

FALL EDITION

the RUCKER FAMILY SOCIETY

VOL. 20, NO. 3, SEPTEMBER 2009

Rucker Reunion

October 2010

Nashville, Tennessee

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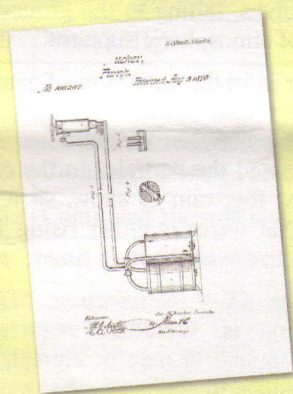


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Biography of James Monroe Rucker

by Steven H. Moe and Mike Rucker

So often ancestors slip into anonymity without a trace of the lives they led, leaving behind only a few scattered dates like crumbs for curious ancestors to follow. Fortunately, by tracking the information that was left I was able to discover more about James M. Rucker, my unconventional great-great-great-grandfather and author of the book reviewed in this newsletter.

In an interview more than thirty years ago my great grandmother Aline Mallard (Rucker) Conard had mentioned this "inventor" on the Rucker side of the family. Recently I found a reference to him here in the pages of the Rucker Family Society Newsletter where his "Air Forcer Pump" was described. Armed with the name and date of the invention I was able to track down the existence of the book at the Library of Congress

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The Sphere and the Cylinder: A Book Review

136 Years Late

by Steven Moe

The writer would not be understood as the advocate and believer in the final success of the many visionary efforts of many parties in constructing flying machines. He finds no model in nature to make such calculations upon. No large animals move on and through the air. Their home and place of travel, though in and through the air, is yet on the surface of the earth, or in and near the surface of the water. Even the largest class birds, such as the ostrich, and others are not favored with the privilege of flying.

We all have certain ingrained assumptions of what can or cannot be done. For a minute place yourself in the summer of 1873, perhaps sitting in a rocking chair on the back porch of an old Virginia home, and the prediction above has certain logic. After all, this is a time when the Wright brothers were just small children who probably only daydreamed about "flying machines".

The extract is from James Monroe Rucker's book titled "The Sphere and the Cylinder", published 136 years ago. James

***The Rucker Family
Society Newsletter***

is published quarterly in
March, June, September, and
December

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was from Bedford County, Virginia (see biography). I have an interest in the book as I am a great, great, great, grandson of the author. As I live in Japan, Mike Rucker obtained a copy for me in the Science Reading Room of the Adams Building of the Library of Congress.

Diligent readers of these newsletters will recall that editions Sept./Dec., 2006 and June, 2007 included articles about the "Air Forcer Pump" developed by James M. Rucker in the early 1870s. These articles brought comments from several interested readers. This book was apparently written and published at around the same time to promote the author's invention and to add his contribution to what he called the "yet unfinished circle of science". Put simply, his theory was that "Nature must give the original model for all our machines ... the sphere and the cylinder seem to be nature's great prototype" and he cited many examples of these two shapes being used in nature throughout the book.

It would be too easy to make fun of the author for the antiquated and, in some cases, wrong science behind his explanations. Instead, the book must be read as a "period piece" with an understanding that it was not only written in 1873, but the author probably did not have more than a rudimentary education in the 1820's and acknowledged himself that many of his theories were "new and

adverse to the common conceptions".

Having given those caveats in his defense, some extracts from the book are set out below from the 26 short chapters with titles ranging from "The Ladies' Fan - Why it Cools" to "The Flying of the Bird and Insect".

Chapter II - The Ladies' Fan - Why It Cools "Dense air is warm; rarified air is cold ... The facts in this instance are simply these, the warm air has been dipped away from the front of the face ..." [and replaced by cooler rarified air.] The air taken away was warm, the air filling its place was cool.

