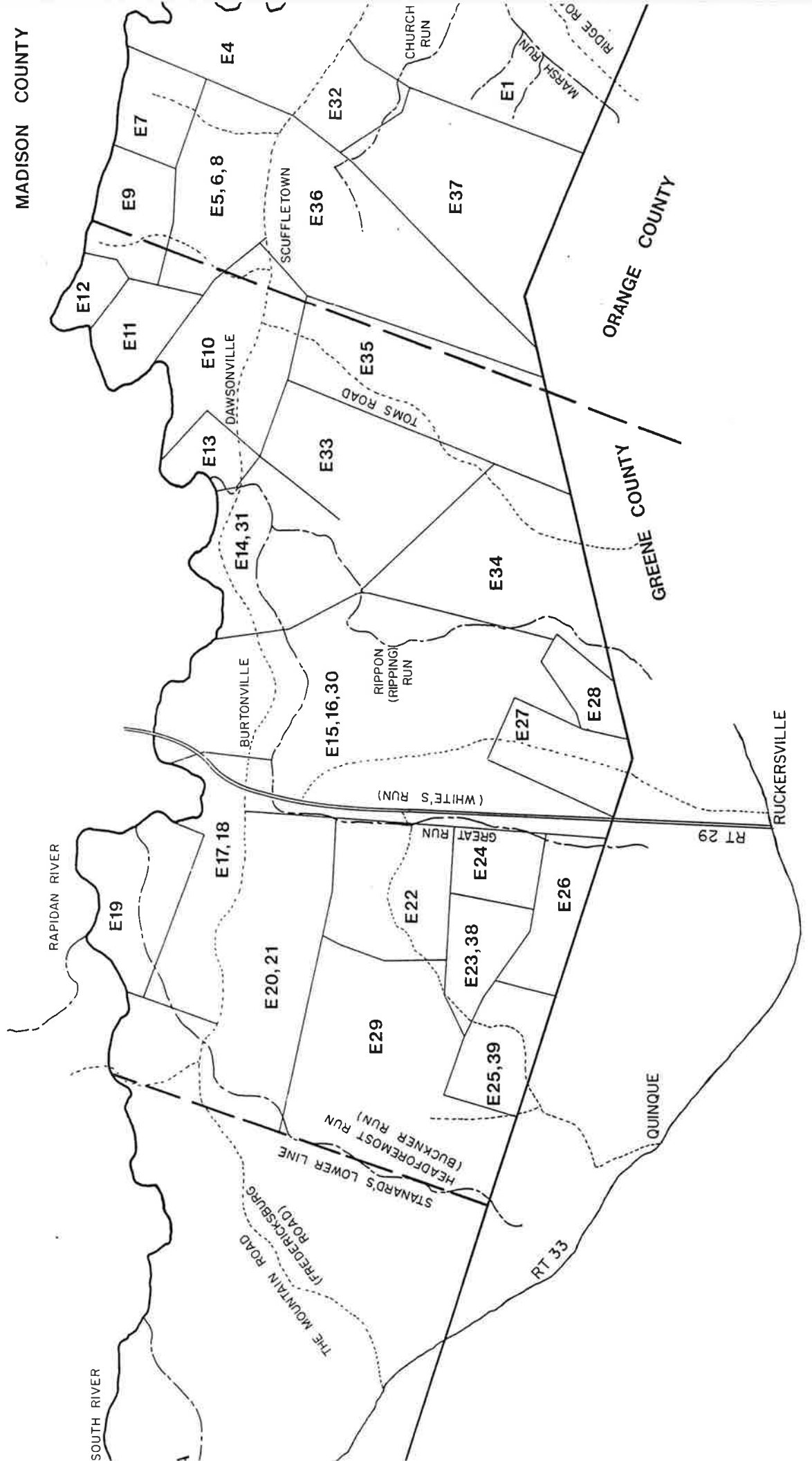
After Gov. Spotswood's trip over the mountains with the "Knights of the Golden Horseshoe," many large grants were taken up by the men on that expedition. It was called "The Octonia Grant" as it was patented by eight of Spotswood's associates. The Octonia Grant contained 24,000 acres and was surveyed 7 September 1721 by James Taylor. The original plat is at the Virginia Historical Society and is reproduced in the book: The Octonia Grant, by J. Randolph Grymes, Jr.

The grant was not taken up and in 1729, it was granted again to Robert Beverley, son of Capt. Harry Beverley, one of the original grantees. Robert died in 1733 and it was given to his son, Harry Beverley. In 1765, 9,908 acres were to be sold at public auction. The ones in the area of Ruckersville are as follows:

- E 10 - 372 a. to Robt Johnson, later sold at auction to Thomas Rucker. D. B. 18, p.277.
- E 14, 31 - 340 a. to May Burton. D. B. 15, p.106.
- E 15, 16, 30 - 1,325 a. to Benjamin Head.
- E 27 - 195 a. to Robt. Pearson. D. B. 16, p.253.
- E 28 - 100 a. to Joshua Stapp. D. B. 15, p.116.
- E 33 - 434 a. to May Burton. D. B. 18, p.98.
- E 34 1). 300 a. to John Rucker.
  - 2). 122 a. to Jeremiah Rucker. D. B. 21, p.207.

The map on the next page was drawn by J. Randolph Grymes, 1977, reconstructed from the land records of Orange County.

The Octonia Grant, Reconstructed  
 from the Land Records of Orange County  
 by J. Randolph Grymes, Jr., 1977



## CHURCHES

Regular attendance at Anglican services was required by law. The General Assembly, in 1643, established the law that the only legal church in Virginia was the Anglican Church. A tithe or tax was established for the support of the church. County sheriffs collected this tithe from all able bodied males over the age of 16. This law was not repealed until the time of Revolutionary War.

The Ruckers, originating from Germany, had to support the church of England, whether they wanted to or not. They did so faithfully.

Bishop Meade, in his Old Churches and Families of Virginia, 1878, said: "St. Thomas' Parish had within its limit three churches,--viz: The Pine Stake Church, the Middle or Brick Church, and the Orange Church.

"The last named, and the oldest of the three, situated near Ruckersville, a small village about eighteen miles from Orange Courthouse, in what is now the county of Greene, is still standing, though it has long ceased to be used as a place of worship by an Episcopal congregation." It wasn't many years later before that church collapsed. (Vol. II, p.84-85)

Philip Slaughter in his History of St. Mark's Parish wrote that in 1732 two new churches were projected within the bounds of St. Mark's. The first was the Lower or Great Fork Church. The second was built "convenient to the Southwest Mountain road, on the first run below the chapel," and John Lightfoot and John Rucker were ordered "to pitch on the place near to some good spring." This was the old church near Ruckersville, in the county of Greene. (p.7)

The "History of Ruckersville Baptist Church," 1952, incorrectly identifies the John Rucker above as the Uncle of Thomas who settled on "Rippen" Run. Actually John and Thomas were brothers. It was Thomas' son, John, who founded the town of Ruckersville and settled on Rippins Run.

G. MacLaren Brydon, in a letter dated December 12, 1950, to Mrs. A. L. Hord of Ruckersville, wrote about the site of an old church that stood on a hill just outside of Ruckersville. "I think this was unquestionably the site of Orange Church which was one of the churches

of St. Thomas Parish in Orange County. As you doubtless know, Greene County was formed from Orange and the territory of both counties was in St. Thomas Parish... Indeed there were two churches near Ruckersville. One was a very, very early church called Mountain Chapel 'erected in about 1725, ten miles northwest of Orange Court House not far from the present town of Ruckersville and near the Indian Mound on the Rapidan which is one mile east of the Greene County line.' This chapel went to ruin in a short time and was superseded by the Orange Church nearby.

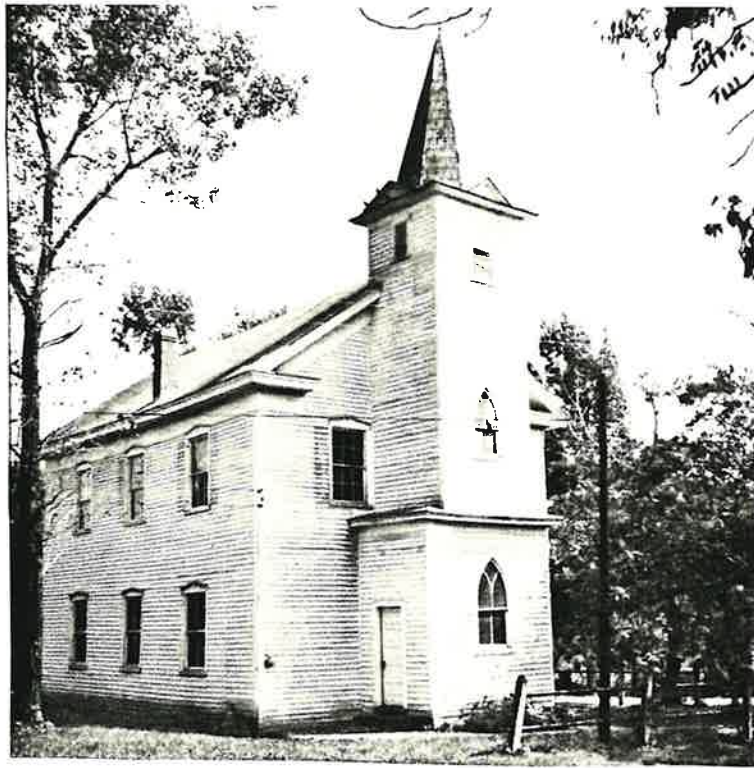
"The second church near Ruckersville, succeeding that first Mountain Chapel, was called 'Orange Church about half a mile from Ruckersville, a wooden building erected about 1732, was in possession of the Methodists for a long time, still standing but in a very ruinous condition in Bishop Meade's time. Was torn down in the (18)60's.'" Dr. Brydon was quoting from the report of the Colonial Churches Commission of the Diocese of Virginia in 1921.

W. W. Scott, in "A History of Orange County, Virginia", suggested that the Orange Church was built about 1740 when St. Thomas' Parish was cut off from St. Mark's and not the earlier date mentioned above.

