

the RUCKER FAMILY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Vol. 18, No. 1, March 2007

2006 Wood Family Reunion

See page 8



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The Antarctica Marathon

By Michael P. (Mike) Rucker

It's probably the only marathon in which the participants must avoid tripping over cute penguins, flee from irate territorial fur seals, watch out for attacks by ferocious monster sea gulls, run a mile up and down a steep slippery glacier (twice) and brave winds up to 40 mph (on the glacier).

The Antarctica Marathon is unique – and rugged. *Runner's World* named it "The World's Toughest Marathon." The marathon and accompanying half-marathon together are limited to two hundred participants. That's because the two Russian ships that transport the runners to Antarctica for the event can accommodate only 100 passengers each. The event

starts at the Russian Science Research Base on King George Island, Antarctica.

The 2007 event on February 26 stood up to its reputation. The dreaded Drake Strait is famous for having the roughest seas in the world, but our 600-mile cruise from Tierra de Fuego, Argentina to Antarctica was remarkably smooth, although my cabin mate was seasick on both crossings. We were introduced to a new term, "Drake secure," meaning that anything not properly stored that could roll around or fly around our cabins would probably do so. We were aboard the ship ten days, a two-day passage each way across the Drake, one day for the marathon, and the remaining five days to cavort with thousands of penguins, seals and whales. Each ship had Zodiac inflatable boats to take us ashore and kayaks in

continued on next page

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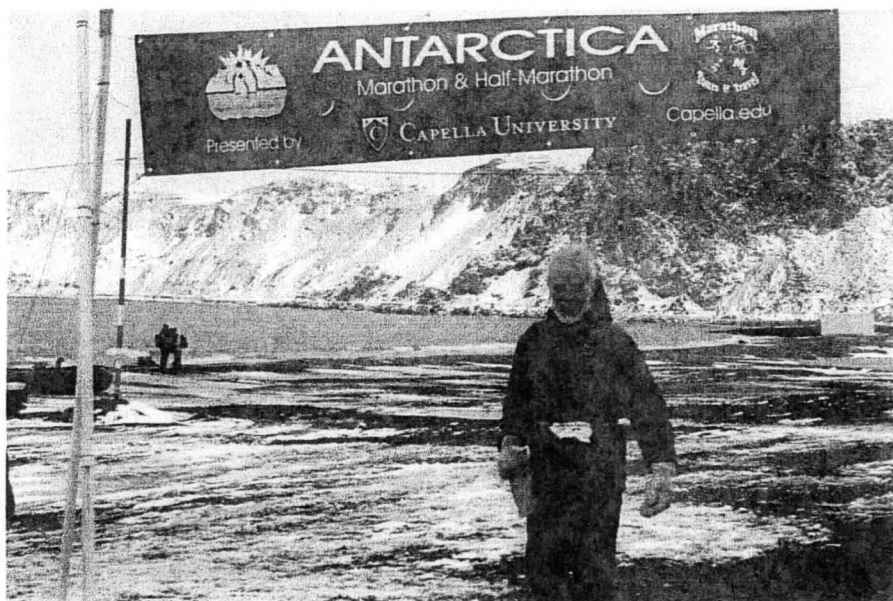
Roland Pittman

Karl Rice

Alice Rucker

Chris Rucker

Fred Rucker



**Mike Rucker
standing at the
finish line of the
Antarctica
Marathon**

which to paddle among the icebergs. The weather was beautiful every day but one: marathon day – when a snow and sleet storm set in and the wind blew unmercifully. Perfect: makes for a better story. We were allowed to use a toilet at the Russian base, but since 200 people could not fit into their “mud room” all at once we had to change into our running clothes under the building in a sleet storm in stiff wind with the temperature near freezing.

The fresh snow made the marathon course beautiful in a savage sort of way but hid potholes and beach cobbles that could twist an ankle. The melting snow made the entire course sloppy and muddy with streams and rivulets of ice-cold water that could not be avoided. We ran along two beaches with round stones about the size of ping-pong

balls that rolled with every step. A misstep on patches of glaze ice on the glacier could result in broken bones. An exhausting course!

But, the wildlife made the event unique. The penguins added a nice touch, but the angry seal at mile 22 was a real hazard—and fast—faster, at least, than exhausted marathoners. The skuas are huge—a six foot wingspan—and attack silently from behind. Several runners were hit by them. Add the glacier, the wind and the sleet and one has what is possibly the most memorable marathon in the world. At least, I'll remember it forever.

