

the RUCKER FAMILY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

VOL. 20, NO.1, MARCH 2009

Rucker 2010 Reunion

Nashville, Tennessee
see page 10



Table of Contents

Ruckers Help in Iraq	p. 1-2
Rucker Marries Veep.....	p. 1-3
In Memoriam	p. 4
Rucker at VMI	p. 4-5
Ruckers' Tomb.....	p. 5
Rucker Geography	p. 5-6
Query of the Quarter	p. 6-7
Dr. Wm. P. Rucker Pt 2 ..	p. 7-8
Index to Newsletters.....	p. 9
RFS Reunion 2010	p. 10

Rucker Descendants Help in Iraq

It's not too often that we get to hear positive stories about Americans in the reconstruction of Iraq. Well, we have one and it's about a father and son team who are Rucker descendants.



Denver Gillespie, father, and Eric Gillespie, his son, are both members of the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) working on rebuilding Iraq, and are ninth and tenth generation descendants of immigrant Peter Rucker. Both of these hardworking gentlemen are nearing the end of their six-month tour of duty in Iraq, after which Denver will have retired after 34 years in USACE. On his return he

(Continued on page 2)

Rucker Marries the Veep

By Mike Rucker and Bill Smith

Mike Rucker writes, "Okay, it's strictly a female book. It has hearts on the cover - and all throughout the whole darn book. It's enough to make a man quickly turn to his current issue of *Field and Stream*.

But once I started reading it, I was hooked. It is delightful! The opening reads "I was a widow when I met Alben Barkley, I am a widow now. In between I was a wife. I was married to one of the finest and most wonderful men I ever knew. We had seven years of happiness. That is a long, long time as happiness is measured. Especially when the happiness is straight, undiluted. I want to tell you about these seven years because you were a part of them and because you lived through them, but mostly because in telling of my story I will be able to relive those happy years." And she shares those fabulous seven years with each of us making each reader feel as if she (or he) is a personal friend talking over a

(Continued on page 2)

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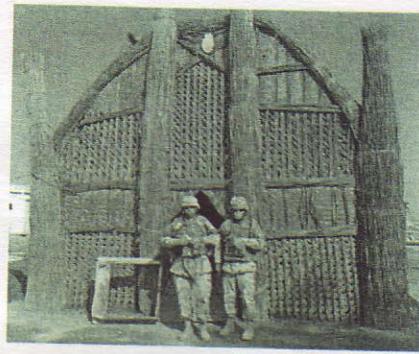
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Ruckers in Iraq

(Continued from page 1)

will become the pastor of McJester Baptist Church in Pangborn, Arkansas. Eric is in his ninth year of service and is the third generation of Gillespies to serve in the USACE. The Gillespies are construction representatives at the Tallil Airbase, in southeast Iraq, where Eric oversees the quality of construction for seven projects with a total value of more than \$50 million.

One of the highlights for both Gillespies was the distribution of gifts to primary school aged children. Eric noted that the students were of a similar age to his sons, Drake, 7, and Caleb, 6. Both men acknowledge their wives Pam and Misti for their continued support.

The Gillespie's lineage is: Eric¹⁰ Gillespie, Denver⁹ Dearyl, Luther Cecil⁸, William⁷ G., Dora⁶ Isabel Rucker, William⁵ Derrell, Simeon⁴ B., George³, Thomas², Peter¹.

This story was originally reported in a USACE press release dated February 11, 2009 written and photos by Norris Jones, the public affairs officer with the Gulf Region South, USACE. The original article was brought to our attention by Muriel Gillespie Bryant, Denver's sister.

Rucker Marries the Veep

(Continued from page 1)

cup of coffee. One can empathize with her feelings; her excitement - and her discomfort - upon her first meeting with the Vice President of the United States aboard a small yacht in the Potomac when the Veep ignored such luminaries as House Speaker Sam Rayburn and Secretary of State and Mrs. Acheson as he continued to clasp the hand of the widow Jane Rucker Hadley whom he had just met."

