

the Rucker Family Society

NEWSLETTER

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FAMILY PROFILE **JAMES FRED RUCKER**

By Andrew Rucker Featherstone

James⁹ "Fred" Rucker (George⁸ John, Joseph⁷ Allen, Joseph⁶ Burton, Robert⁵ Elzaphane, Joel⁴, John³, Thomas², Peter¹) was known to his family as "Poppy" and to his friends as "Fred." He was a man who cared deeply for his family and his community and was never one to say "No," whether to a request for help or a request for an opinion.

The son of George John Rucker and Lydia Eva Deck, Fred was born on May 22, 1911 in Pillowville, Tennessee, a small rural community in Weakley County. West Tennessee remained home



Fred Rucker - 1956

throughout his life, with stays of varying duration in Trenton, Friendship, McKenzie, and Dresden. June 2, 1929, at the age of 18, Fred married Myrtle Femia Kennon, herself a West Tennessean. Myrtle, born March 16, 1909 in Henry County, TN, was the daughter of Jasper Clinton Kennon and Cora Lee Cosby. Like the Ruckers, the Kennons had been in West Tennessee for several generations. Myrtle's three brothers and three sisters spent many years raising families in Weakley, Carroll, Henry, and Gibson counties. The Kennons and Ruckers actually had a double connection, as Myrtle's sister Mabel Lee Kennon married Fred's brother Claude Allen Rucker. Unfortunately, Claude died at the age of 20, leaving behind a young widow and no children.

Fred and Myrtle had two children, Betty Sue (born May 15, 1931) and James Daniel (born September 21, 1950). [Yes, 19 years apart!]

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Editor & President:

Jean B. Robinson
304 Charmian Road
Richmond, VA 23226
1-804-358-3185
<ruckerfs@erols.com>

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Throughout the first 30 years of his married life, Fred had a series of jobs and homes, always looking to provide more for his family. With each new job and each new home, the family took a step forward. His earliest jobs were with the U-Tote-Em grocery chain, first as manager and clerk at the Trenton, TN store and later at the Friendship, TN store, spending a year at each. When his job was eliminated in Friendship, Fred moved the family to McKenzie, TN.

Supporting a family in the depths of the Depression was challenging.

It was in McKenzie where the young family put down their first strong roots. The family lived in a series of apartments until Fred could afford to build their first home. He later sold that home and moved the family into a larger home. During these years in McKenzie, family and friends surrounded them. Parents, uncles and aunts, and brothers and sisters were always there to lend a hand. The downtown park, the corner theater, the drug store soda fountain, and the many warm homes provided an idyllic environment for the Ruckers.

While in McKenzie, Fred's jobs began moving toward a career. After a few years in McKenzie, Fred was bitten by the entrepreneurial bug. He

started his first business, a grocery store, and later formed a partnership owning a dry goods store. This partnership led to the opening of a second dry goods store in Dresden, TN. Fred moved his family to Dresden in 1960 and stayed there for the remainder of his life.

In Dresden, Fred truly became a mainstay of the community. With his son-in-law, Bill Featherstone, he anchored the east side of the court square with the Dresden Department Store and Ben Franklin Store. In an era of shrinking downtowns, they worked to keep Dresden alive. Fred served as Mayor of Dresden from 1965 to 1973 and again from 1975 to 1979 and later served as Director of the Weakley County Chamber of Commerce.

During these years of community service, Fred was personally responsible for bringing Dresden a new city park, a new medical clinic, several major employers, and multiple new apartment complexes. He was a caring politician, driving nails to build affordable community housing long before it became a media event. He also found time to be a leader in the Lions' Club, to work with the Boy Scouts, to be a district lay leader in the Paris District of the Methodist Church, and to establish strong political bonds throughout the state. Upon completion of 30 years of community service, local industrialists and businessmen honored him with a plaque at the Volunteer General Hospital.