Query of the Quarter

Who was Edward A.
Rucker of Chicago Title?
By Michael P. (Mike) Rucker

Chicago Title. That is one of the best-known property title companies in the United States. It was founded in 1847 by Edward A. Rucker.

Chicago was a boomtown in 1847. The population was almost 17,000 -- and growing daily. Edward Rucker was a young law clerk in the thriving new town and he saw the need for a method of keeping track of every legal document and transaction concerning real estate ownership. His new method saved lawyers the laborious and error prone task of searching the extensive records of real estate transfers whenever each property changed hands.

The young entrepreneur perceived an opportunity and moved to seize it by hanging out a shingle on the Saloon Building at the corner of Clark and Lake Streets. The next year Rucker took a partner in the business, J. Mason Rees, and the two moved the office to the Mercantile Building. Then disaster struck Chicago: the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 that destroyed a large proportion of the structures within the new community.

But Rucker, as well as several offshoots of Rucker's company, had the presence of mind to snatch their records from the inferno at the last moment. Soon, these title companies merged in the western outskirts of the burnt city and became Chicago Title and Trust Co. (CT&T).

The next year the Illinois State Legislature passed the Burnt Records Act that made the CT&T records admissible as evidence in court. That established CT&T as the premier title company in Illinois and it soon expanded beyond the borders of Chicago. During the 1950's CT&T grew beyond the borders of Illinois and became the pre-eminent title company in the nation. Today nearly one in four title insurance policies in the U.S. is issued by CT&T.

What is the genealogy of this Edward A. Rucker?

* * * * *

African-American News Memorial Comes to Life

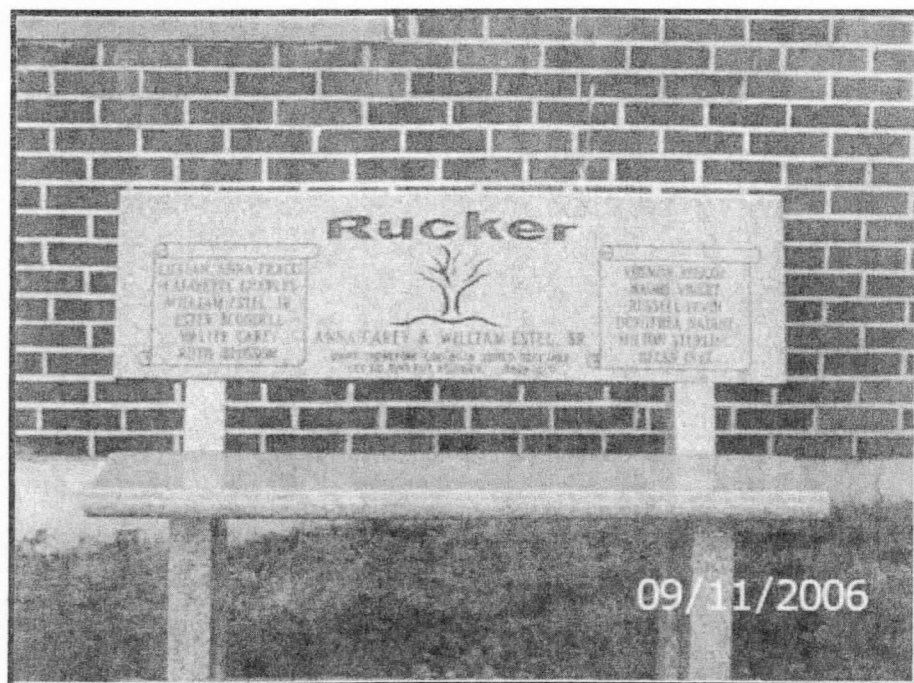
By Veronica Akers
(Daughter of one of the Twelve)
Submitted by
Scarlett Rucker-Misikir

The Rucker family has always had a strong belief in God; and it is that belief that keeps our family so close and together all these years.

Our family has been a part of Second Baptist Church (SBC) in Huntsville, MO for over 100 years. Our great-grandfather Lafe' Rucker was a founding member, and his son William Estel moved his new bride Anna C. to Huntsville, where they united with SBC, and from that union twelve children, six boys and six girls were born.

The Rucker family started having reunions every other year, starting in 1972. Part of our reunion celebration included having church services, acknowledgment of graduates, accomplishments, food, fun and activities for the children. The family suggested in 1984 that a stain glass window be donated to (SBC) in honor of the Rucker name. The money was collected and donated to the church, but unfortunately the window never materialized and monies were used for other church expenses.