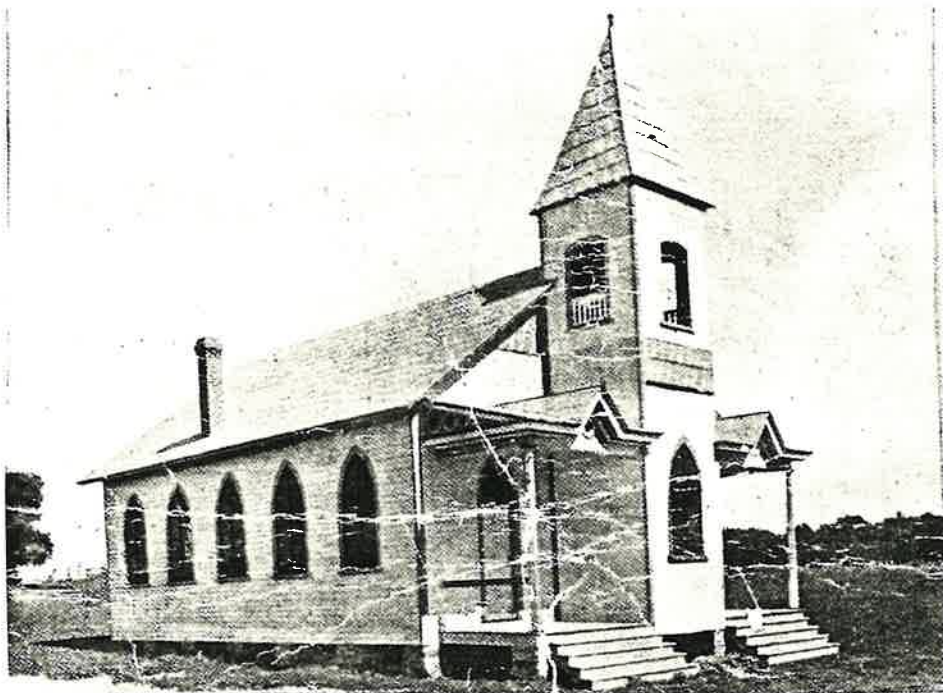
"The spot selected was on what is now known as the Church Hill Farm owned by Mr. Will Morris. The building was in front of the present home with the grave end in the rear and side. Three springs were near, but the Church Spring was the one back of the church." ("History of Ruckersville Baptist Church")

The site of the Ruckersville Church now is a vacant field, one half mile west of Ruckersville, across from the fire house.

The church at Ruckersville was an Anglican Church until the Revolution when it became disloyal to support the Church of England. Most churches became "Union" churches used by all denominations. Dr. Brydon, in the letter cited above, continues: This church "never did become a Union Church in the accepted sense of the term but after the passage of the Act of 1802 by the Virginia Legislature when all the Glebe farms were taken away from the Episcopal Church, it became customary for the old parish churches to be used by all denominations." In this case it was used by the Methodists until some time during the 1860s when it was torn down. No one in those days ever made any repairs to a former Anglican Church. Congregations continued to use it until it collapsed.



The "Old Orange Church"



Ruckersville Baptist Church  
1910



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It was decided to build the new church at the east end of Ruckersville, on a piece of land given by Major Benjamin Herndon. The deed, dated 1879, stated that the "building now being erected on the lot above described shall be used and held equally and jointly by the Religious Denomination before named." Those named were the Methodist, the Baptist and the Disciples Church.

In the early 1890s, each denomination organized as separate groups. The Baptists in 1906 decided to build their own church and purchased the lot adjoining the the Union Church property from J. M. Shotwell. The new church was dedicated September 14, 1910. After a while the Union Church was disbanded and then used as a Sunday School for the Ruckersville Baptist church. It was torn down in the mid 1980s.

Most of the Rucker descendants living in the Ruckersville area have attended this church. These families include the Estes, Ewells, Durrers, Sims, and Watsons.

#### VAUTER'S CHURCH IN MADISON COUNTY

Bishop Meade prints a letter that tells of the recollections of the 82 year old Mrs. Sarah Lewis. It said: "Mrs. Lewis is descended from the Pendletons and Gainses, of Culpeper, the Vauters, of Essex, and the Ruckers." She told about "two churches,--the brick church, called F.T., which stood near what is now known as the Slate Mills... The other church was called "South Church,--I presume from its relative situation, being almost due south, and about sixteen miles distant, and four miles below the present site of Madison Court-House. It was a frame building and stood on the land of Richard Vauters. Both buildings were old at the commencement of the Revolutionary War, and soon after, from causes common to the old churches and parishes in Virginia, went into slow decay..." (Vol. II, p.103)

It was also called Vauter's Church because it built was on Richard Vauter's land.

"The Episcopal families around the churches above mentioned were the Ruckers, Barbours, Beales, Keastleys, Lewises, Blafords, Vauters, Strothers, Thorntons, Burtons, Conways, Gipsons, Pannells, and Gaineses."

## RUCKER CEMETERIES

In colonial times, pioneers set aside a plot of land on their homestead to be used as a graveyard of their families. Church cemeteries possibly were too far away and roads inadequate to transfer the dead to burying grounds and it became family tradition to bury the deceased at home. Unfortunately, in early times, most graves were unmarked or if marked, the stones became lost or deteriorated beyond recognition. We only can guess where our ancestors were buried. Also on every farm was a separate burial ground for slaves. These usually were not marked at all or only with a field stone and only exist now in peoples memory. The site of these burial fields can be pointed out today, but in the future may become lost to us.

It has only been in this century that it has become customary to use public cemeteries. The one in Ruckersville was given by a Rucker descendant. Mr. and Mrs. Angus Estes gave a part of their land to be used as a community cemetery. This was part of original Rucker land on Rippins Run. The deed for this gift was dated July 19, 1929.

The Ruckersville Cemetery is located on Route 653, the old Route 29. There are three family cemeteries in the area of Ruckersville:

A. The house at Aspen Grove has been torn down and there is no sign of any markers from the graveyard. The house was located in the grove or trees facing northeast. The cemetery was across the road a little to the left. Bales of hay cover the spot so there's no way to look for markers. Eva Davidson, in Rucker Kinsmen, wrote: "There are said to be 100 graves of family and slaves in the cemetery at Aspen Grove--which is between the front of the present house (now gone) and the entrance to the 'Old Road' coming in from the east--but now no longer in use. Many small headstones marking graves are buried below the surface of earth in the graveyard." (p.54)

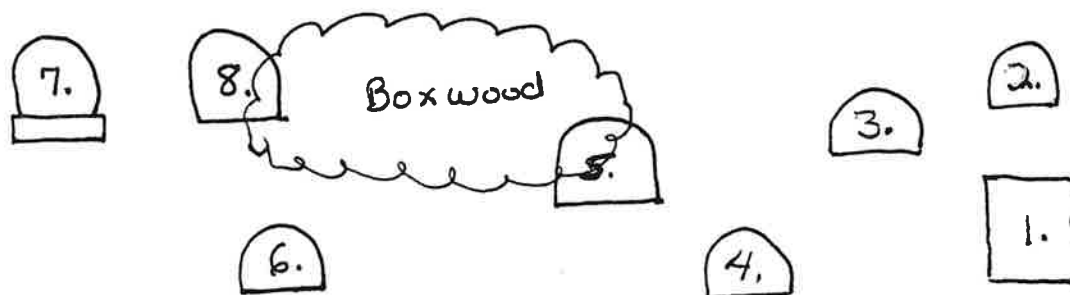
B. On Route 230, 2.7 miles west of Route 29, in Madsion County is the Gentry Farm and Ephraim Rucker Cemetery. The farm was a Rucker home for at least three generations. It has been in the Hoffman family for four generations, the present owners being Joyce Hoffman and her husband Joseph Edward Gentry. The house is modern, built by the Hoffmans, and restored by the Gentrys.

Behind the home is the grave of Capt. Angus Rucker of Revolutionary War fame. On October 31, 1976, the Montpelier Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution placed a marker by his grave. A gala ceremony was held with Rucker descendants in attendance. The large flat stone shows the wear of ages. It has cracks that have been repaired and the inscription is barely readable. Luckily for us, the inscription was published in Wood's Rucker Family Genealogy, p.275. (see below)

An unknown source said "The graves in this old Ephraim Rucker Cemetery are well preserved and many of the old ones have stones which still show their inscription very clearly." This was written in the 1920s, too bad the inscriptions weren't written down.

The stones are as follows:

1. Angus Rucker, "Departed this life on September 21, 1836, in the 89th year of his age, an officer of the Revolution and for many years a soldier of the cross."
2. Unreadable
3. Our Little \_\_\_\_\_. b. Nov. 18, 1848, d. Feb. 26, 1852.
4. Unreadable
5. James Blakey (Angus Rucker's daughter married a Blakey) departed this life 30 March 1847, 52 years old.
6. In memory of N. Blakey, son of J. E. Blakey, departed this live 7 July 1851, 1 month, 15 days.
7. Eleanor V. Hoffman, May 19, 1868 - April 7, 1914.
8. Francis Hoffman (tombstone was under boxwood, so couldn't be read



C. "Friendly Acres," located on Route 33, one half mile east of Ruckersville, has a small grave yard behind the house. There are a number of stone or slate markers, but only one engraved. It is to Allen O. Rucker and located near the center of the plot. The slave grave-yard is to the west and down the hill.

A. O. R.  
1801  
1841



Grave of  
Angus Rucker

DAR  
Dedication of  
Marker  
Honoring  
Capt. Angus Rucker

Anna Watson  
speaker



Rucker Descendants  
at  
Dedication Ceremony

Oct. 31, 1976

8

## ROADS OF ORANGE COUNTY

Nathaniel Pawlett, author of a series of books on the roads of Virginia, wrote that the Indians had been gone from the Piedmont area for many years before the white man began settling the interior. So there were no "paths" to follow.

With the patenting of tracts of land, roads had to be built. In the tidewater, rivers were the main mode of transportation. Above the fall line, rivers became smaller and were navigable only by small boats. It became necessary to develop roads for settlers to carry their belongings in and ship their goods to market.

If paths existed, they were widened for use. If not, paths were laid out and maintained by those using them. Without the tools and knowhow of road building, the first "roads" were very primitive. They were muddy in the spring, dusty in summer, and virtually impassable in winter.

The General Assembly passed a law in 1661 that surveyors "lay out the most convenient ways to the church, to the court, and make the said wayes 40 foote broad, and make bridges where there is occasion." (Act LXXXIX) 40 feet seems wide, they were more likely 10 feet or at least wide enough for the largest carriages.

Surveyors would lay out or "view" a roadway to a specific destination. The Surveyors were aided by his neighbors and their fieldhands at the order of the courts. After completion of the road, an "overseer" was appointed to see to the maintenance of the road.

One of the early functions of county courts was the establishing and maintaining of roads. They could "order" every male titheable to build, widen, and improve the road system. These individuals had to furnish their own tools, wagons, and teams and were required to labour for six days each year or be brought up before the court.

The Ruckers did their share in building and maintaining the roads in early Orange County. The following "orders" were published in the Orange County Road Orders 1734-1749, by Anne Bush Miller, 1984.

