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Winter 1998

Ruffner Roots and Ramblings, Vol. 1, Issue 1

Ruffner Family Association

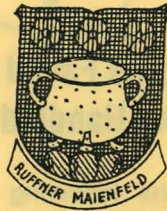
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THE RUFFNER FAMILY NEWS

Issue #1, Winter 1998

VOL. 1

GREETINGS FROM THE ORGANIZING BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The descendants of Peter and Mary (Steinman) Ruffner are pleased to introduce you to our first issue of the **Ruffner Family News**. It has been two hundred and fifty nine years since the newly married couple left her parent's home in Lancaster, Pennsylvania and headed south down the muddy road to the beautiful Susquehanna River. Crossing it they headed to the Valley of Virginia and where the Potomac River is met by the Shenandoah, they secured their wagon on a flat boat and navigated up the river to the mouth of Hawksbill Creek. There they entered into the land given to them as a wedding present by the bride's father, Joseph Steinman. At a plantation they called "Ruffner Spring" they built their new home and from there the Family of Ruffner began its American journey.

Since that date in 1739, the children and grandchildren of Peter and Mary have branched out to claim residence in almost all of the United States, a nation that their daughters and sons would work hard to create. Back in 1991, in the first of a series of Ruffner Family Reunions, begun under the leadership of our late cousin Budge Ruffner, a hardy band of the descendants of Benjamin Ruffner gathered in Mason, Illinois. A call went out for a repeat event and they gathered next in 1993 at Prescott, Arizona. The idea was catching on so the first national gathering took place two years later in Charleston, West Virginia and those in attendance voted to return to the original homestead on Hawksbill Creek in June of 1997. It was there that one hundred and forty-five Ruffner cousins decided to organize themselves into the Ruffner Family Association. An organizing committee was chosen and our goals were set, one of which was to publish a newsletter as the official means of communicating with our members and friends on the history and activities of the Ruffner Family in America.

Your organizing committee is pleased in this first issue to introduce you to our Editor, Joan Ruffner Reid. Joan and her husband Kenneth live in Columbus, Ohio. She is a descendant of Emanuel Ruffner (son of Peter and Mary Ruffner), who took his family into the Northwest Territory in 1803.

We trust you will find our effort to be informative and inspiring as over the years we sponsor additional reunions, conduct research and welcome new-found cousins into our membership. It is hoped that through our News, we can keep you up-to-date on activities at Ruffner historical sites such as the major restoration taking place at Holly Grove, David Ruffner's mansion we all visited in 1995 during our Charleston Reunion. We invite you to submit articles, keep us informed on your family activities, share with us your research, your queries and participate in our reunions. Together we can share, learn and remember our common heritage.

NAME THE NEWSLETTER

We are pleased to present to you this **FIRST** issue of the Ruffner Family News. It seems only proper that we give all the Ruffner family members a chance to provide it with an appropriate name, therefore we are having a contest to "name the newsletter." The entries will be judged by five family members, who will remain anonymous. The winner will receive two years of free membership in the Ruffner Family Association. Please send your entry to:

Joan Ruffner Reid
120 Rita Court
Columbus, OH 43213
Email: Jokereid@aol.com

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and much more -

Mark Your Calendar for the 1999 Reunion Lancaster, Ohio

by Roberta Ruffner Kirwin



Plans are underway for the **1999** Ruffner Family Reunion in Lancaster (Fairfield County), Ohio, **JUNE 4-6**.

For those not familiar with the Lancaster, Ohio area, I will attempt to give a little historical background.

In 1796, Congress decided to have a road built through a section of the Northwest Territory. Prior to that time, the only routes were by river and stream. They hired Ebenezer Zane and his brothers, who had previously built a road from Pittsburgh to Wheeling, VA (now West Virginia). The new road was to go from Wheeling to Limestone (now Maysville), Kentucky and it would be known as Zane's Trace.

In 1800 (3 years before Ohio became a state), Fairfield County was organized and the original town of New Lancaster formed in the plan it bears to this day. It comprised nearly all of the counties of Licking and Knox, and portions of Perry, Hocking, Franklin and Pickaway.

Since Fairfield County was located on the Zane's Trace, it attracted many settlers from Eastern Pennsylvania, Maryland, Kentucky, Virginia and New England. The architecture these settlers built and the arts they brought with them have been lovingly preserved.

I hope this short glance back at history has aroused your interest and you have already rushed to mark the 1999 reunion dates on your calendar.

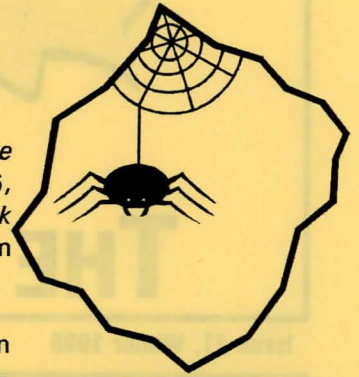
One of the major projects I have been working on is creating a pattern from the **Ruffner quilt**. The pattern will be available for sale in February. Please contact me for details.

Another project is the development of a **Ruffner Family Cookbook**. I am asking all Ruffner descendants to send me their favorite family recipes. Please include your full name, address and the name of Peter Ruffner's son/daughter from whom you were descended. Please send your recipe(s) ASAP so the cookbook can be available for sale at the reunion. All proceeds from the sale of the quilt pattern and the cookbook will go to the Ruffner Family Association.

Mail to: 7700 Revenge Road, Lancaster, OH 43130; Phone: (614) 681-9969

Some Faced Bullets: She Handled Black Widows

(The following is from an article in *The Columbus Dispatch* (Ohio) dated October 16, 1997. The column was entitled *So to Speak* by columnist Joe Blundo. Our thanks to Sam McNeely for submitting it.)