As Fred's grandson, I have my own special memories—the annual trips to St. Louis for Cardinals baseball games, watching “A Charlie Brown Christmas” together every year (he always told me it was his favorite), and the ever-present ice cream with chocolate syrup. He was an avid golfer and crossword puzzle worker, though you had to check his answers on each, looking for embellishment. A memory of mine from a Cardinals ball game is a wonderful example of his optimism and spirit. When beamed by a hard line drive foul ball, which caused severe swelling but no permanent damage, his only concern was “Did we get the ball?” Life was an adventure to be

enjoyed, not something to knock him down. Neither a baseball nor a series of heart attacks could slow him down.

My wife, Tamara Ann Blanford, and my children, Susan Carol Featherstone (born August 13, 1991) and Samuel Andrew Featherstone (born October 19, 1993), never met Poppy. They've seen pictures and they've heard stories, like when Poppy built a putt-putt golf course in the city park for everyone to enjoy. They know that Poppy was Meemaw's daddy and that he died before they were born. They know that we watch "A Charlie Brown Christmas" together every year and it sometimes makes Daddy sad. And one day they will know and appreciate the part of Poppy that ended up in them.

James Fred Rucker died June 29, 1987, leaving behind a wife, two children, three grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and a timeless legacy. In the words of the *Dresden Enterprise* newspaper: "A loyal family man. A respected businessman. A dedicated civic leader. An enthusiastic industrial recruiter. A progressive politician. Everyone benefitted from Rucker's leadership. His family can look back on his life with pride and know that his accomplishments live on."



Fred and Myrtle Rucker - 1982

RON PAYNE'S RESEARCH BOOKLETS ON TENNESSEE AND MISSOURI

While supporting John and Herman Rucker in the preparations for the 1999 Rucker Reunion in Brentwood, TN, I thought it might be beneficial to gather some data of a genealogical nature from local sources which had the potential for helping any attendees who were engaged in family history research. I gathered various data on Ruckers whose names had appeared in documentation indicating Tennessee as their residence. The data was presented in a booklet, as recorded in those sources. I made no effort to interpret the data, but left that to anyone who wished to use it.

The result was a booklet containing information on a few hundred Ruckers from more than 50 Tennessee counties. That compilation was put on display for the use of reunion attendees.

I have recently updated that document by adding 1880 census data and Social Security Death Index information. It now contains more than 1,000 Ruckers in 57 counties of Tennessee.

With the next Rucker Reunion being planned for Missouri, I thought a similar effort might be useful. I have compiled a booklet identifying more than 850 Ruckers in 73 counties of Missouri. Copies of each of these booklets are available at \$20, including S&H.

Editor's Note: Ron Payne's two research booklets are an organized collection of randomly selected records, such as census indexes and printed books on research which mention Ruckers. It is well indexed and documented and would be a valuable asset to anyone researching Ruckers in Tennessee or Missouri. If you would like a copy please send \$20.00, for each, post paid to:

Ron Payne
79 Payne Road
Falkville, AL 35622-6236

Lone Pine Cemetery Telluride, Colorado

From Cindi B. Meyer

I was checking out the Telluride cemetery, intriguing habit don't you think! And I found not one, but three Ruckers buried there. Don't know who they are attached to, but thought you might.

George Rucker/ b. 1889, d. 1968

Edith Hester Rucker/ wife of George/ b. 1894, d. 1991

Milton E Rucker/ son of above/ b. 28 April 1913, d. 11 June 1993

From the courthouse and his death certificate, I found out that George W. Rucker was born March 15, 1889 in Ohio. He was a power employee for the mining industry. He married Edith Hester. George was living with his son Lee Rucker in Redvale, Montrose Co., Colorado when he passed away, October 20, 1968. His real residence was 127 Oak St., Telluride, CO and he is buried in the Lone Pine Cemetery in Telluride, CO.

I am sorry I cannot get a photo yet of the headstones. We have had about 3 feet of snow, and the cemetery is impassable. Keith and I walked there about three days ago. I don't know if they will be snow blowing it or not.

