

the Rucker Family Society

NEWSLETTER

Volume 13

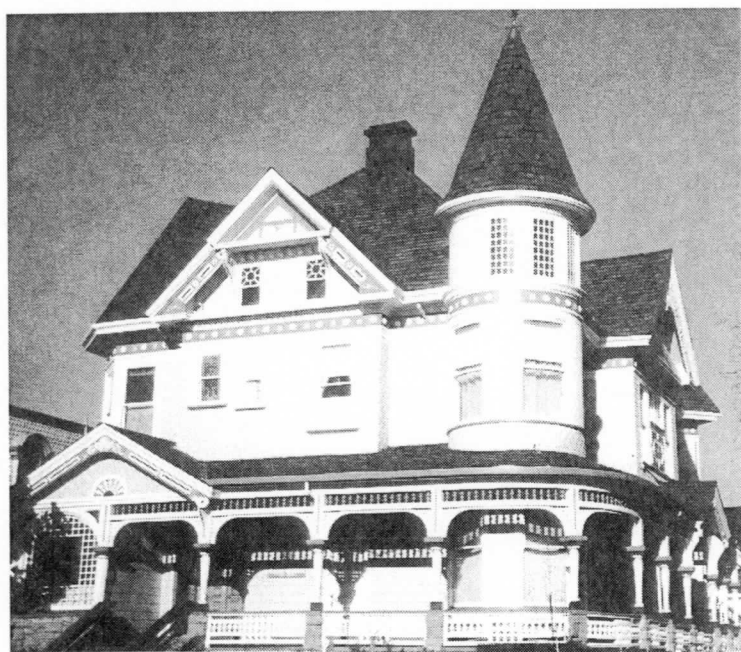
Number 2

June 2002

THE RUCKER MANSION

Home of Joseph H. Rucker (1865-1931)
418 South 3rd Street
San Jose, California
by Chuck Berry of Scotts Valley, CA

The lovely Victorian home pictured here is now called the "Rucker Mansion." It was the home of Joseph H. Rucker, who being in the real estate business desired a charming home. The Rucker Mansion, built circa 1892, is located in San Jose in Santa Clara County, California. The large three story residence was built in the Queen Anne-Eastlake style.



The Rucker Mansion
Photo by Jean Ellen Vallandigham

FAMILY INFOR- MATION

Joseph⁷ H.¹ Rucker (Joseph⁶ E., William⁵ T., William⁴, John³, Thomas², Peter¹) was born March 25, 1865, in San Jose, CA. He attended the University of the Pacific, finishing his education at the Garden City Business College. He married in June of 1888, to Mary Phileta Dunne. They lived in San Jose, CA where Joseph was the president of the Joseph H. Rucker Co., Inc., a real estate, loan and insurance company.

His father, Joseph Edmundson Rucker founded the company in 1874 and nine years later took his oldest son into partnership. Later his other sons came into the business. Joseph E. Rucker was born in Howard County, Missouri and traveled with his parents, siblings and other family members to Santa Clara, California in 1852. See more about this family and their trek west in RFSN, Dec 1999, Vol. 10, No. 4, p.31-33. Joseph E. Rucker married September 27, 1855, in Gilroy, California to Miss Susan Brown, who had come to California the previous year. He farmed for a few years before entering the real estate business.

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Joseph H. Rucker's wife Mary Dunne's mother, Catherine (O'Toole) Dunne, owned one of the last great Spanish land grants about three miles north of Gilroy. It was placed on the market in 1893 with lots of 6, 10, 20, and 40 acres selling for \$25 to \$125 per acre to primarily agricultural families. From this real estate venture came the town of "Rucker." The town was composed of about 100 farms with acreage ranging from 5 to 75 acres in size, the Rowley Thomas Mercantile Store with the U. S. Post Office, a blacksmith shop and the Santa Cruz Fruit Company. A school district was formed in 1894 to educate children living in the Rucker town area. The first nine students were housed in a shed until the new \$5,000, two story school could be completed in the fall of 1894. Although the town of Rucker is not incorporated today, Rucker school still exists, although not the original building.

When Joseph H. Rucker joined his father's real estate business, the name was changed to J. E. Rucker & Son. After J. E. Rucker's death, the name was changed to J. H. Rucker & Company. He continued in the real estate business and with the firm later being joined by his son DeWitt C. Rucker and grandson DeWitt L. Rucker. Their business mainly consisted of the sale and purchase of real estate, renting houses, collecting rents and handling subdivisions of large tracts of land. A large part of their business was investments, lending money and handling insurance. It was

described as one of the most reliable and substantial firms engaged in the real estate business in San Jose.

