

WINTER EDITION

The RUCKER FAMILY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

VOL. 27, NO. 3, DECEMBER 2016

RUCKER'S LANDING DEDICATION

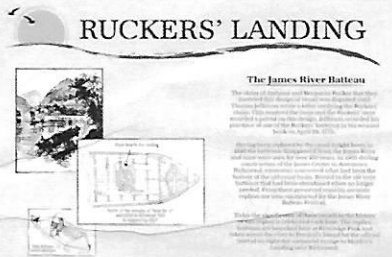


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16th Rucker Family Society Reunion in Columbus, GA by Bill and Susan Rucker

Come visit Columbus, Georgia October 12 - 14 for the 2017 Rucker Family Society Reunion! Columbus is a historical city with a modern feel. You'll experience our famous southern hospitality everywhere from your hotel to our delicious restaurants.

In UpTown, try some local flavor in between boutique shopping trips. From steak to breweries to Mexican, there is something for the pickiest appetite in Columbus! All this can be found just walking distance from your hotel, the Columbus history at the National Infantry Museum history at the National Infantry Museum or Port Columbus Civil War Navel Museum. Looking for some arts and culture? Don't miss the Columbus Museum, with changing historical displays and permanent artwork exhibits. You can also catch a show at the River Center for the Performing Arts or the Springer Opera

Continued on page 23

Dedication of "Rucker's Landing" Amherst Co., VA by Michael P. "Mike" Rucker

A significant "Rucker Family Event" will occur on Saturday, June 10, 2017 beginning at 1:00 PM in Madison Heights, Virginia which will feature historic members of the Rucker family. A number of Rucker family members plan to attend.

The event is to be the first annual Amherst County Batteau Day Festival and the naming of "Rucker's Landing" at Riveredge Park in Madison Heights across the James River from Lynchburg. Amherst County is to "unveil" three informational signs about the history of the James River Batteau and will officially name the boat launch ramp "Rucker's Landing."

Two Rucker brothers, Benjamin and Anthony, created the design for the James River Batteau. Vessels of this design became the most reliable means of transporting tobacco and other goods from the Piedmont Region of Virginia to Richmond.

**The Rucker Family
Society Newsletter**

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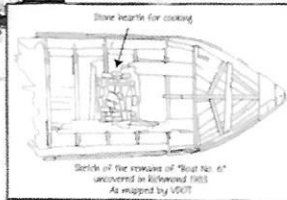
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RUCKERS' LANDING



The James River Batteau

The claim of Anthony and Benjamin Rucker that they invented this design of vessel was disputed until Thomas Jefferson wrote a letter verifying the Ruckers' claim. This resolved the issue and the Ruckers were awarded a patent on this design. Jefferson recorded his purchase of one of the Ruckers' batteaux in his account book on April 29, 1775.

Having been replaced by the canal freight boats in 1840 the batteaux disappeared from the James River and none were seen for over 100 years. In 1983 during construction of the James Center in downtown Richmond, excavators uncovered what had been the bottom of the old canal basin. Buried in the silt were batteaux that had been abandoned when no longer needed. From these preserved remains accurate replicas are now constructed for the James River Batteau Festival.

Today the significance of these vessels to the history of this region is celebrated each June. The replica batteaux are launched here at Riveredge Park and taken across the river to Percival's Island for the official start of an eight-day memorial voyage to Maiden's Landing near Richmond.

One of three permanent signs relating the history of "Rucker's Landing" in Madison Heights, VA

Three permanent informational signs concerning the history of the James River Batteau are to be unveiled during the June 10 event. The image of one of these signs is shown here. There are to be a number of events for the Saturday festival. One event will be an "interview" between "Thomas Jefferson" and the two "Rucker brothers."

The next day, Sunday, June 11, in a continuing aspect of the festival, Michael "Mike" Rucker is to present a lecture at 1:00 PM at the Amherst County Historical Museum, 154 South Main Street, Amherst, Virginia. His subject is to be his *Bridge Burner* book about the controversial Civil War Doctor and Major William Parks Rucker.

While in the area, some family member may wish to visit the D-Day Memorial in nearby Bed-

ford County. Byron Dickson, a Rucker descendant, was the architect who designed the D-Day Memorial which honors WWII veterans, especially those who landed at Normandy on D-Day.

Several Rucker family members have indicated an interest in attending and have requested information on a recommend hotel. The Holiday Inn, 601 Main Street, Lynchburg, VA 24504 (434-237-7771) has given us a special rate of \$105 per night (with tax \$117 - their standard rate is \$166). You may contact the hotel and ask for the special "Rucker family rate" for Friday June 9 and/or Saturday, June 10.

