

# the Rucker Family Society

## NEWSLETTER

Volume 9

Number 1

March 1998

### **SAMUEL BURKS RUCKER**

"A Confederate Cavalryman,  
A Virginia Tobacconist"

by Elizabeth Lee (Rucker) and Joseph Lee Sites

In 1861, Samuel Burks Rucker was a sixteen year old youth preparing for attendance at the Virginia Military Institute. All of this suddenly changed and the aspiring VMI cadet found himself working with the Confederate States Army Topographical Engineers making maps of the Valley of Virginia. By late 1863, it was determined that combat soldiers were needed more than map makers. For this reason, in early 1864, Mr. Rucker was conscripted into the C.S.A. Army. Because he had a private mount, he was assigned to the elite service, the Cavalry. He reported to the 6th Virginia Cavalry in March 1864.

The unit was in a transition period going from the quiet winter stand-down to an extremely active Spring and Summer Campaign. On reporting to his Regiment, Mr. Rucker immediately made a favorable impression on his commanding officer. In a short memoir, now at the Jones Memorial Library in Lynchburg, Mr. Rucker described his reception and the attendance of a religious service with his commander. An anecdote described both in his memoirs and the History of the 6th Virginia Cavalry, he related: "The first

night I reached camp, Lieut. Thornton carried me to church, and whilst there some of the boys went through my baggage and stole a peck of ginger cakes which my mother had put in my haversack. I guess they enjoyed the cakes, but I did not mind as my mother sent me another supply."



Samuel Burks Rucker

Rucker described his first experience at meeting the enemy: "We did not meet with any Yankees 'till we reached Spotsylvania Court House. There we were ordered to dismount and tie our horses, then we went nearly a mile to where the battle was going on. We met the dead and wounded being brought to the rear. It did not look very enticing to me, but I stuck to the boys and kept going.

"When we reached a small flat near a piece of woods, the Yankees threw a shell amongst us, which exploded, and one piece of the shell struck a man on the heel. He just yelled! One of the boys asked him if it hurt very bad. He replied that it did not hurt so bad then, but he was afraid it might. It was such a foolish answer we all had to laugh.

"We had orders then to fall back beyond a piece of woods and form in line behind some fence rails, thrown up as a breastwork, to try and check the Yankeys [sic], who were coming in full force.

"While laying behind the rail breastworks, a ball came and struck a fence rail in front of my head, which saved my life, and I have been partial to fence rails ever since.

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*". . .The bullets fell around us like hail."*

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"We did not remain behind our breastworks long; the Yankees came in such force that we had to retreat up a small hill. When we started, the bullets fell around us like hail. I don't see why all of us had not been killed crossing over the hill. All formed on the

other side of the hill, and when the Yankees came over we received them with such a hot fire we sent them back in full retreat."

The next day at Spotsylvania Court House, Gen. Fitz Hugh Lee, sitting on his horse, spoke to Rucker's group: "'Boys, you have done fine! You have kept the Yankee infantry back for two days until Gen. R. E. Lee has gotten here.' I was in twenty feet of Gen. Fitz Lee when he made that remark," reported Rucker.

"That was the first time I ever saw infantry in line. They certainly did look grand as line after line came marching into line.

"After Gen. R. E. Lee got to Spotsylvania C.H., we left them to head the Yankee cavalry off, who were marching towards Richmond.

"We met them at Yellow Tavern, and after a severe battle drove them off. Co. F of the 6<sup>th</sup> Va. fired the first shots at Yellow Tavern. The company was sent forward to find the enemy, and meeting them, exchanged shots with them, then fell back to the main line. Coming back through the woods, the Yankee balls skinned saplings all around us - which was not a very pleasant sound. . . .

"Whilst stationed [at Yellow Tavern], we saw one of our head surgeons riding rapidly down the road with his sleeves rolled up and his arms all bloody from his attendance on our wounded. A soldier standing by me said that some big man had been wounded, to see one of the head surgeons coming like that.

"After he had passed us, he came back in about twenty minutes

with Gen. J.E.B. Stuart lying on his back badly wounded. It was a sad sight to his cavalry to see their beloved general in such a fix! The ambulance passed in ten steps of me as they carried him on to Richmond, where he died the next day."