THE RUCKER MANSION

The outside of the house is very Victorian looking with a round turret at one corner and gabled roof on the front. A wraparound porch extends the entire front and side of the house. It has many elegant touches of the period including gingerbread trim. The Carriage House in the rear was converted in 1969 from a dirt floor stable with servants' quarters upstairs into a lovely apartment with an open beamed ceiling.

A previous owner said the house was built as a wedding gift by a neighbor for his daughter. The daughter was killed in an accident in Europe on her honeymoon, so the house was sold. It was probably at this time that the home was purchased by Joseph H. Rucker.

We do know, according to "Sunshine Fruit and Flowers," published in 1895², the Ruckers were living in the home by that year. The house was sold sometime in the 1920s when it was converted into eight apartments.

The interior of the house opens up into a large entrance hall and foyer that includes a carved wooden staircase and walls with intricately inlaid paneling. The original copper gas light fixture with cranberry glass is still hanging in the front hall. The house retains much of its original decor such as stained glass windows (including the front door), and a handsomely carved fireplace with bronze trim and small ceramic tiles, marble sinks, and brass hardware, as well as carved wood molding.

Joseph H. and Mary Rucker had three children: Joseph E. Rucker, b. 1889; DeWitt C Rucker, b. 1892; and Jerome W. Rucker, b. in 1894. Joseph H. Rucker died July 5, 1931 and his wife Mary died January 1, 1953.

The photo of the house was taken by Jean Ellen Vallandigham, sister of Chuck Berry who has submitted this article. The mansion is on the

National Historic Register and the exterior is maintained as originally built. The sign in front of the house says "Rucker Mansion." It is currently owned by Mrs. Ardith Meyer and the address is 418 S. 3rd Street in San Jose, California.

Endnotes: ¹ In most records his name is shown with the middle initial H. It is not known whether the H. stands for Henry or Howard.

² The home has been featured in a number of publications including: *A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California*, Gebhard, et al. Peregrine Smith, Inc., Santa Barbara, CA 1973, p.185; "Sunshine, Fruits & Flowers," a reprint of "Santa Clara County and its Resources 1895," *San Jose Mercury*, San Jose 1895, Reprinted 1976, p.145; *The Valley of Santa Clara Historic Buildings, 1792-1920*, Butler, Phyllis, the Jr. League of San Jose, 1975, p.154; "San Jose, An Inventory of its Historical and Architectural Heritage," San Jose Landmarks Commission, 1975, p.VIII; *Victoria's Legacy, Tours of San Francisco Bay Area Architecture*, Waldhorn & Woodbridge, San Francisco, 1978, p.180-182.

BENJAMIN RUCKER

Continued from Vol. 13, No. 1, p.5

Shortly after sending out the last newsletter, I heard from Mary Lou Reifel of Baton Rouge, LA inquiring about her Rucker ancestors. I should mention that she had not seen the newsletter and had no idea who her Rucker ancestors were. The only information she gave was her ancestor's name was Mattie Rucker and she was born 3 May 1865 in Unionville, Bedford Co., TN and her parents were born in Virginia.

I looked in the Tennessee Research Book (by Ron Payne) and found a Mattie Rucker of the right age in the 1880 Dyer Co., TN Census, Dist. 13, p.10B: B. F. Rucker, age 21, b. TN; A. V., age 54, b. VA, mother of B.F.; Lula 18, b. TN, sister of B.F.; Josie 16, b. TN, sister of B.F.; **Mattie 15**, b. TN, sister of B.F.; Chas. McDearmon, age 6, b. TN, nephew of B. F.; Clem McDearmon, age 5, b.

TN, nephew of B.F.

Here was a Mattie age 15, listed with her siblings and mother. But I didn't think it was the right one as she lived in Dyer Co. not Bedford. A good clue was the nephews, Chas and Clem McDearmon, because their brother, Neil B. Rucker had married 13 Mar 1873 to A. F. McDearmon. The 1850 and 1860 censuses, listed in the last newsletter showed, S. H. (or Sol) as the son of Benjamin⁴ Rucker (Ambrose³, John², Peter¹) from Virginia.

1870 Dyer Co., TN, p.168:

Jennie Rucker, age 42, KH, \$4000/1000, b. VA; Neal, age 21, farmer, \$2900/, b. TN; Nora 19, wdof Emplanyia (?); Nancy 17; Ader [sic] 15; Mary 13; Bud 11, Lucy 8; Jo 7; Mattie 5; John 1.