1. "It is ordered that John Rucker by surveyor of the Road in the room of John Lightfoot, Gent." (17 June 1735, p.11)
2. "Henry Downs, John Rucker, and James Coward are appointed to View

which is the best way for a road to go from the Piny Mountain Run to the Road that Joseph Phillips hath already cleared and to make report to the next court." (18 May 1736, p.11)

3. "Zachary Taylor, Gent., is hereby appointed overseer of ye road from the Church to ye tombstone and its ordered that all ye male tithables of John Rucker (plus 18 others) work on ye same and that they be exempted from all other roads." (27 April 1738, p.31)

4. "Liberty is granted to Tho<sup>s</sup> Rucker on his petition to clear a road for himself along Anthony Heads Tract into the road to blue run Mill." (24 Aug, 1738, p.33)

5. "Ordered that the road petitioned for by the Inhabitants of Pomunkey be make according as laid off by Zachary Taylor, George Taylor and John Rucker, Gent, viz<sup>t</sup> to begin at pleaseant run and to continue up the road near the Course the road runs, crossing Terrys run at John Griffins ford thence up the ridge to about three miles from the Church thence the nighest way into the mountain road right ag<sup>t</sup> cap<sup>t</sup> John Ruckers..." (27 Sept., 1739, p.40)

6. "Ordered that John Rucker, Gent, with his own people clear the road and make bridges and cowseys from the road ab<sup>t</sup> half a mile from his race ground into the road called the Courthouse road and that he be exempted from all other roads." (25 March 1742. p.67)

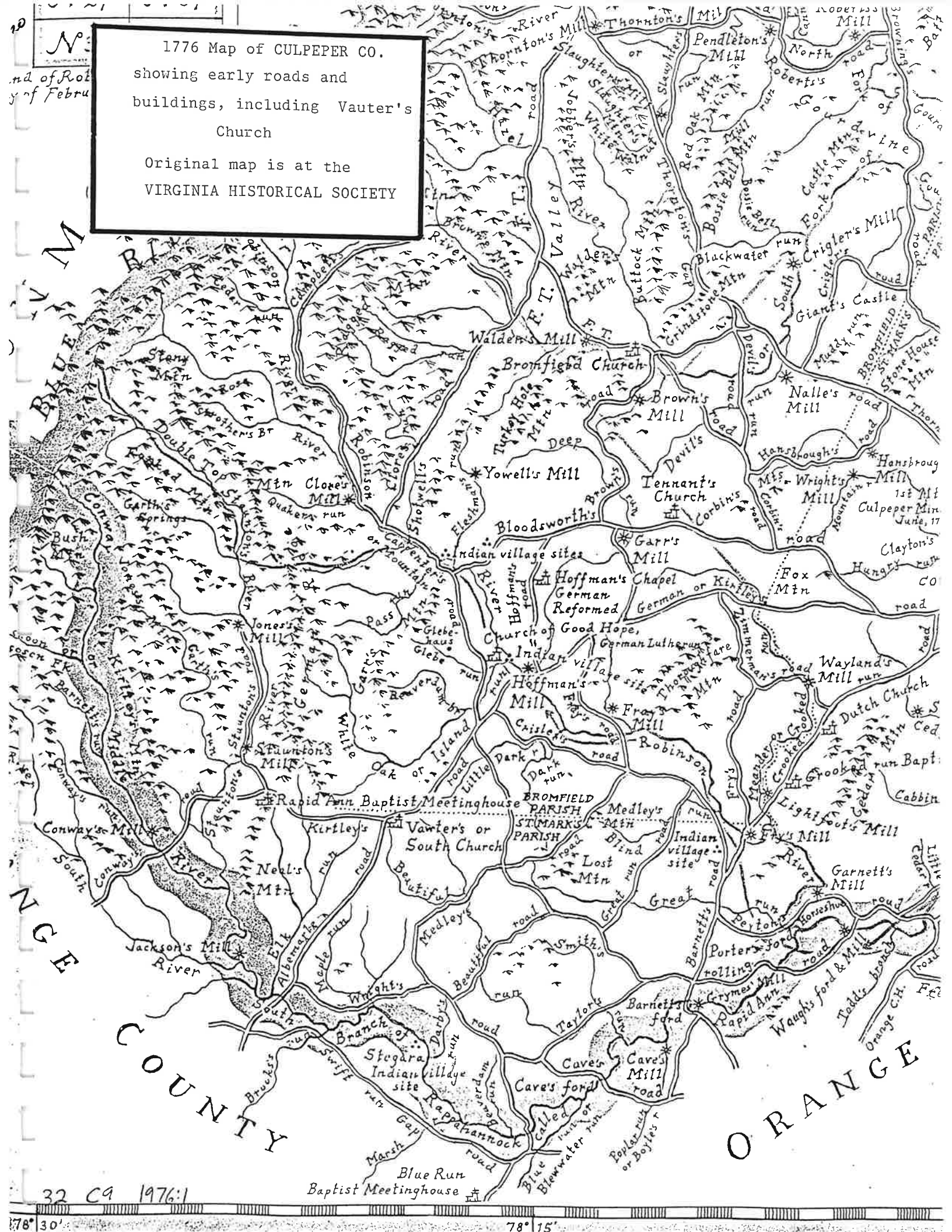
In "Spotsylvania County Road Orders, 1722-1734," by Nathaniel Mason Pawlett, there are 13 listings for John Rucker. Three of these are also for his father, Peter Rucker. They date from 1727 to 1734, when this area became Orange County. An example is dated 6 June 1732, O. B., p.127, John Rucker petitioned a road and Peter Rucker was ordered to be overseer of the road.

There is one interesting road in the area, route 621, the old Plank Road. Joyner, in The First Settlers, wrote about a plank road built circa 1850 being of a new design. "The road was to be ten feet wide and consist of wooden planks laid lengthwise with 8 foot long cross planks placed across them. The road was completed prior to the Civil War and was used extensively for the transport of troops." This road is now in Madison County north of the Rapidan River.



1776 Map of CULPEPER CO.  
showing early roads and  
buildings, including Vauter's  
Church

Original map is at the  
VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## COUNTY TAVERNS

Our colonial ancestors worked hard to settle the frontier of Virginia. They also played hard. Their get-togethers were in the form of "Quilting Parties," barbeques, Sunday church services (people would travel for miles to get caught up on the local news), and court days. In between times, the planter would visit the local tavern or "ordinary" as the English colonist called them. They provided "good spirits and fellowship for gentlemen, the common planter, and the weary traveler." An ordinary was a small affair of a few rooms, usually kept in the proprietor's home. He was expected to serve alcoholic beverages, meals, and lodging for the traveler, and stabling for the horses. The kitchen was usually the sleeping place of the overnight guests.

This was probably true of John Rucker's "Ordinary." In History of Early Spotsylvania County, John Rucker is listed, in 1731, as having an "Ordinary and Rolling House." (p.144) In Orange County: "License for keeping Ordinary at his own house in this county is granted to Capt<sup>n</sup> JOHN RUCKER on his petition he having according to Law entered into Bond and paid the Governours fees." (Orange County D. B., Appointments and Licenses, p.240, September 24, 1742.) John died early in 1743. Another license was granted to James Rucker (brother of John), November 27, 1746: "On the petition of James Rucker, he is allowed to keep Ordinary at his house in this county for one year from this time giving security wherupon he with George Taylor and Edward Spencer, Gent, intered into and acknowledged their bond for his keeping the said Ordinary according to Law." (O. B., p.104)

John Rucker, son of Peter, immigrant, was quite a feisty, party loving soul. He loved his punch, gambling (remember his race track), and politicking. We know this because of the records he left behind. In the Orange County Deed Book 1, Judgements 1735: DOWNS vs RUCKER: Henry Downs vs. John Rucker. For assault, trespass and battery. Damage of L50 asked. Later a letter of Henry Downs requested the action be dropped.

And his most famous "serving of Punch" at a county election, reproduced on the following page from Sudie Rucker Wood's Rucker Family Genealogy, p.7-8. Six months after this incidence, John died. Was his death connected to this injury? This is an interesting point to ponder.

22  
Account of John Rucker's

Famous "Punch Serving"

copied from

Sudie Rucker Wood's

The Rucker Family Genealogy

He was certainly interested in politics, judging from the scrap that took place at an election in Orange Co. The following is copied from the *Journals of the House of Burgess of Virginia*, 1742-47, p. 50-69: "On Saturday, June 5, 1742, Mr. Richard Winslow, Sheriff of Orange Co., John Rucker, John Burk, John MacCoy, Honourous Powell, John Snow, and Timothy Terrell, are found guilty of Great Misdemeanours. The said John Rucker, during the time of the election, gave several large bowls of Punch among the people, crying out for those persons who intend to vote for Mr. Slaughter, to come and drink his punch.

The sheriff stayed the Poll and said he would not have any Punch drank on the Bench, but would have a fair election, to which Mr. Chew replied that he would have Punch and drink it, and that the sheriff should not hinder him.

As soon as the tumult ceased, the candidate and sheriff returned to the Court House. Proceeding to take the Poll, Mr. Jonathan Gibson and John Newport stood at the doors with drawn swords. After the undersheriff, John Newport, was placed at the door, one, Mr. John Rucker, came to the door, and demanded entrance, which he had, and then the said Rucker threw the undersheriff and another person, headlong out of the door. The said Rucker insisted to clear the doors, that every one might have free entrance. He seized the undersheriff's sword with both hands, endeavoring to break it, which the undersheriff prevented by drawing it through his (Rucker's) hands. One, John Burks, came to the said Rucker's assistance and laid violent hands on the undersheriff, who was rescued by the bystanders. There was so much disturbance that the sheriff closed the poll til eight of the clock the next morning, Saturday, June 19, 1742."

A petition of John Rucker, John McCoy, Honourous Powell, and Timothy Terrell, setting forth that "they had surrendered themselves being truly sensible of their offences," was presented to the House and read. After being reprimanded from the Chair and paying fees, they were discharged.

Six months after this occurrence in the court house, John Rucker died, a young man.

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PETER RUCKER

The Ruckers who came to America were survivors, the kind of people needed to settle the frontiers of this new county. They originated in Germany and met the challenges that America presented. The Ruckers propagated themselves on this land with their rough and hardy stock and their many descendants today live all over the United States.

Peter Rucker, the first of his family in America, arrived circa 1690 in a dramatic way. His ship sank! Peter swam ashore, married, had ten children, and lived for many years.

Peter is first recorded in Essex County near Vauter's (Vawter) Church where in 1704 he was paying tythes on 500 acres of land. Vauter's Church is located now on Route 17, outside Supply, Virginia. Peter's land was just below the mill of Samuel Lawson on OccupaCia Creek, now called Farmer's Hill Creek. (Warner, History of old Rappahannock before 1690, p.166)

His will (recorded Feburary 23 1743/4, Will Book 1, p.299, Orange County) stated that he lived in St. Mark's Parish in Orange County and was a planter. At that time Orange County, east of the Blue Ridge Mountains, contained today's Rappahannock, Madison, Culpeper, and Greene Counties. This makes it difficult to pinpoint the actual area that Peter and his family lived. We need to look at more clues.

