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### Ruffner Roots and Ramblings, Vol. 2, Issue 3

Ruffner Family Association

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# RUFFNER ROOTS & RAMBLINGS

Volume 2, Issue #3

AUGUST 1999

## SAM McNEELY ELECTED FIRST PRESIDENT AT 1999 REUNION

**Samuel H. "Sam" McNeely** [desc. Joseph] of Luray, Virginia was elected as first president of the Ruffner Family Association (RFA) during the biennial reunion held June 4-6 in Lancaster, Ohio. We are very fortunate to have Sam as our first president. His enthusiastic leadership and dedication will serve the Association well. **CONGRATULATIONS, SAM!**

A resounding thank you to the 180 friends and family members who gathered for the 1999 Ruffner Reunion. They traveled from twenty-two states to honor their ancestors and support the RFA.

Under the capable and loving leadership of **Roberta [Ruffner] Kirwin**, the 1999 reunion began on June 4th with registration and hospitality at the headquarters Best Western Motel. **Donna [Ruffner] Gillilan** prepared an excellent souvenir program. It not only listed the scheduled events, but included a tour guide of Ruffner Family sites in Fairfield County.

Our Hospitality Room was packed with happy cousins as they renewed old and made new friendships. A beautiful exhibit on the Ohio Ruffners had been prepared by **Donna [Ruffner] Gillilan** and her sister **Roberta**. The room was abuzz with **Jack Childers** running documents off his laptop, **Nancy (Ruffner) Shifflett** selling books on the Ruffners of Page County, **Lois Bibler & Charlotte Dittmar**, sisters of Lancaster, OH, showing their family albums and watercolor paintings, and **John & Jayne Dye** selling books on the Ruffners of Fairfield County. (For sale items, see the "RFA Order Form" enclosed with this issue.)

*(See 1999 Reunion Review on page 6)*



**Sam McNeely**

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Message from the President .....	Page 2
Organizing Chairman's Final Report .....	Page 3
First Genealogy Workshop .....	Page 3
Report on the Charter Meeting .....	Page 4
Cemetery Restoration & Monuments .....	Page 5
Booker T. Washington Descendants .....	Page 7
A Civil War Soldier is Memorialized .....	Page 8
Scenes from 1999 Family Reunion .....	Page 10

Following Emanuel Ruffner to Ohio .....	Page 12
The 2001 Reunion .....	Page 12
Search for Family Bibles .....	Page 13
Kanawha History .....	Page 14
Ceremonies of Dedication at Ruffner Homestead .....	Page 16
Family News .....	Page 18
The Book Shelf .....	Page 19

—AND MUCH MORE

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT by Sam McNeely

I am deeply honored to have been elected president of the Association. We all owe a deep debt of gratitude to **Bob and Shirley Sheets** for their efforts in forming and guiding the Association from its infancy to a chartered organization. Without them, we would be a fledgling group, without direction, and no specific goals or objectives. Thankfully, they will remain members of the Board of Directors and continue to handle the finances of the Association. I am happy they will just be a "mouse click" away when I need their guidance to help me through the rough spots of this job.

I would also be remiss if I did not mention my companion for the last 39 years, **my wife Betty**. Without her support and willingness to move to Virginia, I would not be able to undertake my efforts here in Luray at the Homestead, as well as the duties of the Association. I will do my best in both areas to make you proud of your family home and our family Association.

As we continue to grow, there are many issues we must address to insure the progress of our organization. Your Board of Directors will continue to be cognizant of the requests and needs of the individual members. Toward this end, the Board will communicate on a frequent basis and meet annually to conduct the business of the Association. We have tentatively agreed to meet in Salt Lake City, Utah in 2000 to plan our future activities.

What a wonderful reunion week recently concluded in Lancaster, Ohio. First we had the homestead re-dedication in Luray, followed by a ceremony at the tomb of Lord Fairfax in Winchester, Virginia. From there a vehicle caravan made the trek taken by Emanuel Ruffner on his family's journey to Fairfield County, Ohio.

Heartfelt thanks to **Roberta (Ruffner) Kirwin, Donna (Ruffner) Gillilan, the Rowles family, Joan and Ken Reid** and all the others who worked to make the reunion such a success. Each activity was well planned. We will always be grateful to those who "worry about the details" so our families can enjoy themselves and learn more about their heritage.

To see the glow on **Aunt Ginny's** face as she enjoyed the concert by a former pupil was worth the trip, and a once in a lifetime experience.

Being able to meet **Booker T. Washington's granddaughters, Margaret and Edith**, was another highlight that we will long remember. We were delighted and honored that they extended their visit to include the Sunday picnic. Our appreciation to **Joe Ruffner** for his initiative in locating the Washington granddaughters and making arrangements with them to attend our reunion.

**Melissa's** venture into the Northwest Territory was a trip of a lifetime that most of us would love to make, but seldom do. Many thanks to her for sharing this wonderful experience with the gathering.

The dedication of the marker and the picnic at the Rowles farm were the culmination of a wonderful weekend experience for us all. Thanks to all who supported the auction which raised a significant amount of money for preservation of our cemeteries and monuments.

Our next reunion is scheduled for June 2001 in Luray, Virginia. It will give all an opportunity to visit the Ruffner Homestead that was not available at the reunion in 1997. In addition, a Saturday tour of historic Lexington, Virginia is being planned. There is significant Ruffner family history associated with this city and I feel it will greatly enhance our experience.

In closing, I am happy to report that by the time you read these remarks, Betty and I should be permanent residents of Luray. We have purchased a home here, and just as Jim and Judi have made a long term commitment to the ownership of our ancestral home, we are making a commitment to helping them restore and maintain it in a condition that will make us all proud. ■

HAVE A HAPPY AND SAFE SUMMER OF 1999.

*Sam*

## Organizing Chairman's Final Report

This report signals the end of our period of organization and the formal beginning of our Ruffner Family Association as a chartered and incorporated body. Under our Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws signed during the Reunion in Lancaster June 5, 1999, your new Board of Directors was chosen and our first national president elected. My congratulations to president **Sam McNeely** and to those who will serve with him. Our association is in good hands and you all can be proud of those who are dedicated to the purpose and growth of our association and preservation of our family heritage.

I have felt humbled and honored to have served in the capacity as the organization chairman since the decision to form an association at the 97 Reunion in Luray, Virginia. But the title is something I have shared with many hard working cousins of yours who gave of their time and their financial support to make the RFA a reality. When I think back over what has been accomplished in the past two years, I see a family energized by their love for each other and respect for their shared legacy. It is that energy that has produced this fine and professional publication you are now reading. To our cousin **Joan** we give our utmost thanks for establishing a level of high accomplishment. The flag ship activity of Reunion, which was revived by our late cousin **Budge Ruffner** back in 1991, has just concluded in Lancaster under the loving leadership of cousin **Roberta**. The groundwork has also been laid for the publication of a Second Edition of the honored family history, *Peter Ruffner & His Descendants*, by cousin **Shawn** and is now enhanced by the appointment of cousin **Fred Ruffner** as the chairman of the Publications Committee. Research on our Ruffner roots continues at a fast pace and detached cousins all across the country are daily coming back home. But nothing quite equals the joy we all share in the return of Ruffner ownership of the Homestead in Luray. One more reason to respect and love that **McNeely** family.