Issue of S. H. (or Sol) Rucker and wife Virginia (from census records and marriage records):

1. Neil B. Rucker, b. ca 1849 (1860 census); m. 13 Mar 1873, Dyer Co., TN to Ann. F. McDearmon.
2. Charles Rucker, b. ca 1850.
3. E. Rucker, b. ca 1850 (female).
4. Ann Rucker, b. ca 1854.
5. Autes or Autis R. Rucker, b 1856; m. 19 Dec 1870 J. M. Chambers.
6. Mary V. Rucker, b. ca 1857; m. 21 Dec 1876, C. S. Chambers.
7. Moris Rucker, b. ca 1859.
8. Benjamin F./G. Rucker, b. Feb 1859 (1900 census); unmarried in 1900.
9. Lula Rucker, b. ca 1862.
10. Josie Rucker, b. Jun 1864.
11. Mattie Rucker, b. ca 1865.
12. John Rucker, b. ca 1869.

(Source: Census records; *Early West Tennessee Marriages*, by Byron & Barbara Sistler, 1989; and Ron Payne's *Ruckers of Tennessee*.)

Was this the right Mattie? I wrote Mary Lou Reifel and much to my delight she said, YES, it was the correct Mattie. Mattie Rucker, b. 3 May 1865, Unionville, Bedford Co., TN; m. 9 Feb

1882, Dyer Co., TN to Henry Edgar Rogers, b. 18 Jun 1858, Dyer Co., TN, d. 12 Jun 1915, Gates, TN. (Mattie died young after bearing 7 children and Edgar remarried.)

Mary Lou Reifel wrote: "I am having published on Sept. 1 a book about my Reifel family, called 'A Legacy of Love.' My second book I have under contract is about the Rogers/Rucker families and will be called 'Searching for the Women.'"

So, Mary Lou Reifel, we look forward to your books. To correspond with Mary Lou, her e-mail address is <Mary.Lou.Reifel @worldnet.att.net>.

Raines Reunion Saturday, July 20, 2002

All descendants, relatives and cousins of the Raines/Rucker family are invited to attend the annual reunion held at the Roaring River Park in Lacombe, Oregon.

The family descends from Charles⁶ Lagrande/Legrand Raines (Elizabeth⁵ J. Rucker, Ephraim⁴, Tomagen³, Ephraim², Peter¹) and (Augustine³ Rucker, James², Peter¹). Charles Raines (1860-1942) married 15 Aug 1883, Ella Harris (1866-1941). The family had ten children so there are many descendants today.

Please contact Phyllis G. Shelton, 31919 N. Lake Creek Dr. Spc 41; Tangent, Or 97389-9787.

2002 Batteau Festival

Note From Becky Fox: *Smithsonian Magazine*, June 2002, has an article on the 2002 Batteau Festival and the Rucker family. Either find the magazine at a bookstore or go to the internet www.smithsonianmag.com — Click on the left menu 'THIS ISSUE,' and scroll down to Point of Interest — "POLING ON THE RIVER."

IN MEMORIAM

Mary Elizabeth Rucker Snyder, age 77 died March 14, 2002 in New Albany, Indiana. She was the daughter of Allen McCreary Rucker and Anna Thomas Hays. Her line of descent is as follows: Mary⁹ E. Rucker, Allen⁸ M., Thomas⁷ A., Lunsford⁶ T., George⁵, James⁴, John³, John², Peter¹.

Mary was born in Shelbyville, Kentucky, having lived in Scott County, Indiana as a child. She studied at The Art Center of Louisville and Spencerian Business College early in her life. Later, she attended the University of Louisville and Indiana University Southeast.

Mary retired from the Census Bureau in Jeffersonville, IN in 1986 and participated in the 1990 national Census Bureau population count.



Photo of Mary Rucker Snyder
taken at the 1992 Rucker Reunion in Fredericksburg

Mary was active in genealogy for many years. She was the editor of "Rucker Ruckus," a newsletter highlighting the Rucker family history. Also, she was also a board member of the Rucker Family Society and enjoyed attending many of their reunions. She belonged to many genealogy and historical societies. Her hobbies included arts and crafts, gardening and camping.