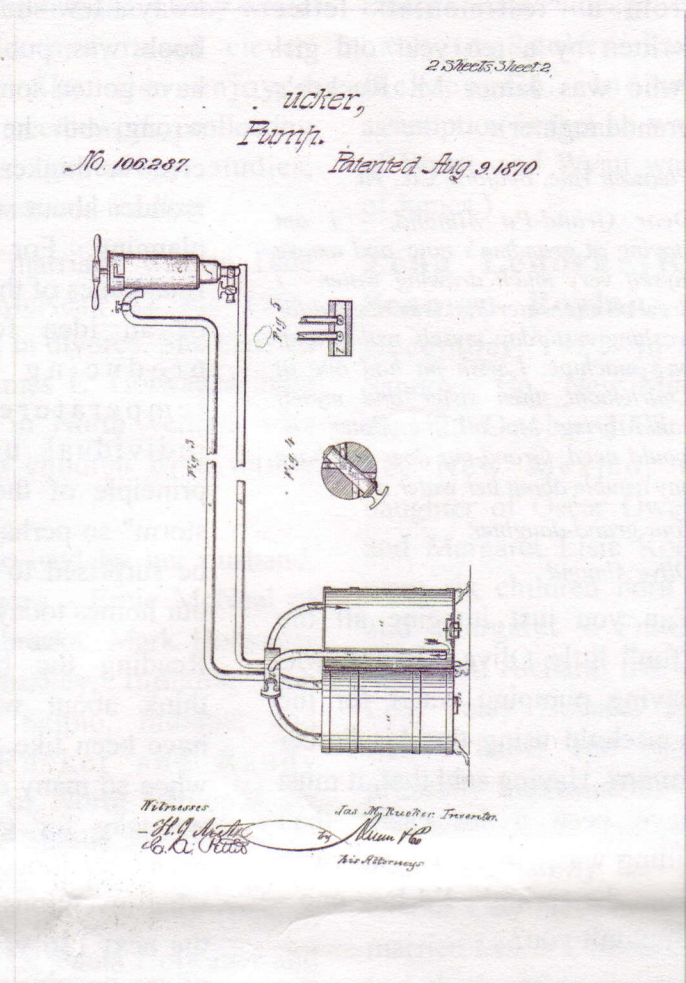
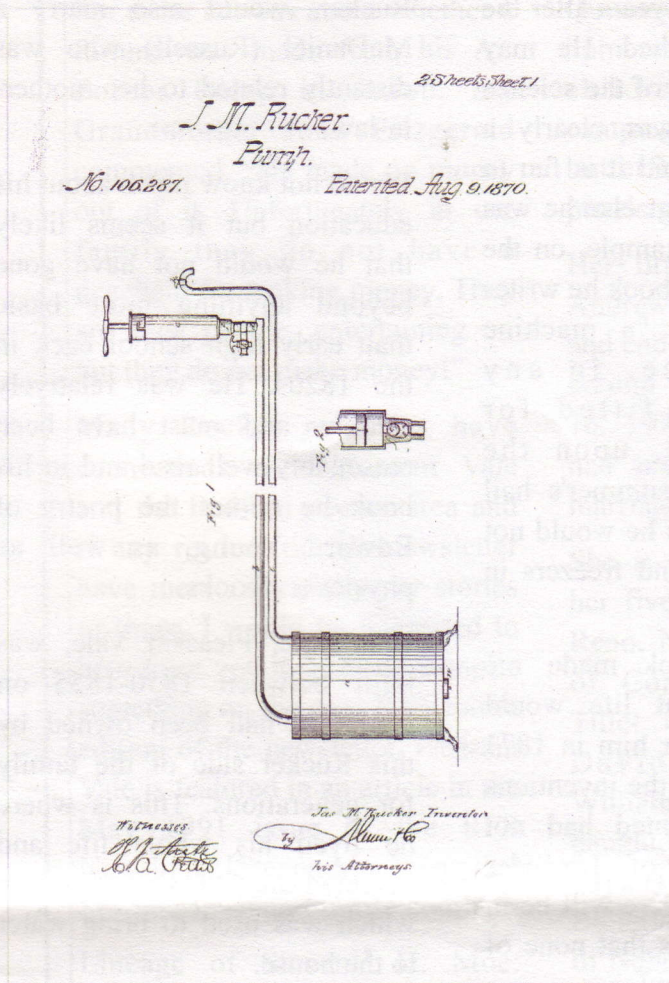
Chapter VIII - Dew, Fog, Cloud and Rain "The farmer knows well that he may look for much rain when he hears the decayed limbs falling from the trees in the woods, or the decayed trees themselves, falling to the ground for the want of atmospheric support."