We hope a number of Rucker family members will attend this special event.

Rucker Reunion in Columbus

Continued from page 21



House, the state theatre of Georgia. Adventure isn't hard to find in Columbus, either. Our Chattahoochee Whitewater Riverpark, the longest urban whitewater rafting course in the world, is open year round to for professional kayakers to casual adrenaline seekers. To stay dry, try zipping across state lines and the Chattahoochee River, on the Blue Heron Zip-Line.

As you can see, our community prides itself on being a destination for everyone. Come join us and see Columbus! More information will be coming in the future. You can find out more at www.exploregeorgia.org.

* * * * *

QUERY -2

Who was Henry Rucker of Robertson Co., Texas?

by Jeannie Brydon

From Mary Ann Laurence, Dec 29, 2016:

Minnie Rucker bought the National Hotel in Robertson County, Texas, after her husband Henry Rucker died. She operated the hotel for many years. Her

daughter has written a book about their life there. The book *The National Hotel* is online at the Robertson County, Texas, Genweb. I am interested in finding out more about this Henry Rucker and from whence he came. Do you have any information on a Henry Rucker who went to Robertson County, Texas in the 1800s?

Answer from Jeannie Brydon:

Having no idea, I began by searching on Ancestry.com for Henry Rucker of Robertson Co., TX and came up with:

Robert Henry Rucker
b. 23 Aug 1865 - d. 21 Jul 1905
m. 22 Jun 1889, Robertson, TX
to Minnie Lee Holton.

The 1900 census showed he was a school teacher and Minnie ran a hotel. This was the right one, but who were his parents?

I searched for Robert Rucker, b. ca 1865 in Texas and discovered two Robert Ruckers in the 1880 census. 1. Robert Rucker, age 13, son of Jane Rucker of Shackelford Co., TN. 2. Robert H. Rucker, age 14 of Robertson Co., TX, son of Sarah J. Bealle. "Bah Humbug," no fathers listed.

Two clues led to the second Robert being the right one. 1st he had the middle initial "H" which could be for Henry. The 2nd clue was he lived in Robertson Co., TX, where our Robert Henry

Rucker lived in 1900. Unfortunately, both lived with their mothers, their father having died. So I looked for the 1870 census.

The 1st Robert lived in the 1870 Collin Co., TX census with father, King Rucker and mother Jane. No 1870 census for the 2nd could be found. You wouldn't believe how many people on Ancestry.com list [Hymen] King Rucker as his father.

The 2nd Robert H.'s mother was married to John F. Beale, so I searched for him. I found marriage information for Sarah Brady to Robert D. Rucker, 1 May 1862, Robertson Co., TX (TX Marriages, 1851-1900) and then Sarah J. Rucker to John F. Beall [sic], 19 Jul 1875, Robertson Co., TX (TX Marriages, 1851-1900). Therefore Robert's father was probably Robert D. Rucker, but, I couldn't find them in the 1870 census. The 1860 Robertson Co., TX census showed Robert Rucker, age 36, living adjoining Sarah Brady, who he later married. This was probably Robert Henry Rucker's parents, but who were the parents of Robert D. Rucker?

Robert D. Rucker, age 36, lived with Nelson, age 22 in the 1860 Robertson Co., TX census. Next door was James Rucker, age 63, wife Elizabeth, age 58.

Aha! James Rucker, old enough to be their father, lived next door. But who was he? The 1860

Rusk Co., TX census: James W. Rucker, Elizabeth, Jonathan, James Whitfield, Nelson, Mary and Susan. They lived next to Robert D. Rucker, age 21 and wife Mary Jane, age 18. They were all born in Virginia. This was more evidence that Robert D. was the son of James W.

Searching for James W. Rucker in the 1840 census, I found him living in Bedford Co., VA with 11 whites and 9 slaves. Was this the right James? Bedford Co., VA was my ancestor's territory. Was he related to me? My ancestor was George Rucker, so I looked him up. Wood, p. 40, showed a son James W., but nothing else. Sudie Rucker Wood said he died.

Then I remembered a call from Shelia Mundèn in 2006 and her subsequent article in RFS Newsletter, Vol. 17, no. 3 & 4, p.19, 24-25, "James W. Rucker." James W. Rucker was the son of George Rucker and Martha Tucker of Bedford Co., VA (also my ancestors).

Rucker lineage of James and Elizabeth: James⁵ W. Rucker (George⁴, John³, John², Peter¹). His wife was Elizabeth⁵ Rucker (Ambrose⁴, Jr., Ambrose³, John², Peter¹), second cousins.