As the World War II generation fades from the scene, individual war stories will fade -

The woman's name is Armada (are-MADE-a) Ruffner. She is a frail 81 and lives at Wesley Glen, the retirement community at 5155 N. High St.

In a closet in her living room, she keeps a couple of rolled-up photocopies of a 1943 *Life Magazine* article. Unroll them and you will see a much younger Armada Ruffner making an unusual contribution to the war effort.

For a year and a half in the midst of the war, Ruffner, a civilian tended a creature capable of producing a wondrous substance useful in a variety of instruments: the black widow spider.

The female black widow is renowned for possessing a poisonous bite capable of felling a man. That, however isn't what made it useful.

Like other spiders, the black widow excretes a liquid that, as it passes out of the body, turns into an amazingly elastic thread finer than a human hair and stronger than a strand of steel of the same size.

This spider silk, used by the black widow to weave webs and raise and lower itself, formed the crosshairs in gunsights, bombsights and telescopic instruments during World War II.

Ruffner began harvesting spider silk for telescopic devices while working for the Army Quartermaster's Corps at the Columbus General Depot, the warehousing center that would later be called the Defense Construction Supply Center.

She had heard that there was a need for spider silk and that the silk of black widows was particularly useful. Her bosses let her go to New Jersey, where a spider expert taught her how to handle black widows.

Ruffner returned with a supply of black widows in coffee jars. She kept them at home until her mother found out.

"She objected to it, so I took them all to the office," Ruffner said.

They weren't a big hit there, either. In fact Ruffner said, co-workers killed some of them. Still she persisted, eventually acquiring 20 black widows.

Ruffner would "silk" her spiders by dipping a long, thin stick into a jar and coaxing a spider onto it. Holding the stick in the air induced the spider to drop toward the floor on a fine thread of silk called a dragline. As the spider neared the floor, Ruffner would raise the stick, pulling the spider up and causing it to lengthen its dragline.

A single black widow could be "silked" twice a week, producing up to 180 feet each time.

Ruffner fed the spiders two flies per week for their troubles.

She wasn't the only person in the country raising spiders for the silk. Some turned selling silk into a cottage industry that continued long after the war. Ruffner simply did it as part of her job.

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Report From The Board of Directors

by Robert Newman Sheets, Organizing Chairman

The Organizing Committee for the Ruffner Family Association, acting as the Board of Directors, held their first meeting in Luray, Virginia during the 1997 Ruffner Reunion. They met at the Ramada Inn following the Reunion Banquet. The committee is the outgrowth of the reunion planning committees of 93, 95 and 97. Invitations were extended to additional members which increased our participation to those listed in this issue of the Ruffner News. A Statement of Purpose was submitted to the Board and it was unanimously supported with the intent of creating a Ruffner Family Association. It was agreed that the heritage we all share in the Ruffner Legacy and related branches is not only worthy of preservation in the historical records but within the assembly of the living cousins. We have all benefited from the knowledge of our history but nothing can match the enthusiasm we see for the new friendships we have made at our reunions. It was clear that a bond of "Family" was growing among the Cousins that would surely give great delight to our progenitors, Mary and Peter Ruffner.

During these next two years, leading up to our reunion in Ohio, we hope to process a number of programs that will be beneficial to the membership and then present them at what will be our first Annual Meeting. During this period, we will become incorporated as a "not for profit" organization and broaden our membership. Annual membership currently stands at \$15.00 per person. Our primary expenditures are for publication and mailing of the Ruffner News as well as answering the number of queries and correspondence that come in to our Denver office.

Programs we plan to develop beside publishing the Ruffner Family News and hosting the 1999 Reunion are: (1) putting the family genealogy on the computer, (2) conducting a nationwide inventory of Ruffner Historical Artifacts, (3) expanding our mailing list, (4) encouraging additional Ruffner Family research, (5) publishing materials on the history of the Ruffner Family and (6) inventorying Ruffner Historic Sites across the country. Two very special projects that are receiving immediate attention are the Cemetery Preservation (see related article in this issue) and the Peter Ruffner Book update. This project will entail the cataloging of the Ruffner Manuscript Collection currently housed in the Page County Public Library in Luray, Virginia. The collection of materials is from the research generated by Doris Laver Ruffner and the late Olive Taylor Ruffner, who edited and co-authored *Peter Ruffner And His Descendants*, published in 1966.

During the organizational period, we are asking for input from our members and friends on other possible activities of the Association that will meet the goals of providing for future generations the knowledge of the Ruffner Family's contribution to the story of America. Your ideas and suggestions should be sent to Robert N. Sheets, Ruffner Family Association, 1675 South Steele Street, Denver, CO 80210 or Email: Rnsheets@aol.com.

The Organizing Committee Ruffner Family Association

- Robert Newman Sheets . Organizing Chair
Denver, CO
- Betty Lou Ruffner Anderson Glen Allen, MO
- Gary Bauserman Luray, VA
- Barbara A. Burner Raytown, MO
- Jack Childers Fenwick Island, DE
- Barbara Ruffner Kibler Luray, VA
- Roberta Ruffner Kirwin . . . Lancaster, OH
- Sara Ruffner Lytle Seneca, SC
- Sam McNeely Aiken, SC
- Melissa Ruffner Moore Prescott, AZ
- Joan Ruffner Reid Columbus, OH
- Douglas Ruffner Barnsdall, OK
- Elizabeth Ruffner Prescott, AZ
- Fred Ruffner Fort Lauderdale, FL
- Gary Ruffner Mason, IL
- George Ruffner Inola, OK
- Patsy Ruffner Riverview, FL
- Shirley Ann Sheets Denver, CO
- Nancy Lee Ruffner Shifflett . . . Luray, VA
- Shawn Williams Catawissa, PA

The Ruffner Family News
is published by
The Ruffner Family Association
Organized in 1997 to support the incorporation of a not-for-profit association to maintain a society of members who will research and preserve their common heritage through the collection of historical artifacts and documents that form the basis for knowledge and appreciation of the historical role played by the Ruffner descendants and their collateral lines in the settlement of the American Frontier.