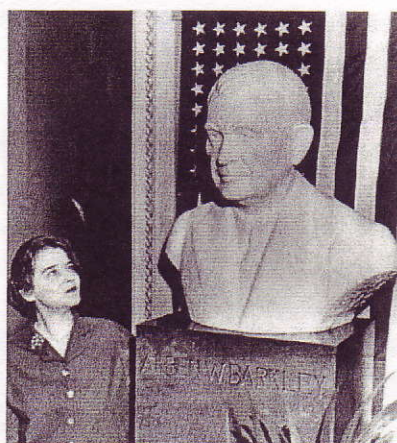
Who would have imagined that Elizabeth Jane Rucker, the oldest of the three children of Roy Waller and Elizabeth G. (Estle) Rucker, born September 23, 1911 in Keytesville, Chariton Co., Missouri, would someday grow up to live a true "Cinderella story" by marrying a widower who was thirty-eight years her elder. But before all this began, Jane Rucker married on April 11, 1931 Carleton S. Hadley (1903-1947), a lawyer for the Wabash Railroad, and who died of a heart attack sixteen years later. They had two daughters, Anne Chandleton (1932-), who married Weldon A. Behrend, and Jane Everett (1934-), who married Thomas Hulen Truitt. A very interesting genealogical sideline is that Carleton and Jane Hadley's younger daughter's husband Tommy Truitt, was also the grandson of Alben Barkley, thereby making Tommy Truitt her

(Continued on page 3)

son-in-law and her step-grandson.

Willie Alben Barkley was born November 24, 1877 near Lowes, Graves Co., Kentucky. He changed his name to Alben William Barkley because he viewed it as a better name for a man in politics. He married his first wife Dorothy Brower in 1903. They had three children, David Murrell Barkley (1906-1983), Marian Frances Truitt (1909-1996) and Laura Louise MacArthur (1911-). Dorothy died in 1947 after 44 years of marriage. Barkley began his political career serving as the prosecuting attorney (1905-1909) and a judge (1909-1913) in McCracken County, Kentucky. He was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1913, and remained there until his election to the U. S. Senate in 1927. As Harry Truman's running mate, he served as the 35th vice president. After his term as vice president, he returned to the Senate until his death. "For I would rather be a servant in the House of the Lord than to sit in the seats of the mighty," were last words uttered by Alben Barkley at a mock Democratic convention held at Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia, April 30, 1956 where he died on the stage in front of the participants. Barkley was popularly known as the "Veep" because his grandson, Stephen

Truitt, suggested that it was an easier alternative to "Mr. Vice President." After relating the story to the press, they printed the story and the "Veep" stuck. Barkley's successor, Richard Nixon, did not choose to continue the tradition.



Jane Hadley Barkley unveils the bust of her late husband at ceremonies held at the Capitol 1958

As Mike made reference above, in 1958 Jane Hadley Barkley and Frances S. Leighton wrote *I Married the Veep*, published by Vanguard Press in New York, and is still available from online book sellers. In the book the author makes several references to her "grandfather" serving in Washington and visiting him there. In reality, her grandfather was James Thomas Rucker who was the principal of the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind in Romney. It was James T. Rucker's brother, and therefore Jane's great-uncle, William Waller Rucker, who served in the House of Representatives from Missouri. There have been two short mentions of Jane Rucker Hadley

Barkley in the Rucker Family Society's newsletters. First in Vol. 2, No. 2, May 1991, page 8 and the second Vol. 6, No. 3, September 1995. The only incorrect information presented is from the first article where Ambrose Rucker mentions that Jane and Alben met in Keytesville, Missouri, when in fact they met in Washington D.C. Census records reinforce the relationships that are stated in Wood's *Rucker Family Genealogy*.

As reported in the September 18, 1964 issue of *Time* magazine in the "Milestones" section - "Died. Jane Hadley Barkley, 52, widow of Alben, a comely St. Louis secretary who caught the Veep's fancy on a visit to Washington in 1949 (he was then 71, she 38 [actually 37]), suddenly found herself swept up in one if the most popular and public courtships in history as her "Punkin" shuttled between his Washington desk and her St. Louis home until he won her hand four months later; of a heart attack; in Washington." Jane Barkley died September 6, 1964."