Peter may have lived on land patented by his son John Rucker in 1727. John Rucker of St. George's Parish patented 977 acres of land in the same parish on the lower side of a run of the Rappahannock River, adjoining that of Machael Holt. (Land Grant Vol. 13, p.161, 17 Aug. 1727). St. George's Parish was in the county of Spotsylvania, formed in 1720 from Essex, King and Queen, and King William Counties. Spotsylvania, in addition to its area today, contained all the land that in 1734 became Orange County.

John Rucker of St. Mark's Parish, Spotsylvania (St. Mark's was created in 1730 by a division of St. George's, and in 1734, St. Mark's became Orange County) deeded 420 acres of land to Peter Rucker and wife, Elizabeth, for their natural lives; afterwards to be divided between Peter Jr. and Ephraim Rucker by a line drawn from William Rucker's line running south to William Hall's, then to Philip Stogdale's, land now in

the actual possession of said Rucker out of 977 acres patented by John in the forks of the Robinson River, adjoining Isaac Tinsley's, William Hall's William Rucker's, and Peter Rucker Jr's. (Deed Book B, p.493, February 5, 1734/5, Spotsylvania.)

The Rappahannock River, after Gov. Spotswood and his "Knights of the Golden Horseshoe" returned from the Blue Ridge Mountains, was renamed the Rapid Anne (Rapidan). "In the forks of the Robinson and Rapidan Rivers" is in todays Madison County. Peter and his children lived in this area of Orange which in 1749 became Culpeper County. In 1793 Madison County was created from Culpeper County using the Robinson River as the dividing line. Most of Peter's children lived in the same area.

If you study the topo map in Ben Coke's book on The Underwood Family, you will see Peter's land is south of Wolftown in Madison County.



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Each one of Peter's children were first recorded as living in Essex before moving to Orange County. A few moved to other Virginia counties. The following information is taken from Sudie Rucker Wood's The Rucker Family Genealogy and shows where each child eventually settled.

1. John died 1742/3 in Orange County. (Sudie Wood pointed out on p.4 that John Rucker lived in what is now Madison. She was clever to have picked up on that and pass it on to us. With county lines changing daily, it is now difficult to determine that except with careful study.)
2. Peter Jr. lived on land adjoining his father's but left no further record.
3. Thomas died 1763 in Culpeper County (Madison).
4. Elizabeth married James Pierce, lived in Orange County. Wood book gives no clue, but it was probably Madison County as did the others.
5. Margaret married Isaac Tinsley of Orange County, (Madison). Her brother, John Rucker, deeded to them 100 acres adjoining his own property. (Deed Book I, p.270, Orange County, 17 May 1730.) The Tinsleys in 1758 moved to Amelia County.
6. William lived in Culpeper (Madison) before moving to Amelia Co. In 1749, William Rucker sold 193 acres of "land received by inheritance". This deed was recorded in Culpeper County, formed from Orange in 1749. (Deed Book A, p.117)
7. Mary married William Offill. In 1734 John Rucker deeded to his sister Mary 100 acres of land in St. Mark's Parish, Spotsylvania, adjoining Anne Rucker's and John Rucker's line. (Deed Book B, p.496, Spotsylvania, later Orange.) In 1755, living in Broomfield Parish, Culpeper, she sold 100 acres, part of the patent made by John Rucker, adjoining Ephraim Rucker, Isaac Tinsley, Richard Vawter, Jeremaih Early, and Peter Rucker. (Deed Book B, p.301, Culpeper).
8. James sold his land and moved to Greenbrier County, VA. (now West Virginia).
9. Ephraim died in 1796 in Madison County.
10. Ann married Shem Cook and moved to Amelia County on land adjoining Isaac Tinsley.



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John Rucker

John<sup>2</sup> Rucker, oldest son of Peter, began adult life in Essex County, moved to King and Queen County by 1725 and lived on a branch of the North Anna River. John patented 977 acres, in 1729; in the area near Wolftown, now Madison County. It was probably about that time that John moved to that area which was then Spotsylvania County. In 1734, it became Orange. John Rucker died a young man, one year before his father. His will was recorded January 28, 1742/43, Will Book 3, p.436, in Orange County.

John was a very unusual young man. He seemed to be the spokesman for family and the most active of all the children. He bought, sold, and made many land deals. I will not attempt to list all of his land deals here. If you are interested, they are in Sudie Rucker Wood's The Rucker Family Genealogy. Some are listed in other parts of this paper. In addition to being a farmer, John seemed to be a land speculator.

He was appointed constable from the Rappahannock River to the Parish line, including the South Mountains in 1731. (O. B. 1730-38, p.35) He helped select the location of the Ruckersville Church in 1732. He purchased lots in the new town of Fredericksburg. He helped build the roads of Spotsylvania and Orange Counties. In 1741, he was sworn as Commissioner of the Peace of Orange Co. on 23 Nov. 1741. (O. B. 1741-43, p.51) He was able to use the word "Gent" after his name (a sign of high position). He was commissioned a Captain for Orange county, 22 May 1740. (O. B. 1738-41, p.163) He was in active service and his estate claimed 2000 lbs. of tobacco for carting arms. (23 Aug. 1744)

Rucker had a race track, and opened an "Ordinary" the year before he died. (Read about these elsewhere in this paper.)

Of John Rucker's and wife Susanna Coghill's 12 children, only two remained in the Orange area.

Son, Peter<sup>3</sup> Rucker died in 1794 in what is now Greene County. He sold the 130 acres that his mother had lived on. (D. B. 15, p.94, May 27, 1769, Orange Co.) He bought and sold so much land it is hard to tell just where he lived. He was married twice and had six children.

Daughter, Margaret<sup>3</sup> Rucker, married Isaac Smith. She was deeded property from her father's estate. Her husband's Will was recorded Aug. 26, 1802 in Madison County. The Smiths had ten children.

THOMAS RUCKER

THOMAS<sup>2</sup> RUCKER (Peter<sup>1</sup>) died in Culpeper County, and his Will was probated October 20, 1763. (W. B. A, p.350) He said: "I, Thomas Rucker of Blumfield Parish in the County of Culpeper..." From our studies of county/parish history, we know that today this is Madison County.

Thomas wills his property to his son George: "I give and bequeth unto my beloved son George Rucker the Land and Plantation I now live on, it being Bounded by the Road that now is Thomas Rucker Jun. his line, the river and William Craford's line..."

He gives an adjoining piece to his son John: "I give and Bequeth unto my well beloved son John Rucker all that Tract or Parcel of Land situate (sic), lying and Being in Culpeper County and Bound between Cornelius Ruckers line, Peter Ruckers Line, Michael Ehart Line, Thomas Ruckers Jun. his line, and the road that now parts it from the Land I now live on to him and his heirs forever."

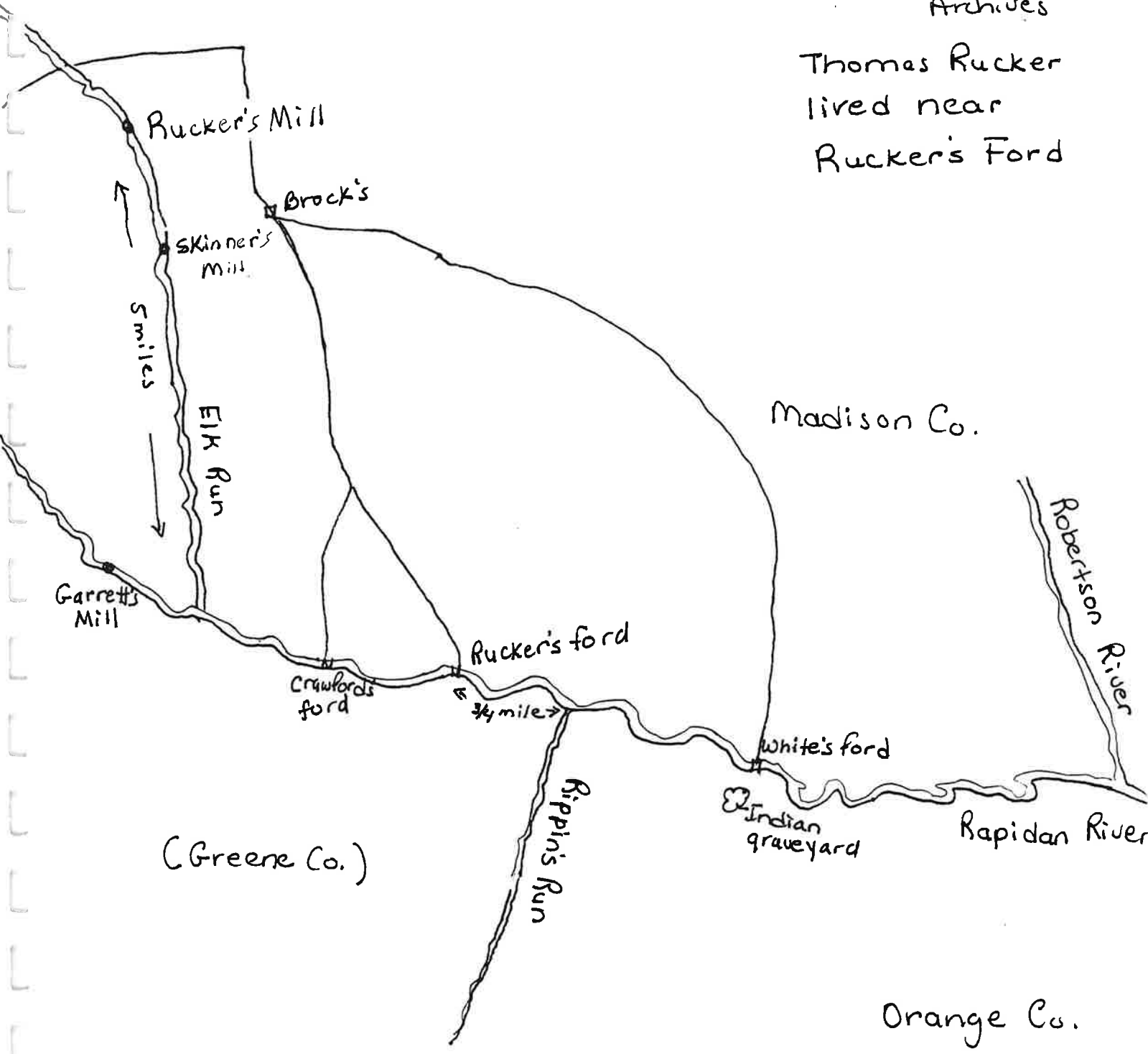
His gives his wife Elizabeth lifetime use of his "manner Plantation I now live on..." He also provides her with livelihood: "I will and Desire that my wife, Elizabeth Rucker, shall have the work and I do lend her the two negroes (Jack and Hannah)..." We have no clue as to what that "work" was. In 1782, Elizabeth was paying on 200 acres of land in Culpeper. After 1788, son George was paying on that land plus his 136 acres.