In early April 1864, the 6th Virginia Cavalry began its campaigns to strike the Northern forces who were fighting doggedly to capture Richmond. After holding on at Cold Harbor and a number of other sites, the Confederates learned that the Northern Forces were sending a flanking force around the Southern left flank. To counter this flanking movement, the 6th Virginia Cavalry was sent to a position along the Central Virginia Railroad in the vicinity of Trevilian's station."

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*". . .before I got my gun loaded the Yankees had me."*

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In keeping with Cavalry tactics for the defense at that time, three of every four cavalymen were dismounted with the fourth holding the horses in the rear. Mr. Rucker was one of those dismounted at the time of his capture and his horse was in the rear. In his memoirs, Mr. Rucker described the Northern attack on his position: "There was a garden in front of us, and some of our boys were up a cherry tree eating cherries when the Yankees suddenly charged us. . .I was sitting on one side of the chimney with my gun between my legs. The first thing I knew minnie balls were knocking dust all over. I saw one of the Yankees come out of the orchard and shoot his gun, which made such a puff of smoke that I could not see him, so I

fired at the center of the smoke. I do not know whether I hit him or not; but before I got my gun loaded the Yankees had me and Funkhouser [one of his company]. They just swarmed around us. . .A guard took us back to the rear at once. As he carried us across the orchard over which the Yankees had charged, there were a great many dead and wounded laying there. The wounded men cursed us for all they could think of."

In his memoir, Mr. Rucker described his subsequent trip to the coast: "We were finally landed at Point Lookout - where we landed through a line of Negroes. [It was] the first black soldiers I had ever seen! Point Lookout is on the Chesapeake Bay, and we had the privilege of going out and bathing everyday - which kept us clean. . . .The water at Point Lookout was awful! There was but one well fit to drink, and that was kept dry - so many drinking out of it. . . . There was a great deal of sickness. . . . I suffered a great deal with dysentery.

"The diet was a piece of bread and pork or beef with a semblance of coffee. Bean soup and bread for dinner! We had no supper.

"I stayed at Point Lookout for two months and was then sent on to Elmyra [sic], New York. We were put on a ship by the name of the Karnack. We sailed up the Atlantic Ocean and were out of sight of land for two days and nights. The guards let me do as I chose. It would have been a delightful trip if we had not been prisoners.

"Sailing up the Hudson was grand! We did not go into New York, but were landed on the Jersey side. As we landed, a nice

gentleman handed us apiece of pie and cake, which was very acceptable. I guess he was a Southern sympathizer.

"The trip up the Atlantic cured me entirely of dysentery. I suppose it was due to the water we drank - which tasted like it came out of tar barrels. . . .

"After we were landed at Jersey City, we were put on a train to take us to Elmyra, which was two hundred miles from New York. . . . Elmyra is situated on the Chemung river. When we arrived at Elmyra, we were taken to the Chemung river and all of us went in and took a good bath before going into camp.

"Our camping ground was a forty acre field by the side of the Chemung river, enclosed by a plank fence, sixteen feet high with a platform on the top all the way around for the sentinels to walk on, with booths every fifty yards for them to stay in when it rained or snowed.

"The boys of my company - Co. F, 6<sup>th</sup> Virginia Cavalry - were assigned to ward 46. We arrived in Elmyra from Point Lookout about August 15, 1864, - and were first lodged in tents, but by the last of September they had barracks built for us to protect us from the cold of winter. The barracks were built of plank, and the buildings were 75 feet long and 35 feet wide. . . .

"Our camp in prison was divided into wards of 160 men, with a Rebel sergeant to each ward." Mr. Rucker soon found himself in charge of a number of prisoners. Among his duties, was making the personnel reports on which rations were based. He found that his predecessor had exaggerated the numbers present in order to get more food. He was afraid to do so, for fear that he would get caught. He was also

afraid not to exaggerate the numbers, because they would get less food. Taking the course which would help his fellow prisoners the most, he continued to stretch the numbers, and fortunately was not caught.