They were married 24 Apr 1820: Bedford Co., VA: Marriage Bond, Bedford Co., VA, Ambrose Rucker, surety. *Bedford Co., VA Marriage Bonds, 1781S-*

1782R, copy on Microfilm Reel 192 at Library of Virginia (2005).

According to tax records they lived in Bedford Co. until 1848 and then disappears. In 1850 they were in the census in Rusk Co., TX and in 1860, Robertson Co., TX.

Editor's note: In 1845, Texas became a state and after the Mexican War and the Mexican Cession in 1848, Texas was opened to even more American immigration. James W. and Elizabeth and family became part of that settlement.

Rucker Lineage Correction by Bill Smith

In a recent issue of the *RFS Newsletter*, I made an error in the Rucker lineage of Sondra Renee Tinsley-Evans. Her cor-

rect Rucker lineage is: Sondra Renee¹⁰ Tinsley, James⁹ Henry, Benjamin⁸, James⁷ A., Benjamin⁶ Smith, James⁵, James⁴, Thomas³, Margaret² Rucker, Peter¹.

In Memoriam

Patricia Rucker Hensel, 82, widow of Robert A. Hensel, died Tuesday, March 22, 2016, at Bourbon Heights Nursing Home, Paris, KY.

A native of Leroy, IN, she was the daughter of the late Kenneth Paul Rucker and Margaret McWilliams Rucker.

She was a member of the First United Methodist Church, a retired legal secretary, a member of DAR for several years and a volunteer at Bourbon Community Hospital for over 18 years.



The Rucker Hotel was on the northwest corner of Second Street and Broadway. Built by W. F. Rucker about the turn of the century, the hotel burned about 1912 or 1913. Pictured from left to right: ...?..., 2. W. F. Rucker, 3. Mary E. Rucker, 4. Florence Rucker, 5. Vernie Harper, 6. ...?..., 7. ...?..., 8. Nan Rucker, 9. ...?..., 10. ...?..., 11. Elliot Rucker, 12. ...?..., 13. ...?..., 14. ...?..., 15. Anna Lee Rucker, 16. ...?... The young boy on the porch roof is Robert Clyde Smith, grandson of W. F. and Mary E. Rucker.

Remember the Rucker Hotel in Delaware County from the last issue? Chris Rucker, RFS President found it in Grove, Delaware Co., OK. The Ruckers in the photo are William⁶ Franklin Rucker (1847-1914) [W.⁶ F., Ellet⁵, Elliott⁴, Mordecai³, William², Peter¹] and his wife, Mary Elizabeth "Libby" (Chenoweth), their daughters, Florence, Nannie, Anna Lee and son, Elliot Nelson Rucker.

She is survived by three daughters, Gwenne Hensel, Amy Hensel and her husband Damon Preston and Beth Hensel; two granddaughters, Abigail Preston and Marissa Preston; one brother, Richard and his wife Cindy Rucker; one sister, Jerilynn Rucker and her husband Thom Dixon and several nieces, nephews and cousins. In addition to her husband and parents, she was preceded in death by two brothers, Donald (1938) and Kenneth (2011).

Funeral services were conducted April 19, 2016, at the First United Methodist Church, of Paris, KY. She was buried in the Lexington, KY Cemetery.

Patricia Hensel Rucker lineage is: Patricia⁸ Rucker, Kenneth⁷, Delbert⁶, William⁵, Garland⁴, Lemuel³, James², Peter¹.

Edwin McCray Rucker, Jr., died peacefully on December 21, 2016, at his home in Richmond, Virginia, of cancer. He was born on September 24, 1946, in Richmond to Edwin M. Rucker, M.D. and Nancy Johnston Rucker. Ed is survived by his sister, Kay Rucker Strohl of Nicholasville, KY; and was preceded in death by his parents; and his sister, Nancy Connelly Rucker. He was educated at, and graduated from, St. Christopher's School and Randolph-Macon College before enlisting in the U. S. Army. He returned to Rich-

mond, and he began his long career in real estate. Ed had a lifelong love affair with the internal combustion engine, and racing Italian cars. Ed was the quintessential Virginia gentleman, all about hospitality, and relationships, and loved to entertain colleagues, friends and neighbors at his home. He was buried at Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond, VA.

Edwin Rucker's lineage is: Edwin⁹ McCrae Rucker, Jr., Dr. Edwin⁸ McCrae, Dr. Marvin⁷ Pierce, Dr. Edwin⁶ Timothy, Benjamin⁵ Jennings, Isaac⁴, Ambrose³, John², Peter¹.

