

SPRING EDITION

# the KUCKER FAMILY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

VOL. 29, NO. 1, APRIL 2018

## BENJAMIN RUCKER'S LEGACY



Part of Benjamin Rucker's Legacy, the home of his son, Gideon Rucker

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## Don't Mess with Rucker Women!

### Doris Rucker's 100th Birthday Adventure

by Bill Smith

Poor 18 year-old Freddy Velasquez didn't know what he'd gotten himself into when he broke into the home of 99 year-old Doris Rucker Wasden of West Valley City, Utah. Freddy learned a lesson that many family members, friends and strangers have learned over the past three centuries . . . you don't mess with Rucker women!

Much of this article appears online at KSL.com, including an extended interview with the, by now, centenarian.



Doris Rucker Wasden at home. Photo by Winston Armani, KSL TV

*Continued on page 2*

## Thomas Richeson Rucker by Don Russell Anderson

My grandfather was Dr. Thomas<sup>8</sup> Richeson Rucker. I knew nothing of him until recently and what I found out was evidence of unknown wives and unexplained changes of profession.

My mother was Virginia<sup>9</sup> Helen Rucker. She was born in Spokane, WA in 1913 (d. 1972) and was abandoned by her father, Thomas<sup>8</sup> Richeson Rucker in 1915. Stories told by my mother to my siblings were that her father (Thomas) was a doctor and that he performed an illegal abortion on her mother, Helen Rapp during which both her mother and the baby died. My mother, at the age of two, then went to live with her maternal grandmother in Spokane, WA. That's all we knew about Thomas except that he hailed from Lynchburg, VA. After searching on Ancestry.com and talking with new-found relatives, I have gathered information that raise

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Society Newsletter***

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Doris Rucker Wasden admitted on the day after being held hostage inside her home for several hours that she is still a little on edge.

Saturday, March 3 will be a big day for Wasden, since that's the day she turns 100 years old. The whole town is invited to the birthday party at her house and she wants to see as many people as she can. "Oh, it's going to be a big one," she said enthusiastically.

The birthday celebration will be a lot different than what happened Friday night, February 23, when an uninvited visitor broke into her home by firing a gun through her sliding glass door as he was fleeing police. "Oh, it was at night. I was in bed," she recalled.

Police had been looking for Freddy Alexander Velasquez, 18, since late November, when court records indicate he escaped from a Weber County Jail work crew.

The events of the evening first began about 8 p.m. Friday when a shooting was reported at home in the nearby community of Magna. Thankfully, no one was injured in that shooting, and the police say they tracked Velasquez to a hotel not far from Wasden's home.

As officers tried to apprehend him, Freddy fled into a nearby residential neighborhood. Her

**EDITOR'S NOTES**

It's time to *renew your membership* in the Rucker Family Society. The first number on your address label is your membership number. The second is the year through which you are paid. If it says 2017, send your \$15.00 to Nell Cordick (address in first column of this page).

Our *next reunion* will be held in Lynchburg, VA, the weekend of June 7-10, 2019. Save the date and join us for another great family reunion.

adult grandchildren said Freddy threatened them with that gun and demanded their car keys, but police were right outside. They the grandchildren escape, but that left Wasden, who isn't very mobile, stuck inside with the intruder.

She said Velasquez started rummaging through her jewelry box. "He took the one tray out and dropped it on the floor, and that's when I told him, 'Don't make a mess!'" she recalled. Over the next several of hours, Velasquez started to calm down a bit. "He patted the dog, and I said, 'Such a nice little dog' and he said, 'Yeah.'" "I could tell he was scared," she said with a laugh. Eventually, Doris was allowed to leave her house. Velasquez found her car keys and tried to drive away when SWAT officers apprehended him. Despite the frightening ordeal, Wasden and

her family said they don't have any hard feelings for Velasquez. There is still some broken glass and a bullet hole in the kitchen table, quite the conversation starter, nonetheless the family is ready for an exciting birthday celebration.