Even after the surrender at Appomattox, the prisoners were detained awhile. They were released in alphabetical order: "The letter R was a long way down the line," lamented Rucker. Finally, he was asked to swear an oath of allegiance to the United States which he did in June 14, 1865. This release is now in the Smithsonian Institute. A copy was secured by Miss Kathleen Rucker, his daughter. It described Rucker as having dark hair, hazel eyes and 5 feet, 10 ½ inches high.

**United States of America.**

*J. B. Rucker* *Co. F, 6<sup>th</sup> Va. Cav.*

County of *Campbell* State of *Virginia*

solemnly swear that I will support, protect, and defend the Constitution and Government of the United States against all enemies, whether domestic or foreign; that I will bear true faith, allegiance and loyalty to the same, any ordinance, resolution, or laws of any State, Convention, or Legislature to the contrary notwithstanding; and further, that I will faithfully perform all the duties which may be required of me by the laws of the United States and I take this oath freely and voluntarily without any mental reservation or evasion whatever.

*J. B. Rucker*

Subscribed and sworn to before me, this *14* day of *June*,  
A. D. 186*5*.

The above-named has *Dark* complexion, *Dark* hair, and *Dark* eyes  
and is *5* feet *10 1/2* inches high.

Rucker's oath to the U.S.A.

Rucker was then released and began the long trek home. "They put us on a freight train and brought us to Baltimore where they gave us our dinner; they then put us on board a steamer and brought us to Fortress Monroe where we spent the night; next morning reloaded us on a steamer and brought us to Richmond. We stayed all night there and then boarded a freight train which landed us at

Burkeville. At Burkeville, the R.R. track had been torn up by the Yankees, so we had to march 25 miles to Farmville. The roads were very muddy, and often we were up to our knees in mud. When we reached Farmville, we found we had to march two miles further to get on the train. It was a freight train and I got in one of the box cars which was partly loaded with oats, and laid down on the oats and slept all the way to Six Mile Bridge, at which place we got on an old flat boat pulled by an old mule and landed safely in Lynchburg. My home people had not heard from me for some time, so they did not meet me with a coach and four at the old freight boat landing. I struck out and walked home. My mother was sitting on the front porch when she looked up and saw me coming."

Almost immediately after being reunited with his family, Rucker went to the stable and was greeted by his horse who had gone home one year earlier.

At twenty years of age, Mr. Rucker entered the tobacco business and remained active until 1925. By that time, he owned and operated tobacco warehouses in Lynchburg where the local tobacco was auctioned off to various buyers. A major destination for much of his tobacco was Europe and, in particular, England. Much of the "fine Virginia tobacco" advertised in English tobacco products had passed through Mr. Rucker's warehouses. His love of the tobacco industry extended to his sons, Samuel who succeeded him in Lynchburg; Latham who owned and operated warehouses in Bedford, Va; and Otis Grey (O.G.) of Kingston, N.C. who was an auctioneer, trainer of auctioneers, and best known for his auctioneering in the Lucky Strike radio commercials which always ended

"Sold American." O. G. was also featured in Lucky Strike magazine advertisements including *Life*, *Saturday Evening Post* and many other magazines. (Note: See RFSN, Vol. 5, No. 2, p. 12, 20, for a copy of a magazine ad showing Otis C. Rucker.)

The descendants of Samuel B. Rucker can be justifiably proud of his service to his principles, the example he set for others, and his youthful courage in surviving great obstacles.

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Note from the Editor: See RFSN, Vol. 5, No. 3, p.34, for a photo of Samuel B. Rucker's home in Lynchburg.

"Recollections of my War Record During the Confederacy," by Samuel Burks Rucker Sr. (In his 85th year), dated Jan. 5<sup>th</sup>, 1930, on deposit at the Jones Memorial Library in Lynchburg, Virginia.

Samuel<sup>7</sup> Burks Rucker (William<sup>6</sup> G., Garland<sup>5</sup>, Ambrose<sup>4</sup> Jr., Ambrose<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>), was born March 26, 1845; married on October 20, 1869, to his third cousin (once removed), Mary<sup>6</sup> Katherine ("Kate") Richeson (James<sup>5</sup> S., Amelia<sup>4</sup> Rucker, Anthony<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>). Kate was born Dec. 1848 (1900 census), Lynchburg, VA, daughter of Nancy McClure Douglass and James S. Richeson (Marriage Book 2, p.169, Amherst Co., VA).