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Review - 1997 Ruffner Reunion

By Robert Newman Sheets

On June 6th, 1997, one hundred and forty five descendants of Peter and Mary honored them by returning to the ancestral homestead which is now the beautiful town of Luray, Virginia.

Three days of events had been well planned by our Chairman **Douglas Ruffner** from Inola, Oklahoma and his Committee. **Registration and Hospitality** welcomed us to our headquarters motel, the Ramada Inn, just a short two miles from the original Ruffner Farm where our monument to Peter and Mary was being installed by Heritage Memorials of Harrisonburg. Under the chairmanship of Cousin Joan Ruffner Reid from Columbus, Ohio, the registration ran smoothly and we all renewed our many contacts from the Charleston Reunion and made many new ones. Connecting with Cousins became infectious as we met the faces that went with so many of the names in the Ruffner Book. Honored guest was Doris Ruffner, co-author of those two volumes that were the inspiration for our being together.

A nice gift from the committee was a pin attached to our name badges that was the **Ruffner Family Crest** whose roots go back to the Ruffners of Maienfeld, Switzerland. It is the same crest shown on the masthead of this newsletter. Cousins shared genealogy charts, information and photos which kept our copy machine busy. A sales table of books on Luray and the Ruffners quickly sold out.

We closed out our first day with a special evening of research at the **Page County Public Library** hosted by Librarians, Vickie Cyphert and Debbie Owens. They very graciously made available to us the records in their genealogy collection that pertained to the Ruffners. Our committee was able to index the records in the "Ruffner Collection" that is housed there. The collection contains the research and

correspondence generated by Olive and Doris Ruffner when they edited the Ruffner books.

Saturday we boarded our buses for a delightful and exciting exploration of the Hawksbill Valley and the Ruffner Family Historical Sites. Guided by the "local experts," **Barbara Ruffner Kibler** and **Gary Bauserman**, we toured (1) the **Willow Grove Mill** on the land of **Joseph Ruffner** before he took his family to the Kanawha River Valley in 1795; (2) we were welcomed by **Louise Ruffner** to the **John & Nancy Bumgardner Ruffner** home on the South Fork of the Shenandoah River and childhood home of Barbara Kibler; (3) "**Fort Stover**" historic home built by Samuel Stover on Peter Ruffner land; (4) we toured the log cabin built by **Reuben Ruffner** before he departed for Kentucky about 1789 with his wife Catherine; (5) we climbed through the fascinating construction of "**Fort Egypt**" built by Joseph Strickler in 1758 which became the home of the Stover family; (6) we toured the beautifully preserved historic **Mauck Meeting House** where the Ruffners, Stricklers and Stovers worshipped in 1798 and we toured (7) the museum of the **Page County Heritage Association** in the historic Barbee House.

Our buses also drove by: The **Massanutten Monument**; **Fort Rhoads**, site of the Rhoads family massacre in 1764; the home of Benjamin Ruffner, Sr.; the home of Mark Ruffner at Marksville and the site of Emanuel Ruffner's homestead. We all met at the famous **Luray Caverns** for tours and lunch. The caverns, part of what was first called "**Ruffner Cave**" are on the original Peter Ruffner land.

Our second day concluded with the traditional **Ruffner Family Banquet** held at the Ramada Inn. Following a delightful reception gathered around the wall-size **Ruffner Genealogy Chart**, we were treated to a Southern Buffet. Our program was hosted by Cousin **Melissa Ruffner Moore** of Prescott, Arizona. With a tribute to her father, **Budge Ruffner**, organizer of our Illinois and Arizona Reunions, who passed away in 1996, she honored all the cousins who had volunteered their time to produce our four reunions, especially this one on the original Ruffner homestead. A special ovation was given to our chairman, **Doug Ruffner**.

Highlight of the banquet was our visit by "**Dr. Henry Ruffner**" in the person of **Garrett Jeter** of Charleston, West Virginia. Dressed in period attire, he delivered the historic speech that Ruffner gave in 1847 before the Franklin Society and was later published in what is known as the **Ruffner Pamphlet**. As Jeter demonstrated, our ancestor was among the earliest who spelled out the destructive nature of slavery, both morally and economically. (See related article in this issue.) Our evening concluded with remarks by **James Ruffner** of Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan and son of Olive Ruffner, co-author of "Peter Ruffner and His Descendants."

Sunday, June 8, began with the dedication of the **Monument to Peter and Mary (Steinman) Ruffner** at the Ruffner Family Burial Ground on their original homestead in Luray. With **Bob Sheets** officiating, tribute was paid to our ancestors who from that site began the family that was gathered in their memory. He gave special thanks to Cousin **Fred Ruffner** who made the initial contribution that enabled the monument to be erected.

The Monument, shaded by ancient trees planted long ago now marks the first family burial ground in view of the Historic Ruffner House Inn. (See related article in this issue.) Representative members of the various

(continued on page 5)

1997 Ruffner Reunion

(continued from page 4)

branches of the Ruffner Family took part in the unveiling of the monument followed by **Shirley Ann Sheets** of Denver, Colorado, placing a symbolic arrangement of Pine boughs from the East Coast and sheafs of wheat from the West Coast representing the national union of the Ruffner descendants. A dedication sermon was delivered by the **Rev. Paul Mishler** and the benediction by our cousin, **Rev. Dorothea Russell** of Mahomet, Illinois. (See related article in this issue.)