Jane Rucker's lineage: Elizabeth Jane¹⁰, Roy⁹ W., James⁸ T., William⁷ P., Clifton⁶ H., Ambrose⁵, Reuben⁴, Ambrose³, John², Peter¹.

* * *

In Memoriam

Michael Sidney "Mike"

Dewberry passed away on February 3, 2009 of pneumonia at his home in Vienna, Virginia, aged 42 years. He was the son of Sidney O. Dewberry and was an owner, member of the board of directors and corporate secretary of the family business, The Dewberry Companies, one of the largest engineering and architectural firms in the country. The Dewberry Companies employ more than 2,200 and have 40 offices across the United States. One of Mike's first jobs was as a survey truck driver for the Dewberry Companies. His driving skills permitted him to capture a bank robber by cornering the thief's car, then pulling him from the vehicle and pinning him to the ground until the police arrived.



Mike is survived by his wife of eighteen years, Stephanie Anne, and their four children, Michael Sidney Dewberry II, Katie Anne Dewberry, John Michael Dewberry and Kelly Anne

Dewberry. Contributions in his name may be made to St. Jude's Children's Research Center, P.O. Box 50, Memphis, TN, 38101-0050. Michael's¹⁰ lineage is: Sidney Oliver Dewberry⁹, Mary (Mollie) Rucker⁸, Ambrose⁷, Reuben⁶, Ambrose⁵, Reuben⁴, Ambrose³, John², Peter¹.

* * *

Ruckers Who Attended the Virginia Military Institute

1839-1989

Note from Editor: I have identified as many graduates as possible. If you know of other VMI graduates who are not listed, please contact Jeannie.

Virginia Military Institute, located in Lexington, Virginia, and founded in 1839, is the nation's oldest state-supported military college. Unlike all other military colleges, all of VMI's students are military cadets. Currently there are 1,300 male and female cadets from 37 states and 9 foreign countries. Past graduates include 21 generals of the Confederate Army, and 257 cadets who fought, and ten who died, in the Battle of New Market, Virginia. More recent graduates in U.S. Senators and other politicians, Army, Marine Air Force Generals, Medal of Honor recipients, sports notables and actors.

Barnes Mitchell Rucker of Lynchburg, VA, class of 1872, attended 3 years. Bookkeeper;

Died Oct. 17, 1908, Marion, VA. Son of Ambrose⁶ B. Rucker (Ambrose⁵, Reuben⁴, Ambrose³, John², Peter¹) [1852-1908].

Parks McDaniel Rucker of Salt Creek, VA, class of 1878, attended 7 months. Farmer; Died Jan. 25, 1918, Clarendon, VA. Son of Daniel⁶ H. Rucker (Wm.⁵ B., George⁴, John³, John² Peter¹) [1857-1918].

Wooster Dudley Rucker of Stuart, VA, class of 1901, attended 3 years. LLB degree from Washington & Lee University. Southern Railway Systems, Washington, D.C.; Died Apr. 9, 1963. Son of Wooster⁵ Rucker (Larkin⁴ G., Larkin³ Tomagen, Ephriam², Peter¹) [1880-1963].

Erle Taliaferro Rucker of Danville, VA, class of 1928, attended 4 years. BS-CE; 28-88 1LT USAR CAV; Ass't. VP, Chesapeake BBCO, Kingsport, TN; Died March 14, 1989. Son of Dr. Claude and Emma Rucker, 1920 Allegheny Co., Clifton Forge census. 1930 London Co., Kanawha, WV, age 22. Son of Claude⁸ N. Rucker, Sr. (Waller⁷, James⁶, Jonathan⁵, George⁴, John³, John², Peter¹) [1908-1989].