I write these notes while sitting outside my tent pitched at just below 11,000 feet on a mountain south of the historic Colorado mining town of Leadville. We have been coming to this site for over thirty years on an annual camp-out to get back to the nature of things and clear our minds. Looking at the royal blue sky and the snow capped peaks that are hiding our afternoon shower, I am focused on the field of Blue Columbines which is our state flower—thinking how just two months ago, the tragedy at Columbine High School has tainted its identity forever. How swiftly the forces of nature or the actions of individuals can alter our memories or our attitudes. With all the talk after the massacre about the shallowness of the American family and how we must get back to some basic roots of identity, I can only feel good about what we in the Ruffner Family have created. We have opened the door once again to our shared legacy. With the ability to assemble, to reunion, to publish, to remember and to know, you and I now have the opportunity to preserve for those who shall come after us, the Family of Ruffner. In the face of tragedy we heal; in the face of illness we recover; in the face of loss we remember—so the beauty of the Blue Columbine is forever a symbol of renewal as the "angel of our better nature" and not the memory of some horrendous low point in the human condition.

In the Name of Ruffner, we move forward with our shared best wishes and continued support for President Sam and our family of loving cousins.■

With great affection,

*Bob Sheets*

Organizing Chairman  
1997-99

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### First Genealogy Workshop Held in Lancaster

by Bob Sheets

The day following the reunion, twenty-six heavy-duty researchers met at The Georgian Mansion, headquarters and Museum of the **Fairfield Heritage Association**. Assisted by the generous and helpful **Mary Lou McCandlish**, executive secretary of their Association, we spent the day exchanging information and researching the Ruffner Records of Fairfield County. It was the perfect setting and we all were treated to personalized tours by **Richard Dye** whose contribution to our reunion and Association has endeared him along with his wife **Jayne** to our family. They have joined the Ruffner Family Association so we can look forward to a continuing association with these two knowledgeable and generous persons. **A big thank you to Richard, Mary Lou and the Fairfield Heritage Association.**

Be looking for future announcements of the June 2000 Workshop and Seminar to be held in Salt Lake City at the world famous Family History Center.■

## Report on the Charter Meeting

The Organizing Committee was called to order by Chairman **Bob Sheets** at the Best Western Motel in Lancaster, Ohio, during a breakfast meeting, June 5, 1999. He reported on the past two years of activity and thanked all who played a part in the development of the Association. Membership, which forms the basic support of the Association was 43 for 1997, 59 for 1998 and 70 for 1999 prior to the reunion. With a mailing list over 300, Sheets stressed the need for more memberships in order to cover just the basics such as mailings and supplies. If the organization is to indeed be successful in programming there needs to be an expanded source of income. He hoped that once we are chartered there will be an increase in memberships.

A call for endorsement of the proposed Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws was unanimously accepted and signed by: **Nancy (Ruffner) Shifflett**, Luray, VA; **George Ruffner**, Inola, OK; **Jack Childers**, Fenwick Island, DE; **Samuel H. McNeely**, Luray, VA; **Melissa Ruffner**, Prescott, AZ; **Joan (Ruffner) Reid**, Columbus, OH; **Gary G. Ruffner**, Mason, IL; **Patsy (Reed) Ruffner**, Riverview, FL; **Jane (Munro) Webber**, Broomfield, CO; **Elisabeth (Friedrich) Ruffner**, Prescott, AZ; **Joseph Wilson Ruffner**, Huntsville, AL; **Sara (Ruffner) Lytle**, Seneca, SC; **Frederick Gale Ruffner**, Grosse Pointe Farms, MI; **Shirley Ann Sheets**, Denver, CO; **Roberta (Ruffner) Kirwin**, Lancaster, OH; **Sally (Ruffner) Spangler**, Lorton, VA; **Judi (Woodward) McNeely**, Powell, OH; **Robert Rowles**, Lancaster, OH; **Jane [Ruffner] Lucas**, Winchester, VA and **Robert Newman Sheets**, Denver, CO. They hereafter will be known as the **Charter Members of the Ruffner Family Association**.

With the seating of the Board of Directors, the unanimous election of **Samuel Hearst McNeely** as president followed. Joan Reid reported that the nominating committee felt that the significance of our first president being from Luray and assisting his brother Jim with the Homestead restoration and operations adds to his already noted leadership role in working for the development of the Association. Chairman Sheets spoke to the qualities of generosity and respect for family that Sam brings to the leadership of the Association.

It was announced that the new Board will hold its first Annual Meeting in the Ruffner Barn on the Ruffner-Rowles Farm during the Reunion Picnic the next day. After deciding to have Annual Meetings of the Board, Salt Lake City, Utah was chosen for mid June of 2000 and the Association will sponsor a Research Seminar and Genealogy Workshop at the same time in the Family History Library.

The Board voted to establish the position of **Director**

**Emeritus** for those in our Association who have achieved a high level of success in support of the Association and its programs or have made extended contribution to the historical and genealogical research on the Ruffner Family and their collateral branches. The Board chose **Doris (Laver) Ruffner** and posthumously **Olive (Taylor) Ruffner** and **Lester "Budge" Ruffner**. The certificates to be presented at the banquet that night.

Sam McNeely, as chairman of the Cemetery Restoration Committee reported that following the Reunion a few of our members will be in Charleston/Malden, West Virginia to survey the condition of the Ruffner cemetery there and to meet with Charles T. Jones, President of the Amherst Coal Co. owners of the property. [That meeting with Mr. Jones did take place on June 8th along with Drema Woods of Amherst, local historian Richard Andre and Association members, Sam McNeely, Shirley Sheets, Joe Ruffner, Jane Webber and Bob Sheets. See related article.] A discussion was held on the possibility of contracting with one company for the manufacture of a standard type fencing that can be installed at all the Ruffner Grave Yards. It was agreed to survey the possible companies and inventory those cemeteries in need of fencing. The Board thanked Bob Rowles for beginning the process with the Ruffner-Friend Cemetery.