I think I will mail the death cert. to you and then you can offer it to anyone that is interested. Also, I found the Rucker name in Cortez and Grand Junction phonebook, so I sent off some inquiry letters. We'll have to wait and see.

Editor's Note: Cindi and her husband Keith are staying in Telluride for the winter and are willing to research for anyone interested. Her address is P.O. Box 3985, Telluride, CO 81435.

E-mail Cindi at <cbmeyer1@attglobal.net>

Or check out her web-site at

<http://www.xanga.com/home.asp?user=Cindi>

If anyone knows the identity of George, Edith and Milton Rucker, please let Cindi or the Editor know.

* * * * *

QUERY OF THE QUARTER

What happened to **Benjamin⁴ Rucker**, the son of Col. Ambrose³ Rucker (John², Peter¹) and Mary Tinsley found in Sudie Rucker Wood's *Rucker Family Genealogy*, p.113. Benjamin was born in Amherst Co., Virginia, ca 1782 and married there 22 Nov 1813 to Sallie Harris. There were no further records for Benjamin and Sallie in Amherst County.

* * * * *

IN MEMORIAM

Father and Son Die Same Day

Dr. William Vincent Rucker, age 90, the noted Bedford County, Virginia physician, died December 5, 2001 in a Bristol, Tennessee hospital. He was a lifelong resident of Bedford but recently moved to Johnson City, TN.

Dr. Billy, as he was affectionately known, graduated from Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia and the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. He began practicing medicine in 1936, and was the first doctor in Bedford County to know how to use sulfur, then a wonder drug.

He was a major in the U.S. Army Medical Corps from 1942 until 1945. He served in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, France and Germany. After the war he returned to Bedford where he practiced medicine for 49 years. His main claim to fame was

delivering more than 5,000 babies in and around Bedford. He was the Bedford County Medical Examiner for many years.

Dr. Billy was a member of the Lynchburg Elks Lodge and the Bedford Lions Club. He was a member of the Virginia and American Medical Associations. He was an avid outdoorsman, hunter, golfer, collector of Indian Artifacts and antique firearms.

Billy Rucker was the son of another Bedford physician, Dr. Joseph ("Joe") Anthony Rucker and Eliza Vincent Cauthorn. Joe's lineage: Moses⁶ Peter, Anthony⁵, Ambrose⁴ Jr., Ambrose³, John², Peter¹. He was first married to Emilie Eliza McClain and after her death, he married Hilda Parsons Lawson who survives him. He is survived by his daughter Eliza Rucker Hager of Raleigh, NC; three grandchildren, Michael, Emily and Alice Hager and a brother, Ambrose A. Rucker of Bedford. His son died the same day, see below. Father and Son were buried together at Greenwood Cemetery. His obituary from *The Bedford Bulletin*, Dec. 12, 2001, p.13 A, was submitted by Mary Johnson of Amherst Co., VA.

* * * * *

William Warnock Rucker, age 60 died December 5, 2001 in Richmond, Virginia, a few hours after his father, see above. Formerly of Bedford, Bill graduated from Staunton Military Academy. He served in the U. S. Marines. He was a retired employee of Phillip Morris Company in Richmond.

He is survived by his sister, Eliza R. Hager of Raleigh, NC and his stepmother, Hilda Parsons Rucker of Johnson City, TN. He was buried alongside his father in Greenhill Cemetery in Bedford. From the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Dec. 6, 2001, p.B9. Also from *The Bedford Bulletin*, Dec. 12, 2001, p.13A, submitted by Mary Johnson of Amherst Co., VA.