Rheda Faye Smith Davis of Greenville, TX passed on November 13, 2016, at Baylor Hospital, following a brief battle with leukemia. She was born Rheda Faye Smith on August 22, 1931, in Nevada, Texas, and was the second of three daughters of Van N. Smith and Virgie O. (Rickman) Smith. She is survived by her husband Robert D. Davis; sisters Doris Jean Moore of Princeton and Linda Jane Hess of Farmersville; a host of cousins, in-laws, nephews, nieces, beloved friends and her church family at Highland Terrace Baptist Church in Greenville.

Rheda chose a life of bringing people together, not only in her 31 year professional career as an employee of Southwestern Bell

in Dallas where she was honored as a member of the Telephone Pioneers of America but also in her service and dedication to family, faith and numerous patriotic and historical societies and organizations.

In particular, she had a passion for genealogy and remembrances of loved ones, tirelessly investigating both her own family tree, assisting others with their efforts to discover their roots and co-authoring 4 books documenting her genealogical research. These passions also led her to join and serve as integral member and officer in a variety of genealogical and patriotic societies and organizations, including the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Descendants of George Washington's Army at Valley Forge, National Society-Colonial Dames XVII Century, the Huguenot Society of Texas, the Huguenot Society of the Founders of Manakin in the Colony of Virginia, the Sons & Daughters of the Pilgrims, the National Society of Daughters of the American Colonists, the First Families of Tennessee, the First Families of Franklin, Tennessee, and the United Daughters of the Confederacy. She was also a supporter of and historian for the Audie Murphy/American Cotton Museum in Greenville.

By bringing together the often frayed threads of her own line-

age and that of others and honoring the memories of those who came before, she built a legacy of friendships, service and love that will stand as an enduring testament to her life. Rheda's life was celebrated at Highland Terrace Baptist Church in Greenville on November 16, 2016. Burial was at Caddo Mills I.O.O.F. Cemetery, Caddo Mills, TX.

The Rucker lineage of Rheda Faye Davis is: Rheda⁹ F. Smith, Van⁸ Nicholson Smith, Margaret⁷ Sarepta Cooper, Martha⁶ Matilda Rucker, Wilford⁵, James⁴, Mordecai³, William², Peter¹.

Marriage Document from 1831 Brings Clarity

by Alice J. Rucker

Many have said that Legrand Rucker (1808-1853) (Armistead⁴, Anthony³, John², Peter¹) had two wives: 1) Helen Lee; and 2) Mary Eleanor/Ellen (surname unknown). Recently the actual certificate, and county recording of marriage were located and studied.

Legrand's father Armistead and mother Elizabeth (Richeson) were married in Virginia in 1801 (Source: Ancestry.com. *Virginia Select Marriages, 1785-1940* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2014. Original data: *Virginia, Marriages, 1785-1940*. Salt Lake City, Utah: FamilySearch, 2013.

FHL film 30273, p. 437). After the death of Armistead [perhaps about 1828, Henry Co., VA], Elizabeth and children moved to St. Louis, Missouri. In Charles F. Rucker's manuscript, he mentions the 1836-37 City Directory citing "Widow Rucker, Boarding House, 78 Locust St...", and in the next directory as Mrs. E. Rucker, Private Boarding, Vine & 3rd Streets (Source: Rucker, Charles F., Unpublished Manuscript, Robertson, MO, January 1946, later deposited at the Virginia Historical Society).

Judging by his Last Will and Testament (1849) in St. Louis Co., Missouri, Legrand had become a fairly significant businessman and had a partner. They

were horse dealers and owned stables on 2nd Street, and also on Broadway. Legrand's estate was noteworthy. Throughout Legrand's many records, his name can be found expressed as Legrand, LeGrand, Lee, Lee F., and Legrand F. Rucker, yet his full middle name has yet been discovered.

Legrand married in 1831 and the documentation of this marriage is quite fascinating because the language is partially in French, the spellings of the bride's name doesn't remain consistent, and the fact that it is a Roman Catholic record (Source: Ancestry.com. *U. S., French Catholic Church Records (Drouin Collection), 1695-1954* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc.,

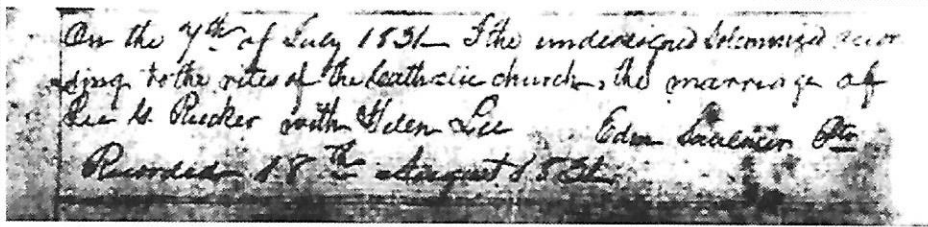
Transliteration of the text below: Lee G. Rucker and Helena Lee—On the Seventh of July eighteen hundred and thirty one I, the undersigned, solemnized the matrimony of Lee G Rucker son of Hamstead [Armistead] Rucker and of Elisabeth Witherson [Richeson] with Helen Lee Daughter of Louis Lee and of Adolem and Joined them according to the rites of the Catholic Church.