It was reported that the Genealogy Forms and Letter from Shawn Williams will be passed out at the picnic. A new name for the Second Edition of the Peter Ruffner Books was discussed with "Peter & Mary Ruffner of the Shenandoah Valley" being considered. Fred stressed the importance of doing a first class production of the Second Edition and moving fast to get the forms out and back. As Chairman of the Publications Committee, he will be calling a meeting soon. Joe spoke to the need to do a thorough job in documenting the spouses who married into the Ruffner line. Bob urged folks to attend the Genealogy Workshop on Monday, June 7th at the Fairfield Heritage Museum.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30am with the Chairman congratulating the new Board and President McNeely. ■

**Plans are underway for the second edition and update of *Peter Ruffner & His Descendants*.**



**Look for Genealogy Forms in the mail soon.  
Respond quickly! Don't be left out!  
Shawn Williams, Editor, 2nd Edition**

## Cemetery Restoration and Monument Committee Report

The Cemetery Restoration and Monument Committee met on June 4, 1999, in Lancaster, Ohio. Attendees were **Chairman Sam McNeely, Bob Sheets, Joan Reid, Gary Ruffner, Joe Ruffner, George Ruffner and Bob Rowles.**

The committee agreed that the Association membership should conduct a survey of all cemeteries which contain graves of Ruffner ancestors. A copy of the survey is enclosed with this newsletter and you are urged to complete and return a form for each cemetery of which you have knowledge. This is an important function of our Association. A directory will be compiled from the information gathered from this survey which will benefit all of us and our descendants. Any photos of the cemetery and graves therein will greatly enhance the directory.

We will also begin a survey at a later date of Ruffner family historical markers and monuments currently in existence throughout the United States. A list of potential monument and historical marker sites will also be developed. You are encouraged to submit suggestions for potential sites to the chair of this committee for future action.

One of the greatest undertakings of this committee and the Association is the restoration and maintenance of our known cemeteries and burial sites. Many cemeteries have been allowed to deteriorate for a variety of reasons. It is incumbent upon us, the living, to preserve them for future generations. For those who attended the 1995 Reunion in Charleston, West Virginia, there is no better example than the cemetery near Malden which contains the remains of David Ruffner, his sons Lewis and Henry, among others. This cemetery is in deplorable condition and in need of restoration. On Tuesday, June 8th, several members of the committee and "Honorary Ruffner" Richard Andre met with representatives of Amherst Industries, Inc., current owners of the property, concerning improvements to this historic site. Mr. Charlie Jones, chairman of the board, and Drema Woods, the corporate secretary, pledged their support in restoring the cemetery. This site will receive top priority from the committee to insure that it is restored to a condition of which our membership may be proud.

Another issue concerns a type of enclosure for our cemeteries and burial sites. We should not erect fencing that would detract from the historical markers contained within their confines. Past experience has indicated that antique wrought iron, similar to that seen at many older cemeteries, is almost cost prohibitive in today's market. We have asked Robert Ruffner, whose business is preservation of historical homes, to research alternative fencing which could become a standard for future projects undertaken by the committee.

Finally, the committee feels that an ongoing fund raising campaign is necessary to finance the projects described above. The auction at our recent reunion raised a significant amount of money toward our efforts. We will continue to be creative in our attempt to obtain sufficient funding for the undertaking of this work. Hopefully without the necessity of loans which have been the cornerstone of recent monument and marker erections. **Remember—we will not have a future if we do not preserve our past.■**

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS Ruffner Family Association

### Samuel H. McNeely, President Luray, Virginia

Jack Childers . . . . . Fenwick Island, DE  
Roberta [Ruffner] Kirwin . . Lancaster, OH  
Jane [Ruffner] Lucas . . . Winchester, VA  
Sara [Ruffner] Lytle . . . . . Seneca, SC  
Judith [Woodward] McNeely . Powell, OH  
Joan [Ruffner] Reid . . . . . Columbus, OH  
Robert Rowles . . . . . Lancaster, OH  
Elisabeth [Friedrich] Ruffner Prescott, AZ  
Fred Ruffner . . . . . Grosse Point Farms, MI  
Gary Ruffner . . . . . Mason, IL  
George Ruffner . . . . . Inola, OK  
Joseph Wilson Ruffner . . . Huntsville, AL  
Melissa Ruffner . . . . . Prescott, AZ  
Patsy [Reed] Ruffner . . . . Riverview, FL  
Robert Newman Sheets . . . . Denver, CO  
Shirley Ann Sheets . . . . . Denver, CO  
Nancy [Ruffner] Shifflett . . . . Luray, VA  
Sally [Ruffner] Spangler . . . . Lorton, VA  
Jane [Munro] Webber . . Broomfield, CO

### Ruffner Roots & Ramblings

is published by

*The Ruffner Family Association*

Chartered and incorporated in 1999 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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**Robert Newman Sheets**

## 1999 Reunion Review

*(continued from page 1)*

Saturday dawned with the RFA Organizing Committee holding a breakfast meeting. It was to be a day of tours. **Sara [Ruffner] Lytle** provided expert assistance to Roberta in the location of historic Ruffner sites to visit. As the buses rolled through the beautiful green countryside of Fairfield County, **Karen Smith**, our morning guide, and **Richard Troup**, our afternoon guide, provided a narrative on sites of interest. The **Mary Ruffner Covered Bridge**, built in 1869 and named for Emanuel's youngest daughter; the **Harmon House**, built in 1802, one of the oldest homes in Fairfield County, presently occupied by **Howard & Dixie Smith** (great-granddaughter of Rebecca [Ruffner] Harmon; an existing portion of the **Zane's Trace** on the Harmon property; **Pleasant Hill U.M. Church**; **Pleasant Run Baptist Church**; the **Pleasant Run Cemetery**; the **Ruffner-Stevenson Cemetery**, and **Caleb Ruffner's home** were among the highlights.

That evening before the banquet there was a reception and surprise 95th Birthday celebration for **Virginia Rigg** from Denver. Cousin Virginia has taught piano for over 80 years and one of her former pupils, **David Schrader** of Chicago, was there to serenade her playing a Mozart Sonata on his Viennese Piano. She shared her birthday party with **Edith Johnson** (see special mention).

We were honored with a grace delivered by **Sam McNeely**. Following a delicious midwest buffet, Emcee **Rick Gillilan** introduced **Bob Sheets** for some business of the Association. Before the backdrop of an 1849 historic American Garrison Flag that once flew over the Presidio of San Francisco during the Gold Rush of '49, Bob introduced **Sam McNeely** as our first elected president under the new Charter signed that day officially incorporating the Ruffner Family Association. Presentations were made for those elected as Director's Emeritus to: **Doris [Laver] Ruffner** and posthumously to **Olive [Taylor] Ruffner**; co-editors of the respected *Peter Ruffner & His Descendants* and posthumously to **Lester "Budge" Ruffner** who began the modern series of Ruffner Reunions in 1991.

On behalf of the Association, Bob presented Certificates of Appreciation and Commendation to **Bob & Marge Rowles** for their Restoration and Preservation of the Ruffner-Rowles Farm and the Ruffner-Friend Cemetery all on the historic Emanuel Ruffner Homestead in Fairfield County; and to **Jim and Judi McNeely** for their recent purchase of the Peter & Mary [Steinman] Ruffner Homestead in Luray, Virginia in order to return it to Ruffner ownership after 159 years.

For her outstanding chairmanship of the 1999 Reunion, the Association presented to **Roberta [Ruffner]**

**Kirwin** a framed picture of the Ruffner-Rowles Farm. The photograph, taken by **Barbara [Ruffner] Neff**, represents the gratitude of many appreciative cousins.