Fast forwarding 20 years, it is 2005 and plans for the 2006 Reunion hosted in Minneapolis, MN were well underway. Joyce Williams, (daughter of one of the twelve) the host of 2006 Reunion encouraged the family to revisit the stained glass window. Ricardo Harris, (grandson of one of the twelve) was appointed to head up the project and after research, he



Note from Scarlett Rucker-Misikir: We are the descendents of Wm. E. Rucker, Sr. and Anna Mae (Carey) Rucker of Huntsville, Randolph County, Missouri. Their twelve children are as follows: Lillian, Lafayette Jr., William E., Jr., Esther, Walter, Ruth, Roscoe Sr., Namoi, Russell Sr., Dorothea, Milton and Helen. There are more than 200 living, blood/linear descendents.

See Esther B. Rucker's obituary on page 7.

discovered that the window proved to be too expensive at that time. The entire reunion committee came up with four suggestions on what type of memorial would be placed in the church. Aunt Esther (last of the twelve children of Anna & William) made the final decision, and the bench was chosen.

The Rucker family choir came together from across the country and recorded a Gospel CD on Memorial Day weekend of 2006; and put the final touches in place for the upcoming reunion in September, but the highlight of the weekend was the 90th birthday party for Aunt Esther, where family members of all ages were in attendance to

Rucker Bench

honor her.

The bench was finished and installed in November and in the following week Aunt Esther passed away, the last of twelve. Prior to her passing, she was blessed to see it, and even sit on it. Pictures were taken of this memorable occasion that has become a family treasure.

I know that my mother (Dorothea Rucker-Akers), aunts and uncles are all looking down from heaven and smiling, knowing that their dream has finally come to pass.

* * * * *

Book Review:

The Best Seat in the House

By Allen Rucker

Reviewed by Michael P.
(Mike) Rucker

"Humor?" you ask. "How could a book about paralysis possibly be humorous?" The answer is Allen Rucker's uncanny ability to turn an ironic phrase around almost any possible situation.

This book, Allen's latest *New York Times* bestseller, will make you laugh or at least



Allen Rucker

chuckle occasionally, and while it probably won't make you cry, it will make you painfully aware of your own vulnerability.

Allen was a moderately successful (although somewhat stressed and anxious) Hollywood writer when in 1996 at the age of 51 he suddenly became disabled with transverse myelitis. This rare (one in a million persons per year) neurological disease left him completely paralyzed from the middle of his back down. In the course of 90 minutes he went from being a typical, relatively healthy, mid-lifer and recreational runner to a total cripple.

During the next several months, as he realized that he would never stand or walk again and as he suffered

constant new sources of humiliation such as his "skinny friend the urinary catheter," he lapsed into depression. He recounts, with amazing candor, his spiral into this personal Hell. He prevails and eventually achieves an epiphany, realizing that in many ways, his life after paralysis is better than it was before. He even achieves greater writing success than before: writing the best selling companion books for the "Sopranos" television program. And, in 2006, two prestigious TV writing awards.

In this tidy book, Allen leads his readers on a giddy romp through a great swath of American popular culture. Not being fully hip on certain details of various movie and television culture, I could not relate to some of Allen's specific references, but seldom missed the point he was making, whether poignant personal insight or slightly twisted humor.

Allen does not use this book to preach any particular point of view, except one that I found particularly apropos, stem cell research, which might lead to a cure for transverse myelitis. I empathized with his point of view on stem cell research because my wife, Harriet, (and Rucker cousin) has been disabled for many years with multiple sclerosis. Allen: "To most people who hear about or

debate the stem cell controversy, it's a matter of values or religion. To people with disabilities, it's personal. When and if stem cell procedures are accepted medical practice, it will take someone with enormous ideological conviction to say 'No thanks, I think the use of embryonic stem cells is morally wrong, so please don't use this therapy on my twelve-year-old daughter with type 1 diabetes'." That's a hard argument to counter.

Rucker has a message in this book for everyone of any age, but he particularly targets his fellow baby boomers, predicting (with certainty) that they will lose their health, stem cell research will go from ethical dilemma to moral imperative and adult diapers will be designed by Ralph Lauren in a "rugged, Wyoming rancher motif."