Doris LePrieve Rucker, daughter of William Richard Rucker and Addie C. Wilkerson, married three times. Her first marriage was to Kenneth Peterson, with whom she had two children, William Kenneth (b. 1941) and Marva Mae (b. 1944). She then married Morris Franklin Wade second, and third to Reed L. Wasden.

Doris' three Rucker lines are: (1) Doris<sup>8</sup> LePrieve Rucker, William<sup>7</sup> Richard, (2) Henry<sup>6</sup> Wingfield, (3) Nathaniel<sup>5</sup> Wingfield, Isaac<sup>4</sup>, Ambrose<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>.

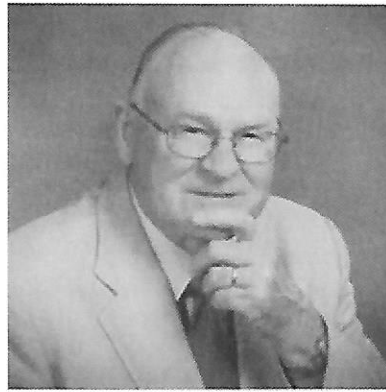
(2) Henry<sup>6</sup> Wingfield Rucker's wife: Elizabeth<sup>7</sup> Boyd Bethel, Margaret<sup>6</sup> Morris, Mollie<sup>5</sup> McDaniel, Margaret<sup>4</sup> Rucker, Ambrose<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>,

(3) Nathaniel<sup>5</sup> Wingfield Rucker's wife: Frances<sup>6</sup> Jane Jones, Polly<sup>5</sup> McDaniel, Margaret<sup>4</sup> Rucker, Ambrose<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \* \*

## In Memoriam

**Donald Elton Jennings**, of Boston, VA passed on November 23, 2017 after a battle with pancreatic cancer. Born on May 9, 1937 in Lynchburg, VA, he was the son of the late Leroy Randolph Jennings and Margaret (Maggie) Hudson Jennings.



He is survived by his sweetheart and wife of 46 years, Kathryn Louise Zimmer Jennings and daughters, Karen Jennings (Ted Weber) and Leigha Jennings Gordillo, his four grandchildren, Marcelo, Helena, Eloise and Charlotte Gordillo. He is survived by his brothers, Warren D. Jennings, Leroy R. Jennings, Jr., and Linwood H. Jennings. He is also survived by nieces and nephews James Bibb, Jr., Debbie Allen, Greg Jennings, Gary Jennings, Larry Jennings, Dawn Edwards, Steve Jennings, Clinton Jennings, Troy Jennings, Neal Jennings, Kimberly Jennings, Ward Zimmer, Andy Zimmer and Jill Cunningham. He was preceded in death by his sister, Dorothy (Dot) Belle Bibb and his brother Harman L. Jennings.

Donald Jennings graduated from E.C. Glass High School in Lynchburg in 1957. After graduating from high school, he enlisted in the U.S. Army for three years and served a tour of duty in Korea. From the Army, he went to work for the U.S. State Department and served in both

Paris and Algeria. Later he graduated from Benjamin Franklin University, Washington D.C. (now a part of George Washington University) where he received a Bachelor's degree in Accounting and a Master's degree in Finance. A lifelong public servant, he worked for several Federal agencies and retired from the Department of Health and Human Services with 37 years of service in 1995. He and his wife moved from Kensington, MD to Boston, VA in 2007. In his retirement, Donald enjoyed working on genealogical research, spending time in his garden, and tending to his many bluebird houses. He was a member of the Jamestowne Society, the Sons of the American Revolution, the Sons of Confederate Veterans, the Rucker Family Society, and the Hudson Family Association. He was also an active Mason and Shriner. A funeral service was held Tuesday, November 28, 2017 at Culpeper United Methodist Church, Culpeper, VA. and the burial was held at Newton Cemetery in Emporium, PA.

Donald Jennings Rucker lineages are: Donald<sup>9</sup> Jennings, Margaret<sup>8</sup> Emerson Hudson, Valentine<sup>7</sup> Hylton, Sarah<sup>6</sup> Jane Rucker, Alexander<sup>5</sup> Marr, Richard<sup>4</sup> m. Margaret<sup>4</sup> Marr, Isaac<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>.