Lee G. Rucker
&
Helena Lee

On the Seventh of July eighteen hundred and thirty one I, the undersigned, solemnized the matrimony of Lee G Rucker son of Hamstead Rucker and of Elisabeth Witherson with Helen Lee Daughter of Louis Lee and of Adolem and joined them according to the rites of the Catholic Church.

dispenation granted upon the impediments of consanguinity
 Leg Rucker Mary E Leigh
 Wm. Saulnier
 Martin
 Thos. Jones
 J. H. ...
 James Leuter

*In certis que le mariage e' d'après
 l'usage de la paroisse de ...
 non s'it.*



A copy of the county record of Lee Rucker and Elenor Lee's marriage.

2007. Original data: Gabriel Drouin, comp. *Drouin Collection*, Montreal, Quebec, Canada: Institut Généalogique Drouin).

Edm. Saulnier, priest who married Lee (Legrand) and his bride, granted a special "dispensation" because of the "impediment of disp. [or diff.?] cultures." So it is believed that Legrand's bride was French Catholic and he was not.

Most Rucker researchers would agree that a Roman Catholic marriage record for a Rucker of this time would be rather unusual as most Ruckers remained Protestant. Father Saulnier wrote the bride's name as Helen Lee, and the clerk of the book it is bound in cited the bride's name as Helena Lee.

When the marriage became recorded in the county record book, it states the groom and bride were "Lee G. Rucker and Helen Lee" (Source: Ancestry.com. *Missouri, Marriage Records, 1805-2002* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2007. Original data: *Missouri Marriage Records*, Jefferson City, MO, USA: Missouri State Archives. Microfilm).

Looking at the names within both documents we see the groom's name "Lee" (Legrand)

remains unchanged throughout both documents, however his bride's name does not. In the certificate she was referred to as Helen and Helena Lee, yet she signed her name Mary E. Leigh. In the certificate, the signatures of the groom and bride appear to be penned in the same hand. Perhaps Mary E. Lee/Leigh could not write and Lee (Legrand) signed for her?

There were four witnesses: 1) D. Martin; 2) Thomas J. [or "I"] Jones; 3) an impossible to read name that looks like it could have something to do with the surname "Hook"; and lastly, 4) James Carter. The "Hook" name may be preceded by initials, or a title, and an unknown suffix. This handwriting was evaluated by the famous Kip Sperry whose specialty is reading early American handwriting. But he could not discern the "Hook" signature fully. Many marriages contain two witnesses for the groom, and two for the bride, so perhaps these four witnesses could be viewed in that same way. It is impossible to say which witnesses were for the groom, and which for the bride. But while researching, it is always a good

idea to keep those names on the horizon.

The parents of Lee (le grand, French for "the great" as in Louis XIV, le Grand) in the certificate were named as Hamstead Rucker and Elisabeth Witherson. One can imagine the combination of the dialect of the day, and the ability of the Roman Catholic (and French) priest to hear and understand. However it appears perfectly clear that Lee (Legrand) was trying to say "Armistead", and "Richeson".

The bride's parents were named Louis Lee and Adolem [an extremely uncommon given name] (surname not given). Considering that the bride [or Lee/Legrand?] signed "Leigh", further research would be necessary to determine beyond a doubt if the bride's root family was "Lee" or "Leigh".

Lee (Legrand F.) and wife are mentioned in about thirty five land transactions in the contiguous counties of Franklin and Saint Louis, MO, which are roughly bound on the north by the Missouri river, and on the east by the Mississippi river. In these transactions, Legrand's wife signed in a variety of ways: Mary E., or Elenor, or Ellen. So it is clear that she did not sign "Helen" (Source: Rucker, Charles F., *Ruckers of St. Louis and Vicinity*, unpublished MS, January 1946, now on deposit at the Virginia Historical Society).

It remains pasted all over Ancestry.com and FamilySearch that Legrand's bride was Helen. However, in later records such as census, land, and death records, it can be proven that Legrand's wife's common name was "Elenor" [correct spelling]. Legrand and Elenor "Ellen" would name a daughter Elenor. It is very typical for a woman to have "Mary" as a first (Christian) name, but to be commonly called by her second name. So it is this writer's assertion that *Legrand had only one wife, and her name was Mary Elenor Lee/Leigh*, (b. 1817 in Maryland and died in 1855 of "Cancer in Womb") and that she probably spoke in French and "Ellen" was heard as "Helen".