Children (Wood, p.100-101):

1. Pitticus<sup>8</sup> Garland Rucker
2. Lucy<sup>8</sup> Lee Rucker
3. Thomas<sup>8</sup> Richeson Rucker
4. Mary<sup>8</sup> Fletcher Rucker
5. Samuel<sup>8</sup> Burks Rucker Jr.
6. Henry<sup>8</sup> Latham Rucker
7. Nancy<sup>8</sup> Douglas Rucker
8. Robert<sup>8</sup> Craighill Rucker
9. Otis<sup>8</sup> Grey Rucker
10. Kate<sup>8</sup> Sledd Rucker
11. Kathleen<sup>8</sup> Kingsley Rucker

There are three living grandchildren of Samuel B. Rucker: Henry Rucker of Aiken, SC; Robert Rucker, of Bedford, VA; and Elizabeth Lee (Rucker) Sites of Fairfax, VA, who submitted the above article.

**POINT LOOKOUT RUCKERS**

by Carolyn S. Billups  
rebel63@erols.com  
13 Feb 1998

I received my newsletter today and looked through it. I noticed you put an item in about the two Ruckers and Point Lookout. Well, I found a few more! I was inspired by Ron Payne's booklet to go check the rest of them out! Here is what I found:

**1st Virginia Cavalry, Co. G:**

John Harvey Rucker, Pvt. Born 7 Jan. 1834, farmer, Deatonsville PO, Amelia Co., 1860 Census, Enl. Richmond 1 Aug 1862, Present until captured at Edinburg 1 Oct. 1864, Sent to Point Lookout, Exchanged 16 Feb, 1865, Paroled Burkeville Junction 21 April 1865. He was a Farmer, and lived at Ledona PO, Amelia Co., in the 1870 Census, died 19 May 1898, buried Sandy Creek Baptist Church Cemetery.

**28th Virginia Infantry, Co. F:**

John C. Rucker, enlisted 1 March 1862, Bedford, Pvt to Cpl Sept. 1862, to Sgt. May/June 1864, 5'10", fair complexion, Brown hair, blue eyes, WIA 30 August 1862, 2nd Manassas, WIA 3 July 1863 at Gettysburg, at home until Nov 1863, POW April 1865 Harper's Farm, released 19 June 1865 from Point Lookout, at Soldier's Home 9 April 1914.

**11th Virginia Infantry, Co. A:**

Edward Perrow Rucker, enlisted 22 April 1861 in Co. A, age 19, Student. Promoted to Cpl 11 Sept. 1861, Absent sick Nov. 1862-June 1863, POW 7 Feb. 1864. Exchanged from Point Lookout POW 1 April 1865. Released from Point Lookout 17 June 1865, 5'11 1/4" tall. Residence - Campbell Co.

**Co. D, 20th SC Infantry:**

W. A. Rucker Captured in Strasburg (Harper's Ferry) on Oct. 19, 1864. Sent to Point Lookout Oct. 24, 1864, arrived Oct. 28, 1864. Released June 17, 1865.

**Co. A (Co, K) 24th GA Infantry:**

Armor M. Rucker, enlisted Aug 24, 1861 in Harris, Banks Co, GA as a Private. He was admitted to Chimborazo Hospital, Richmond May 18, 1862 for rubela. He was promoted to Sergeant. Captured at Farmville, VA on April 6, 1865, he was taken to Point Lookout. He was released June 17, 1865. He was Fair complected, light brown hair, gray eyes and 5'10 1/4" tall.