Margaret<sup>4</sup> Marr m. Richard<sup>4</sup> Rucker, Sarah<sup>3</sup> Rucker, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>.

**Edna Doris Rucker Hooks**, 88, formerly of Fort Worth, passed



away Thursday, Dec. 28, 2017, in Granbury, TX. Doris was born in Georgetown on June 18, 1929, to William Mitchell and Edna Alice (Anderson) Rucker. She was the youngest of three children. Doris graduated from Baylor University in 1949 with a BBA in Education. Doris married Bentley C. Hooks Jr. on July 4, 1953. They had three daughters, six grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. Doris loved visits from her family during the grandchildren's summer break. Doris loved playing tennis, and played until age of 86. She was a member of Arborlawn United Methodist Church. She moved into Waterview Senior Living in Granbury in November 2015. Doris was preceded in death by her sister, Mary Rucker Cole, and brother, William Rucker Jr., her husband, Bentley C. Hooks Jr., and their daughter, Jane Hooks Orcutt. She is survived by her daughter Kay and Dean Wiesmann, Carol and Bill Thomson, her grandchildren, Colin and Leslie Orcutt, Sam and Amy Orcutt, Dayna and Casey Norton, Rachel Thomson, Kelly and Caleb Newman, Jenny

Thomson, her great-grandson, Benjamin Reed Orcutt.

A memorial service was held on January 4, 2018, at Arborlawn United Methodist Church, Fort Worth, and she was interred at Rosemound Cemetery, Waco, TX.

Doris' Rucker lineage is: Edna Doris<sup>9</sup> Rucker, William<sup>8</sup> Mitchell Jr., William<sup>7</sup> Mitchell, Sr., Samuel James<sup>6</sup>, Western Tennessee<sup>5</sup>, James<sup>4</sup>, Benjamin<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Thomas Richeson Rucker** *Continued from page 1*

many questions about Thomas. This article is written with the hopes that someone in the RFS can help us clear up what kind of a man he was. Here's what I believe so far:

Thomas Richeson Rucker was born in Amherst County, VA on 24 Oct 1873, the son of Samuel Burks Rucker and Mary Katherine Richeson. On 22 April 1897 he received his medical degree from the Medical College of Virginia, Richmond.

In 1898 he was married to Geneva Rose Moore (b. 1877, d. 1957), had four children with her and lived in Appomattox, VA. Although we cannot find a marriage certificate, it appears that they were married 15 Dec 1898, Appomattox, VA, based on claims in census reports and on Geneva's (and her children's)

death certificates. He apparently abandoned this family sometime between 1908 and 1910, although Geneva continued to claim him as her husband until her death.

In 1910 he was living in a boarding house in Spokane, WA that was run by my grandmother's mother Anna, and believe that's how Thomas met my grandmother, Helen Rapp. 1910 Spokane Co., WA census, Spokane Ward 4: Anna M. Rapp, age 49, b. IN, Wid (6 children, 4 living); Helen J. (dau), age 19, b. MO; George (son), age 13, b. MO; Thomas Rucker (boarder), age 36, Sales Mgr, Sales Specialist, b. VA.



Thomas Richeson Rucker with

On that census, he claimed to be a sales manager. We are unsure why he changed his profession. Was it to protect his new identity and to hide from his Virginia family? Was it because he made a medical mistake and couldn't face medicine anymore? Thomas (age 37) and Helen (age 20) mar-

ried in 1911 and had a daughter (my mother) on 9 Jan 1913.

Thomas next married Lillian Johnson, then age 20, in Spokane on 30 Jun 1918. He claimed on the marriage license that this was his second marriage, but we believe it was his third. On the marriage certificate his age listed as 40, but he was actually 44.