In reading various documents she signed, the reader gets a sense that Elenor/Ellen was surrounded by many with names of French origin (i.e. Peregrine, Garesché, Beaudry). So it is not known if she was actually French, or just lived near and associated with those of French origin. Keep in mind, the French had explored, settled and named much in the Mississippi River drainage. Chief examples being the town in Missouri, St. Louis (named after the French King Saint Louis IX) and town in Louisiana, New Orleans or Nouvelle Orléans (Orléans being a town in France associated with Joan of Arc, the "Maid of Orle-

ans"). It was only after the Louisiana Purchase by President Thomas Jefferson in 1803 that the gigantic middle section of our country became part of the United States. As so many families did after the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, Ruckers moved further west and traveled by rivers. It would appear that Legrand F. Rucker did just that, while retaining his traditional occupation as a horse dealer and stable keeper. It appears that he met a nice girl of French descent along the Mississippi somewhere, married, and settled down.

Legrand and Elenor's children were: John F. (ca 1833), Louisa (ca 1835), Edward L. (ca May 1838), William H. (ca 1841), Thomas W. (ca 1843), and little Elenor (1846-1852) who died in a fire.

The sad truth is that probably Ancestry.com and FamilySearch will always cite Legrand's wife Helen. As genealogists, we are in constant challenge to find original sources and not simply copy off what others have said. It is hoped readers have enjoyed this little story about the real name of Legrand's wife.

Special thanks goes to Bev Mundy, Jeannie Brydon, De Hill, and Kip Sperry, who each in their own way helped this article take shape.

* * * * *

Joseph Barnett Rucker, Kentucky Editor by Christopher Rucker

The man pressed his large frame closer to the wall of the livery stable, seeking the lengthening shadows as the sun continued its slide behind the southern Kentucky hills. As the electric streetlights snapped on, he pulled his broad-brimmed slouch hat farther down to shield his eyes. Just before eight, he watched the light go out in the newspaper office down the street. He sucked in a sharp breath, and felt for the heavy weight in his coat. He went over his escape route again. He had mulled all the options: hop the Cincinnati Southern train north toward Canada; take it south to make connections to the Gulf coast and Mexico; ride the rails west to get a boat on the Ohio or the Mississippi to New Orleans; hide a small boat on the Cumberland and float west through the night; or take his chances on foot. He knew the area intimately, and hadn't underestimated his neighbors' aptitude and willingness for a lynch mob. He thought of his wife and two young boys at home who must be wondering why he was late for supper. Just then, the door to the *Somerset Reporter* office opened, and its proprietor exited, turned to lock up, and started down the street. The man waited a few moments, then eased out of the shadows and furtively followed with his characteristic, peculiar flat-footed, swinging gait.

Southern Kentucky in the late

nineteenth century could be a rough and tumble place, and for a newspaperman bent on exposing corruption and vice, it was a landscape replete with potential political enemies. Editor Joseph B. Rucker, a former Confederate soldier, was tough enough to take them on, whatever the hazards.

The Kentucky Ruckers had left Virginia over a century earlier. Joseph descended as follows: Joseph⁶; Lewis⁵ Dawson; John⁴; John³; John²; Peter¹. His father is in the Georgetown, Scott Co. censuses for 1830 to 1850, when his youngest son, Joseph, first appears by name. Born 1842 in Georgetown to his father's third wife, Hannah, Joseph showed early on a predilection for a life of letters. By 1860 he was an eighteen year-old printer, and a year later was working in the post office for a man who would later be a newspaper editor. When the Civil War broke out, Joseph enlisted 1 Aug. 1861 in the Confederate army, joining his older brother, John Alphas, in the 2nd Kentucky Mounted Infantry regiment. He traveled 335 miles to the place of rendezvous, a trip perhaps necessitated by the considerable Union sentiment in his divided area of Kentucky. Muster rolls confirm his service at least through the end of 1861, after which there is no further record of him in the army.