Descending the burial hill, we left the old homestead to attend a **Ruffner Memorial Service** at the **Big Spring Mennonite Church** with Rev. Mishler officiating. We then journeyed out to Arrowhead Lake Park for a grand finale of our reunion at a **Ruffner Family Picnic** hosted by Barbara Kibler and our "local cousins." To the sounds of authentic Shenandoah Valley music, we took part in an old fashioned feast and the memories of a Ruffner family gathering two hundred years ago. Auctioneer Melissa Moore led our traditional family auction to raise funds for the reunion. Bob Sheets announced that **The Ruffner Family Association** had been launched with the creation of an organizing committee to be incorporated by the next Reunion in 1999 at Lancaster, Ohio. Reunion Chairman is **Roberta Kirwin** of Lancaster, Ohio. Closing remarks were by Chairman Doug Ruffner followed by tributes from Fred Ruffner, to the committee and all who made the Luray Reunion a success. We parted in the shadows of the Blue Ridge Mountains as the sun set over the historic Shenandoah Valley with a pledge to keep alive the Family of Ruffner in America.

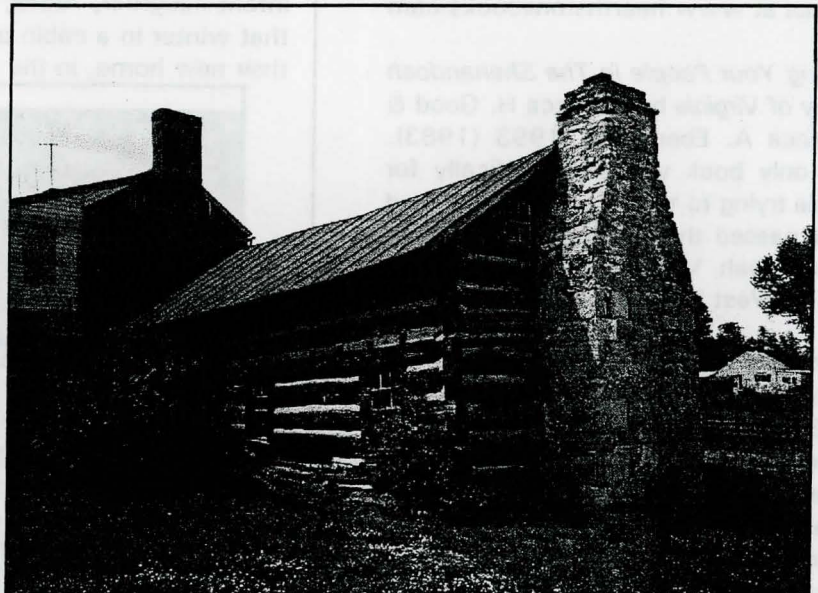
Many of you may have heard about the dramatic events that happened before we all departed Luray. Returning to the Ramada Inn, we met with Tom Weinstein whose family owns the Virginia Oak Tannery and the

Ruffner House B&B. He generously offered to take us on a guided tour of the House but when we arrived we were accosted by the current managers of the Inn with threatening remarks to "leave the property at once." We were told that the police had been called and were on their way. It seems that the Weinstains had long been dealing with this unhappy situation and it erupted during our reunion. Many of you had encountered the rude managers when you had asked to see the house. But for the seriousness of the situation — ala, a Fellini type movie — the comical scene was something we will never forget. Four carloads of Ruffner descendants unloading on the lawn of their ancestors with high anticipation and a preponderance of gray hair, met by two screaming, out-of-control Inn Keepers (needing a good shot of valium) and a patrol car of baffled but amused policemen. The upshot of the encounter is that we left without our tour and the Inn Keepers lost their lease. It is our continued association with the kindness and generosity of the Weinstein Family that is the memory to last longer than any we might have of the "Battle at Ruffner Spring."

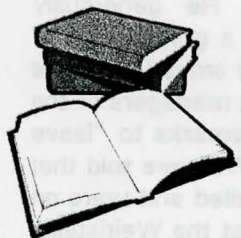
QUERIES

In an effort to assist those seeking their ancestors and for the Association's ongoing research program, the Ruffner Family News publishes this column of queries. In contacting the "seekers" listed below, please let them know where you saw their query. (Note: b=born, m=married, d=died, bur=buried, ca=circa)

Seeking the name of the **Ruffner engineer** who came to Birmingham, AL in latter part of 19th or early 20th century to survey for mines in area of what is now **Ruffner Mountain Nature Center**. Also, would like to hear from others descended from **Lewis - Elizabeth Shrewsbury Ruffner**. Write: Joe Ruffner at 11511 Jade Lane, Huntsville, AL 35803 or e-mail: jruffner@bellsouth.net.



Reuben Ruffner Cabin



BOOKS OF INTEREST

If you didn't purchase a copy of "*A Short History of Page County Virginia*" by Harry M. Strickler at the 1997 Ruffner Reunion, you can contact Brenda Behm at the Page County Heritage Association, 24 East Main Street, Luray, VA 22835; phone (540) 743-9001. The cost of the book is \$37.50 plus postage.

Copies of "*Pioneer Period and Pioneer People of Fairfield County, Ohio*" by C.M.L. Wiseman are scarce. We suggest you contact the Fairfield County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 1470, Lancaster, OH 43130-0570 to see if a copy is obtainable.