The Chairman then introduced our two honored guests at the banquet: the **granddaughters of Booker T. Washington, Edith Washington Johnson and Margaret Washington Clifford**. Edith, whose 75th Birthday we had just celebrated, lives in Wilberforce, Ohio and Margaret lives in Atlanta. They not only graced us with their presence but shared with us memories of their grandfather who as an eleven year old worked in the home of Gen. Lewis & Viola Ruffner in Malden, West Virginia. Having been born into slavery in Virginia, his family took him to the Kanawha Valley following the end of the Civil War and their emancipation. In his autobiography, *Up From Slavery*, he gives great credit to Viola Ruffner for instilling in him the rewards of hard work, the value of good books and the pursuit of learning. A standing ovation welcomed these two beautiful ladies into the Ruffner Family Circle. **Ernest Ruffner** of Cincinnati presented to each of them a framed copy of a letter written by Booker to Viola. Bob thanked cousin **Joe Ruffner** for being the catalyst in bringing the Washington sisters to us. A call was made to plan in the future a joint reunion between the Washington Family and the Ruffner Family to be at the esteemed Tuskegee University.

**Rick Gillilan** introduced our banquet featured presentation: **Gregg Pittenger** who in his Civil War garb told us of the "Great Locomotive Chase" and the involvement of Ruffner ancestor Marion Ross who lost his life in that daring attempt to commandeer the Confederate Locomotive "The General." As a Sergeant Major in the Ohio Infantry, he joined Andrew's Raiders, whose attempt was foiled at Big Shanty, Georgia and on June 16, 1862, Ross and his comrades were hanged. He was the son of Levi Ross & Mary Ruffner. She was the daughter of Benjamin II and Anna Coffman of Fairfield County.

The evening concluded with an exciting and informative tour to the Yukon Gold Rush in 1897 and the exploits of Julius Ruffner as told in a slide show by cousin **Melissa Ruffner** of Prescott, Arizona. She had made the trip to Atlin, British Columbia in 1998 to learn more about the history of the last great gold rush and the role Julius played in it. Noted lecturer and historian, Melissa learned her art from her literary and yarn-master father, the late Budge Ruffner. Julius was a great grandson of Joseph, son of Peter & Mary [Steinman] Ruffner.

Sunday, June 6th, we all gathered at the Ruffner-Friend Burial Ground on Coonpath Road near West Rushville. In a scene that repeated what may have been

*(continued on page 7)*

## 1999 Reunion Review

*(continued from page 6)*

the lot of our ancestors so many times before, we walked up the little hill from the Ruffner-Rowles farm to honor the memory of those buried there. In this hallowed ground where the first burial of a Ruffner took place in "The Great Northwest Territory," we dedicated a new monument and historical marker. Unveiling the boulder and bronze plaque was our youngest Ruffner in attendance, two year old **Matthew**, son of **Michael Ruffner & Margaret Alessi** of Arlington, Virginia and grandson of **James & Trena Ruffner**. Matthew's fifth great grandfather is Emanuel Ruffner, buried in the cemetery forty-two years after his son Henry was buried there at the age of 17.

Following the traditional ceremony, we walked back across the road to the farm for food and fellowship. Roberta thanked everyone who helped her on the reunion and especially **Marge & Bob Rowles** for hosting such a large gathering and opening all the historic structures for their cousins to enjoy. Before the food tent was opened, many took the walking tour of the farm with an informative guide put together by **Barbara Rowles**. The highlight was the ancient Conestoga Wagon that had been moved from the barn to the picnic area. This historic wagon helped move the family from Virginia in 1805 and transported their goods to the eastern markets. Another beautifully restored building was the cabin built by Emanuel Ruffner as his second home.

After a sumptuous picnic feast (thanks to the local KFC and all the generous cousins who provided covered dishes), the biennial Ruffner Auction took place under the big elm trees with **Melissa Ruffner** managing and **Richard Troup** auctioning. Our special thanks to this talented duo and all the Ruffner cousins who donated items to raise money for the Cemetery Restoration and Monument Committee.

The picnic and reunion drew to a close as all the Ruffner cousins gathered around the Conestoga Wagon for a group photograph. **As we posed in this beautiful spot, surrounded by family history, it was easy to smile and feel blessed by the family ties that bind our hearts in love.** ■

### 1999 Ruffner Reunion Group Photo

An 8x10 color print of this official photo is available for \$10 (includes postage)  
Please send your check or money order to:  
Garry's Studio, 2473 E. Main Street,  
Lancaster, OH 43130

## Booker T. Washington Descendants Honored Guests at 1999 Reunion

**by Bob Sheets**

During ceremonies at our Reunion Banquet in Lancaster on June 5th, the granddaughters of Booker T. Washington presented to the Ruffner Family Association Library a copy they autographed of his classic autobiography, "Up From Slavery." Margaret Washington Clifford of Atlanta and Edith Washington Johnson of Wilberforce, Ohio attended the Reunion as our honored guests. Their attendance brought an enthusiastic response from our cousins, many of whom share the common childhood story, passed down through our families of the relationship between eleven year old Booker T. (1858-1915) with Lewis (1797-1883) and Viola (Knapp) Ruffner (d.1903) of Malden, West Virginia. His generous reflection in his autobiography of that relationship made it a special and emotional reunion of the Ruffner and Washington descendants.

Margaret and Edith are both graduates of Tuskegee University founded by their grandfather in 1881. Margaret was an educator in the California Public Schools prior to a teaching assignment at Atlanta University from which she retired in 1986. She is the widow of the late Dr. Paul I. Clifford, the mother of three children and seven grandchildren.

Edith is retired from her alma mater, Central State University of Ohio where she served as Director of Admissions, Associate Dean of Students and Coordinator of Counseling. She is the widow of the late Dr. Robert B. Johnson, mother of two sons and one granddaughter.

Following their attendance at the reunion, they sent us the following note:

**"Dear Ruffner Family,**

***We have not stopped talking about the wonderful reception we received from you at your recent Family Reunion in Ohio. We are deeply grateful for your kindness. It was great to make this connection after 128 years. Surely this was an historic occasion that pleases B.T.W. [Booker T. Washington] and Viola [Ruffner]. We look forward to seeing and hearing from you again.***

***Our sincere best wishes,  
Margaret and Edith"***

## A Civil War soldier is memorialized: Aaron Thomas McNaghten

by Joan [Ruffner] Reid

*"The world will never have lasting peace so long as men reserve for war the finest human qualities. Peace, no less than war, requires idealism and self-sacrifice and a righteous and dynamic faith."*  
—John Foster Dulles