She is survived by three daughters, Grace A. Rouck of Clarksville, IN, Deborah L. Stemmler of Crestwood, KY, and Edwina A. Snyder of Jeffersonville, IN; two sons, Edward P. Snyder Jr. and Allen W. Snyder, both of Jeffersonville; and three grandchildren.

Mary was preceded in death by her husband of 38 years, Edward P. Snyder Sr. and a grandchild, Max A. Wiley of Indianapolis.

Note: Mary was deaf, having lost her hearing after the birth of her oldest child, Grace. This hindered her only slightly as she could lip-read.

Her obituary was submitted by her daughter Grace A. Rouck of Clarksville, IN from *The Courier Journal*, March 16, 2002, Louisville, KY.

* * * * *

Samuel James ("Jim") Rucker IV, 75, of Cheyenne, Wyoming died Feb. 20, 2002. He was born Oct. 1, 1926, in Englewood, Colorado, the son of Samuel and Leadmna Rucker. He had lived in Cheyenne for the past 32 years. He graduated from Englewood High School and joined the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II. He also served with the U.S. Air Force Reserve during the Korean Conflict. Mr. Rucker retired as a hydrologist for the U.S. Geological Survey after 40 years of service.

Jim is survived by his wife, Vivian Rucker, whom he married Dec. 14, 1947; his daughter, Patricia Lee Anderson of Cheyenne; sons, Samuel James

Rucker V of Vacaville, Calif., and Jeffrey Arthur Rucker of Peyton, Colo.; and six grandchildren. He was preceded in death by a brother, Gale F. Rucker; and a sister, Frances E. Ferrell. He was buried at Cheyenne Memorial Gardens. His obit was printed in the *Wyoming Tribune-Eagle*, Feb. 24, 2002 (from the Internet).

* * * * *

Frank Allen Beesley, age 68 died August 25, 2001 at his home in Scipio, Indiana. He was born Sept. 12, 1932 in Jennings County, the son of Minor Beesley and Virgie Hartwell.

He retired in 1990 after 23 years with Arvin/Pilot Industries in North Vernon. Before that he worked for 17½ years at Golden Foundry in Columbus. His hobbies included farming, hunting, traveling, camping and attending bluegrass festivals. He enjoyed collecting Edison records. Frank was a member of the Independent Order of Foresters and the Hoosier Hills Bluegrass Association and the Scipio United Methodist Church.

Frank married Margaret Rucker (Millard⁸ E., Edward⁷ W., Nathan⁶ C. Jr., Nathan⁵ Chaney, Reuben⁴, Wyatt³, James², Peter¹—lineage between Reuben and Wyatt not proved) on Dec. 30, 1950 in Vernon. He is survived by his wife; two sons, Robert Minor Beesley of Chicago and Bernard Wayne Beesley of Butlerville; four daughters, Patricia Ann Brennan of North Vernon, Kristia Annette Claghorn of Butlerville, Penny Jo Royse of Brewersville, and Donna Kay Gassaway of Taylorsville, KY. He is survived by a brother, six sisters, fifteen grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by a brother, a sister, a grandchild, Curtis Minor Beesley, and a great-grandchild, Malachi Joseph Longbrake.

Frank, buried at Scipio Cemetery, was the brother-in-law of one of our board members, Dorothy R. Cain of Gosport, IN who submitted the article from the *North Vernon Sun*, North Vernon, IN.

2002 RUCKER REUNION

"The Rucker's Western Migration"
Kansas City, Missouri

Many thanks to Becky Fox for making such wonderful plans for our reunion. It will be held at the Hilton Hotel at Independence, Missouri in October 18-20, 2002. The theme will be the 1800's: wagon trains, steamships and the migration westward. See the schedule for the reunion, elsewhere in this newsletter.

PRE-REUNION TRIP THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17

On Thursday, October 17 we will tour the middle part of the state of Missouri. This trip will be held separately from the reunion and is being planned by Chuck Berry and Karl Rice. You have the choice of staying in Kansas City/Independence and car pooling to the area or staying overnight in a motel in Arrow Rock or Moberly.

We will visit the counties of Saline, Chariton, Howard, Randolph and possibly Boone, visiting the towns and cemeteries of our Rucker forebears. Missouri is a state where many of the descendants of Peter Rucker migrated.

*We will visit the church of Rev. Thornton Rucker (William⁴, John³, Thomas², Peter¹, Wood, p.182), a Baptist minister. He established Heath Creek Church and Cemetery near Arrow Rock where he, his father William, and other relatives are buried. The town of "Rucker" in MO was named for him.