The *Find A Grave* Index shows that Thomas died 9 Mar 1932 in Cortland, New York and was buried in Presbyterian Cemetery, Lynchburg, VA. We believe this is an unmarked grave near his parents and grandparents. He was again listed as a doctor. Why was he in Cortland, NY? Why was he buried in Virginia? Through *Ancestry.com*, I am in contact with my second cousin, Anita Lovett, who has shared information about Thomas Richeson Rucker's first family in Appomattox. I have included a portrait of Ashby<sup>9</sup> Emory Rucker, who was the only son of Thomas. Thomas also had three daughters with Geneva. Ashby is my half-uncle, a relative from a marriage that my family knew nothing about. I also included is a photo of me as a high school senior. I think the resemblance is remarkable and furthers my belief that we are closely related.

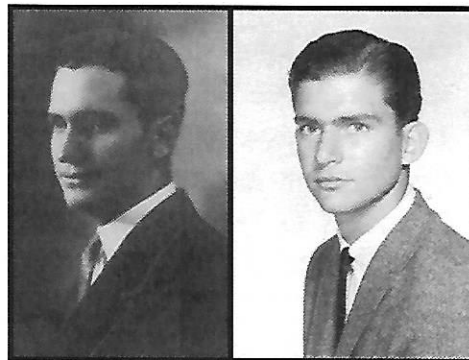
Does anybody have additional information that can clear up his marriages and why he changed

his profession from doctor to travelling salesman? Anything?

Don's Rucker lineage is: Don<sup>10</sup> Russell Anderson, Virginia<sup>9</sup> Helen Rucker, Dr. Thomas<sup>8</sup> Richeson, Samuel<sup>7</sup> Burks m. Mary<sup>6</sup> K. Richeson, William<sup>6</sup> Garland, Garland<sup>5</sup>, Ambrose<sup>4</sup>, Jr., Ambrose<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>; and Mary<sup>6</sup> Katherine Richeson m. Samuel<sup>7</sup> Burks Rucker, James<sup>5</sup> S. Richeson, Amelia<sup>4</sup> Rucker, Anthony<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>.

If you have additional information that might prove use to Don research, his email address: donanderson7802@gmail.com.

Editor's Note: This story intrigued me, so I researched the family he left behind in Virginia. Geneva Rose Moore's family lived on a farm in Appomattox Co., VA. She lived with her parents in the 1910 census. It said she was married 12 years and had four children. She was left without any means of support and by the 1930 census she was living in Richmond, VA with two daughters and a granddaugh-



Ashby Emory Rucker  
(1920-1978)

Don R. Anderson  
(b. 1948)

ter. Her daughters were both Stenographers and Geneva kept house.

Their marriage date is shown on the Delayed Birth Certificate of daughter, Mary Peyton Rucker, by her mother, Geneva Rose Rucker. It showed her parents were married 15 Dec 1898, Appomattox, VA. Source: Family Bible. Does anyone know the location of the Bible?

Issue of Dr. Thomas<sup>8</sup> Richeson Rucker by 1<sup>st</sup> marriage to Geneva Rose Moore (4 children and 2 grandchildren):

1. Kathleen<sup>9</sup> Douglas Rucker, b. 21 Jul 1899; m. Carlisle Callahan Cochran.
2. Ashby<sup>9</sup> Emory Rucker, b. 28 Jan 1902 (VA Birth Records), Pedlar Mills, Amherst Co., VA; m. Ada Belle Lovett.
  1. Gloria<sup>10</sup> Rucker, b. ca 1935; m. \_\_\_\_\_ Meer.
3. Mary<sup>9</sup> Peyton Rucker, b. 19 Aug 1905 (VA Birth Records), Pedlar Mills, Amherst Co., VA, d. 21 Mar 1975, Richmond, VA; unmarried. She lived and cared for her mother in Richmond, VA.
4. Pauline<sup>9</sup> Stewart Rucker, b. 2 Sep 1907 (VA Birth Records), Amherst Co., VA; m. 1<sup>st</sup> Earle Stanhope Sanne, divorced; m. 2<sup>nd</sup> Melvin Maynard Chaney.
  1. Jacquelin<sup>10</sup> Gray Sanne, b. 7 Aug 1924.; m. John Cox.