"Water is in the condition of evaporation at all times, unless the attraction of cohesion between the particles of vapor has massed the particles to the condition of dew, fog, rain or snow, so it may be said, that water is either rising from, or falling to the earth, at all times."

Chapter IX - Respiration "The term breathing is, therefore, nothing more, when applied to man or animal, than an expression to indicate the manner in which the Creator first put the air to work, giving them life and motion." And, further into the chapter: "The aeronaut himself [man in a hot air balloon] will be very much enlarged by the expansion of the air in his body, which has been conveyed in it from the surface of the earth."

Chapter XI - Animal Heat "The breath of inspiration compresses the air in the cells of the lungs, and, therefore produces or evolved heat; while the breath of exhalation produces cold or destroys it." [This explains why animals produce body heat.]

Back in 1873 the steam engine was a recent invention and he includes a far sighted comment on



Paperwork filed by James M. Rucker for his invention. The patent for his pump was granted August 9, 1870.

the environmental implications which resonates with what many are still feeling today:

"The time cannot be far distant when the question must be asked: Can we submit to the feeding of this giant any longer [with coal and wood], or shall we let it die, or die ourselves? To keep it alive, we must continue to search the bowels of the earth, or to sweep down the forest on the surface. The exhaustion of either must be fatal to the existence of man himself. Shall we be like some drunken boatman, gliding down the rapids, above a great waterfall, without sail, or oar, until the fearful chasm looms in sight when too late to avoid the dreadful leap?"

The chapter called "*The Raising of Water by Artificial Pressure of Atmosphere*" explains his theories behind his Air Forcer

Pump. Unfortunately, there is no illustration of the pump in the book but I did find a copy of the patent from 1870 and a picture from the patent is included in this newsletter. The picture shows that the water was in an air tight barrel and pressurized using the hand pump. He gives some further indications in these extracts from the book:

"...much can be gained in raising water by compressing air, by raising it through a small pipe with the multiplying force of the air, which gives it greatly increased velocity, while the weight of the water is supported all the time by the force of the air of equivalent resistance, ... his method for compressing air is by a piston working in a cylinder, giving

expulsion of the air, by reciprocal motion ... power can be multiplied by a rapid stroke of the piston massing the air, and thus giving a great velocity through the pipes and delivering a large quantity of water in a short time through small and cheaper pipes ... one man, acting on a fly-wheel upon an Air-Forcer, acting like the piston in the steam engine, reciprocally forcing the air continuously upon the water, would give a flowing of water at each terminus of the pipes ... the machine has been in use in the writer's own house over twelve months, from the date of writing this - March 22, 1873 - and answers all the purposes for which it was constructed, raises the water from his spring to his kitchen and dwelling house, to three rooms of the same, by the saving of much labor."

Probably a great selling point for the Air Forcer Pump is a quote

from a "testimonial" letter written by a ten year old girl (who was James M. Rucker's granddaughter):

Pleasant Vale, Bedford, Co., Va.

Dear Grand-Pa Almond, - I am staying at grandma's now, and amuse myself very much drawing water. I drew all the water that was needed for washing yesterday, myself, with grand-pa's machine. I wish pa had one at Charlemont, then sister and myself could bring Ma all the water she would need. Grand-ma does not have any trouble about her water at all.

Your grand-daughter,

Olive Almond

Can you just imagine all the "fun" little Olive Almond was having pumping water for the household using the Air Forcer Pump? Having said that, it must have been a lot easier than filling water in buckets to carry from the spring! I'd buy one - wouldn't you?

About one hundred years after the book was published James M. Monroe's granddaughter, Aline Mallard (Rucker) Conard, added the following bittersweet note in an interview in 1976:

My Grandfather was an inventor, and he invented the air force pressure pump. [I]n fact he invented quite a number of things. [W]e had . . . [a] spring . . . and he brought the water by air force pressure into the house. . . . [H]e got sick . . . and my Grandmother . . . didn't approve of all these inventions . . . as he was sick and overdoing it. [H]e hurried and wrote a book about his inventions before he died.