Allen has achieved other recent successes in addition to this best seller. During 2006, he was granted two meritorious awards for his TV adaptation of David Maraniss's book *Two Days in October* about the Vietnam War. These were the George Peabody Award and the Emmy Award for Exceptional Merit in Nonfiction Filmmaking.

We can all learn a lot about life and its ups and downs from this tough, resilient Rucker cousin. Buy this book! It will make you think!

In Memoriam

Alice Elizabeth Rucker

Allen passed away January 22, 2007, in Austin, TX. Born September 10, 1918 in Taylor County, TX, Alice was the oldest daughter of Joseph Herman (J.H.) Rucker, Sr. and Mary Ophelia Fuller Rucker. Lineage: Alice⁸ Rucker, Joseph⁷ H. Sr. Joseph⁶ M., Reuben⁵, Reuben⁴, Peter³, John², Peter¹ (See *Rucker Heritage*, p.295.)

Alice graduated from Abilene High School, and received a degree in Mathematics from McMurry College. She subsequently attended Texas Tech in Lubbock where she obtained a degree in Home Economics and met her future husband, Howard C. Allen, whom she married in Abilene, TX on June 30, 1941. The Allens first resided in St. Louis, MO and returned to Texas when Howard entered WWII. The couple then moved to Lamesa, TX, where Howard was associated with his father in the architectural and building business. In 1966 the Allen family moved to Austin, TX, where Howard was associated with the Texas Department of Health.

Alice is survived by husband Howard, son Donald H. Allen,

grandson Austin H. Allen, of Austin; daughter Wanza E. (Brooks) Grantier of Marshall, MI, and grandchildren Charles F. Grantier, Marguerite C. (Scott) Grupke, and Elise M. Grantier; daughter Barbara J. (David) Bend of Marble Falls, TX, and grandchildren Aaron D. (Cristy) Bend, and Hannah E. Bend; and daughter Mary Jane (Mark) Phelps of Kingwood, TX, grandchildren Ashley E., Amanda M., and Angela V. Phelps.

She was preceded in death by her older brother, Joe Herman Rucker, Jr. of Fresno, CA, and by a younger sister, Ruth R. Hickock of Houston, TX. Surviving brothers and sisters, all of TX, are J. Morris Rucker of Houston, J. Lloyd Rucker of McKinney, Rev. Harold B. Rucker of Richardson, Lucille R. Chessmore of Fort Worth, Juanita R. Marshall of Midland, and Melba R. Boozer of Abilene. She is survived by numerous nephews and nieces.

Alice joined the Methodist church at a young age, taught kindergarten classes, sang in the choir for many years, and was a member of the Susanna Wesley Sunday School Class of FUMC, Austin. She published in 1993 a book of her Rucker family genealogy, *Rucker Heritage*, and also *The Rucker Family Cookbook*. She

was a charter member of the Rucker Family Society and a former board member.

Alice's services were held at the First United Methodist Church, Austin, TX, with Rev. John McMullen and Rev. Kathleen Jones, FUMC, and Rev. Harold B. Rucker, brother of the deceased, officiating. Honorary pallbearers were Alice's grandsons and sons-in-law. She was buried in Austin Memorial Park.

* * *

Thomas J. Rucker Jr., age 89, died at home in Fairfax, January 24, 2007. He was a St. Louis native and graduated from Columbia University in New York. He was a high school science teacher before entering World War II.

He received a Distinguished Flying Cross in 1943, while in the Army Air Forces, for helping establish air routes across Africa and the Middle East. He transported key personnel and material over unmapped terrain where landing fields and navigational aids were practically nonexistent. Later in the War, he trained flight crews at domestic air bases, readying

them for the African and European theaters.

He flew for 24 years as a commercial pilot, flying for the old Pennsylvania Central Airlines, Capital Airlines and then United Airlines. After his retirement in 1977, he became a real estate agent for Keith Barcroft Properties in Falls Church, VA. He was also a volunteer with Travelers Aid at Dulles International Airport for more than ten years.

His wife of 46 years, June Stones Rucker, died in 1991. He is survived by three daughters, Suzanne Horstman of Stuart, FL, Karen Vincent of Parkersburg, WV, and Janice DeHaven of Centreville, VA; six grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

From the *Washington Post*, Feb. 5, 2007, submitted by Bob Sealock of Fairfax, VA.

Lost Ruckers

If you know these folks and their new addresses, please let us know.