In 1725, Thomas was living in St. Anne's Parish, Essex County. He was a young man, possibly living at home (Peter Ruckers land near Vauter's Church). He purchased 100 acres of land in Spotsylvania County. (D. B. A., p.143) He sold this land in 1727 and was then living in King and Queen County. He was appointed one of the Magistrates to set up Caroline County in 1727. In Colonial Caroline, by T. E. Campbell, Thomas Rucker was described as being a protégé of Robert Beverley. "Rucker lived on the Three Knotch Road near John Daniel's Mill (Whites now), and left the region shortly after Caroline became a county." Rucker in objecting to the new tobacco laws, was removed from that position. Thomas was living there in 1741 when he was appointed constable in Orange. (O. B. 2, 357) He moved to Orange County before 1747.

In 1730, Thomas patented 876 acres of land in Spotsylvania. 476

Madison County Map  
by John Wood 1821  
original at VA State  
Archives

Thomas Rucker  
lived near  
Rucker's Ford



acres of this patent was sold in 1732 to his brother John. (This was located in St. Mark's Parish which later became Culpeper County.)

In 1739 he purchased from John Rucker 539 acres of land on the North side of the Rapidan River, on Maple Run.

Thomas sold 123 acres of land to William Rucker, August 22, 1747. Thomas was then living in St. Thomas' Parish, Orange County. He patented 347 acres of wash land in 1754, adjoining his own land, and Captain Henry Downs. (Wood, p.176)

However by 1761, Thomas was living in Culpeper (now Madison). He sold 240 acres of land adjoining Julius Christy, Samuel Angels and Thomas Rucker on the Rapidan River. (D. B. C, p.534)

Thomas Rucker certainly moved around. From Essex, to Caroline, to Orange, ending up in what is now Madison County.

Thomas married Elizabeth Reynolds (Wood, p.175) and had thirteen children. He deeded or willed each of his seven sons a parcel of land. His sons are:

1. JOHN RUCKER sold his lands, moved to Greene County, and founded Ruckersville. (see later)

2. George Rucker lived on his father's "Manor Plantation." In 1777, he bought 150 acres of land from his brother John, land on Maple Run, on the North side of the Rapidan. (D. B. H, p.602, Culpeper) His sons went to Georgia.

3. Thomas Rucker Jr. died 1805 in Madison County on land deeded to him by his father. (D. B. C, p.171, 1759, Culpeper) When he died in 1805, he was paying on 190 acres. His widow Elizabeth moved to Greene County, but continued to pay on this land until 1829 when the property was divided and sold. It was described: "Eheart's road on the north; by the Rapidan River on the East; the Rapidan on the West; the Orange road runs through south west corner; Rucker's ford of Rapidan on West; the Orange Mill Run empties into the Rapidan River on the land and so does a branch on the north; adjoins lands of John White, Michael Eheart, the estate divided into 77 lots, 18 2/3 acres each, each valued at \$121.09." (W. B. 5, p.201)

4. Cornelius Rucker died 1761 in Culpeper (Madison). His two sons moved to Ruckersville, Georgia.

5. Peter Rucker moved to Mississippi.

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6. William "Jaw Bones" Rucker married his cousin Elizabeth Smith (Margaret<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>). He was called "Jaw Bones" to distinguish him from his 1st cousin, "William, son to William." (Wood, p.229) Ambrose Booten (Tomagen<sup>3</sup>, Ephraim<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup> Rucker) bought all of William Rucker's land, January 8, 1826, for \$3,057.45. He sold 59 1/2 acres of it to Jarvis Rucker son of William, for \$589. (D. B. 9, p.105, 1826) "He lived, died and was buried on this place, near Hood, Madison Co., Va." (Wood, p.230)

7. Mauldin was named for his father's good friend, Richard Maudlin. They were magistrates together in Caroline County. Mauldin left no record.

#### JOHN RUCKER OF RUCKERSVILLE

JOHN<sup>3</sup> RUCKER (Thomas<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>) was "born in Orange County (later Madison), sold his share of his father's land and moved across the Rapidan into Orange (Later Greene), and founded Ruckersville. He died there in 1794, leaving his wife land on Rippins Run, on the South side of the Rapidan River." (Wood, p.178) His wife, Mary Burton, daughter of May Burton, continued to live there until she died in 1823. (Will probated Feb. 24, 1823, W. B. 6, p.66, Orange County.)

John and Mary had 10 children: Joel, Frankey, Milly, William, Jeremiah, James, John, Mary, Nancy, and Burton.

Son JOEL<sup>4</sup> RUCKER was born in 1767 in Orange County (Greene). He married Dec. 20, 1786, Nancy Oliver, same county. In 1787 he pays his first personal tax, but does not pay on land until 1792, then upon 296 acres of land on Rippins Run.

"After the death of his father, Joel bought a tract of 300 acres of land belonging to his father, which land was not deeded to him until 1824, after the death of his mother, Mary, land adjoining his uncle, May Burton, Minor Rucker, William Henderson, Edward Cason, Mary Rucker, dec'd, and John Head; called 'Beverly Tract.'" (D. B. 30, p.396, 1824, Orange, Wood, p.180) See the section titled "Octania Grant."

Joel Rucker died in 1831 leaving all his land and slaves to his son Minor. His son Elzy had predeceased him. Joel left his son, Blyfield, \$10. (He had previously given him land) (W. B. 7, p.559, Orange)

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1. MINOR<sup>5</sup> RUCKER (Joel<sup>4</sup>, John<sup>3</sup>, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>), in 1822, married Harriett Head. In 1814, he received land from his father in Orange County, and paid taxes on 195 acres on Rippins Run. In Sept. 1834, Minor and wife, Harriett, of Orange, sold their land to Larkin Rucker. Later that year they moved to Missouri.

On Nov. 3, 1838, Minor Rucker and wife Harriett of Missouri, sold Larkin Rucker of Greene County, 60 acres for \$500. (D. B. 37, p.319, Orange)

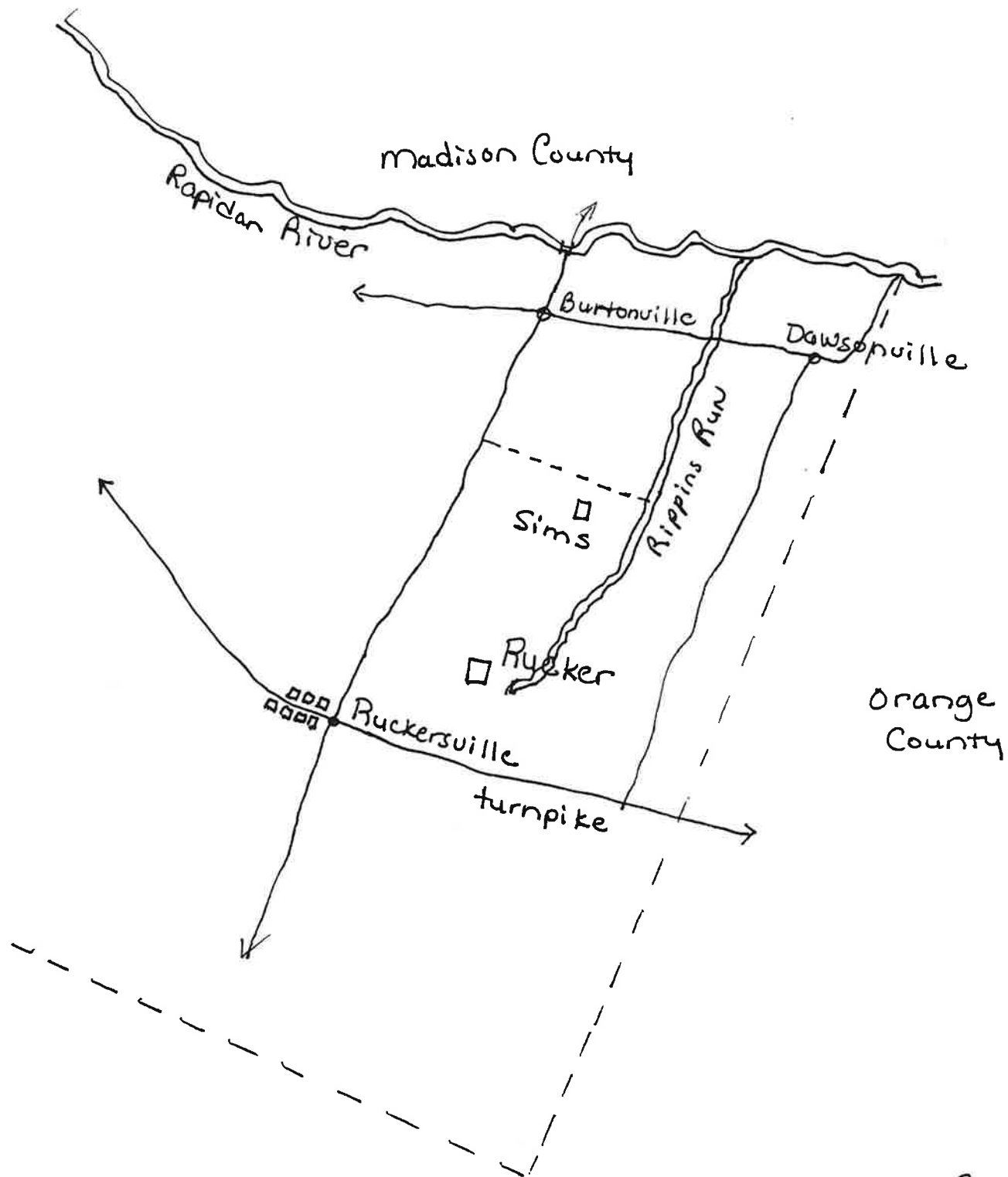
In 1841, Minor sold to his brother, Blyfield, of Greene Co., "A tract of land willed to me by my father, Joel Rucker" for \$250 on the North side of Mine Road, from Cartersville (this possibly is Dawsonville) to Ruckersville, 6 acres and 46 acres, two tracts adjoining Rucker and William White. (Wood, p.180, no deed is cited.)

2. BLYFIELD<sup>5</sup> (pronounced Blif'fil, other places written as Bliffie, Blyfil, Belfield) RUCKER married in 1809 to Nancy White. He inherited 178 acres of land from his father "on the Richmond Road". (Deed dated Nov. 18, 1824, Orange County, now Greene) He also purchased land from his brother, Minor. (see above) Blyfield's will was dated Apr. 1849 (W. B. 1, p.409, Greene). He had seven children: Albert G., William E., Willis W., Minor B., Virginia (Pittman), Frances Ann m. 16 Apr. 1849, Isaac Mitchell, and Allen O. (See Allen O. Rucker-later)

3. WILLIS<sup>6</sup> RUCKER's will was dated Dec. 15, 1900 (W. B. 2, p.213, Greene). He left two legacies to former slaves: 30 acres to William Cole, and 30 acres to Lindsay Rucker Cole. He divided the rest of his land among his two nieces: Mary Estes and Sally Durrer. They each received 31 1/2 acres. Sally Durrer received the land that is today called "Friendly Acres."