**Co. C, 3rd KY Mounted Infantry:**

1st Lt. Winston Rucker, enlisted July 18, 1861 at Camp Boone, TN at the age of 25, traveling 60 miles to do so. On the muster card dated March 1 to July 1, 1863 he was listed as "absent, lost in skirmish at McCanicsburg [sic], supposed to be wounded and captured." On muster card for Sept - Dec. 1863, he is listed as "absent sick with leave." Captured June 4, 1863 at Mechanicsburg, Miss. POW Provost Marshall, Memphis, TN June 14, 1863. Transferred to Military Prison, Alton, IL, June 26, 1863. Sent to Johnson's Island Aug. 6, 1863. Transferred to Point Lookout April 22, 1864. Paroled at Hammond General Hospital May 3, 1864 and transferred to City Point, VA. Furloughed May 23, 1864 to Rockbridge, VA for chronic diarrhea of 10 months duration.

**Co. A, 2nd Tennessee Infantry:**

Private Robert M. Rucker enlisted 27 April 1861 at Camp Galloway, Murphreesboro [sic] for a period of 12 months. Detailed with pioneer; owe stores \$600 lost pioneer detail; wounded at Chickamauga; appears on a roll of

prisoners of war at Point Lookout, date of arrival, April 3, 1865 from Newberne [sic], NC; captured March 22, 1865 at Goldsboro; released June 16, 1865, after taking Oath of Allegiance; resided in Ruthford [sic], TN, dark complexion, dark hair, blue eyes 6'1 1/2" tall.

**N**OTE FROM THE EDITOR: No one has come forward to help with the newsletter. I will continue for now, but hope someone will volunteer to help.

The society is sorry to announce that the reprint of Studie Rucker Wood's *The Rucker Family Genealogy* is sold out.

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### LETTER FROM STEPHANIE ROUTON TAYLOE

To Rucker Cousins coming to the 1998 Rucker Reunion  
April 10, 1998

Welcome, Rucker Cousins, to the wonderful state of Tennessee:

Our state is steeped with the history of the Rucker family. In the early 1920's Ms. Edythe Rucker Whitley, native Tennessean, wrote one of the first books on the Rucker family, and held the first known Rucker conference. She had, indeed, a rare opportunity that none of us will have: over seventy years ago, she was able to interview some of the Ruckers, some in their nineties who knew their family history, enabling her to put together her book. Genealogical charts upon genealogical charts and books have been based upon her works. Over almost three fourths of a century her book has literally been cast in stone.

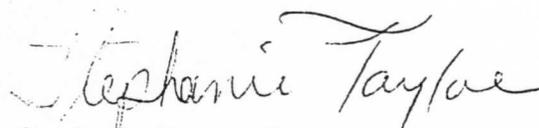
We, in the age of modern technology, have more access to records, and are beginning to discover that work of stone has a few cracks. Like many researchers of her time, she literally took the words of others; not meaning to discredit her in any way, I want to stress to you, **the next generation of genealogists**, some sound advice, which is to check EVERYTHING! Just being in print does not always validate the

information. Label everything as to the source: if it is from an old family member, give the name, address and date; or if it is from courthouse records, give the location, book and page number.

Over almost forty years of genealogy, I literally took Ms. Whitley's work as gospel, to find out she had left out one generation of my line (I really do not mind, as it give me a new family to work on). In the research for the truth, a true genealogy is the only genealogy.

Enjoy our state library and the library in Franklin. A special thanks to Jeannie Robinson for her great work on the Rucker Family and her willingness to share.

Best regards,



Stephanie Routon Tayloe

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Buchanan, TN 38222  
E-mail sata@compu.net

**IN MEMORIAM**

**IZETTA RUCKER TOTEN**, age 102, died February 11, 1998 in Decatur, Texas. She was born October 10, 1895 in Sandhill. She married Arthur Lee Toten on November 5, 1911 in Greenwood. She is survived by her son A. D. Toten and his wife Trudy of Fort Worth; daughters Ava Grimes and Zelda Smith of Decatur; Daughter-in-law, Louise Toten of Decatur; brother, Odis Rucker of Paris; 11 grandchildren; 38 great-grandchildren and 29 great-great-grandchildren. She was buried at Oaklawn Cemetery in Decatur. (From *The Fort Worth Star Telegram*, Feb. 12, 1998, and *the Wise County Messenger*, bi-weekly paper of Decatur, TX, submitted by A. D. Toten of Fort Worth.)