In his conclusion he writes of his hopes to publish more of his views but it appears his illness prevented that for he passed

away a few short years after the book was published. He may have gotten some of the science wrong, but he was clearly a creative thinker and it is fun to wonder about what else he was planning. For example, on the final pages of the book he writes of an idea for "a machine producing ice, in any temperature, fitted for individual use, upon the principle of the summer's hail storm" so perhaps he would not be surprised to find freezers in our homes today.

Reading the book made me think about what life would have been like for him in 1873 when so many of the inventions we take for granted had not even been thought of. I wonder what inventions there will be in the next 136 years that none of us can imagine now!

* * *

Biography of James Monroe Rucker

(Continued from Page 1)

and, with a copy kindly sent by Mike Rucker, gain more of a glimpse into who this ancestor was.

James M. Rucker was born in 1814 and died in 1878. In an era of very large families it is interesting that he was the only child of Jonathan Rucker and Margaret (Hatcher) Rucker. He married Marinda McDaniel. One of their sons, Waller J.

Rucker, would also marry a McDaniel (Russell) who was distantly related to her mother-in-law.

We do not know much about his education but it seems likely that he would not have gone beyond anything more basic than early high school back in the 1820s. He was relatively wealthy and must have been reasonably well read and in his book he quotes the poetry of Edward Young, as well as physics textbooks.

His home, Pleasant Vale, was built between 1850-1855 on land that had been owned by this Rucker side of the family for generations. This is where he lived his whole life and invented the "Air Forcer" pump which was used to bring water to the house.

Pleasant Vale, when James owned it, is described in a book (Peaks of Otter Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, *Bedford Villages - Lost and Found Volume II*, Bedford, Virginia, 1998 at page 66) about the area:

Further on up the valley on the left is the George Rucker farm known as Pleasant Vale. When owned by his grandson, James Monroe Rucker, it was composed of 900 acres. James M. Rucker inherited the place from his father, Jonathan Rucker, and built the present house in 1856. His wife, Marinda McDaniel, planted the impressive boxwood in the yard.

For those curious about whether a fortune was made from his Air Forcer Pump invention, my Grandmother Joan Fitzgerald commented, "He made no money out of it. Unfortunately in our family they do not have a penchant for making money. They are nice people, entertaining ... but they do not make money!"

Many Rucker relations have connections with Pleasant Vale and the Bedford county area and if any readers of this newsletter have memories, photos or stories to share, I would be interested to hear from you in order to compile something on the area for a future edition of the newsletter. Pleasant Vale is featured in an article in the May 1991 issue of the RFS Newsletter [Steven Moe's email is Steven.Moe@nortonrose.com]

Lineage of Steven¹¹ H. Moe: Marion¹⁰ A Moe, Joan⁹ Conard Fitzgerald, Aline⁸ Mallard Rucker, Waller⁷ J., James⁶ M., Jonathan⁵, George⁴ M., John³, John², Peter¹

* * *

In Memoriam

Catherine "Cathy" Ruth Holwager, age 64 of North Vernon, Indiana, died April 15, 2009, in Columbus, Indiana. She was born July 4, 1944 in Scipio, Indiana, the youngest of the nine children of Millard E. Rucker and Rose M. Davis. She was a 1962 graduate of North Vernon High School and a member of the Queensville Community Church,

Queensville, Indiana. Cathy was a homemaker and raised eleven children. She also enjoyed camping, needlework, collecting butterflies, genealogy studies, puzzle games and reading.

Her first marriage was to Dale Andrew McNeal, 22 Jan 1966, and ended in divorce. She married second James E. Holwager, June 16, 1979 in North Vernon, who had seven children by a former marriage.

She is survived by her husband, her five sons - Ernie McNeal of Reno, Nebraska; Mark Holwager of Commiskey, Indiana; Rob Tillet of Scipio, Indiana; and David Rucker and Randy Williams of North Vernon - six daughters, Shellie Hutchinson of Taylorsville, Indiana; Jo Petty of Butlerville, Indiana; Pam Branum of Nebraska; Paula Holwager and Sharon Trice of Versailles, Indiana; and Valerie Maxwell of North Vernon - two sisters, Dorothy Cain of North Vernon and Margaret Beesley of Scipio, both former board members of the R.F.S. - and 23 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents; three brothers, Lewis "Bud," John M. and Billy J. Rucker; and two grandsons, Corbin Ryan Cheesbrew and James Keith Young.