*Thornton's brother was William T. Rucker, Chuck Berry's great-grandfather. He lived in Howard County, MO, until 1852 when the Ruckers and Campbells left for California via a wagon train. It left from Asa Finley's property at the fork of the Salt Fork and Blackwater Rivers near Arrow Rock in Saline Co., MO.

*Remember RFS member, Ambrose S. Rucker Jr.

(Ambrose⁶ S., Joseph⁵ E., Ephraim⁴, Tomagen³, Ephraim², Peter¹) and (Augustine³, James², Peter¹) from our early reunions in Virginia. Ambrose was born in Salisbury, Chariton Co., MO, reared in Moberly and lived his adult years in Kansas City. (See obit, RFSN, Vol. 4, No. 3, p.28, Sep 1993.)

*John D. L. Rucker (John⁴, Isaac³, John², Peter¹, Wood, p.137) and his son Maj. John Fleming Rucker lived and are buried in Sturgeon in Boone Co., MO. He married his cousin, Julia Rucker (William⁴, John³, Ephraim², Peter¹, Wood, p.289). Their son Booker Hall Rucker was well known in the town of Moberly.

*Buried in Arrow Rock Cemetery is George A. Rucker (Angus³, Ephraim², Peter¹, Wood, p.283) and his son, Angus A. Rucker. This family has only recently been made known to us.

We will have lunch in the town of Arrow Rock, a quaint village on the Sante Fe Trail with many gift and antique shops. It has a few restored buildings, e.g., an old tavern, log courthouse and stone jail.

Maybe we can return to Kansas City from Arrow Rock by the old Santa Fe, Oregon and California wagon train trail (highways 41 to 65 to 24).

If you want to join us on this tour, please let us know. If there is enough interest, we will charter a bus from Kansas City. It's about a two-hour trip to Arrow Rock. Details will be forth coming later.

Two motels in each area:

Moberly: Ramada Inn - 660-263-6540 - US Hwy 24 & 63 — also Super 8 Motel - 660-263-8862

Arrow Rock: Marshall Lodge - 660-886-2326 - hwy 65 bypass—also Comfort Inn - 660-886-8080

Let Chuck or Karl know your plans:

Charles "Chuck" Berry	Karl Rice
3000 Bean Creek Rd.	1112 Timberline Rd.
Scotts Valley, CA 95066	Moberly, MO 65270
cfberry@jps.net	kcecyr@swbell.net
831-438-6033	660-263-4900

President's Letter

Many thanks to the board of directors for serving this past two years. We hope most of them will continue until the next reunion to be held in 2004 in Amherst Co., VA. The board will meet prior to the reunion in Kansas City on Friday afternoon from 3 until 5 p.m. at the hotel. We will then adjourn to hospitality room for refreshments.

Would the board members please let me know if they will be attending the reunion? My address, e-mail and phone number are on the second page of this newsletter. Please let me know by October 1st.

We are always looking for new board members. If anyone would like to serve or suggest someone for the board, please make your wishes known to me.

Jeannie

RUCKER FAMILY SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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 send in your dues.

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

Mrs. Leslie B. Cabral, Treasurer
 5601 South 37th Court
 Greenacres, FL 33463-2332

E-mail <LeslieCab@aol.com>

☐ \$7.00 Dues for Membership for 2002
☐ \$14.00 Dues for Membership for 2002 and 2003
☐ \$5.00 Institutional Dues (Give the newsletter to a local library)
 Name and address: _____
☐ Donations for the Preservation and Memorial Fund _____

Membership number _____ I am a new member (please give Rucker line of descent)

Name(s): _____

Please print your name(s) exactly as you would like it to appear on your mailing label

Address: _____

_____ zip + 4 _____

PHOTO CORNER

Clay Family Reunion from Nina Clay Cole

This photo of my brothers and sisters was taken last summer at our family reunion in Colorado Springs. There were 75 family members in attendance. We are the children of Lemuel⁷ Mitchell Clay (Mary⁶ E. Rucker, Lemuel⁵, Ambrose⁴, Lemuel³, James², Peter¹) and Margaret Jane Dolen. Of their ten children, six are living and pictured here.

On July 14, 2002 we are having an even larger reunion with many of the descendants of our grandparents, Mary Elizabeth Rucker (1846-1928) and William Henry Clay. It will be held at the Community Building at Broken Bow, Nebraska. All are welcome.



Keith Dora Nansel Helen Dye Charley Nina Cole John

THE RUCKER FAMILY SOCIETY



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