Aaron Thomas McNaghten surely embodied all the qualities cited by Mr. Dulles. In what was to be the last letter to his beloved family in Ohio, dated July 8, 1863, Aaron wrote: *"This morning I will attempt to address you probably for the last time; and in so doing it is a pleasure to know that if it is the last, I lost my life in helping to defend a Government which has protected you and me since our existence and hope it may yet stand the storm and be handed down to succeeding generations of men for ages yet to come. Another reason why I write this is because on tomorrow the Great Battle is to take place and there is no telling who is to be numbered among the dead and if I should be one of the remembered, I wish you to know how I feel about meeting death in this critical hour. All I have to say, I have no fears as regards to my eternal destination as I believe God does all things well and he will take care of me in the best hours of death. When I go into this battle my trust will be in the God who directs and makes all battles and my last hope will be of meeting those loved ones at home in a better country where wars are not known and friends never part; and I make one more request that is to not mourn after me for it is God's work that has been fulfilled and no one should murmur at his doings or teachings."*

Born in 1838<sup>1</sup>, he was the first child of David Young McNaghten and Deborah Ashbrook. Aaron worked on his father's farm, attended and taught school until the spring of 1861, when he joined the Union forces as a private in Co. F, 17th O.V.I. On October 11, 1861, Aaron re-enlisted for three years in Co. D, 62nd Regiment, Ohio Infantry at Somerset, Fairfield County, Ohio. He became the first or orderly sergeant of the company. His enlistment record indicates that he was 23 years of age, 5 feet 10 1/8 inches tall with a fair complexion, blue eyes and black hair.

Unfortunately, Aaron's fateful premonition in his letter of July 8, 1863, came to pass. He was reported among the killed and missing at the battle of Fort Wagner on Morris Island, South Carolina on July 18, 1863. His body was never recovered and his final wish to be buried in the Free Mason Order could not take place.

Without a gravesite, the memory of Aaron, would have faded more and more over the years had it not been for one of life's ironies. His Civil War journal was given to historian Warren Motts, founder of Motts Military Museum in Groveport, Ohio, 45 years ago. It became the first item in a lifelong collection now on display at the museum. Motts never forgot the first piece of memorabilia he received, nor the man who wrote it. Through the help of the Operation Flag Committee, chaired by Franklin County (OH) Auditor Joe Testa, a tombstone [see picture on page 9] in memory of Aaron was erected at the Pleasant Run Primitive Baptist Church Cemetery on Coonpath Road, Fairfield County, Ohio.

Exactly 136 years to the day, June 18, 1999, Aaron received his final wish. With more than 30 of his descendants and their families assembled, a memorial dedication was held at the Pleasant Run Cemetery. A Masonic graveside service was conducted. Nine military and veterans groups provided a Color Guard for the ceremony with a 21-gun salute from the American Vets and Vietnam Veterans of America. Doug Weakley, Warrant Officer (Ret) U.S. Army closed the service with the playing of Taps. Roberta (Ruffner) Kirwin, whose great-grandmother was Aaron's first cousin, attended the ceremony on behalf of her own family and the Ruffner Family Association. She reports it was a beautiful and moving experience. The printed program, which included presentations by Central Ohio dignitaries and clergy, attests to the dignity of the service.

Eleanor Wilson Shonting, who has been researching the history of the McNaghten family for 20 years, provided the text for a beautiful Memorial Dedication pamphlet. It includes the life story of Aaron, his last letters and military record.

*The Columbus Dispatch* printed a story in their Metro section on July 17, entitled "Event honors memory of Union soldier" and the *Lancaster Eagle-Gazette* featured a front page story on July 19 entitled "Final wishes" by their reporter, Karen Adler, who attended the ceremony.

(continued on page 9)

<sup>1</sup>Although the memorial is engraved 1840, Aaron's correct birth date was 1838.

## A Civil War soldier is memorialized (continued from page 8)



I know all the Ruffner cousins will join me in expressing appreciation to Warren Motts, Joe Testa, Eleanor Shonting, and all the other individuals and groups who extended this ultimate homage to Aaron Thomas McNaghten.

### Aaron Thomas McNaghten's family lineage:

#### Great-great grandparents:

Neal McNaghten b. ca 1720 in North Ireland; d. Nov. 8, 1777 in York County, PA; emigrated to America prior to 1740; married Elizabeth\_\_\_\_, 1740. Children: Elizabeth, Marjory (Mary), Sarah, Margaret, Thomas and John.

**Great grandparents:** John McNaghten b. ca 1754 in PA; d. ca 1817 in Fairfield Co., Ohio; married Jane Lowry after her escape and redemption from the Indians. They moved to Ohio in 1803 and settled two miles north-east of Pleasantville in what was known as the Elm Flats. There were 8 children:

John, Thomas, James, Neal, Alexander, Mary, Jane and Elizabeth.

**Grandparents:** Thomas McNaghten (1787-1863) and Rebecca Young (1783-1831), daughter of David Young, a Revolutionary War soldier, and Nancy Cruse. Thomas, a farmer by trade, was distinguished for his integrity and other good qualities. He was a life long member of the Pleasant Run Baptist Church. Thomas and Rebecca had 7 children: Jane, Mary, Araba, David (Aaron's father), Noah, Owen and John S. Wife #2 was Mary Spitler (1801-1834). They had one child: Hiram. Wife #3 was Mary Grove (1801-1866) and they had 6 children: Cynthia, Rebecca, Harrison, Thomas J., James M. and Tunis.

#### Aaron Thomas McNaghten's connection to Emanuel Ruffner family:

His Uncle Owen [1824-1885] married Susan Baker [1831-1904], Emanuel's granddaughter; Uncle Noah [1820-1886] married Maria Ashbrook [1828-1910], Emanuel's great-granddaughter; Uncle Thomas J. [1839-1901] married Alma Ashbrook [1849-1924], Emanuel's great-granddaughter and his Uncle Hiram's daughter, Almeda McNaghten [1858-1942], married William Stuart Ruffner [1855-1925], great grandson of Emanuel.

There are no doubt other connections to the Ruffner family. Sources for this family history were McNaghten family history notes (1995) and *Pioneer Period and Pioneer People of Fairfield Co., Ohio* by C.M.L. Wiseman (1901). As Mr. Wiseman stated in his book—

"It is surprising to learn how the old families are locked together by marriage.....Peters, Stevensons, Rebers, Ruffners, Leists, Allens, Ashbrooks, Claypools and Shaws are bound together like an endless chain."■

### How do you live your dash?

*I read of a man who stood to speak  
At the funeral of a friend.  
He referred to the dates on his tombstone  
From the beginning...to the end.  
He noted that first came his date of birth  
And spoke the following date with tears,  
But he said what mattered most of all  
Was the dash between those years.*

*For that dash represents all the time  
That he spent alive on earth...  
And now only those who loved him  
Know what that little line is worth.  
For it matters not, how much we own;  
The cars...the house...the cash,  
What matters is how we live and love  
And how we spend our dash.*

*So think about this long and hard...  
Are there things you'd like to change?  
That can still be rearranged.  
If we could just slow down enough  
To consider what's true and real,  
And always try to understand  
The way other people feel.*