In the 1940 census, Geneva was living at 2915 West Grace St., Richmond, VA. Being from Richmond, I drove by the house, a duplex, where she lived with her daughter, Mary, until she died February 25, 1957. It is just

around the corner from the house of my grandmother, Sudie Rucker Wood.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Mildred Rucker by Jeannie Brydon

This is continued from Vol. 28, No. 2, Article on Elizabeth Rucker, search for her sister Mildred. We know John<sup>4</sup> Rucker, Jr. (John<sup>3</sup>, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>) had three daughters according to the *Chancery Suits, Orange Co., VA, 1831-1845*, ed. by Ruth and Sam Sparacio, "Rucker v Burton," p.119-121 – Elizabeth, Mildred and Amanda.

Mildred Rucker is listed on Ancestry.com with four different parents:

1. John<sup>4</sup> Rucker, Jr. (John<sup>3</sup>, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>), and Milly \_\_\_\_ (Wood, p.179.)
2. John<sup>4</sup> Rucker (Cornelius<sup>3</sup>, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>), and Elizabeth "Betsy" Tinsley (p.210).
3. William Rucker (John<sup>4</sup>, Cornelius<sup>3</sup>, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>), and \_\_\_\_\_ Manguin. This is where Wood, p.226, lists Mildred.
4. Joseph Rucker (John<sup>4</sup>, Cornelius<sup>3</sup>, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>), and Margaret Houston Speer (p.209). Joseph Rucker had no daughter named Mildred, so no further searching his files.

In Wood, Mildred is listed twice, p. 209 and p.226. Neither is correct.

1. p.209 Joseph<sup>5</sup> Rucker (Cornelius<sup>3</sup>, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>), no spouse listed.
2. p.226 William Rucker (John<sup>4</sup>, Cornelius<sup>3</sup>, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>),

and \_\_\_\_\_ Manguin.

There are only two sources for Mildred Rucker, listed on Ancestry.com.

1. Her marriage to William Bowling White, 8 Jan 1833, Elbert Co., GA (Georgia Marriages to 1850).
2. Find A Grave (Tombstone at Van Creek Baptist Church Cemetery gives birth 7 Dec 1814, and death 16 Jan 1845.

All of the above family trees give these two sources. Neither of these sources mention parentage.

So, let's get started on our research. To reiterate: Joseph Rucker did not have a daughter named Elizabeth, nor did he have a daughter named Mildred.

Again, the Chancery Suit proves parentage. *In a receipt dated 17<sup>th</sup> April 1833, in Ruckersville, Virginia, W. B. White certifies he received from Joseph Rucker the full legacy of Mildred Rucker daughter of John Rucker dec'd for her interest in her Grandmother's [sic] Estate. W. B. White married Mildred Rucker.*

**Mildred<sup>5</sup> "Milly" Rucker** (John<sup>4</sup> Jr., John<sup>3</sup>, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>), b. 7 Dec 1814, d. 16 Jan 1845 (Tombstone -- Find A Grave); m. 8 Jan 1833 (Georgia Marriages to 1850), Elbert Co., GA, to William Bowling White, b. 13 Dec 1811, Elbert Co., GA, d. 16 Jul 1858 (Find A Grave). They were buried at Vans Creek Baptist Church Cemetery, Elber-

ton, Elbert Co., GA.

Children of Mildred Rucker and W. B. White (according to census records):

1. Y.<sup>6</sup> W. White, b. ca 1836.
2. William<sup>6</sup> Bowling White, Jr., b. ca 1839; m. 9 Apr 1863 (GA Marriage Records), Elizabeth A. Fortson.
3. Mary<sup>6</sup> "Molly" White, b. 16 Dec 1840, d. 7 Jan 1882; m. cousin Stephen<sup>6</sup> Ham Fortson (Susan<sup>5</sup> Ham, John<sup>4</sup>, Mildred<sup>3</sup> Rucker, John<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>).
4. Tinsley<sup>6</sup> Rucker White, b. 23 Nov 1843; m. 1<sup>st</sup> Mary Elizabeth Mathews; m. 2<sup>nd</sup> Minnie Day McLanahan. His mother died when he was 7 months old.