Joseph B. returned to Georgetown after the war to begin his calling as a newspaperman. He had a severe speech impediment, and found his voice in

the written word. He started *The Times* with John Bell, his former postmaster. After six months, Joseph moved to the Ohio River town of Warsaw, in Gallatin Co., to begin another newspaper. By 1870 he was an editor and printer, and his family included his wife Anna, daughter of Robert B. and Annie E. (née Smith) Hamilton of Lexington, their infant son Robert H., and Joseph's widowed mother, Hannah D. The newspaper business presented another opportunity, and Joseph moved to Lancaster, Garrard Co., KY, two counties south of his boyhood home. For eight years Joseph ran the semiweekly *Central Kentucky News*, and during the cholera epidemic of 1873, added a daily to update the latest deaths and developments. It was in Lancaster that Joseph's combative nature was manifested, as his stance on political issues and his law and order morality earned him frequent threats from those he lambasted in print. His life was at risk, but he felt an editor's duty to take a public stand against graft.

The family moved farther south again, in the late 1870s, to the Pulaski Co., KY town of Somerset.

The 1880 census there shows Joseph is an editor, and his eighty-one year old mother is still living with the family. They were in Louisville for several years, where Joseph was a printer in 1883, and his fifteen year-

old son, Robert, was mature enough in 1885 to join his father at the printing concern of Joseph B. Rucker and W.N. Mayfield. It was in Louisville that Joseph had a religious awakening, accepting Jesus and melding his fervent Christian faith with an innate sense of social justice. He was a Prohibitionist, and served in an executive capacity in the Temperance movement. He helped organize the Central Gospel Mission, and after moving back to Somerset, established a mission branch there and invited Louisville pastors to sermonize. Absent the 1890 census, Joseph is documented in Somerset in that year's Veterans Schedule as a former Confederate soldier.

Rural Kentucky earned a reputation for violent feuds and confrontations, and in 1892, small town Somerset had its share. Joseph had an eye for the contributing problems of alcohol and ineffectual policing, and never hesitated to use *The Somerset Reporter* to censure those he felt were deserving of public reproach. When Rucker's paper published the news that a suspect had been indicted by a grand jury, the individual attacked him with a billy club. Joseph charged the mayor and police with complicity in the assault, and raked them over the coals in his paper. He was just as contentious with the city council, and while he was beloved by his newspaper's readership, his enemies despised

him for exposing their failures. Another publication opined: "Mr. Rucker was a peaceable, kind-hearted man, but could not countenance crime in any shape and he has made his paper of late a terror to evil doers.

Working late into the evening of 19 September, Joseph glanced out his office window to see the streetlights come on just before eight. He straightened his desk, and locked up, walking home to his wife and two daughters. He made it only a little way, when, a few yards from the public square, three shots rang out from the shadow of the livery stable, and two pistol bullets tore into Rucker's back. He ran seventy-five yards and fell, his life blood ebbing away. Carried by friends to a nearby drugstore, then to his home, he regained consciousness long enough to say that he did not see his attacker, and reassured his family that all was for the best. He died just after midnight, and was buried on 21 September after a funeral thronged by his admirers in the shocked population of Somerset.

The citizens were in a frenzy to apprehend the murderer: "It was the most dastardly and cold-blooded deed ever committed in this county, and everybody is wild with excitement;" "Posses are out on the hunt of the assas-

sin, and if he is caught there will certainly be a lynching;" "Mr. Rucker has been very outspoken in his denunciation of crime and criminals and it is thought that one of the many who felt the deserved lash of his pen committed the foulest deed known to the law – an assassination." Somerset was on the railroad line, the Cumberland River ran just south, and the rugged hills afforded plenty of opportunity for concealment. Searchers scoured the landscape, and the telegraph clattered in the rail stations with the news of Rucker's murder. The crime scene was examined, and a size 7 ½ black, broad-brimmed slouch hat, bought at Waddle Brothers, was found under a wire clothesline, six and a half feet above ground, suggesting that the hat was knocked off of a tall man. The hat was identical to that commonly worn by former chief of Police, Robert C. Anderson, who was nowhere to be found. Now Somerset's tax collector, Anderson had two months earlier left the police force after two years' duty, and entered the saloon business. His business partner, Robert Coffey, reported that someone had cleaned their saloon's till of several hundred dollars in cash the evening of Rucker's murder. It was commonly known that Anderson hated the newspaper editor, who he frequently threatened. Rucker criticized the chief

of police several times for bad conduct, supported by the best citizens of Somerset, and had railed against Anderson's decision to sell alcohol. The suspect's vengeful motive thus established, and the evidence pointing to him alone, Anderson became the object of a far-ranging search. A large reward was offered by the Governor, the county, and Rucker's brother-in-law. The description went out by telegraph: 32 years old, 6'2" tall, 207 pounds, Anderson had a heavy head of black hair and moustache, and moved with an odd, characteristic gait. As this was a man who would stand out in a crowd, his apprehension was expected without much delay.