3. Elzy<sup>5</sup> Rucker was born 1783 (?), married Jan. 16, 1809, Mary, daughter of Joseph Burton, of Culpeper. They moved to Greenway County, Ky. He died prior to 1831 (father's will). (An Elzy enlisted in the war of 1812, a sergeant, died in Carters County, Ky. Wood, p.181)





Map of Greene County  
under Brig. Gen. P.S. Michie  
March 1866  
pub. 1875  
original at VA State Archives

FRIENDLY ACRES

ALLEN<sup>6</sup> O. RUCKER (Blyfield<sup>5</sup>, Joel<sup>4</sup>, John<sup>3</sup>, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>) was the youngest son of Blyfield and Nancy Rucker. He is buried in the graveyard behind the house at "Friendly Acres." The dates on his tombstone read 1801-1841. His parents supposedly were married in 1809 and his daughter, Sarah, was born in 1844 (see below) so more research will have to be done. The dates 1815-1849 have been suggested.

Allen (no one seems to know what the "O" stands for) married in 1836, to Harriett Pritchett and had five daughters.

1. The oldest, Mary Rucker, married Isaiah Clinton Estes and inherited the land adjoining "Friendly Acres." Her land is located to the west of the main house and the house was built by their son, Angus Estes. It was Angus and his wife who gave a piece of land for the Ruckersville Cemetery. There is presently no one living in the house. Mary had married a Mr. Durrer first and has descendants from both husbands living in Greene County today. Her Estes children are Fritz, Allen, Yates, Angus Clinton, Mary Tinsley, and Mattie Lou.

2. Lucy Catherine Rucker

3. Martha Rucker

4. Ann Rucker, not mentioned in 1850 census.

5. SARAH FRANCES<sup>7</sup> RUCKER was born 29 Aug. 1844. She inherited "Friendly Acres" from her Uncle Willis Rucker. She married 4 Dec. 1864, John Christopher Durrer. John was born 27 March 1834 in Rockingham County and died 5 Nov. 1911 in Greene County. Sarah Frances died 14 May 1916. They are buried in the Durrer Cemetery, Taverner Marshall Farm.

Their children are:

1. Virgie (Bird) Durrer married Henry Peregoy, 9 children.

2. Ellis Durrer never married

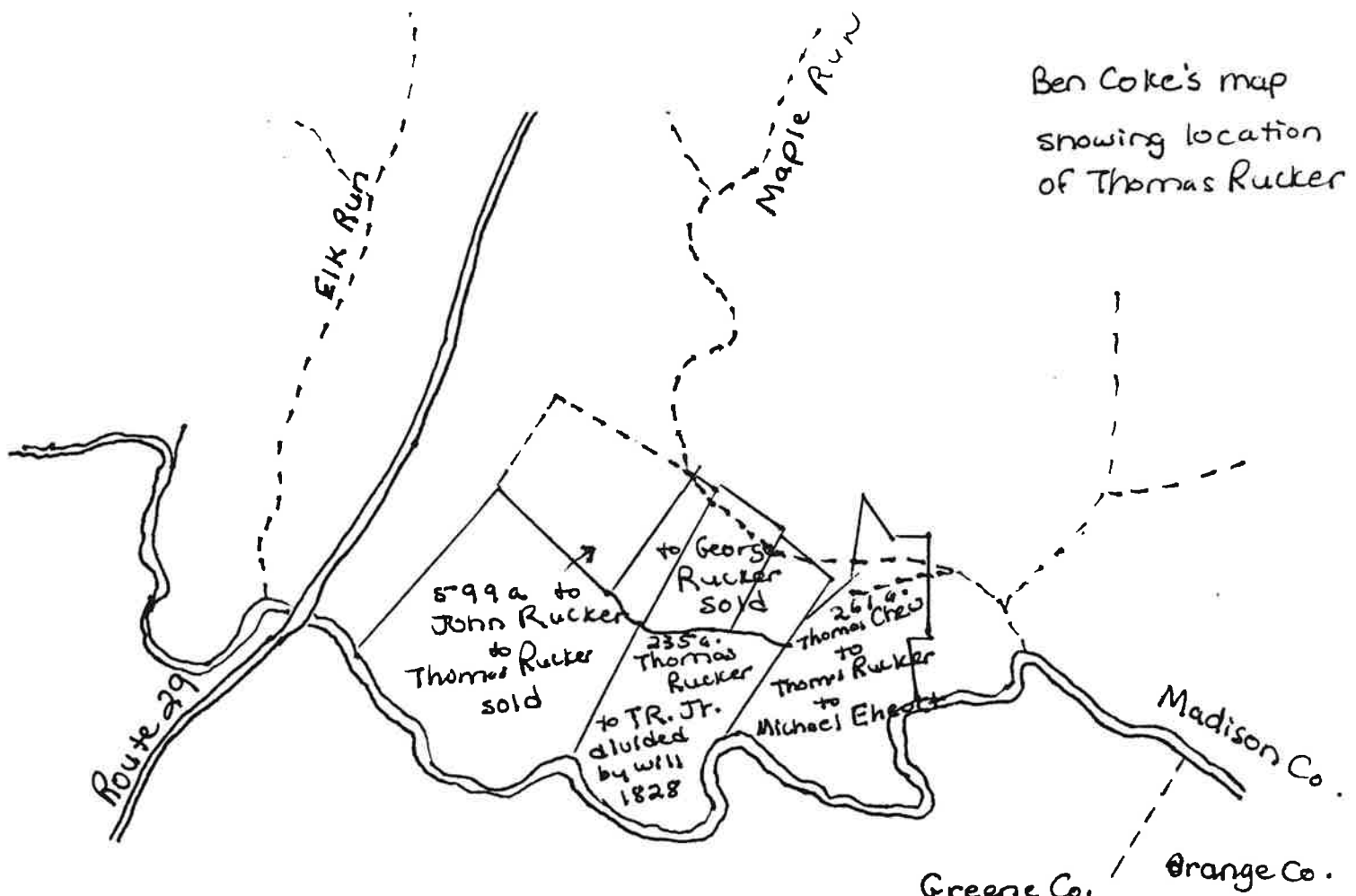
3. Mary Edith Durrer married John Russell Deane, no issue.

4. JOHN SINCLAIR<sup>8</sup> DURRER born 15 June 1875, died 7 May 1967. He married Mary Elizabeth Deane, born Feb. 1, 1885, died 12 Sept. 1954. They lived at "Friendly Acres." John was an employee of the Highway Department. (He married 2nd Willie Anderson Durrer.) John and Mary are buried in the Ruckersville

Cemetery.

Their children are:

1. Anna Rucker Durrer, b. 29 Oct. 1904, m. 25 Dec. 1925, Marcus L. Watson. They live at "Markanna" on land of "Friendly Acres."
2. Corrinne M. Durrer, b. 18 March 1908, m. Carroll S. Narvelle. She died 25 Oct. 1982 and is buried in Charlottesville.
3. Ruby Gordon Durrer, b. 15 July 1910, m. Grimalley Douglas. They live in Ruckersville.
4. John Sinclair Durrer Jr. b. 22 Dec. 1913, m. Martha Hamm, live in Barboursville.
5. ELLIS LYLE<sup>9</sup> RUCKER b. 14 Aug. 1916, m. Virginia Hoffman, who was raised by Anna and Mark Watson. They live at "Friendly Acres."
6. Elizabeth Scott Durrer b. 26 Jan. 1919, m. Robert W. Tucker and live in Charlottesville.
7. Agnes M. Durrer b. 26 May 1924, m. 15 Oct. 1949 Leroy P. Kirstein. They live in Lynchburg.



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EPHRAIM RUCKER

EPHRAIM<sup>2</sup> RUCKER was the ninth child of Peter. He married Margaret Vauter, daughter of John Vauter and Margaret Noel of Essex County. Margaret was left 150 acres of land at "the Great Mountains, part of a patent of 700 acres patented in 1736 by me." This land from her father, was deeded to Ephraim, 7 Feb. 1750.

Elphraim purchased, in 1759, 100 acres of land in Culpeper from his sister, Margaret and her husband, Isaac Tinsley. It was located on Elk Run, in the forks of the Rapidan and Robinson Rivers.

He purchased 505 acres, in 1773, on Elk Run in the forks of the Rapidan and Robinson Rivers.

Ephraim deeded 150 acres to his son, Angus Rucker, in 1775, in the forks of Robinson and Rapidan Rivers; on the north side of the court house road near Holt's mountains. The same day he deeded to Edmund Gaines 150 acres in the same location, to James Davis 150 acres more in the same location.

The first land and personal tax books of Orange mentions him as "Col. Ephraim Rucker," paying on 63 acres, on eight slaves, and 13 head of cattle. Ephraim owned this property in Orange (Greene) but he was living on the north side of the Rapidan River in Culpeper (Madison). When Madison was formed from Culpeper in 1792, he was paying on 400 acres of land and 16 slaves.

He served in the Revolutionary War. (Wood, p.274)

Ephraim's Will was dated 24 Sept 1796, probated 28 Dec. 1797 (W. B. 1, p. 348, Madison). He left his estate to his wife and then to be divided equally among his seven children. His son, Julius, was injured in the Revolutionary War and continued to live with his mother.

ANGUS<sup>3</sup> RUCKER, oldest son of Ephraim, was born in 1746 in Culpeper County. He married Jane Allen about 1770.

His father deed his 150 acres of land on 15 May 1775, on the north side of the court house road, near Holt's Mountains, in the forks of the Rapidan and Robinson Rivers in Culpeper County.

In 1792, he bought 265 acres near the Rapid Ann meeting house. In 1805, he bought 125 acres from Joseph Early's estate, land on Elk Run. In 1815, he bought 100 acres adjoining Edmund Gaines.

In 1801 he sold 99 1/2 acres to Edmund Gaines. In 1801, Angus sold 28 acres to Augustine Rucker, land in Madison. At the same time Angus bought 30 acres from Augustine and wife, Thomsey Rucker.

In 1826, Angus and wife, Jane, sold to Augustine Rucker land beginning at Mrs. Early's Corner, and 24 acres on an old road called the Mountain Road, where it meets the main road leading from Graves store to Fredericksburg.

He served as a Captain in the Revolution.