Samuel Burks Rucker, III of Lynchburg, VA, class of 1928, attended 3 years, 4 months, and 20 days; Died Jan. 1, 1970. Son of Samuel⁸ B. Rucker, Jr. (Samuel⁷ B., Wm.⁶ G., Garland⁵, Ambrose⁴, Ambrose³, John² Peter¹) [1906-1970].

Alban Mack Rucker, Jr. of Buena Vista, VA, class of 1933, attended 4 months and 20 days. LLB from National Univ. Son of Albon⁷ McDaniel Rucker (Daniel⁶ H., William⁵ B., George⁴, John³, John², Peter¹) [1912-1994].

Claude Nelson Rucker, Jr. of Charleston, WV, class of 1933, attended 4 years. BS-CH; 43-45 USAR FA Retired. Production Manager, Union Carbide Corp., Palos Verdes Estates, CA. Son of Claude⁸ N. Rucker, Sr. (Waller⁷, James⁶, Jonathan⁵, George⁴, John³, John², Peter¹) [1911-1996].

Embry Cobb Rucker of Bala-Cynwyd, PA, class of 1936, attended 4 years; BS-CE. Retired Minister of the Episcopal Church; Reston, VA. Son of Tinsley⁸ W. Rucker (Tinsley⁷ W., Tinsley⁶ W., Joseph⁵, John⁴, Cornelius³, Thomas² Peter¹) [1914-1994].

Henry Latham Rucker, Jr. of Bedford, VA, class of 1940, attended 4 years; BS-CE. 40-42 2LT USA AMP. Retired Area Supervisor, E. I. DuPont, Aiken, SC. Son of Henry⁸ L. Rucker, Sr. (Samuel⁷ B., Wm.⁶ G., Garland⁵, Ambrose⁴, Ambrose³, John², Peter¹) [1923-2007].

Robert Saunders Rucker of Bedford, VA, class of 1943, attended 3 years. BS from Lynchburg College; 43-46 PFC USA EGR. Retired Investment Advisor/Financial Planner, United Fidelity Insurance, Bedford, VA [1918-2006].

Thomas Nelson Rucker of Peru, IN, class of 1952, attended 4 years; BA-BI; MD from University of Virginia; 57-59 CPT USAF MC. Plastic Surgeon, Kingsport Radiology, Kingsport, TN [1930-1995].

Warren Page Rucker of Lynchburg, VA, class of 1954, attended 1 year [1933-].

Melvin Price Rucker of Bluefield, WV, class of 1983, attended 4 years; BA-EC. Died Aug. 11, 1987 [1961-1987].

Louis Gene Rucker of Bluefield, WV, class of 1986, attended 4 years; BS-CE. TD 2LT USAF, US Air Force, Midwest City, OK [1964-]

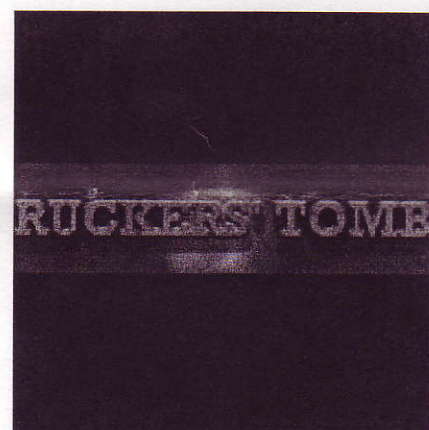
This information was transcribed from the 1989 Register of Former Cadets of the Virginia Military Institute Published by the VMI Alumni Association, Inc. Lexington, Virginia and was typed by Susan P. Willis.



Rucker's Tomb The Band

Who would have thought that the Rucker name would become

associated with a rock band, but strange as it may seem, four young men from Everett, Washington (home of the actual Rucker's Tomb written about in the March 2001 RFS newsletter) established such a group. Their first CD, the cover of which can be seen below, was reported well received by most critics and listeners, with the exception of the organization that forced them to change their name because of copyright laws to Trafficlight Chronicles. I'm sure the name change will have affects on their career, after all what could be better than the name Rucker?