Vesta Otheniel Rucker Webb, age 84 died at her home in Bartlesville, Oklahoma on October 29, 2001. She was born in Grant County on December 26, 1916, the daughter of Rosa E. Cullins and Fred⁷ Rucker (Enoch⁶ A., Wiley⁵, George⁴ Jr., George³, Thomas², Peter¹). Vesta was predeceased by her husband Roy Lee Webb and a son, Boyce Webb. She was a member of Palestine Missionary Baptist Church in Grant Co., OK. She is survived by three daughters: Levoy Cullins and Yetieve McGee of Sheridan and Yevonne Gunter of Bartlesville, OK; a brother Thurman Rucker of Zapata, TX; a sister Donnie Gene Zook of Morrilton; nine grandchildren; fifteen great-grandchildren and three g-g-grandchildren. She was buried at Corinth Cemetery, Grant Co., OK. (Her obituary was printed in *The Sheridan [OK] Headlight*, November 7, 2001, submitted by her daughter, Yevonne Gunter.)

* * * * *

Lola Ann Rucker, age 91 of Tulsa, OK, formerly of Wichita, KS died September 5, 1999. She was a homemaker and former PBX operator. She is survived by her husband, John Rucker; daughter, Sara Busch of Tulsa; one granddaughter; and two great-grandchildren. Her obit, printed in *The Wichita Eagle*, Wichita, KS, was submitted by Julia L. Beadles of Kechi, KS.

* * * * *

Mrs. Enola Louise Rucker Speer (Nonie), age 89, died April 8, 1999 in Nashville, Tennessee. She earned a two-year degree from David Lipscomb University in 1929 and a Bachelors Degree in English from George Peabody College for Teachers in 1931. She was an elementary school teacher and librarian. She was preceded in death by her husband of 30 years, Phillip G. Speer who died in 1966. A pulpit minister, he served Churches of Christ in Tennessee, Georgia and Mississippi. Nonie Speer was a member of the Granny White Church of

Christ. She is survived by four children: Phillip Speer, Eliane Vansteenbergh, Wayne Speer and Sherrilyn Johnson; one brother, John Rucker; 13 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren. Her obituary from the Nashville newspaper was submitted by Mary Rucker Estes of Thousand Oaks, CA.

SUGGESTION-

A BLACK RUCKER SOCIETY

Suggestion from Julia L. Beadles of Kechi, Kansas: We need to have a Black Rucker society to make slave records of our white ancestors available to help black Ruckers trace their kin.

Note from Jeannie Robinson: I have heard from many black Ruckers over the years, but have not been able to help them. If anyone has any records of our African-American Ruckers, please send them to her and she will make them available.

Acting in the roll of President, Jeannie would like to nominate Scarlett Rucker-Misikir as the head of this group. Scarlett is from Huntsville, Missouri and currently is living in Duncanville, TX. She can trace her lineage to Minor Rucker (Joel⁴, John³, Thomas², Peter¹), (Wood, p.130).

Letter from Scarlett, December 13, 1997: "I got a chance to go to great-grandfather's land [in Randolph Co., MO]. It was so beautiful. He had 36 acres around the East Fork River. What is interesting about that is the farm is located not far from the Minor Rucker place. It's said to have been by the Thomas Hill reservoir about ten miles out of Huntsville. I have found that there were two sets of Rucker families in that area, one white, one black. The only white Ruckers that lived in Huntsville were Capt. Minor Rucker had his children (and families). I have learned that Minor had children before he married Harriet Head. Two boys, twins, one light skinned and one dark. He kept those boys, but one lived as a white man, and one lived as a free slave. The twins were always

close. Their names were Albert and Henry Rucker, born in 1810, Virginia. My great-uncles and the brothers of Lafayette . . . [Capt. Minor Rucker] had been in Virginia, Kentucky, and Missouri. He would have been old enough to father the boys."

Much of Minor Rucker's family is found in the *Descent of Henry Head, 1695-1949*, by Idess Head Alvord, 1949.

Scarlett would like to correspond with others working on this family. Her address is 223 E. Magnolia Lane, Duncanville, TX 75137. E-mail her at <rucker_misikir_scarlett@hotmail.com>. Scarlett is the daughter of Milton Sterling Rucker and Ada Belle Williams of Huntsville MO.

Scarlett Lynn Rucker and Agegnehu Misikir were married September 3, 2000 at Second Baptist Church in Huntsville, Missouri.