Lineage: Catherine⁹ Ruth Rucker (Millard⁸ Earnest, Edward⁷ Wallace, Nathan⁶ Chaney, Jr., Nathan⁵ Chaney, Reuben⁴, Wyatt³, James², Peter¹).

Editor's note: lineage is proved back to Reuben Rucker of Jackson Co., Indiana. (My assumption is that he was the son of Wyatt, and Wyatt was the son of James.)

Zena Lenora (Rucker) Seaman Boylan, born 20 December 1921 in Regina, Sandoval Co., New Mexico, and died 25 October 2008, in Santa Fe, New Mexico, was the daughter of Oscar Owen Rucker and Margaret Elsie Koon. There were six children born to Oscar and Margaret - Frank Owen, Raymond Richard, Iris May, Ellis Leo, Patsy Nevada, and Zena. Zena's father and uncles were primarily interested in cattle and had homesteads, but by the late 1920s the family had moved to Clarke Co., Nevada where Zena married Lewis J. Seaman and they had three children: Lewis "Guy" Owen (his wife is Shirley and they live in Santa Fe, New Mexico); Sylvia Marie "Pat" Seaman (of Albuquerque, New Mexico), and Margaret "Margie" Clara Trujillo (of Abiquiu, New Mexico), all born from 1930-1945. At the time of her death, Zena had seven grandchildren, Rena Rulley, Heath Seaman, Brett Seaman, Lee Hauser, Patrick Trujillo, Lane Hauser, Tanner Trujillo; and eight great-grandchildren.

Lewis and Zena lived in Clayton, New Mexico and were ranchers. When Zena was 28, she used her inheritance from her parents to

begin a 28 year career in the grocery business. Zena loved rodeo and was fond of telling the story that one time she was watching a thrilling event she got so excited that she accidentally dropped her baby!

After Zena's husband Lewis died in 1960, Zena married Mike Boylan, who died in 1986. In later years she had become a passionate real estate developer and was having homes built on her properties – a project she was working on even in her last days! Zena maintained an interest in genealogy and helped keep family stories alive. She suffered from leukemia and died at the Presbyterian Hospital in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Lineage of Zena⁸ Boylan: Oscar⁷ Owen Rucker, Richard⁶ Morton Rucker, Julius⁵ Rucker, Abner⁴ Rucker, Anthony³ Rucker, John² Rucker, Peter Rucker¹. Obituary submitted by Alice Rucker.

Charlotte Rosezetta (Rucker) Holland Erickson, was born 8 December 1915 and died 6 May 2009, was the daughter of Franklin Merritt Rucker and Mabel King. Charlotte was born in Cuba, Sandoval Co., New Mexico, but the family soon moved to Beaver County, Utah where her father was working for a mining company. Charlotte had two sisters, Elva Lillian (1918-1919), and Marvel (1920-1992). Charlotte's mother, Mabel, died in 1921 so Frank moved back to New Mexico

where his mother, Emily Jane (Cox) Rucker helped tend Charlotte and Marvel.

By the late 1920s the family had moved to Clark Co., Nevada, where Charlotte's father and uncles were primarily interested in the cattle business. They then moved on to Barstow, Kern Co., California where the families were engaged in rounding up wild burros that were then marketed to an animal farm in Big Bear, California for food. Ultimately the family returned to and permanently settled in New Mexico.

In 1922 and 1925 Charlotte gained a new half brother and sister, Frank and Agnes, although Charlotte's dad didn't marry their mother, Felicita Duran. Another half-brother, Merritt Jay "Mickey" Rucker was born about 1930 after Charlotte's father married Bessie May Kimball.

In her later years, Charlotte enjoyed sharing stories from her childhood. Two in particular come to mind: in the early days in the mining town in Utah, the miners would give her pennies and which she saved in a can, but she later gave them all to a neighbor boy to buy candy which infuriated Mabel; she and her cousin Jack got impatient for Thanksgiving guests to arrive, so they climbed up on the table and began mixing the food together!