The "Complete" Rucker Geography

by Bill Smith

In the last issue of the Rucker Family Society Newsletter, it was mentioned that there are almost 150 geographical locations in the United States that bear the name Rucker. Below is a complete listing of those sites recognized by the United States Geological

Survey associated with Rucker. Eventually, it would be interesting to complete a description of how each relates to the descendants of Peter Rucker, or not. If you can offer an explanation as to which Rucker descendant the geographic site is associated with or named after, feel free to email to the Bill Smith, Assistant Editor for future publication. In addition, this list doesn't include informally, versus officially, named locations and the numerous Rucker Streets, Boulevards, Roads, Courts, Places, Lanes, etc.

Alabama-Rucker Boulevard Elementary School and Rucker Plaza Shopping Center, in Coffee Co., and Fort Rucker, Ft Rucker Dam, Elementary and Primary Schools, and Post Office, in Dale Co.

Arkansas-Ruckers Grove in Washington Co.

Arizona-Camp Rucker and Playground, Rucker Canyon, its North Fork, and Dam and Ranch and Trail, Rucker School, in Cochise Co., and three Rucker Tanks in two different counties (Mojave and Pima).

California-Rucker Spring in Fresno Co., Rucker Hill and Tank in Modoc Co., Rucker Creek, Lake and Dam in Nevada Co., Rucker, Rucker Creek and Elementary School in Santa Clara Co.

Florida-Fort Rucker Recreation Area in Walton Co.

Georgia-Ruckersville and its Cemetery and Methodist Church in Elbert Co., Rucker Memorial Church in Hall Co., Ruckers Lake in Harris Co., Ruckers Grove Cemetery in Hart Co., and Ruckers Grove Church in Hart Co.

Illinois-Rucker Chapel in Hart Co., Rucker Cemetery in Morgan and

Sangamon Counties.

Indiana-Rucker Cemetery and Ruckers Ferry in Jackson Co.

Kansas-Rucker Airport in Pawnee and Sedgwick Counties.

Kentucky-Ruckersville, and its Christian Church and Post Office in Clark Co.

Michigan-Rucker Cemetery in Wayne Co.

Minnesota-Rucker Post Office in Morrison Co.

Missouri-Rucker in Bates and Boone Counties, Ruckers Prairie and its Post Office in Franklin Co., Rucker Cemetery, Church, and School in Wayne Co.

Mississippi-Rucker Cemetery in Adams Co., Buck Rucker Lake in Benton Co., Rucker Cemetery, Ruckersville, its Church and School all in Tippah Co., and Rucker Creek and Cemetery in Yazoo Co.

Nebraska-Rucker Lake in Sheridan Co.

New Mexico-Rucker Canyon and its Mine in Dona Ana Co., and Rucker Spring in Sierra Co.

Nevada-Boyd Rucker Ranch, Clark Co.

New York-Holcombe Rucker Playground-New York Co.

Ohio-three Rucker Cemeteries in Lawrence Co.

Oklahoma-Rucker Park and Post Office in Comanche Co., Rucker School in Haskell and Rogers Counties

South Carolina-Rucker Court in Anderson Co., Ruckers and Willie Ruckers Pond in Calhoun Co., Ruckers Crossroads in Chester Co., and another Ruckers Pond in Edgefield Co.

Tennessee-Rucker Cemetery in Bedford Co., Rucker Goodloe Cemetery in Cannon Co., Rucker Branch and two Rucker Cemeteries in Grainger Co., Rucker Dam ad

Lake in Jefferson Co., Ruckers Point and Landing in Lauderdale Co., Rucker, Rucker Baptist Church, two Rucker Cemeteries, Rucker Knob, Rucker Post Office, Rucker Seminary and Rucker-Pitts Cemetery in Rutherford Co., Rucker Stewart Middle School in Sumner Co., and yet another Rucker Cemetery in Weakley Co.