Rucker's assassination was a dark blot on the surrounding area, and of course received wide play in the regional and national press from his fellow editors, as he had started papers all over the state of Kentucky: "Pulaski county and Somerset are getting a deserved reputation as being the rottenest section in the State as to lawlessness. The cowardly murderers there do not give their victims any show, but shoot them down in darkness and through the back. It would take all the hemp raised in Fayette County to hang all in Pulaski County who deserve to have their necks stretched;" "The assassination is a deeper stain upon the reputation of the State than

all the hemp raised in Fayette County to hang all in Pulaski County who deserve to have their necks stretched;" "The assassination is a deeper stain upon the reputation of the State than all the mountain feuds of the past fifty years combined." Despite intense press and public pressure to bring Anderson to justice, he *had vanished into thin air*.

Three years after the murder, it was reported that Robert Anderson was in custody in Canada, which proved a hoax when Kentucky agents made the trip to Ontario. Tens of thousands of letters and telegrams claiming to know the whereabouts of the suspect were received over the years, but Anderson was never found. Whether in Canada, Mexico, or under a new identity in another state, the suspect never faced trial in Joseph Barnett Rucker's assassination.

Birth records state that John C. Anderson was born 10 Feb. 1861 in Pulaski Co., KY to Bradley C. Anderson and his second wife, Sarah Cowan. In the 1860 census, however, John C. is already three months old, living in Lincoln Co. with three siblings and three half siblings. The family has moved to Pulaski Co. by 1865, when they are paying Federal tax at Stegall's Ferry, near the forks of the Cumberland River. In 1880 the family is enumerated in Precinct 1, and John C. is

nineteen years old. On 22 Nov. 1887 he married 21 year-old Nannie Johnston at her father's Pulaski residence. They had a son, Carey, in Oct. 1888, followed by another, Griffin, in Sept. 1890. When John Anderson disappeared from Somerset after Rucker's murder, his boys would have been two and four years old. The 1900 Mercer Co. census shows them living with "widowed" Nannie and her mother. In 1920 the family is in Lexington, and by 1930 Nannie lives with her son, Carey, and her sister, May. Nannie died of pancreatic cancer 23 Aug. 1945 in Lexington, where she is buried. Her son, Griffin Simpson Anderson, has living descendants; it is not known if they have any additional information about their ancestor, John C. Anderson.

Annie E. Rucker stayed for a time in Somerset after Joseph's murder. Daughters Lilly B. and Catharine M. are listed with her there in the 1900 census. She and her daughters were in Columbus, Ohio from 1903 to 1905. In 1910 Annie was living alone in Somerset, and was boarding there in 1920. She died there 27 Dec. 1929 of septicemia from gangrenous leg ulcers, and is buried in the Somerset cemetery. Joseph was memorialized with a large monument erected by the grateful readership of his *Somerset Reporter*.

There are no living descendants of Joseph B. Rucker. His daughter, Katharine⁷ M. Rucker (called Catharine M. in the 1900 census) married 12 Nov. 1913 to a French artist, René Theophile de Quélin, whose first marriage had ended in divorce; she became stepmother to a daughter and son from the previous union. She was a magazine editor in Manhattan, New York City. Kathryn had no children by de Quélin, and they reportedly divorced. A second marriage by Kathryn, at an advanced age, was also childless.

Joseph and Annie's son, Robert⁷ Hamilton Rucker, has no living descendants. He was a widely traveled accountant, in New York City by 1902 and by 1904 was already married to "Georgietta F." of Quincy, MA. He last appears in the census in 1940, and is widowed. He died in Manhattan 13 July 1944.

Joseph and Annie's third child, Lillie⁷ Rucker, was a dress maker in New York City by 1915. She married Martin Jensen, a Danish immigrant, in Manhattan 12 July 1920. They apparently divorced, as Jensen had a different wife by the 1930 census. Lilly was reported as single when she died 26 November 1944 in Manhattan, NY; she is buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery.

If you would like a copy of Chris's article with his extensive notes, please email Bill Smith at wsmith0128@ca.rr.com.

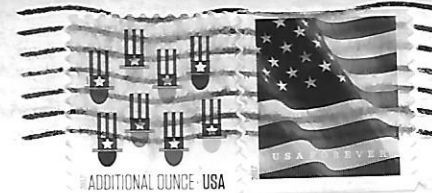
Central Virginia in 1760



This map shows the area of Amherst Co., VA at about the time the Ruckers first lived there. It shows: Lynch's Ferry, now Lynchburg; Rucker's church, now moved to Amherst Court House; New London, then it was a major crossroads, but faded into oblivion as Lynchburg became the dominant city in the area.

The RUCKER family SOCIETY

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