*And be less quick to anger,  
And show appreciation more  
And love the people in our lives  
Like we've never loved before.  
If we treat each other with respect,  
And more often wear a smile...  
Remembering that this special dash  
Might only last a little while.*

*So when your eulogy's being read  
With your life's actions to rehash...  
Would you be proud of the things they  
say About how you spent your dash?*

—Author Unknown

## SCENES FROM THE 1999 RUFFNER FAMILY REUNION



**Roberta Kirwin, 1999 Reunion Chair, and Joan Reid [registration] welcome cousins to the Best Western in Lancaster.**



**Hospitality Room [John Dye of Fairfield Heritage Assn. in foreground]**



**Marge Rowles and her granddaughter lay flowers at Emanuel's grave**



**Ruffner Roots & Ramblings**

***A Celebration of Family***

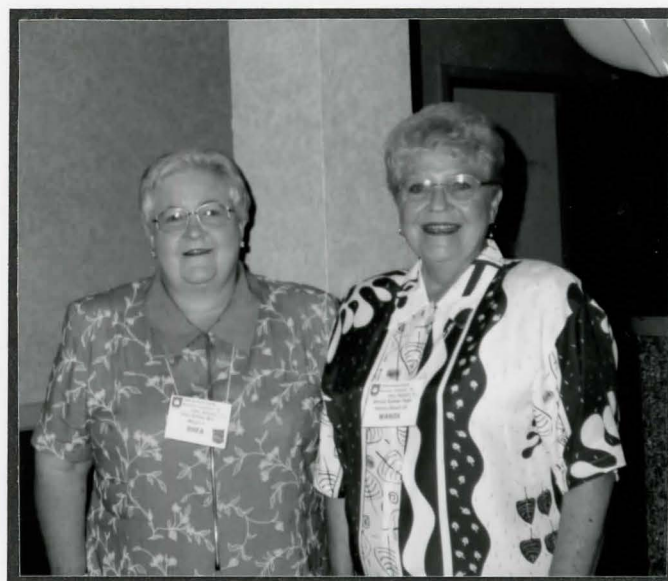
## LANCASTER, OHIO - JUNE 4-6



Presentation to Margaret and Edith of a framed letter written by their grandfather, Booker T. Washington to Viola Ruffner. [Left to right: Bob Sheets, Margaret Washington Clifford, Edith Washington Johnson and Ernest Ruffner]



The Ruffner-Rowles House [1844]



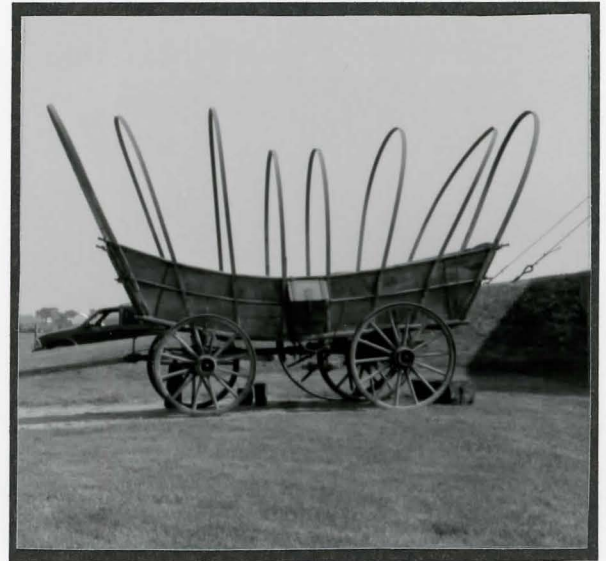
Sisters Rhea [Ruffner] Witt of Macon, IL & Wanda [Ruffner] Pugh of Solana Beach, CA have attended all the reunions since 1991

## Following Emanuel Ruffner to Ohio by Bob Sheets

In 1805, when Emanuel Ruffner moved his family from their home on the Hawksbill Creek in the Shenandoah Valley to the Northwest Territory called Ohio, it took twenty-seven days. This year a car-caravan of modern day Ruffner pioneers retraced that same route and it only took ten hours. Following the dedication ceremonies at the Homestead in Luray, twelve cars left the old pioneer tree lined road that passed the Ruffner Monument in the ancient burial ground and headed north to Winchester, Virginia. Greeting us there in her hometown was cousin **Jane Lucas** who graciously arranged for representatives of the city and historical society to meet us as well as press coverage. We held a ceremony at the tomb of Lord Thomas Fairfax at Christ Episcopal Church. Assisting cousin Jane in the placing of a floral arrangement at the tomb were **Kylie and Jacob Ruffner** of Mason, Illinois. It was Lord Fairfax who first owned the land sold to Mary Steinman's father Joseph and as a part of her dowry secured the Homestead for Peter & Mary on the Hawksbill in the Shenandoah Valley. Peter would also purchase much additional land from Lord Fairfax.

Leaving beautiful and historic Winchester, we drove north to intercept highway US-40 which follows much of the original wagon road known as the National Road or Pike. The road, commissioned by Congress with the law signed by Pres. Jefferson, was first called the Cumberland Road. Our route took us from Cumberland, Maryland, through Pennsylvania, across the Ohio River to Zanesville, Ohio. The original road continued on to Richmond, Indiana ending at Vandalia, Illinois, first capitol of Illinois and famous for a man named Lincoln. We though, turned south at Zanesville and followed the original Zane's Trace that

took us to Lancaster as it did Emanuel and his family 194 years earlier. With our Ruffner identity banners on each car, made for us by Cousin Jane Lucas, we pulled up to the Reunion Headquarters greeted by Cousin Roberta and a big "Welcome Ruffner Reunion" sign on the motel marquee. We got to take showers. Emanuel and his family had to build a cabin in which to live. We paid homage to their resolve.■



**Emanuel's Conestoga Wagon**



**Jane Lucas, assisted by Kylie and Jacob Ruffner, placed flowers at Lord Thomas Fairfax's tomb.**

## LURAY SITE OF REUNION 2001

The Board of Directors has selected the Ruffner Homestead in Luray, Virginia following an overwhelming response of our members to return there since the Homestead is back in Ruffner ownership after 159 years. Sam McNeely convened the new Board for their first official meeting held in the Ruffner Barn on the Ruffner-Rowles Farm during the Reunion Picnic, June 6th. It was further decided that the Reunion will be more toward the middle of June to accommodate those families whose children are still in school. Because one of the considered sites was Lexington, Virginia and the campus of Washington & Lee University where Dr. Henry Ruffner was an early president and his son William served on the faculty, it was decided that one day out of the reunion will be spent there. Those interested in serving on the planning committee are asked to contact Sam McNeely. A chairman will be announced soon.■

## Search for Lewis Ruffner Bible and Other Family Bibles

by Joe Ruffner

In his 1917 publication entitled "Genealogical Notes of the Miller—Quarrier—Shrewsbury—Dickinson—Dickenson Families...", D.C. Gallaher, the author, makes the following statement:

"—DESCENDANTS OF LEWIS AND ELIZABETH SHREWSBURY RUFFNER—Family Record from the old Lewis Ruffner Bible extracts supplied by Joel S. Ruffner, Jan 1st, 1894, to Ernest H. Ruffner and by him to D.C. Gallaher."