#564 Elizabeth R. Douglas
Indian Harbor Beach, FL
#884 Sgt Wade M. Dixon
San Diego, CA

Marjorie Rucker Ball

From Frances Willess

I hate to be the bearer of sad tidings again so soon, but there has been another Rucker death here in Austin: Marjorie Rucker Ball, daughter of Truett Rankin Rucker (Page 308 in Alice Rucker Allen's book, *Rucker Heritage* and her 1st cousin). The obituary was printed in the Austin American-Statesman.

Marjorie Rucker Ball was born on February 9, 1933 in Abilene, Texas and died February 22, 2007 in Austin.

She is survived by a son, David Jan Ball and his wife, Shirlene; granddaughter Jessica and her husband, Josh; grandsons, Cameron and Tyler.

She studied at Oxford, was a graduate of UT (University of Texas) Austin and TSU (Texas State University) in San Marcos with her Masters. Marj worked with AISD (Austin Independent School District) in many capacities, starting in the classroom and eventually becoming Principal. She was active at Riverbend Church along with showing her devotion to her grand-

children who were the light of her life. She enjoyed dining and visiting with her many friends. Her lineage: Marjorie⁸ Ann Rucker, Truett⁷ R. Joseph⁶ M., Reuben⁵, Reuben⁴, Peter³, John², Peter¹.

* * *

Esther Blondel Rucker, age 90, died November 17, 2006. She was born June 30, 1916 in Huntsville, MO, the daughter of William E. and Anna Carey Moss Rucker.

Esther was a member of the Huntsville Second Baptist Church where she served as church pianist for many years. She also worked in private nursing care and cared for many children.

She was preceded by her eleven brothers and sisters (see names on page 4). She is survived by her daughter, Regina A. Davis of Huntsville, three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

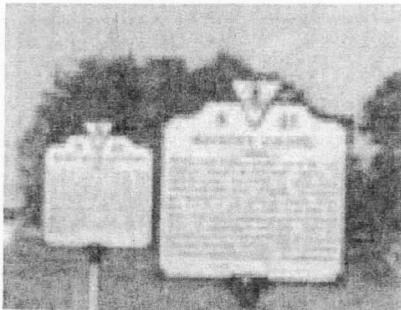
From the *Moberly Monitor-Index*, 20 Nov 2006, submitted by Karl Rice, Moberly, MO.

See article on the Rucker Bench on page 3-4.

The Amherst County, VA Rucker Highway Markers

The first photo is not clear, but it shows how the two markers, at Faulconersville, Amherst Co., VA looked before one was demolished by an out-of-control vehicle. Unfortunately, the damaged sign has disappeared so it will have to be replaced (by us).

Rucker Highway Markers as



originally placed

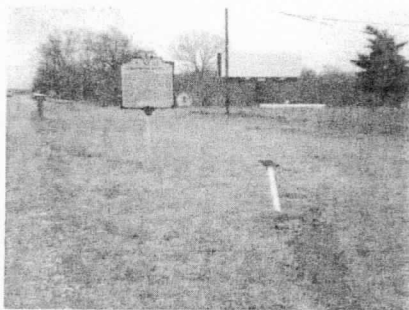


Photo showing one marker missing

The markers, one for the Anglican Church of Amherst Co., founded by Col. Ambrose

Rucker, and one for the James River Batteaux invented by Benjamin and Anthony Rucker, were dedicated at the 1994 Bedford County, Virginia Rucker Reunion.

Do we want to replace the marker at a cost of \$1350? Route 29 has been moved (bypass around this area), so the signs would not be as visible as once was.

Please email your comments to Chris Rucker at

Sparklecitychris@aol.com

* * * * *

President's Letter

As I write this, I am making preparations to join Mike Rucker for this year's Batteau Festival in Lynchburg, Virginia, the launch point for the float down the James River toward Richmond. You will recall that brothers Anthony and Benjamin Rucker invented the batteau in the eighteenth century to transport tobacco down river to market, and return goods back upstream. Our 2004 Rucker Family Society reunion in Amherst

County included a visit to the Batteau Festival, and we watched as Mike departed on the *Rose of Nelson*, his usual ride. He will return to her this year, and I will be on Thomas Jefferson's *Spirit of New London*, a newly built batteau sponsored by the nearby town of the same name. Mr. Jefferson (as he is called by the students at "The University," which is what they call the Charlottesville institution, which he founded) was a contemporary of the Rucker brothers and described their batteau in his journals. Our batteaux will pass just to the south of Charlottesville, where we will convene for our next RFS reunion, in 2008. I hope that you will make plans to attend. There is a great deal to see and do in Charlottesville, not the least of which is visiting Jefferson's beloved Monticello and the University of Virginia. I am very excited at the prospect of returning to my old college stomping grounds for our reunion, and looking forward to introducing its charms to my Rucker cousins.