Angus' will was produced into court and proved 22 Sept. 1836. His estate was sold and equally divided among his six children. He is buried in the Ephraim Rucker Cemetery on the Gentry Farm. (See Cemeteries)

TOMAGEN<sup>3</sup> RUCKER, daughter of Ephraim, married her first cousin, AUGUSTINE<sup>3</sup> (James<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>) RUCKER. Their son Larkin bought the "Aspen Grove" property. During the terrible typhoid epidemic, his daughter, Sarah Ann Rucker, married to John Miller, died leaving a tiny baby girl named Lucy. Lucy grew up, married Hiram Parrott and lived at "Greene Pastures" (Wood, p.295, incorrectly identifies Sarah Ann as the granddaughter of Larkin. She is his daughter.) After the epidemic, Larkin sold "Aspen Grove" to R. D. Sims.

MARGARET<sup>3</sup> RUCKER (Ephraim<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>) married Dr. William Morgan on the 15th of May 1817. (Simms Family Bible). Their son, Richard<sup>4</sup> Durrette Simms was born 10 Sept. 1819 and married Elizabeth Kirtley Davis. R. D. Simms purchased "Aspen Grove" from Larkin Rucker.

Their daughter, Eula<sup>5</sup> Simms, married James R. Beaty and their daughter was Senannie<sup>6</sup> Rebecca Beaty. (See next page.)

## RUCKER HOMES IN RUCKERSVILLE, VIRGINIA

Peter Rucker and his children all lived in the area that is today Madison County between the fork of the Robinson and Rapidan Rivers in the area of Elk Run and Maple Run. Peter, John, and Ephraim lived near Wolftown and Thomas lived near the Madison /Greene County line on the Rapidan. This was near Rucker's Ford.

An early map showed evidence of Ruckers Mill on Elk Run. Was this the "work," Thomas spoke of?

Ephraim is the only one that we have proof of where he lived. His son Angus Rucker's grave is there. The house, which is new, is located west of Route 29, 2.7 miles. It is a short distance from Wolftown. The land borders on Elk Run in a hilly section with the Blue Ridge Mountains looming in the distance.

For more information on the house and graveyard, see "Cemeteries."

### ASPEN GROVE

Located on old Route 29, now 653, "Aspen Grove" was a plantation plain style house with white columns added later. It has now burned and there is little evidence that it was once a working plantation. The land is now owned and farmed by Carl Lamb.

John Rucker, founder of Ruckersville, owned this property, and in 1782, was paying taxes on 400 acres. In 1786, he added 185 acres more. 296 acres of land on Rippins Run went to his son, Joel. Joel left this estate to his oldest son, Minor. Minor Rucker, in 1834, sold that land to a cousin, Larkin<sup>4</sup> Rucker (Tomagen<sup>3</sup>, Ephraim<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>, and Augustine<sup>3</sup>, James<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>.) Larkin's parents were first cousins. Larkin sold this land to R. D. (Richard Durette) Simms in 1842.

(The correct spelling and information about the Simms family was taken from "The Sims-Simms Family," Greene County Record, Sept. 27, 1973.) See previous page for more Simms information.

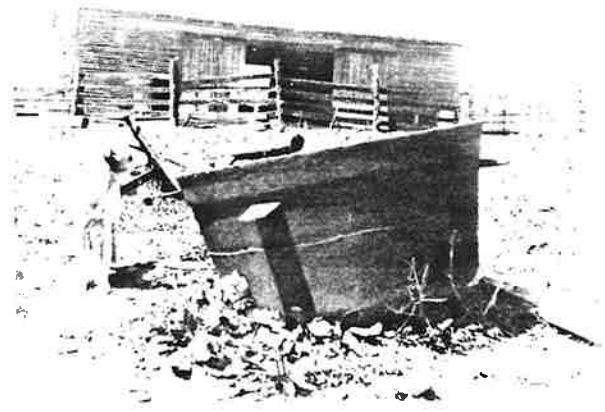
The Simms moved to "'Aspen Grove' in 1839, although the deed did not pass until 1842. The farm had been abandoned by the Rucker families earlier that year when 19 deaths among family and slaves occurred from typhoid fever, due to contaminated water from the spring. They left,

APR 57

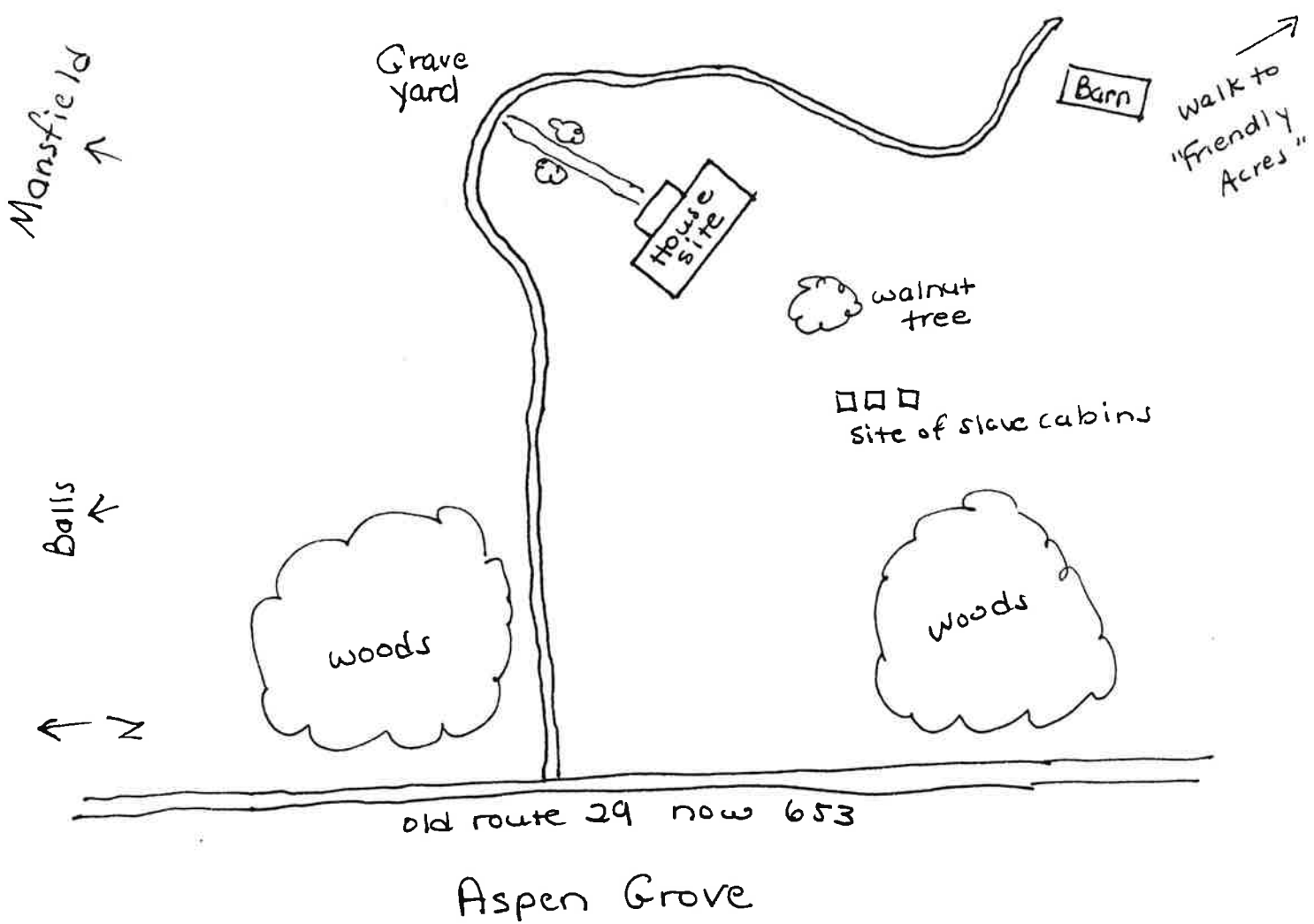


Aspen Grove

APR 57



Kettle, now at Anna Watson's



28  
leaving behind them their furnishings and furniture... In the midst of this fateful tragedy a baby was born--'Lucy'--whose mother of 19 years also succumbed--but Lucy lived to a venerable old age." Her granddaughter is Mrs. Annie Ewell of Greene Pastures. (Davidson, Rucker Kinsmen, p.52)

"Richard Sims (Senannie spelled it Simms) put 5 teams of oxen to hauling away all the soil from the contaminated spring and replacing it with river sand; this work was done in the month of August--taking the entire month; and even today--five or six feet below the surface of soil you will find a layer of that sand, but no illness or deaths have since occurred from the water's contamination. The slave quarters and houses were near this spring. Today the barn lot for cattle and horses is where the slave house stood. There are said to be 100 graves of family and slaves in the cemetery at Aspen Grove--which is between the front of the present house and the entrance to the 'Old Road' coming in from the east--but now no longer in use. Many small headstones marking graves are buried below the surface of earth in the graveyard.

"The early log school house for children, built in 1849, had windows of early glass panes.

"Early reminiscences include the following, 'Older people in my childhood spoke of the fact that The Mansfields and The Balls cleared this land enough to raise their tobacco crops long before 1730, when the Ruckers came up from Essex and Caroline County. The Mansfields and Balls moved on after they had used up "the land," in yearly tobacco crops. The early Mansfield tract was the northern part of Aspen Grove today. The many rose bushes and shade trees were there until a forest fire ca. 43 years ago, and included a wide spreading large white oak. West of the house was the Ball tract and here were also shade trees, rose bushes and about an acre of blue grass." (Davidson, p.54. Eva got her information from Senannie Beaty, who had a tendency to exaggerate.)

In the late 1950s, Senannie decided to sell some of her possessions. Many Ruckers visited her and purchased family treasures. One was the corner cupboard that Eva Davidson bought, restored, and gave to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond. Senannie said it was built by Peter and had been in the house ever since. (This could not be true as Peter never lived in this area, and the house was not built by



the time Peter died in 1743.) A window had to be removed to get the piece out, but Anna Watson remembered when the cupboard had been taken in via the same method.

Eva Davidson gave the corner cupboard to the Virginia Museum in memory of Peter and Elizabeth Rucker. She described it in a letter to Jean Brydon: "Its a handsome piece, with butterfly shelves--like those at Williamsburg--its a classic gem of it kind."

The Sims' daughter, Eula, married James R. Beaty, who had a daughter Senannie Rebecca Beaty. She lived with her two aunts, Betty and Adaline Sims at Aspen Grove, eventually inheriting the place. As Senannie got older, she moved into a nursing home and rented out Aspen Grove. The home burned and has since been razed. (see Cemeteries for description).