The following publications are available through the Hearthstone Bookshop, 5735-A Telegraph Road, Alexandria, VA 22303. Phone: (703) 960-0086 or the Internet at www.hearthstonebooks.com

Finding Your People in The Shenandoah Valley of Virginia by Rebecca H. Good & Rebecca A. Ebert, rev. 1993 (1983). The only book written specifically for people trying to trace families who lived in or passed through Virginia's historic Shenandoah Valley (part of which is now in West Va.). VA-190 \$18.50

A History of the Valley of Virginia by Samuel Kercheval, 1986 Fourth Ed. (1925). The author, a native of the Valley, wrote the first edition of this volume in 1833. The present edition has notes, additions, and corrections by local historian Oren Morton. In Morton's words, this work remains "a most valuable repository of Valley history..." VA-194 \$32.50

WESTWARD HO ON THE RUFFNER TRAIL TO OHIO

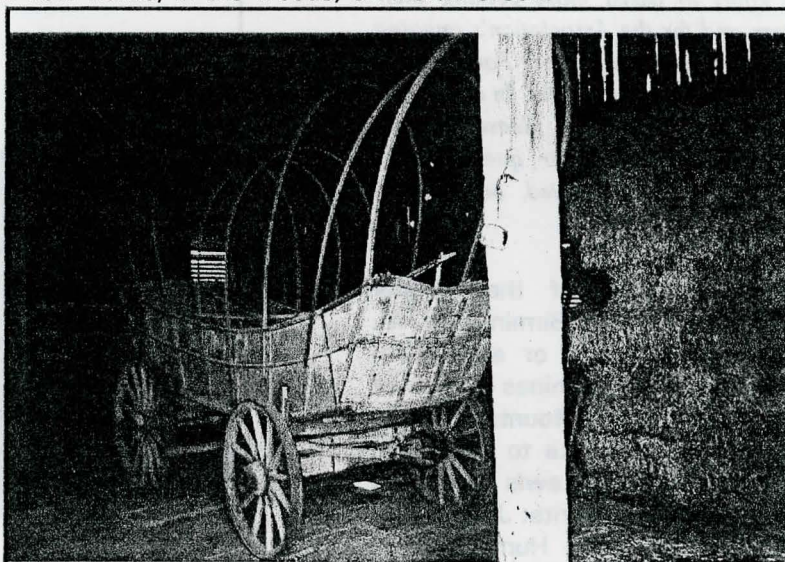
(Through the Ruffner Family reunions - 1995 in Charleston, WV and 1997 in Luray, VA - we have traced the progress of the Peter Ruffner family from their early beginnings in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and the westward trek of his eldest son, Joseph, and his family to the Kanawha country of West Virginia. This begins a series of articles devoted to the further adventures of the family as Emanuel, Peter's youngest son, takes his family westward to Ohio.)

Emanuel Ruffner, forefather of most of the Ohio Ruffners, was born in Shenandoah County, Virginia, now Page County, on March 31, 1757. He grew to be 6 ft., 3 in., a giant in size and strength. He was a teamster in the Revolutionary War. Emanuel married Magdalene Grove of near Luray and they settled near Yager's Spring but moved, about 1785, to the Big Hawksbill, about seven miles south of Luray. Emanuel and Magdalene were blessed with 11 children: Jacob (1781), Barbara (1782), John (1785), Emanuel II, Henry (1789), Anna (1790), Magdalene and Joseph, twins (1796), Elizabeth, Susanna (1801) and Mary Ann (1802).

In 1803, Emanuel traveled to Ohio and purchased 693 acres, 1 mile north of West Rushville in Fairfield County. In 1805, he sold his farm, Locust Grove, on the Big Hawksbill to Ulrich Biedler and returned to Ohio with his wife and 10 of his children by Conestoga wagon (see picture) which served as their shelter while their first cabin was built. The wagon is still preserved in the barn at the Ruffner-Rowles farm near Rushville.

Emanuel became a member of the Pleasant Run Church, which was transported from Virginia to Ohio, in a body, by its founders because of its anti-slavery principles. This Pleasant Run Church was one of the first Baptist churches in Ohio and one of the first of any denomination.

In 1807, he purchased another 202 acres where their second cabin was built. That same year, Barbara Ruffner, his oldest daughter married David Pence in Virginia and came to Ohio on horseback carrying their infant daughter, Annie, resting upon a pillow. Barbara and David spent that winter in a cabin on her father's place and in the spring moved to their new home, in the woods, on Indian Creek.



Emanuel's Conestoga Wagon

THE FAMILY FORUM - Ideas for Discussion

The Peter & Mary Ruffner Homestead in Luray, Virginia

by Robert Newman Sheets

The homestead called "Ruffner Spring" in Luray, Virginia, where Peter and Mary (Steinman) Ruffner settled in 1739, is now the property known as the Virginia Oak Tannery, Inc. It is on this property that homes once built by descendants of Peter & Mary are known as The Ruffner House Bed & Breakfast. The owners of Virginia Oak Tannery, Inc. who lease out the management of the Ruffner House are considering selling off a portion or possibly all of the property. Having met with Tom Weinstein, representing his family, a group of descendants of Peter and Mary Ruffner offered to present possible concepts for the continued preservation and utilization of the "Ruffner Spring" homestead.

It is understood that this property not only has historical significance to the Weinstein Family and the Ruffner descendants but has a broader dimension of interest to the City of Luray, the County of Page and the Commonwealth of Virginia. That wider interest is in the location of the homestead to the core center of Luray. We know that it was the grandson of Peter & Mary, Isaac Ruffner, who gave part of the Ruffner property for the creation of the town of Luray in 1812. So in a larger sense, the property has as much an historical significance to the citizens of Luray and the people of the historic Shenandoah Valley as to the Ruffner descendants.

Physically, the property is strategically located, being just past the center of the town between Broad Street, Peters Ave. and Main Street (originally Peter Street). It is important to note that the site has easy access to the major east-west highway, US-211, between the Shenandoah Valley and Washington, DC. The groups that seem to have special interest in the historic properties would be: 1) The Weinstein Family, 2) The Ruffner Family Association, 3) The Page County Heritage Association, 4) The City Government of Luray, 5) The Public Schools of Page County, 6) The Luray-Page County Chamber of Commerce and 7) the Virginia State Historical Society.