This statement indicates the existence of a Family Bible which belonged to Lewis Ruffner [1797-1883]. The mention of extracts being supplied by Joel S. (Shrewsbury) Ruffner to Ernest H. (Howard) Ruffner leads me to believe; 1) this Bible possibly still exists somewhere in one or the other of these two family branches; and, 2) it contains listings of births, deaths, marriages, etc.

I would like to determine its current location and, hopefully, obtain a copy of any listing of family information it may contain. The discovery of its present existence and location would be invaluable to the descendants of the entire Ruffner Family. If you know of its whereabouts, please let me know.

My son possesses the 1870 Bible of Lewis Ruffner, Jr. [1837-1910], who was the son of Lewis and Elizabeth A.D. Shrewsbury Ruffner. I do not believe this is the Bible mentioned by Gallaher. Therefore, this search. I have copied the listings of births, deaths, marriages, and children from this Bible. This information will be made available to anyone who wants a copy.

In respect to other Family Bibles, I would like to compile a list of all the Family Bibles which exist in various branches of the Ruffner Family. Any information you can send me would be greatly appreciated. Please include the original owner's name, date of Bible's publication, branch of the family it represents, its present location (who has possession?), a brief description indicating the information it contains regarding births, deaths, marriages, and the inclusive dates it covers (from / to), etc. A complete copy of any listings it contains would be appreciated if available (handwritten, photocopied, typed, or computer file).

Please send all information/comments/questions to:

**JOE W. RUFFNER, 11511 JADE LANE, HUNTSVILLE, AL 35803**

**Phone: (256) 882-6645; E-mail: jruffner@bellsouth.net**

**Thank you!**

### DO YOU HAVE A QUERY?

Ruffner Roots & Ramblings will publish it. Please include all possible information, e.g., person's name, parents' names, spouse's name, known birth, marriage and death dates. Include your name, mailing and e-mail addresses.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

**CHILDERS/CHILDRESS FAMILY ASSOCIATION  
1999 ANNUAL MEETING  
FRANKFORT, KY  
OCTOBER 7-10**

**PLACE: HOLIDAY INN, CAPITOL PLAZA  
405 Wilkinson Blvd., Frankfort, KY 40601  
Telephone: (502) 875-7147**

**RATE: \$65 per room until September 8, 1999**

**Note: No rooms will be held for us beyond that date.**

**Airport Transportation:** If you plan to fly to the meeting, you will land at Lexington. The distance to the hotel is 19 miles. The hotel does not provide complimentary shuttle service. I will be happy to send transportation for anyone who will write and advise of their arrival date and time. You will be returned to the airport on Sunday to meet your flight.

**Banquet:** The banquet is scheduled for Saturday evening, October 9th at the headquarters hotel.

**Blue Licks Dedication:** Funds have been allocated for a coach or coaches to transport us to Blue Licks. Please write to me by September 8th if you plan to attend the dedication so that a proper size coach or coaches can be reserved.

**GARLAND & LEDA CHILDRESS** of Louisville, KY will be our hosts for the 1999 meeting. Their address is: 4105 River Oaks Lane, Louisville, KY 40241. Telephone: (502) 425-4334. Please contact them with your plans to attend the meeting, for arrangements to be met at the airport and for transportation to the Blue Lick Dedication.

**General Information:** if you have never attended a Childers/Childress Family Association meeting, they are work sessions for researchers who are interested in their ancestry. All attending members bring their family histories, books, documents, computers, programs and any other data they may have on the Childers/Childress and related lines. This is a national meeting. You do not have to be a member to attend. All Childers/Childress and allied lines are welcome.

**Jack Childers, RD 3 Box 480, 780 Ocean Highway, Fenwick Island DE 19944-9345  
Phone: 302/539-9366 (day); 302/539-2955 (eve)  
Fax: 302/539-1285 / E-mail: Childers@dca.net**

## HISTORY OF THE RUFFNER FAMILY OF KANAWHA by Charles Hedrick (3rd in a Series)

A sketch of Dr. Henry Ruffner from the *Charleston Gazette*, 1884.

Having finished a sketch of Colonel David Ruffner, and endeavored to portray his character as a moral hero, I now come to his oldest son, the late Dr. Henry Ruffner, the beauty of whose character has never been excelled in Kanawha Valley. And I can only regret that with the scant material to which I have had access, I shall be confined to a very brief notice of the life and works of this eminently learned and good man, the best part of whose life was spent away from the Valley, and of whom even the oldest citizens know so little.

Dr. Henry Ruffner was brought up to labor on his father's farm at the salt works, just below Malden, receiving, as a boy, a common education. When near 20 years of age, his father observing his love for literature and fondness for books, sent him to an Academy at Lewisburg, Greenbrier County. This Academy was kept by Rev. Dr. McElheny, a Presbyterian Minister, and at that time the most successful teacher of youth in any of the western parts of the State of Virginia. While at this institution his mind took a religious turn and he joined the Presbyterian Church, of which he was ever a firm, consistent and devout member. He then determined to prepare himself for, and to enter the ministry. From Lewisburg he went to Washington College at Lexington, VA. After completing the usual course of college studies and graduating from that institution, he spent two years in the study of divinity; and being amply armed for the work, he undertook the duties and assumed the responsibilities of a minister in the church. He commenced preaching, and for some time preached the gospel with ability and much acceptance in Kanawha County. Indeed, he is accorded the credit of preaching the first Presbyterian sermon ever delivered in Charleston or Kanawha County, and organized the first Presbyterian congregation ever organized therein.

Now, here the writer will make an excursion into a field of controversy merely as a curious observer.

The controversy is between the two Presbyterian bodies, or congregations now existing in Charleston. For divers reasons the primitive congregation has become divided; one portion adhering to the Northern General Assembly, and the other portion to the Southern General Assembly, and to the Presbyteries which belong to them respectively. Now, only one church of that persuasion was ever organized in Charleston by Dr. Ruffner, and each of the two contending bodies claim that it is the true successor to the parent church organized by him. One is denominated "The First Presbyterian Church of Charleston," and in proof of its legitimacy claims to hold

the archives of the original congregation, and cites a record alleged to be in Dr. Ruffner's own alleged handwriting in these words:

"Charleston, Kanawha Co., March 14, 1819. On this day, Rev. Henry Ruffner attended at the Academy according to appointment, for the purpose of constituting a Church to be in connection with and under the care of the Lexington Presbytery and then Synod of Virginia. Upon invitation given a number of persons presented themselves as candidates for membership; and an election being held for two persons to serve as ruling Elders. Samuel Beaumont and Thomas Law, who had previously been members of the Church of Christ, were chosen, and thereupon ordained to the office of ruling Elder in the congregation. The aforesaid Elders and the officiating minister having convened the session, several persons were upon examination received into the Church."