Texas-Rucker in Comanche Co., Rucker Elementary School, Park Trail, and School in Harris Co., Rucker Creek in Hood Co., Ruckers Bridge in Lamar Co., and Rucker Pond in Wise Co.

Virginia-Rucker Gap and Hollow in Alleghany Co., Embry Rucker Community Center in Fairfax Co., John Rucker Lake, Ruckersville, its Cemetery, District, Elementary School, Post Office and Volunteer Fire Department all in Greene Co., Rucker School in King William Co., and Rucker Run in Nelson Co.

Washington-Rucker Mansion in Snohomish Co.

West Virginia-Rucker Branch in Boone Co., Rucker Cemetery and Fork in Kanawha Co., and Rucker Bend in Nicholas Co.

Wyoming-Rucker Bend in Nicholas Co. and Rucker Draw in Campbell Co.

* * *

Query of the Quarter

Professor James Jefferson Rucker of Georgetown College

Georgetown College, the first Baptist school of higher education west of the Alleghenies, dates to an earlier institution founded in 1787. It is now a well-respected small liberal arts college noted for academic achievement.

According to the college's website

"Professor James Jefferson Rucker let the effort to integrate women into Georgetown's student body beginning in 1889 and ending in 1893 when women graduated with men. The first women's dormitory, completed in 1895, was named in honor of his efforts. Rucker also supervised the construction of a building that houses the chapel, gymnasium, museum, and literary society meeting rooms.

Rucker Hall, an imposing four-story brick structure, was demolished in 1971 to make way for new college facilities.

What is the lineage of this Professor James Jefferson Rucker?

Dr. William Parks Rucker

Patriot or Traitor?

Part Two of Four

by Michael P. Rucker

After destroying the Cow Pasture River railroad bridge Rucker and the Union forces were to pass through Covington on their return to West Virginia. Rucker sent a message to his wife and family there in Covington. He advised them hastily prepare to join him and the Union soldiers as the safest means of their reaching their plantation near Summersville, West Virginia. Rucker had been staying at the plantation since he agreed to join the Union Army. The family was ready and waiting as Rucker and

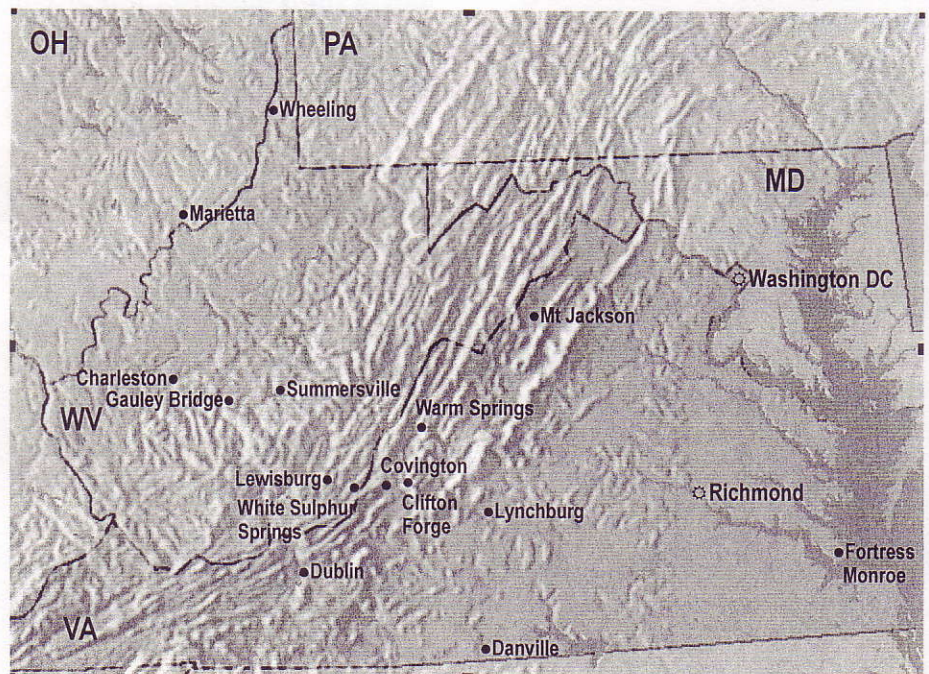
the soldiers passed through the town. The folks in Covington remembered Dr. Rucker, but not fondly. When they learned that he had led the bridge burning expedition the townspeople met to denounce him and demand his death, but it was too late; Rucker and his family were beyond their reach.