Given the historical connection to Luray and Northern Virginia, as well as the location and accessibility to the site, it is feasible to explore the possibility in developing the lands and facilities as a Living History Farm along with the current use of the Ruffner Houses as a commercial Bed & Breakfast. To facilitate this discussion, I have listed the points supporting such a proposal:

1. Very few communities have in the middle of their town the original homestead of the founding family in an unspoiled natural environment such as the Ruffner Farm owned by the Virginia Oak Tannery, Inc.
2. Its location so close to the core city and with such good highway access makes it ideal for commercialization of the Bed & Breakfast concept.
3. The outbuildings and great barn are facilities that could lend themselves very well to a "living history" farm as an educational experience for students and tourists, as well as all the citizens of Page County.

4. The lands, fields and great meadow could be developed into a natural habitat for fowl and native flora. This would lend itself nicely to the development of a City Park with facilities for farmer's markets, arts and crafts fairs, historic pageants and pioneer reenactments.

5. The Tannery Buildings that currently exist could be developed into an entertainment and museum complex. The large, open spaces lend themselves very well to traveling exhibitions and permanent displays. It could become the major focus of town and county cultural activity.

6. The Historic Ruffner Burial Ground could be further developed and preserved in a manner begun at the 1997 Ruffner Family Reunion.

7. A Page County Visitors Center could be included in the restoration of one of the Tannery facilities. The center and farm could be a big boost to the tourist industry in the area.

8. The Ruffner House, the Weinstein Cultural Center, the Peter Ruffner Farm, the Hawksbill Nature Preserve could all be coordinated as a vital part of the education of all county school children.

9. The Ruffner Family Association could actively participate in the preservation of the Ruffner House, farm buildings and burial ground, not only raising funds among family members, but returning to the Ruffner Museum historic family items. The Association could also sponsor regular events at the site that would be of interest to the community at large as well as the family.

These are just a few points regarding the property that may facilitate some thinking and discussion.

Please send your comments to the Ruffner Family Association, 1675 South Steele Street, Denver, CO 80210 or contact Robert N. Sheets at (303) 733-4935, Email: Rnsheets@aol.com or FAX: 303-733-4935.

McNeely Children Erect Fence at Monument

A beautiful and secure new fence was erected September 27, 1997, to protect the new Ruffner Monument in Luray. The fence was a gift to the Ruffner Family Heritage from Sam McNeely, Jim McNeely and Sandra McNeely Walters. They dedicated it to the memory of their mother Aileen Ruffner McNeely.

After the work party of Sam, Betty, Jim and Judi spent the day removing the temporary fence and installing the new one, they visited some of the sites of our June Reunion. Sam writes, "Afterwards we wanted to take Jim and Judi for a tour of Luray and some of the historic sites. Going through town I saw Frank and Clara Brown outside the Methodist Church, so we stopped and went in with them. They then took us on a short tour of the town. They were so gracious and told us we had 'made their day.' We went to the sites on the south side of town before returning to the Ramada Inn for dinner. We had a special bottle of wine and toasted our heritage in Page County.

There was a wedding in the Ruffner House Bed & Breakfast on Saturday, however we went for a visit and tour on Sunday morning. Sonja was very delightful and charming — seems to be adjusting quite nicely to the task. She shared some horror stories from the end of the 'Beevis & Butthead' regime. We thoroughly enjoyed her and the tour.

In closing let me add that God and our ancestors continued to smile upon us. It was a wonderful Fall day for the work on Saturday. The entire weekend capped off a strong desire and fulfillment of my ambition since the reunion in June. May God Bless us all."

As we all share in the success of the McNeely Fence and the energy from Cousin Sam, we look forward to his serving as chairman of the Ruffner Monuments Project.

—Robert N. Sheets

Project to Preserve Ruffner Cemeteries

During our 1995 Ruffner Reunion in Charleston, West Virginia, we visited the old family burial ground in Malden where some of the most honorable and famous Ruffners are buried. Most of us were shocked at the condition of the little cemetery which is in such a state of neglect that the memory of those interred are not just offended but their visibility as history to the local inhabitants is in serious jeopardy. It was proposed by the cousins in attendance to plan at each reunion to restore or improve the grave sites of our ancestors. Thus, at the 1997 Ruffner Reunion in Luray, Virginia, we began by erecting a monument to Peter and Mary Steinman Ruffner at the old burial ground on their original homestead. Their grave markers, having long since disappeared along with many others due to floods, agriculture and the passage of time, it was our way of investing in grave stones as a vital, visible family record for future generations of Ruffners. As reported in this issue on the events of the 1997 Reunion, the ceremony proved to have a special bonding effect for those in attendance.

It was decided by the Organizing Committee of the newly formed Ruffner Family Association that we would make it a program of the Association to inventory and restore the family burial sites. We are all in debt to our cousins, Sam McNeely and his brother Jim who with their wives, Betty and Judi, returned to Luray this past September and erected a security fence and gate around the Ruffner Monument. The fence was dedicated in memory of their mother, Aileen Ruffner McNeely, by her children: Samuel Hearst McNeely, James Ruffner McNeely and Sandra McNeely Walters. This is a successful beginning to our program and we salute the McNeely children for this demonstration of what is possible. Sam has already contacted the Salines Presbyterian Church in Malden in an effort to see what we might be able to do at the Malden Burial Ground. Your Association will explore the possibility of our restoring that site on our way to the 1999 Reunion in Ohio.

The following is just a sample of some family burial sites, both public and private, that we have visited and are in our inventory. The Stonewall Jackson Cemetery in Lexington, Virginia, burial site of William Henry Ruffner, 1824-1908, first Superintendent of Virginia Public Schools. Near New Metamoras, Ohio, at Center Valley Baptist Church is the grave of Sally Lowery Leith, 1760-1800, the grandmother of Elizabeth Leith Ruffner. In Mason, Illinois, the Leith Cemetery and Mason Cemetery contain graves of the descendants of Elizabeth and her husband Andrew who was buried in the Pleasant Run Cemetery in Ohio. Also near Rushville, Ohio, in the Ruffner-Friend Cemetery is the grave of Emanuel Ruffner, father of the Ohio Ruffners. In the Green Hill Cemetery, Luray, Virginia, are the graves of William & Mary Ruffner Marye. In Charleston, West Virginia, is a monument to Joseph & Elizabeth Ruffner on the site of the original family homestead. The Ruffner Cemetery in Malden claims the graves of David Ruffner and his son Rev. Henry Ruffner, writer of the famous Ruffner Pamphlet.