The following tombstones are located in Van's Creek Baptist Church Cemetery, Elberton, GA.



SACRED  
To the Memory of  
Mrs. MILDRED WHITE  
wife of Wm. B. WHITE  
Who was the born 7<sup>th</sup> Dec 1814  
And died 26<sup>th</sup> Jan 1845  
Aged 30 years 1 month & 19 days  
Virtue truth and righteousness  
Were hers  
\*\*\*\*\*

In Memory of  
William Bowling White  
Husband of Eliza White  
Born 13 Dec 1811  
Died 16 Jul 1858  
(stone is difficult to read)



Wait a minute. It said he was the husband of Eliza White? Who was she?

Mildred Rucker died shortly after the birth of her son, Tinsley White Rucker, leaving his widow William B. White to raise four children. After additional research, I found he married a second time and had five more children, dying and leaving them without a father.

In the "Georgia Marriage Records from Select Counties, 1825-1978," it says William B. White married 2 Aug 1845, Eliza Blackwell. Married by Asa Chandler, Minister of the Gospel. This was only seven months after Mildred died!

Then I found in *Administrative and Guardian Bonds, Vol. A-C, 1830-1881*, p.28-29: Mrs. Eliza White Guardian Bond 1860 for the minor children of William B. White. Children named Frances S. White, Thomas J. B. White, Elizabeth B. White, Victoria J. White, and Laura D. White, Orphans of William B. White

Up until I began this search, no one seemed to know about this 2<sup>nd</sup> marriage. This shows you

what you can discover if you look for clues and persevere.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Corra Mae (White) Harris**  
*Granddaughter of Mildred Rucker*  
 by Michael P. "Mike" Rucker



Editor's note: In researching Mildred Rucker I found an illustrious granddaughter. Mike came to the aid and researched her.

Corra White Harris was one of the most celebrated women from Georgia in the early twentieth century. She is best known for her first novel, *A Circuit Rider's Wife* (1910). From 1899 through the 1920s, she published hundreds of essays and short stories and more than a thousand book reviews in such magazines as the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Harper's*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Ladies Home Journal*, and especially the *Independent*.

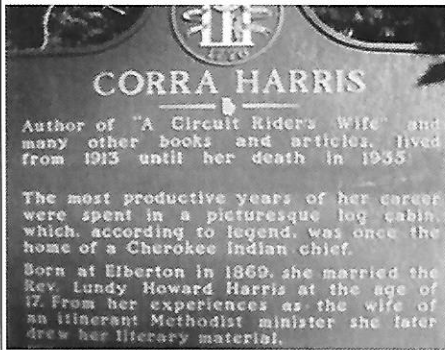
She established a reputation as a humorist, southern apologist, polemicist, and upholder of pre-modern agrarian values. She criticized southern writers who sentimentalized a past that never

existed. Most of Harris's nineteen books were novels, though she also published two autobiographies, a travel journal, and a coauthored book of fictional letters. Two of her works became feature-length movies. Of these, the best known is *I'd Climb the Highest Mountain* (1951), inspired by *A Circuit Rider's Wife*. In September, 1914, the *Saturday Evening Post* sent her to the War Zone in Europe as the first female war correspondent to go abroad in World War I.

She was born Corra Mae White on March 17, 1869, on Farm Hill Plantation in the foothills of Elbert County, she was the daughter of Tinsley Rucker White and Mary Elizabeth Mathews White. Like many southern women of her day, she did not have an extensive education. Her formal education was limited to teacher training at nearby Elberton Female Academy but she did not graduate and, as a writer, was largely self-taught.

In 1877 she married Methodist minister and educator Lundy Howard Harris. They had three children, only one of whom, a daughter named Faith lived beyond infancy. Her husband experienced bouts of alcoholism and depression. Before and after his death in 1910, Corra assumed responsibility for her immediate and extended family's financial survival. She remained a widow, spending the last two decades of her life at the place she named

"In the Valley" just north of Atlanta, in Bartow County, Georgia. There she died in 1935, having outlived her daughter by sixteen years. She was buried in the Corra White Chapel, she built near her house.