Rucker had been reluctant to join the Union Army because he had promised his wife that he would not do so. But rebel sympathizers in Covington would not allow any of the slaves to go with Mrs. Rucker to join him in West Virginia. This made Dr. Rucker furious and was possibly the reason he decided to accept a commission as captain. He wrote to his wife that she should prepare to leave all the slaves behind, and he would arrange to have an escort for her to come to their West Virginia plantation. This he accomplished on his return trip

from the Cow Pasture River Bridge expedition.

During the Battle of Lewisburg, West Virginia on May 23, 1862 Captain Rucker gave most of the citizens of that town great reason to dislike him, as well. Lewisburg's sympathies were predominantly with the South and some of the townspeople even sniped at the Union soldiers from their windows during the brief conflict. As Colonel Crook's men gained possession of the town Rucker pointed out to the Union officers the houses of Confederate sympathizers and these homes were promptly burned. Following the Battle of Lewisburg Rucker was put in charge of organizing the scouts and spies for the Union Army in West Virginia.

July 24, 1862 General Fremont sent a message to Rucker to report without delay to Mount Jackson in Shenandoah County, Virginia. He was to call upon Colonel Starr,



who was then in Lewisburg, where an escort would be provided for his safe conduct. However, before daylight on the morning July 25 three-hundred Confederate cavalry surrounded Colonel Starr's headquarters and took Starr, Rucker and all the other officers there prisoner. They were taken to White Sulfur Springs where Colonel Starr and the other officers were promptly released in prisoner exchange agreements, but Rucker was held upon charges of treason, murder and bridge burning.

As a prisoner Rucker was treated more harshly than the others and a special iron forging secured by rivets around both wrists was made especially for him. Meanwhile, Colonel Crook, sent word to three of the county's most prominent civilian residents that if Rucker was harmed he would hang all three of them. Apparently this bluff worked as Rucker was then sent – his hands in irons with his legs fastened together under the horse – with a guard of sixty men - first to Lynchburg then on again to Richmond.

In Richmond Rucker was held in the hideous Castle Thunder Prison, a large tobacco warehouse located on the north side of Cary Street between 18th and 19th Streets. It was mainly used for civilian

prisoners suspected of disloyalty to the Confederacy. Its inmates were harshly treated and many were under sentence of death. Rucker was held there until September when Virginia Governor "Honest John" Letcher decided, that under a charge of treason, that he be returned to his home town of Covington for trial.

Rucker was sent via the Virginia Central Railroad to the bridge he had burned, then by hack on to Covington. He faced trial for ten crimes: murder, treason, bridge burning, horse stealing, corn stealing, Negro stealing and four other charges. The murder charge being the one for which he had already been tried and acquitted.

Rucker appealed that the local sentiment was prejudiced against him and, surprisingly, the judge changed the venue to Botetourt County and he was arraigned there in November, 1862. Rucker's good fortune was that the judge, who heard his case, was a personal friend. He dismissed all the charges except the one for murder for which Rucker had already been acquitted – and that acquittal was sustained. Still, as it became clear that the Confederates still had no intention of releasing him, two attempts were made by Union forces to conduct raids to secure his escape, but both failed. He

was continually moved from jail to jail in an attempt to keep him from rescue attempts by the Union forces - ten different locations in all - with the last in June 1863, being the jail in Danville, Virginia which was judged to be the most secure. Meanwhile President Lincoln announced that if Dr. Rucker was put to death a Confederate, Dr. Green being held in Fortress Monroe would also be executed.