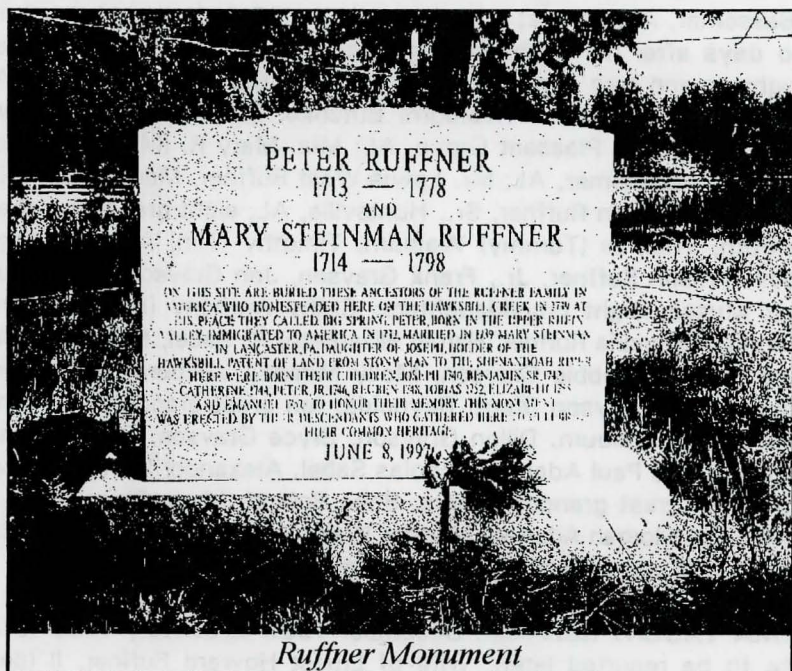
—Robert N. Sheets

Funds Needed for Ruffner Monument

The Ruffner Family Association continues its appeal for additional funds to cover the cost of the Monument erected in Luray, Virginia in the memory of Peter and Mary Steinman Ruffner and their descendants. Considered as the first official project of the Association, the Monument is considered to be the first historical marker erected in the Shenandoah Valley to honor the founders of Luray. The monument cost a total of \$1,766.05 and was beautifully executed by the Heritage Memorials, Inc. of Harrisonburg, Virginia. Those in attendance at the installation and dedication will attest to the beauty and dignity of the work under the hand of their president, Jeanne Rinker and assisted by Heath Johnson and Larry Crawford.

The monument made from Georgia Gray Granite was inscribed: "**Peter Ruffner, 1713-1778 and Mary Steinman Ruffner, 1714-1798. On this site are buried these ancestors of the Ruffner Family in America who homesteaded here on the Hawksbill Creek in 1739 at this place they called "Big Spring." Peter, born in the Upper Rhein Valley, immigrated to America in 1731, married in 1739 Mary Steinman in Lancaster, PA, daughter of Joseph, holder of the Hawksbill Patent of land from Stony Man to the Shenandoah River. Here were born their children, Joseph 1740, Benjamin, Sr. 1742, Catherine 1744, Peter, Jr. 1746, Reuben 1748, Tobias 1752, Elizabeth 1755 and Emanuel 1757. To honor their memory, this monument was erected by their descendants who gathered here to celebrate their common heritage, June 8, 1997.**"

As of this publication, we have raised a total of \$1,013.00 which leaves the need to raise an additional \$753.05 to meet our goal. Checks should be made to the "Ruffner Family Association" with memo marked "Ruffner Monument." Send them to Robert N. Sheets, Ruffner Family Association, 1675 South Steele Street, Denver, CO 80210. For those who have already contributed, we thank you on behalf of all your Ruffner Cousins.



Ruffner Monument

Some Faced Bullets: She Handled Black Widows

(continued from page 2)

The project did win her a small measure of fame. First Life Magazine came calling, and then she was invited to bring a jar of spiders to New York for a radio show.

That was the only time one of her spiders got loose. She was staying with friends in New York when one of them took the lid off the jar and a black widow scurried out.

"There was a bit of a panic."

The spider harmed no one and never was found. Ruffner said neither surprised her -- black widows are not aggressive.

"I had them on my hands many times, and they didn't bite me."

Ruffner's spider-keeping career ended when the department she worked for was moved to St. Louis and she decided to stay in Columbus. After the war she worked as a purchasing agent at DCSC, retiring for health reasons in 1966.

Her expertise with black widows was called upon only once after the war. During construction of Amvet Village, a northeast Columbus subdivision built to meet the need for housing during the postwar boom, a suspicious-looking spider was discovered in the basement of a building under construction.

People who remembered Ruffner's spider project called her to come out and identify it. It was indeed a black widow. She killed it - reluctantly.

Decades have passed since then, and few people remember what Ruffner did during the war or why. And she doesn't bring it up unless asked.

"It was 50 years ago," she said.

All the more reason to tell the story again.

(Editor's Note: Armada's address is: Wesley Glen, 5155 North High Street, Columbus, OH 43214. Phone: (614) 842-8325

BIRTHS

Welcome to the newest Ruffner descendants-



Robert Carter McNeely

Born: December 3, 1997,
Jacksonville, FL

Parents: Lee and Rebecca McNeely
Grandparents: Sam and Betty McNeely

Thomas Walker Troup (desc. Emanuel)

Born: December 27, 1997

Parents: Robert & Pamela Troup



HONORS

Caleb and Doris Ruffner
of Pleasantville, Ohio
received the "Royal

Treatment" when they were named the 1997 Pleasantville Festival King and Queen on August 1, 1997. Caleb (a descendant of Emanuel) has lived his entire life in Pleasantville and has served as mayor and fire chief. Doris has served as the village clerk. She, of course, is better known as the co-author of the Ruffner Family History.