Marriage of Scarlett Lynn Rucker and Agegnehu Misikir

* * * * *

TOMBSTONE FOUND

Found in a cemetery in mid-Michigan is the following stone. Does anyone know who she was? Submitted by Nancy Mitchell:

*Georgiana Rucker
died Oct. 7, 1894
Aged 55 years*

Born in slavery at Holly Springs, Mississippi

Julius Rucker

Birth, Death and Cemetery Information
Submitted by Alice J. Rucker, Sylmar, CA

Julius Rucker is listed on p.157 of Sudie Rucker Wood's *Rucker Family Genealogy*, one of ten children of Abner⁴ Rucker (Anthony³, John², Peter¹). Nothing was known of Julius, he left home and was not heard from again. When his father died in 1864, Julius's inheritance was divided among his nieces and nephews (Will Book Y., p.578. Woodford Co., KY).

Alice J. Rucker married to Loren Rucker, a descendant of Julius, was determined to find out what happened to him and where he was buried.

From 1880 to 1909, Richard Morton Rucker (son of Julius) and his wife, Emily, homesteaded and continued to own 160 acres of land in the SW quarter of Twp. 19, Range 21. (Widow, Emily quit claimed this land to Bernard and Cora Miller on Oct. 1, 1909.)

Last year, October 18, 2000 Alice and Loren searched this area for Julius. Here is her story.

"Keep Looking, We're all out Here"

By Alice J. Rucker

A long time ago, in a dream, my maternal grandfather (not a Rucker) came to me and sat next to me on a school bench. In this dream, I turned to look at him and he said "Keep looking honey, we're all out here." I guess that is one of the reasons I believe if I look long enough, I will discover ancestors.

One such ancestor I have looked long and hard for is Julius Rucker (Abner⁴, Anthony³, John², Peter¹). Although I can document him on the 1860 census in California, I can't locate him in 1870, but find him again in 1880, a 75-year-old living with his wife in Texas. There are other Rucker researchers of this same line who also have been looking for

Julius. One believed he probably died in Texas and that the grave and headstone went undocumented. Another researcher believed he had relocated to Mohave County, Arizona after 1880, because we all knew of his wife, Sarah's grave there in 1885. All along, I believed it entirely possible that he may have migrated to Grant County, New Mexico after 1880 because he had a son, Richard who was living there. Family letters said Richard was living "about ten miles above Duncan, Arizona on the Gila River." ('Above' Duncan meant 'up river' from Duncan.) All past attempts to discover a grave in Grant County, NM have proven unfruitful, so my husband Loren and I decided to go to the Arizona-New Mexico border area ourselves.

We traveled to Duncan, AZ and used a pay phone to call a researcher I had met over the Internet and who had promised to look up and have some information waiting for me when I got to Duncan. Sadly, she said she hadn't been able to discover anything. I was looking around as we were talking, and I noticed a town hall. As soon as I hung up we went in the town hall. I asked if there were old records for Duncan, or for the little town called Virden (previously called Richmond—named for Richmond, VA), New Mexico. She said all the old records were gone. I asked if there was a library in Virden. She said "well, sort of." "Can you call them," I asked? She did and found them to be open and she gave me directions and off we went.

The library was a small room in an LDS church, but it was not a Family History Center—just a little town library that served the community well. I asked the young lady if they had any old records. She asked what family I was looking for and I said "Rucker." She said she didn't know of any old records or any Ruckers, but there were "old timers" around that I should talk to. She wrote three women's names on an asto bright pink post-it note. She said one of them had been a town clerk for a number of years. I asked if she had the telephone numbers of them. She looked them up. I asked if we could call one of them and she began

to dial the old town clerk. Then she stopped and thought for a moment and said, "no, let's call this one." So she dialed another number and said quietly, "Aunt Myrt, there's some folks here looking for old time Ruckers . . . do you know anything about them?" "You do!" she said. And so she gave us directions to Aunt Myrt's house.