Izetta Rucker Toten was the daughter of John Martin Rucker and granddaughter of Amanda Lane and Franklin Rucker who moved from Saline Co., AR, to Van Zandt Co., TX, sometime between 1860 and 1870 (census records). Frank's parents are unknown, see RFSN, Vol. 3, No. 4, p.9, Nov. 1992, and Vol. 4, No. 1, p.7, Mar. 1993.

# # # # #

**WILLIE "MAUDE" HUDSON SUTHERLAND**, died at the age of 101, February 9, 1998, in Salem, Virginia. She was the widow of Homer C. Hudson and the daughter of William Milton Sutherland and Mary<sup>7</sup> Rucker (Moses<sup>6</sup> Peter, Anthony<sup>5</sup>, Ambrose<sup>4</sup> Jr., Ambrose<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>). She was born November 30, 1896, in Franklin Co., VA and taught school in Lynchburg, VA, and Greensboro, NC where she met and married her husband. She is survived by one son, Robert<sup>9</sup> Clarence Hudson and his wife Cliffodean (Boyd); a granddaughter, Mary Hudson Boston and husband Paul; grandsons, James C. Hudson of Richmond, and Clifton R. Hudson of Nashville; and great-grandchildren, Jessica and David Boston of Salem, and Christopher Hudson of Warren, RI. She is buried at Sherwood Memorial Park in Salem. (From *The Roanoke Times*, Feb. 10, 1998, P.C., submitted by Laurie Gatwick, Forest, VA.)

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**50<sup>th</sup> WEDDING ANNIVERSARY**

DECEMBER 10, 1947  
DECEMBER 20, 1997

ROBERT AND  
MARILYN WILLIAMS  
AND FAMILY

"We partied in Villanova, PA, with our three children and their children over the Thanksgiving holiday."

**UPDATE OF  
THE RUCKER FAMILY GENEALOGY  
DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING MATERIAL SEPTEMBER 1, 1998**

The deadline for submitting family data for the Rucker Family Genealogy update is Sept. 1, 1998. Please send your family group sheets to Mrs. Jean B. Robinson 304 Charmian Road Richmond, VA 23226 phone: 1-804-358-3185 E-mail: ruckerfs@erols.com

Send copies to Doris W. Edwards, 2017 43rd St. SE, U-2, Grand Rapids, MI 49508, who is placing copies of family groups sheets at the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond, VA. E-mail dorisedwards@triton.net

Send your family data on computer discs (PAF or Family Tree Maker program) to Ruth McBride, 9104 Timberlake Road, Lynchburg, VA. Ruth has a new e-mail address: ashmont@earthlink.net

Send cemetery information (name, location, owner, condition, and tombstone listings) to James M. Rucker, Rt. 1, Box 56-B, Gladys, VA 24554

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1998 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE NOW DUE

CHECK YOUR MEMBERSHIP LABEL TO SEE IF YOUR MEMBERSHIP HAS EXPIRED. THE FIRST NUMBER IS THE YEAR THROUGH WHICH YOU HAVE PAID, THE SECOND NUMBER IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP NUMBER.

Please make check for membership, payable to The Rucker Society and mail to: Mr. Lewis M. White, Treasurer 9751 Firth Court Vienna, VA 22181 E-mail - LewisWhite@compuserve.com

\_\_\_ \$7.00 Dues for Membership for 1998 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ \$14.00 Dues for Membership for 1998 and 1999 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Donations for the Preservation and Memorial Fund  
Current Project: Marker for Ruckersville, GA, founded  
by Joseph Rucker, Georgia's first millionaire \_\_\_\_\_

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_ New member \_\_\_ Renewal (Enclose updated family information)

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The committee has worked long and hard to plan a fabulous reunion. Please contact them if you have any questions:

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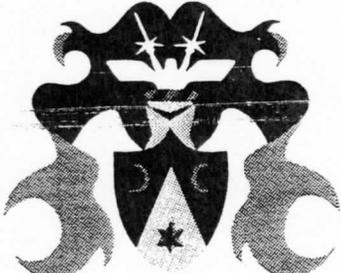
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ALWAYS USE ZIP CODE



FIRST CLASS MAIL

**THE RUCKER FAMILY SOCIETY**

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