Historical Marker for Corra Harris, located at Rydal, Bartow Co., Georgia

Corra's most acclaimed novel was *A Circuit Rider's Wife*, the first of a trilogy in the "Circuit Rider Series." *A Circuit Rider's Widow* (1916) and *My Son* (1921) followed. Semiautobiographical, *A Circuit Rider's Wife* is the story of an itinerant Methodist minister and his wife, and their life together on a church circuit in the north Georgia mountains. The book has been noted since that time for its portrayal of rural mountain folk in their earthiness and simplicity. It was reprinted in 1998 by the University of Georgia Press.

Less well known, is *The Recording Angel* (1912). This novel is set in a little town called Ruckersville in the hills of northern Georgia. It depicts a place where residents are so devoted to the legacy of their Confederate heroes that they have isolated

themselves and become culturally barren. Harris mocks the Lost Cause mythology, and again she reveals the excesses and limitations of evangelical religion. This book, along with Harris's first novel, reflects her efforts to come to terms with modernity.

In 1996 she was inducted into Georgia Women of Achievement.

Quote from Corra Mae Harris. "The best thing you can do when you are not brave is to profess courage and act accordingly."

Sources: Sudie Rucker Wood, *The Rucker Family Genealogy*, p.226, *Wikipedia* and *New Georgia Encyclopedia*

The center part of the house was reportedly built ca 1830 by Pine Log, a Cherokee chieftain. Corra purchased it in 1913 and lived there until her death in 1935. It originally it was a log cabin, but she added a study and chapel. It is known as *In the Valley*. Rydal, GA is located north of Atlanta, originally a small town of 2,000 people, but is now a bedroom community of Atlanta.

The complex was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1997. A 57-acre area is listed with five contributing buildings and one other contributing structure.

Editor's note: When visiting Elbert Co., GA, in July 1996, I saw on the Elbert Co. map, that there was a marker to Corra Harris on Route 72. I remembered Corra Harris was a Rucker and we

stopped. The large granite marker (most everything in Elbert Co. is made of granite as it is the "Granite Capital of the World") was placed at Farm Hill where Corra Harris was born.

Corra White Harris lineage is: Corra<sup>7</sup> Mae White, Tinsley<sup>6</sup> R. White, Mildred<sup>5</sup> Rucker, John<sup>4</sup>, Jr., John<sup>3</sup>, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Benjamin Rucker's Legacy by Mary Estes

In the last decade of the 18th Century, Benjamin Rucker (son of John<sup>2</sup> and grandson of Peter<sup>1</sup>) was a wealthy influential man living in the Piedmont Region of Virginia. He was a successful tobacco farmer and was known for the creative design of a boat, the Rucker batteau, that was being used to transport the region's farm products down the river to Richmond. His four sons and three daughters were married, or were soon to be married, and had started families of their own. These children also had ambitions beyond even their father's. With the Revolutionary War over, the land to the west of the Appalachians was opening up for settlement. Danger from the Indians had lessened, and thousands of acres in this new land had been awarded to soldiers as payment for their war service. Kentucky became a state in 1792 and Tennessee 1796. It was



Middle Tennessee that attracted the Ruckers.

Nashville was a frontier town offering a frenzy of land deals. James and Thomas Rucker, with their brother-in-law Zachariah Dawson, were armed with cash money, bought 1,806 acres of land for \$3,612 or \$2 dollars an acre, near the mouth of the Stones River in 1797. This was prime land near the properties owned by one of the first families and founders of Middle Tennessee, the Donelson's. Their daughter, Rachel Donelson Jackson, wife of Andrew Jackson, lived nearby.

James Rucker, age 40, Thomas Rucker, age 38, and Zachariah Dawson moved their families to Tennessee shortly after their land purchases. James' wife was Nancy Ann Read who he married after his first wife, Epheum Tate, died leaving four children without a mother. He and Nancy Ann had 6 more making ten children, ages 16 to newborn, when they moved to Tennessee. Thomas had married Nancy Ann's sister, Sallie. They had a young baby when they came to Tennessee. Zachariah Dawson was the husband of James and Thomas's sister, Lucy, who had 5 children. Their plan was to divide the land between them.