Charlotte married William Edward Holland in Pagosa

Springs, Colorado in 1932. Their four children, Mabel Leona "Mayone", Jack Wayne, Frank Edward "Buddy", and Caronia LaVon were all born between 1933-1937. After her first husband's death, Charlotte married Lyle R. Erickson. Charlotte died in Barstow, California.

Lineage of Charlotte⁸ Rucker: Franklin⁷ Merritt Rucker, Richard⁶ Morton Rucker, Julius⁵ Rucker, Abner⁴ Rucker, Anthony³ Rucker, John² Rucker, Peter Rucker¹. Obituary submitted by Alice Rucker.

Mary Katherine (Williams) Dalton, CPS, died Aug 11, 2009 in Morrilton, Arkansas. She was born in Russellville, Arkansas, on 9 April 1929, the daughter of Lamar and Mary Pearl (Kendrick) Williams. She was preceded in death by her parents, Lamar and Mary Pearl Kendrick Williams, her sister Cleotha Hallman, and brothers Lamar "Junior" and Donald Williams. She is survived by her brother Raymond E Williams, Sr. and his wife Rose, sisters Cleva Glentaline Williams and Imajean Himmelberg and her husband Gilbert, two stepsons, Kenneth and Robert Dalton and a host of nieces and nephews.

Mary was a Life member of the National Association of Active and Retired Federal Employees (NARFE), a long time member of Beta Sigma Phi, a former president of the Capital Chapter, Office Professionals International,

in Washington, DC, and a former member of the governing council of the District of Columbia before it gained semi-independent status.

Mary worked as an executive secretary for the Department of the Army at the Pentagon, supporting a series of general officers in research, development and acquisition, for 37 years.

Among Mary K's accomplishments were that she and Archie had square danced in all 50 states. She was baseball fanatic, she and Archie watched a game in some 30 major league parks. Archie and Mary had established two others goals, but had not accomplished as many of them as they had hoped. They wanted to go fishing in every state, with few of these accomplished, and they had planned on going water skiing in every state. A person of diverse talents, Mary K could be serious enough to conduct a good meeting and, when the time was right, could giggle with the silliest of us.

Lineage of Archie¹⁰ E. Dalton: James⁹ A., William⁸ T., Sam⁷, Reuben⁶, Delphi⁵ Rucker, Colby⁴, Peter³, Thomas², Peter¹. Reuben⁶ Dalton married his 1st cousin, Sarah⁶ Rucker who lineage is, William⁵, Colby⁴, Peter³, Thomas², Peter¹. Obituary submitted by Archie Dalton.

Harry L. "Winkie" Rucker, 91, of Muncie, Indiana passed away Friday, April 3, 2009 at Parkview Nursing Center. He was born January 31, 1918 in Henry

County, Kentucky to Forrest and Mabel (Nalls) Rucker. Harry was a U.S. Air Force veteran and was a war hero at the Battle of Peleliu Island, which was fought between September 15-November 27, 1944. From his actions in this battle, in which more than 10,000 soldiers died, he received the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star. Peleliu Island is one of the many islands in the Republic of Palau in the western Pacific Ocean. At the time, Palau was a possession of the Japanese Empire. Harry later worked in the maintenance department of Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana, and had worked at the Florida School Board in Sarasota, Florida

He is survived by his two daughters Marie and her husband Chuck Ondrejko of Albany, Indiana, and Wanda Meer of Muncie; his brother, Forest and wife Lillian Rucker of Hayward, California; several grandchildren, great-grandchildren and nieces and nephews.

Harry was preceded in death by his parents, his wife of 36 years, Sylvia Lucille (Shull) Rucker; three daughters, Shirley Manship, Mary Jo Newport and Micki Yursky; three brothers, James, Ralph and Lloyd Rucker; and three sisters, Nell Owenby, Aletha Bird and Norma Manship. Burial was at the Hopewell Cemetery in Farmland, Indiana. Military rites will be conducted by the Veterans of Delaware County Honor Guard at the graveside.