Senannie was born in Warren Co., W.Va., on 3 April 1892. She died on her 95th birthday, 3 April, 1987. (Obit, Green Co. Record, 9 April 1987)



House site at "Aspen Grove"

Showing only evidence of house -  
a lone telephone pole. Blue  
Ridge Mts. in background. (1988)

## GREENE PASTURES

The baby Lucy, mentioned above, married a Parrott and lived at "Greene Pastures" near Quinque, about half way between Ruckersville and Stanardsville. "Greene Pastures" was formerly called Roadside House. The house is now called "Daffodil Lane" and is owned by Teresa Burger and husband. The front part of the house is in the plantation plain style, but the back part is the original old log home. This is a beautiful example of the primitive houses lived in by our ancestors. As you enter the side door, you can see a picture of this house with three generations posing in front. Annie Ewell, the daughter of Lizzie Douglas, the granddaughter of Lucy Rucker Parrott.

Notice the cook standing in front of the kitchen. She was curious about what was going on with the picture taking and while watching, the jelly she was making, boiled over.

The original house was built of heart of pine and in the kitchen you can see the original construction of the log house. The modern part of the house was built in the late 1800s. The house has been beautifully restored by the Burgers.

Annie Ewell lived there with a companion, Mrs. Brown, who inherited her many lovely Rucker things. No one knows today what happened to those treasures. Many of the Parrott descendants live in the area, some on adjoining property.

Mary Durrer lives next door, to the east, on "Durrer's Retreat." Next to her is Annie Ewell's nephew, George and Blanche Parrott. On the same side of the road, beyond the firehouse is the home of Mary C. Estes' granddaughter, Margaret Parrott. (Remember Mary married a Durrer first.)

## MARKANNA

"Markanna" is named for the two who built the house on land adjoining Friendly Acres. Anna Rucker Durrer married Marcus L. Watson more than 60 years ago. Anna is the authority on Ruckersville and gave me much of the information written here.



"Greene Pastures"  
View of front



Back of "Greene Pastures"  
Showing original house -1988

## FRIENDLY ACRES

"Friendly Acres" is located on "The Richmond Road," now Route 33, one half mile east of Ruckersville. It is on land thought owned by John Rucker, founder of Ruckersville. John's son, Joel Rucker, paid taxes on 296 acres of land on Rippins Run in 1792. Joel was probably the builder of the house of "Friendly Acres," as the date 1806 is carved on a door. He inherited another 300 acres belonging to his father, called "The Beverley Tract."

Joel deeded his son, Blyfield, 178 acres on the Richmond Road, in 1824. It joined his brother Minor's tract. Blyfield left "Friendly Acres" to his son, William, who in turn willed it to his brother, Willis. (W. B. 2, p.143) When Willis died in 1900, he divided his land equally between two nieces. (W. B. 2, p.213) Mary Estes and Sally Durrer each received 31 1/2 acres. (This is sort of confusing as William and Willis's, brother, Allen O. Rucker is buried in the graveyard behind the house and his daughter, Sarah Frances, married to John Christopher Durrer inherited the property. The property descended to their son, John Sinclair Durrer, and then to his son, Ellis L. Durrer, who owns it today.

The house was originally a two room log cabin with attic room. Anna Watson said that her parents slept in the family room, her two brothers slept in a small room adjoining the family room, and the girls slept in the attic room. There was no access to the room on the other side of the chimney, so her parents built a second staircase in the parlour. There was a center chimney with fireplace on either side. The chimney was six feet square and one fireplace was large enough to hold logs four feet long.

The original part of the house is the front part and was built of logs. The inside wall is covered with ten inch boards with furring strips over the joints. Hand hewn beaded beams cover the ceiling of the front parlor, now painted white.

The house was later covered with clapboard, then weatherboard, and in the last few years, has been covered with brick.

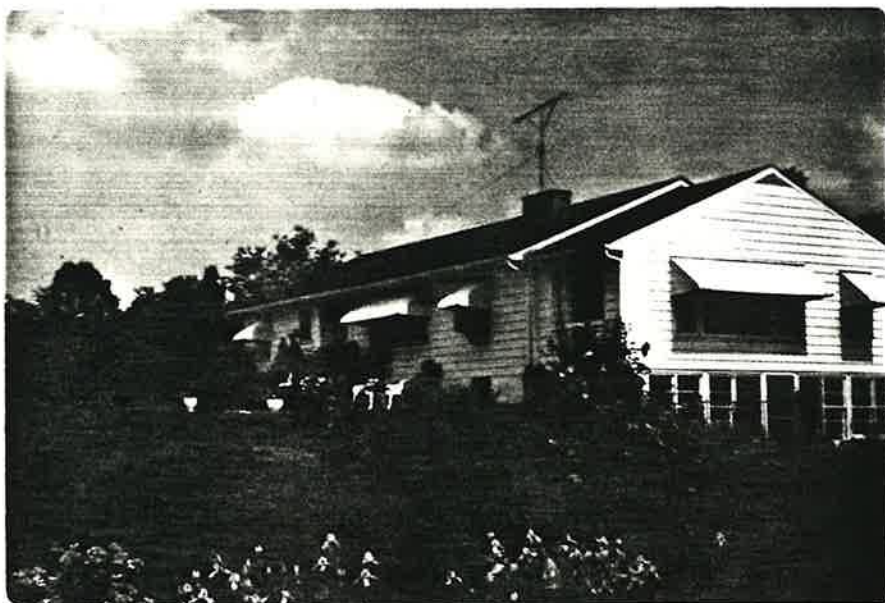
When John S. Durrer lived there, he added a dining room and kitchen. The present owners have added a family room with bedroom over it. It no longer looks like the primitive house that it once was.



"Friendly Acres"



Eva Davidson -  
John S. Durrer  
at  
"Friendly Acres"  
©1955



"Markanna"



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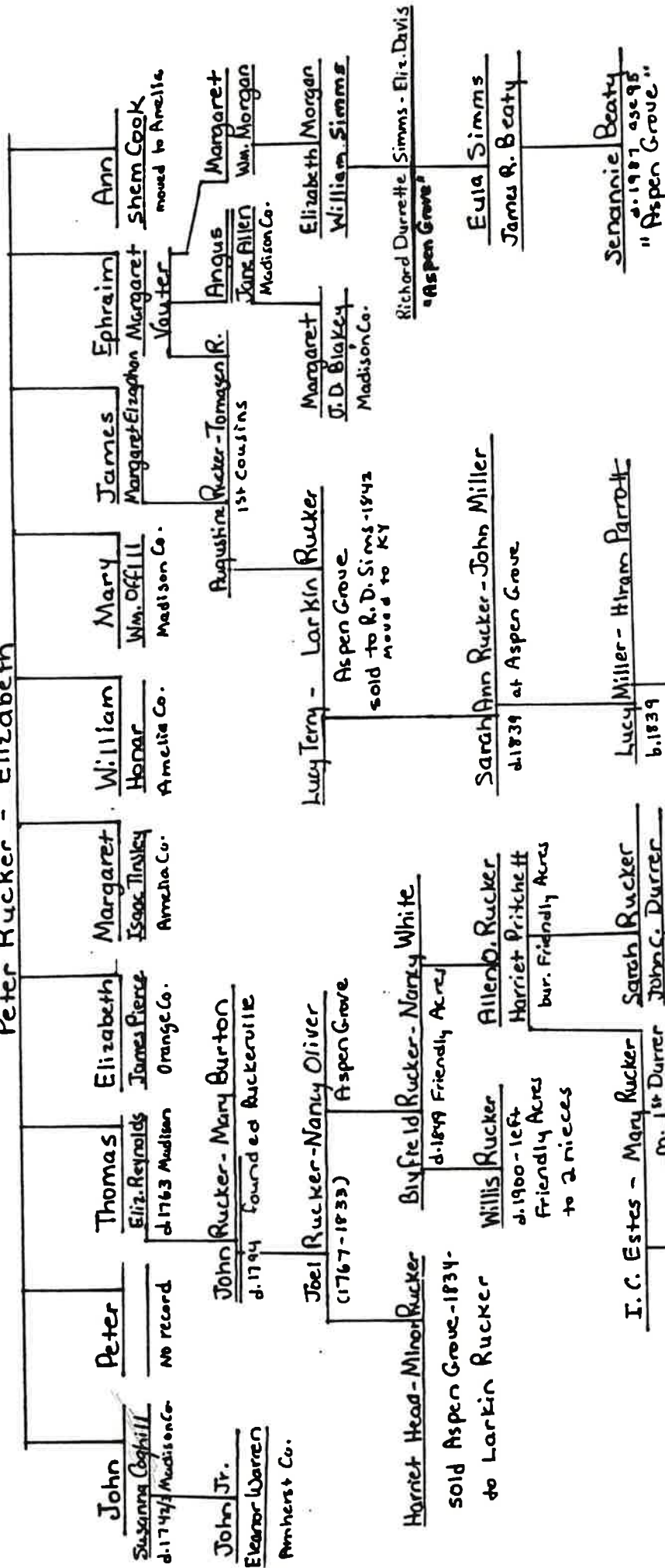
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# Peter Rucker - Elizabeth



John  
 Susanina Coghill  
 d. 1744  
 Madison Co.  
 John Jr.  
 Eleanor Warren  
 Amherst Co.  
 Peter  
 no record  
 Thomas  
 Elizabeth Reynolds  
 d. 1763  
 Madison  
 founded Ruckerville  
 Elizabeth  
 John Rucker - Mary Burton  
 d. 1794  
 founded Ruckerville  
 Margaret  
 Joel Rucker - Nancy Oliver  
 (1767-1833)  
 Aspen Grove  
 William  
 Bryfield Rucker - Nancy White  
 d. 1849  
 Friendly Acres  
 Mary  
 Willis Rucker  
 d. 1900 - left  
 Friendly Acres  
 to 2 nieces  
 James  
 Minor Rucker  
 d. 1834  
 Aspen Grove  
 Larkin Rucker  
 Ephraim  
 Margaret Elizabeth  
 d. 1849  
 Vaunter  
 Ann  
 Madison Co.  
 d. 1849  
 Madison Co.  
 Margaret  
 Allen Rucker  
 d. 1849  
 Friendly Acres  
 Harriet Pritchett  
 bur. Friendly Acres  
 Sarah Rucker  
 d. 1849  
 Friendly Acres  
 John S. Durrer  
 d. 1849  
 Friendly Acres  
 John S. Durrer  
 Mary Elizabeth Deane  
 built home (Mary's sister)  
 adjoining Friendly Acres  
 Ellis L. Durrer  
 "Friendly Acres"  
 Markanna  
 Anna Durrer Watson  
 Annie Ewell  
 "Greene Pastures"  
 Sarah Parrott - B.T. Douglas  
 b. 1839  
 Lucy Miller - Hiram Parrott  
 b. 1839  
 d. 1839 at Aspen Grove  
 Sarah Ann Rucker - John Miller  
 Richard Durrette Simons - Elizabeth Davis  
 "Aspen Grove"  
 Eula Simms  
 James R. Beatty  
 Senannie Beatty  
 d. 1907  
 Aspen Grove  
 "Aspen Grove"



# Madison County