With the move came tragedy. Zachariah Dawson died. The purchase had to be redivided in order to settle his estate for his widow and children. James and

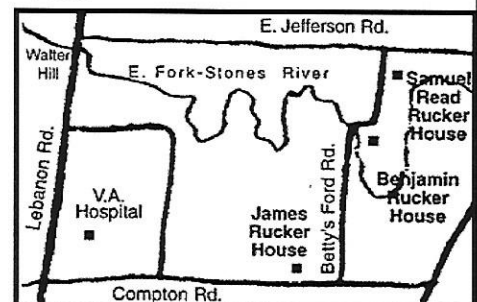
Thomas must have been close to their sister, Lucy, who was only 33 years old at the sudden death of her husband. They had made their plans together when they all moved to Tennessee. When things didn't turn out as expected, an old acquaintance of Lucy's appeared on the scene. John McDaniel had courted Lucy years earlier but both had married someone else. Now a widower, he came to Tennessee and finally convinced her to return to Virginia with him and her children.

Other changes quickly followed. James's 19 year-old daughter, Betsy, married Severn Donalson, brother of Rachel. Another land deal appeared when in 1801 brothers, James and Thomas, found another partner, Simon Miller. This new purchase lay south on the east fork of the Stones River and it was huge, 5,000 acres. It was a land grant belonging to Revolutionary War hero, Issac Shelby who was just completing his first term as Governor of Kentucky. This was an new area that was opening up for settlement. There were no roads through the forest, but it was the river that offered the most desirable transportation. The Rucker brothers knew the advantage rivers had in transporting goods from their father's experiences in Virginia. Thomas and James Rucker and Simon Miller bought the 5,000 acres for \$7,000 from Isaac Shelby in 1801. By 1802

the land was divided between them by the transfer of deeds and money. Simon Miller married James Rucker's second daughter, Lucinda, in 1802 at about the time the families moved to the land on the east fork of the Stones River.

It is local tradition that all three of these new citizens of what would become Rutherford County built substantial houses within a year or two of their arrival. In 1803 the County of Rutherford was formed out of the land that had been the southern part of Wilson County. The new Rutherford County Court met January 1, 1804 in Thomas Rucker's house and in April 1804 it met in Simon Miller's house. The country seat was supposed to be about 7 miles down river at the new settlement of Jefferson. The family was well situated for sharing and visiting with each other. Near to the lands of Thomas, James and Simon, sister Sophia Rucker with her husband, Joseph Burrus also purchased land. The third brother, Gideon Rucker seemed to be more independent.

Area of Middle Tennessee referenced in the article.



*Continued in next Issue*

### Mr. Rucker's Car



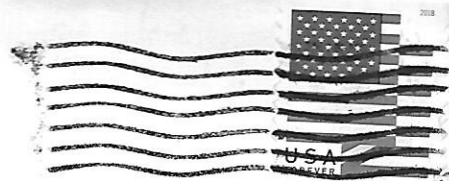
Louis Rendemonti recently purchased a 1911 Franklin automobile that was originally registered to a Mr. Joseph H. Rucker of San Jose, California. The car is not very pretty right now as he is in the process of restoring it. Fenders and headlights are off of it and it's in plain primer. Editor's note: An article about the mansion of Joseph H. Rucker (1865-1931), 418 South 3rd Street San Jose, California was printed in the Rucker Family Society Newsletter, Vol. 13, No. 2, June 2002, by Chuck Berry of Scotts Valley, CA. I hadn't thought about it but such a fine house would have had automobiles. There were three registered to Joseph H. Rucker in 1914. Mitchell Touring Car 1912, Kissel Touring Car 1911, and a Franklin Touring Car 1911. We look forward to seeing the finished product. Mr. Rucker's lineage is: Joseph<sup>7</sup> H. Rucker, Joseph<sup>6</sup> E., William<sup>5</sup> T., William<sup>4</sup>, John<sup>3</sup>, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>.

## The RUCKER *family* SOCIETY



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