With his amazing good luck some friends aided his escape on October 18, 1863. Keys were provided and doors unlocked. Dressed in a Confederate lieutenant's uniform and armed with a Navy Colt revolver and a heavy saber Dr. Rucker took the reins of a buggy provided by a friend and drove to Lynchburg fifty-five miles away. The jailer had no clue of his escape until he brought his breakfast. Upon learning of his escape a furious Governor Letcher proclaimed a reward of \$5,000 for his capture.

Thus Dr. Rucker began a harrowing twenty day flight to safety behind Union lines in West Virginia.

To be continued in the next issue of the Rucker Family Society Newsletter . . .

Editor's Note - The map on page 7 of this issue is intended to give approximate locations and distances of places mentioned by the author.

Index to RFS Newsletters

Over the next several issues we provide an index for the issues of the Rucker Family Society newsletter.

Page	Article
	May 1990, Vol. 1, No. 1
1	Rucker Reunion 1990
2	Rucker Reunion 1990
3	Death of Sudie Rucker Wood; Death of Lillian Lee Wood
4	Jeannie-alogy; Letter from the Editor
5	Officers and Board Members
6	Reunion Committee Members
	August 1990, Vol. 1, No. 2
1	President's Letter
2	Rucker Society Organizational meeting
3	Profile of Edward Walter Rucker IV
4	Jeannie-alogy
5	Group picture of Rucker Family Reunion; Picture of Ruckersville Marker
6	Questions and Answers
7	Peter Rucker notepads
8	Reunion pictures
9	Letter from the Editor
10	Request for Rucker lineage
	November 1990, Vol. 1, No. 3
1	Profile of Anna Durrer Watson
2	Continued profile of Anna Durrer Watson
3	President's Message
4	Anna Watson's lineage; Ruckersville marker
5	Jeannie-alogy; Tips for Genealogists
6	Peter Rucker's Shipwreck
7	Questions and Answers
8	Questions and Answers continued
9	Letter from the Editor
10	Pictures from the 1990 Rucker Reunion
	February 1991, Vol. 2, No. 1
1	Profile of Michael Price Rucker family
2	Continued profile of Michael Price Rucker and Harriet Allen Jones family

3	Drownings of Rucker Relatives; A Sad Case of Drowning
4	Continued profile of Michael Price Rucker family; Letter from the Editor
5	Jeannie-alogy – The Coghill Connection
6	Author Rudy Rucker profile
7	Notes from the President; Continued Rudy Rucker profile
8	Questions and Answers
9	Continued Questions and Answers
10	Lineage Chart for Michael Price Rucker and Harriet Allen Jones
	May 1991, Vol. 2, No. 2
1	Vixella Rucker White Family Profile
2	Continued Vixella Rucker White Profile
3	"Pleasant Vale" Home of George Rucker
4	Continued "Pleasant Vale;" Rucker Realty
5	Photo of Daniel H. Rucker and his ten children
6	Continued Rucker Realty
7	In Memoriam: Edmund Harrison Rucker, Sarah Mae Enoch Branch, Lucy Love; Jeannie-alogy
8	Questions and Answers
9	Continued Questions and Answers; Letter from the Editor
10	Notes from the President
	August 1991, Vol. 2, No. 3
1	Joseph Herman Rucker Family Profile
2	Continued JH Rucker family profile
3	Alice Rucker Allen and Howard C. Allen family profile
4	Cemetery Repair Fund Update
5	"Nap" and "Johnny" Rucker – Major League Baseball Players; Georgia Rucker's Family Reunion
6	Anniversaries: Henry Rucker, A. McDaniel Rucker, Alice Rucker Allen, Mary Whitely, Martha Rucker Diggle, Nancy Chapplelear and Al Baird
7	Notes from the President
8	Questions and Answers
9	Continued Questions and Answers; Query of the Quarter

To be continued in the next issue.

Plan Ahead!

Rucker Family Society Reunion

Nashville, Tennessee

October 2010



The **RUCKER** family SOCIETY

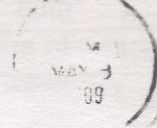


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