Harry's lineage: Henry⁹ L. Rucker, Forrest⁸, Alver⁷, James⁶, Elisah⁵, Moses⁴, Isaac³, John², Peter¹. A version of the obituary appeared in the *Star Press* of Muncie, Indiana.

* * *

Dr. William Parks Rucker

Patriot or Traitor?

Part Four of Four
by Michael P. Rucker

After the war Dr. Rucker did not re-establish a medical practice, but turned more to his law training and to various business investments. He dealt in livestock: sheep, cattle and horses. Of greatest significance, he went into the timber, oil and coal land businesses. He eventually sold most of his land holdings to the C&O Railroad and then established a law practice. He initially resided at his plantation near Summersville. Then, in 1870, he moved to Lewisburg, fifty-eight miles southeast of Summersville, although that area was still a hotbed of Southern sentiment and many of the residents resented his having served with the Yankee Army. None the less, he was elected Prosecuting Attorney for Greenbrier and Pocahontas Counties 1870-1872.

Inn the summer of 1872 Rucker and "Honest John" Letcher, the former governor of Virginia who had once offered \$5,000 for

Rucker's capture, met in Warm Springs, Virginia. The two were on their way to the Bath County Courthouse as opposing



Greenbrier County, West Virginia

councils in a legal case. They recognized each other and Governor Lechner spoke first, "Aha, Old Fellow. I've met you before." "Yes," replied Rucker, "and I've met you, too." They had indeed known each other before the war. The governor assured Rucker that he had never intended to take his life, but only to keep him incarcerated as long as possible for the sake of the Confederate army in Virginia.

In 1888 Rucker was appointed by the West Virginia Republican State Committee to represent gubernatorial candidate Nathan Goff, Jr. in contested election cases in several counties. In a bitter and hard fought contest Goff had been elected governor of West Virginia, but controversy surrounded the election, and Goff never assumed the office, despite the best efforts of William Parks Rucker. Rucker's last public

service was as Postmaster of Lewisburg from 1889 to 1893.

In 1897 Rucker elected to defend an accused husband in a controversial murder trial: the case that involved the testimony of the "Greenbrier Ghost." Zona Heaster Shue had died that earlier year and her death was presumed natural. Later her mother reported that Zona's ghost had appeared and described how her husband had killed her by breaking her neck. The body was exhumed and it was discovered that, indeed, she had died of a broken neck. Local public sentiment ran strongly against Mrs. Shue's husband and he was arraigned on the charge of murder. Dr. Rucker, with the assistance of Greenbrier County's first black attorney James. P. D. Gardner, volunteered to defend Mr. Shue. Zona's mother was permitted to testify as what the ghost had told her and this evidence was critical in the decision of the jury to convict Mr. Shue of murder. This is perhaps the only case in U.S. history in which the testimony of a ghost helped to secure a verdict of murder. Despite the efforts of Dr. Rucker, Mr. Shue was sentenced to life in prison.

Relishing his renegade role to the end William Parks Rucker died in Lewisburg nearly 74 years of age on January 3, 1905. He is buried in the Lewisburg

Cemetery near the Old Stone Presbyterian Church. His wife died in April 1914 and is buried beside her husband.



New River in Greenbrier County

* * *

What's in a Name?

by Bill Smith

The website *Census Data Research Online* lists information about surnames and their frequency. According to this site, there were 77,339 Ruckers listed in the 2000 census. The most common first names for all Ruckers was James. There were 1,105 James Ruckers. The top ten male names were James, John, Robert, Michael, William, David, Richard, Charles, Joseph and Thomas. Most popular females names were Mary, Patricia, Linda, Barbara, Elizabeth, Jennifer, Maria, Susan, Margaret, and Dorothy. These twenty names account for 15% (11,273) of all Ruckers. To give this a bit of perspective, there were 74,639 William Smiths in the 2000 census.

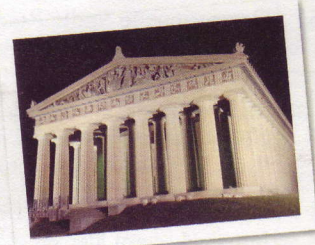
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REUNION
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