Chris Rucker

Letter from the Editor

I am trying a new format and would like your comments. Let me know what you think and if you have any suggestions.

The Jamestown stamp is for the 400th reunion of the founding of Jamestown that is taking place in Virginia this summer. Our interest is in our immigrant ancestor, Peter Rucker, who sailed into Jamestown in 1700 two years after the capital had been moved to Williamsburg.

Jeannie Brydon

* * * * *

2006 Wood Family Reunion

Richmond, VA

August 11 - 13

By Jeannie Brydon

The get-together of the grandchildren of Sudie Rucker and William P. Wood was accidental. I discovered at the Library of Virginia shop, articles for sale, reproduced from old seed catalogs of the T. W. Wood & Sons Seed

Company founded by Wm's father. We visited Wood family homes and stores, a church with two stained glass windows dedicated to T. W. & Elizabeth Wood and the library where we all purchased items. We ended with a lovely covered dish lunch on Sunday, at the only family home still lived in by family members.



Posing on the front porch of 2702 Monument Avenue, Richmond, VA as we did as children.

From left: Sudie Mann Wilson, her daughters, Sue Moore and Beverly Sumner; Bettie, Sudie, and Carol Wood (sisters) and Jeannie Brydon



From left: Sudie Mann Wilson, on the left is the oldest grandchild (We celebrated her 80th birthday), Marion Wood Addison, Sudie Rucker Wood (youngest grandchild), Price Wood, our host, and Dave Addison

Sudie Rucker Wood's family is found on Page 55 of her book.

Photo on p.1 – grandchildren of Sudie Rucker Wood:

From left: Sudie R. Wood II, Jeannie Brydon, Bettie Wood, Tim Wood, Billy Mann, Carol Wood, Bobby Brydon, Price Wood, Ward Wood;

Seated: Marion W. Addison and Sudie Mann Wilson.

Missing: Roger Mann (dec'd) and Gar Wood Jr. (was sick).

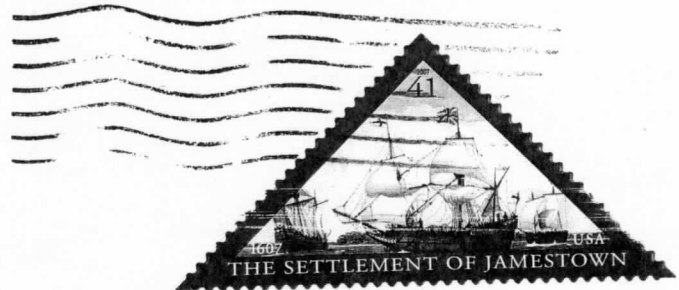
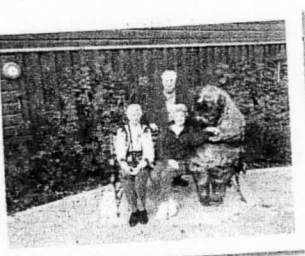
Message from Fred Rucker Co-Chairman of the 2006 Rucker Reunion

Thanks for everyone's wonderful concern about my health. I am much better, have returned to work and expect to make a full recovery. My back still bothers me some. I am so sorry I missed the Salt Lake City reunion but plan to be in Virginia for the next one. I am very grateful for my good wife Carol for all the work she did with the reunion and keeping our business going. I would like to thank everyone who came to Salt Lake City and hope it was a great experience for them and hope they will come again.

Thanks, Fred

The Road to Salt Lake City--October 2006

Becky Fox and Jeannie Brydon drove from Kansas City to Salt Lake City for the 2006 Rucker Reunion. Going out, we followed the route where the Oregon trail, the Mormon trail and the pony express converged. You can see the wagon ruts created by the heavy traffic. Also the beautiful skies at sunset. A photo of Marita Taylor at the Olympic site and other Ruckers at the Kennecott Copper Mine. Another group at the LDS Library. Marita Taylor joined us for the following week in Park City, Utah, and for our drive back to Kansas City. The last two photos are Becky, Jeannie and Marita in Park City, Utah.



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