Cynthia Lytle Hunt was selected as Outstanding Young Woman of America for 1997. She is a Lieutenant in the United States Navy Core of Civil Engineers, stationed in Okinawa. Descended from Emanuel, she is the daughter of Sara Ruffner Lytle and the granddaughter of Caleb and Doris Ruffner.

Brian William Neff (descendant of Emanuel) was elected president of the Circleville, Ohio Kiwanis. Brian is a high school English teacher at Circleville High School. He is the son of Barbara (Ruffner) and William Neff of Williamsport, Ohio.

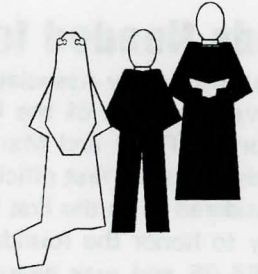
MARRIAGES

Congratulations to newlyweds -

Robert Raymond Troup

(desc. Emanuel) & Pamela M. Smith

Date: July 5, 1997



Nicolle Zink (desc. Emanuel) and Adam Hill

Date: January 3, 1998

Where: University Presbyterian Church, Seattle, WA

Parents: Norma Ruffner Zink & Dr. & Mrs. Wayne Hill

Grandparents: Norman & Marilyn Ruffner, Steilacoom, WA

IN MEMORIAM



VIRGINIA LOUISE RUFFNER, age 83, September 17, 1997, at Mt. Carmel Medical Center, Columbus, Ohio. Preceded in death by husband Roderick (descendant of Emanuel), father William Pearl Schotts, brother Walter H. Schotts. Survived by daughters Roberta (Bill) Kirwin, Doris (Tom) Bryant, Arlene Ruffner, Diane (Tim) Lind, Donna (Rick) Gillilan; son Roger (Linda) Ruffner; 12 grandchildren; 6 great grandchildren. Louise was interred at Forest Rose Cemetery in Lancaster, Ohio.

RACHEL ELIZABETH WILSON RUFFNER, Saturday, December 6, 1997, in Bessemer, Alabama at approximately 11:00 AM, twenty years and two days after her husband Lewis Ruffner. She is survived by four daughters and two sons (Mrs. Sidney R. Anthony, Montgomery, AL; Mrs. Rachel Miranda R. (Walburn) Butchko, Pelham, AL; Mrs. Annie Helon R. Adams, Pleasant Grove, AL; Mrs. Mary R. (Musso Grayson) McDonald, Bessemer, AL; Mr. Lewis West Ruffner, Merritt Island, FL; Mr. Joseph Wilson Ruffner, Sr., Huntsville, AL; eight grandsons: Frank Walburn, Thomas (Tommy) Walburn, Timothy (Tim) Adams, Joseph (Jody) Wilson Ruffner, Jr., Frank Grayson, Jon Grayson, Lee Musso, Matt Musso; eight granddaughters: Cathy Anthony (Boland) Jones, Marion (Alex)andria Ruffner, Harriet Eliza(Beth) R. Sabel, Melissa (Missy) Anne Ruffner, Debbie Grayson, Molly Miranda Walburn Gentry, Amy Adams, Sara Grayson (Kent) Reynolds; ten great grandsons: Brandon Boland, Will Walburn, Dillon Grayson, Bryce Grayson, Grayson Kent, Grady Gentry, Paul Adams, Nicholas Sabel, Alexander Sabel, Cameron Sabel; ten great granddaughters: Shea Boland, Marie Claire Walburn, Kayla Kent, Morgan Adams, Jennifer Walburn, Rachel Elizabeth Musso, Catherine (Katy) Miranda Gentry, Rebekah Grayson, et al.

FLORA VAUGHT RUFFNER, December 1997 or January 1998 (exact date to be reported later), wife of Ernest Howard Ruffner, II (desc. Joseph).

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

We hope you have enjoyed this first issue of the Ruffner Family News. Now that you know who we are and where we are, we hope you will send your family news, articles, items for discussion, pictures, suggestions, comments, or anything you would like to share with your extended Ruffner family to Joan Ruffner Reid, 120 Rita Court, Columbus, OH 43213 or e-mail: Jokereid@aol.com. Please include your name, address and descendency (Peter's son/daughter) with your submission. Deadline for the next issue will be June 1, 1998. Thanks for reading and writing! *Cousin Joan*

PLEASE SIGN UP A FAMILY MEMBER!

**Ruffner Family Association
Membership Application**

*"A people which take no pride in the achievements of remote ancestors,
will never achieve anything to be remembered by remote descendants."*

—T. B. Macauley

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: () _____ Fax: () _____ Email: _____

Descended from (Peter's Son/Daughter) _____

My committee interests are:

- newsletter
- computer program
- 1999 reunion
- publications
- research
- historical collections
- Other _____

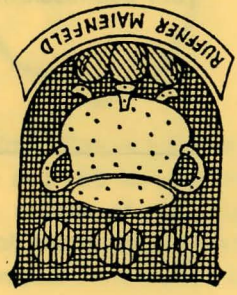
**Mail with your check in the amount of \$15.00 to:
Robert N. Sheets, 1675 S. Steele St., Denver, CO 80210**

THANK YOU!

Mark Your Calendar
for the 1998 Ruffner

Some Funnel Bulletin:

PLEASE SIGN UP A FAMILY MEMBER



Ruffner Family Association
1675 So. Steele Street
Denver, CO 80210

HEARYEA! HEARYEA! HEARYEA!

*The Ruffner
Family News
is here!*