We knocked and Aunt Myrt opened the door with a friendly smile and asked us in. As we sat down, she asked us who we were looking for. We said "Richard Rucker" because we knew he had had land there. Myrt said that 15 years ago, she and some young girls had made it their project to go along the Gila River and write down the names of various headstones that they found. Myrt got out a well worn spiral steno book and looked us in the eye and said: "now, I don't want you to be disappointed, because this may not be your kin." Then she read:

*"Stones on the canal bank near the farm of LeRoss Jones. The grave of **Julius Rucker** is near the canal with the following information: Julius Rucker, Born 20 Nov 1804, Died 22 Aug 1884."*

We were so elated that all three of us shed a little tear or two. Myrt said that it had been her dream that in her lifetime, she would meet someone who came to claim relation to old Julius.

THE GRAVE SITE

His tombstone is in a private graveyard near the border of Grant County, New Mexico and Greenlee County, Arizona. Nearby is the town of Virden, New Mexico. What is unusual is that modern day residents of Virden, NM, get their mail, vote, shop and bank in Duncan, AZ, which is just a few miles over the Arizona state line.

For an Eagle Scout project, a young man from the community had placed a curb and a fence around the little grave site. Loren hoisted me over the

chain link fence and I tromped down the tall weeds. The stone was lying flat, completely intact and readable.

In Memory of
JULIUS RUCKER
Born Nov. 20, 1804
Died Aug. 22, 1884

Also near this grave another marker was found. The grave was never located, but the marker was placed beside the one on the Rucker grave. It appears as follows:

Born 14 Oct 1895

Died 28 Aug 1896

Bessie D. White

Father M. E. White

It was such a great day, with such an unusual series of events led us to old Julius. So, . . . the moral of this story is to "keep on looking, they're all out there!"

See photo of the stone on the back page.



Photo of "Myrt" and Loren Rucker at the grave site

President's Letter

**Rucker Family Reunion
October 18-19, 2002
Kansas City, Missouri**

The dates for the 2002 Rucker Family Reunion have been set. Rooms have been reserved at the Hilton Garden Inn for the weekend of October 18-19, 2002. Please mark your calendars and plan to visit Kansas City, Missouri next fall. We look forward to meeting many of our western cousins.

My family and I had a very Merry Christmas and we hope you did as well. We certainly hope 2002 will be a good year for all our members and for our country. I am proud of the way our nation has come together in our fight against terrorism.

For the newsletter, we always welcome articles, family profiles, 50th Anniversary notices, obituaries or anything you would like to contribute. We especially need pictures for the Photo Corner as we had none this quarter. When submitting articles, please send your line of descent and a good copy of your photographs.

Jeannie

2002 RUCKER FAMILY SOCIETY DUES

Please check your mailing label to see if your dues are due. The first number is your membership number and the second is the year through which you are paid. If it says "01," it is time to pay.

Please make your membership check payable to The Rucker Society and send to the Treasurer:

Mrs. Leslie B. Cabral, Treasurer

5601 S. 37th Court

Greenacres, FL 33463

E-mail <LeslieCab@aol.com>

- ☐ \$7.00 Dues for Membership for 2002 _____
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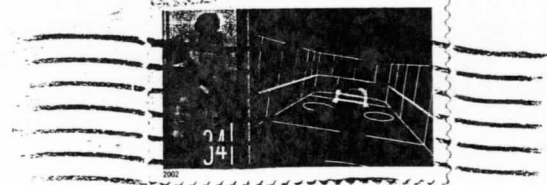
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Photo
of
Alice J.
Rucker
sitting on
the
tombstone of
Julius Rucker

See story
page 37-38



THE RUCKER FAMILY SOCIETY



Jean B. Robinson, Editor
304 Charmian Road
Richmond, VA 23226

First Class Mail

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

03 176
Mrs. Alice J. Rucker
13331 Gridley St.
Sylmar CA 91342-4529

91342X4529 23