The other body or congregation is denominated "The Kanawha Presbyterian Church of Charleston," and allege that the Church was founded in the early part of this century. That the precise date is lost. And they assert that "The years 1815 or '16 (*sic*) are the accredited period," and claim that it was the "First Presbyterian Church planted in this Valley, the parent church to all that have taken root here," and "That the Rev. Henry Ruffner, D.D., L.L.D., a native of the town first preached here and probably (*sic*) organized the Church." The assertion that Dr. Ruffner was a native of the town is a mistake, as we have already seen.

The body does not claim to hold any of the original records respecting the organization of the Church in Kanawha County, but alleges that the body denominated "The First Presbyterian Church of Charleston," seceded from the primitive Church, which it says was "probably" organized by Dr. Ruffner, (*Hardesty's Cyclopeadia*, pp. 299-300).

In this grave controversy the writer takes no part, being only, as it were "a looker on in Vienna." He has stated the evidence respectively adduced by these two contending bodies as he has gathered it, and understands it, from their several statements of their respective claims, and leaves the reader to decide between them, it being sufficient for the purposes of the writer that both of the contending parties agree that the subject of this sketch preached the first Presbyterian sermon ever preached in Charleston, and organized the first Presbyterian Church therein. Perhaps the best and safest solution would be to adopt the wise old rule: *In medio tutissimus ibis*, and come to the conclusion that the parent Church was organized by Dr. Ruffner, either in 1815 or '16, or in 1819, no matter which, and that the congregation agreed

(continued on page 15)

## HISTORY OF THE RUFFNER FAMILY OF KANAWHA

(continued from page 14)

to disagree and divided in the year 1872, both the personnel and property, one portion going to the West Virginia Presbytery and Northern General Assembly, and the other adhering to the Greenbrier Presbytery and Southern General Assembly, both of which General Assemblies being themselves but branches or divided parts of one original body. As the case of Paul and Barnabas, "the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other," both working for the same end—the salvation of souls. Trusting there is no case of casuistry involved in this unsettled controversy the writer dismisses the subject with the remark that it is fully established that Dr. Ruffner preached the first Presbyterian sermon ever preached in Kanawha County, and organized the first Presbyterian Church ever organized within its borders.

Dr. Ruffner, after preaching some time in Kanawha, was (in 1820) elected to the Presidency of Washington College, from which he had graduated. This was a distinguished honor. He filled the place with eminent success and retained it as long as his health would permit. He was soon known as an enthusiastic educator, and as a learned divine and excellent writer. Mild in manner and deliberate in his delivery, his sermons were full of profound thought, expressed in the most terse, smooth and forcible style, such indeed as Goldsmith himself would not have disowned. In this the writer speaks with full knowledge, having heard him frequently in his latter years. By nature benevolent and kindhearted, he was anti-slavery in sentiment and also from the standpoint of State policy. He desired the gradual and complete abolishment of slavery in Virginia, and proposed and advocated the *post nati* principle of emancipation. And with this view he wrote an able article on the subject of gradual emancipation, which he first delivered as a lecture before the Franklin Literary Society in Lexington, Virginia, and which was afterwards published in pamphlet form and became known as the "Ruffner Pamphlet." This produced a great deal of excitement in Virginia, as everything written or said touching the subject of emancipation, did at the time. The pamphlet was severely criticized and its utterances condemned in all the South.

Dr. Ruffner wrote an elaborate work published in two volumes, entitled "Fathers of the Desert." The subject of this work is the origin and progress of Monachism in the early days of Christianity. He wrote for the magazines, especially for the Southern Literary Messenger, in which he published a very interesting story, "Judith Bensadi," and a sequel entitled, "Seclusiville." These stories met with a fair public appreciation when they first made their appearance.

Dr. Ruffner was twice married. His first wife died in Lexington, VA. Some time after her death he returned to Kanawha with health very much impaired. He was married again November 20, 1849, to Miss Laura J. Kirby, of Cincinnati; and having improved some land he owned on Blue Creek, in Kanawha County, he lived on it some time, then he came back to Malden, where he died December 16th, 1861, leaving no children by his second wife.

The fruits of his first marriage were four children, viz: William Henry, Julia, Anna, and David Lewis Ruffner—all well educated. The first was for some time a Presbyterian divine of more than ordinary literary culture, has always resided in the State of Virginia, and was lately, and for some years had been at the head of the public school system of that state. He has withdrawn from the ministry of the church. Julia devoted herself to teaching school, and is now dead. She was never married. Anna married Arthur H. Howell, of Philadelphia, and now resides there—a widow. David Lewis Ruffner married Fannie, the eldest daughter of the late Col. Joseph Ruffner, and has a family of four children. He is a civil engineer and resides in Charleston.

Ann E. Ruffner, daughter of Col. David Ruffner, married Dr. R.E. Putney, who came from Buckingham County, Virginia. Nearly the whole of their married life was spent in Malden. Dr. Putney was the chief physician in and around Malden for many years. Three of their children viz: Mrs. Ann E. Doyle, Susan T. Thayer and Richard E. Putney, Jr., are living in Kanawha County. The oldest son, Dr. James Putney, was a surgeon and physician in the Union army during the late Civil War. He came out of the service badly afflicted with rheumatism and was thenceforth an invalid, and died several years after the war closed. His widow and their children now reside in Charleston.

Susan B., the other daughter of David Ruffner, married Moses Fergna of Kentucky. After their marriage they resided for some time within one or two hundred yards of the residence of her father on the river bank. The brick house in which they resided is still standing. He manufactured salt for some time, and then moved to Missouri, where he and his wife both died.

**Samuel Ruffner**, brother of David, removed early to the State of Ohio, where he died.

**Eve Ruffner**, David Ruffner's sister, married Nehemiah Wood. They moved to the State of Ohio. Both are dead.

**Abraham Ruffner**, a brother of David, settled in Ohio on Mill Creek, near Cincinnati, where he died. A monument stands to his memory in Spring Grove Cemetery. ■

## CEREMONIES OF DEDICATION AT RUFFNER HOMESTEAD

by Bob Sheets

The warming sun of another beautiful day in the Shenandoah Valley greeted the guests who gathered on the lawn of the Ruffner Homestead in Luray, Virginia, June 2, 1999. It was for the dedication of the ancient home place of our ancestors Peter & Mary (Steinman) Ruffner that brought their descendants and friends from across the nation to celebrate the return of the Homestead into Ruffner ownership after 159 years. Hosted by the new owners, our Cousins, **Jim and Judi McNeely**, the music of "Shenandoah" and "The Promised Land" welcomed their guests to the north porch of the old brick home which overlooks the beautiful twenty-three acre farm.

The Master of Ceremonies, **Sam McNeely** invited the **Rev. David Lord** to deliver the invocation. Calling upon the memory of those ancestors and founders of the town of Luray whose pioneering lives began the Ruffner dynasty and established a legacy of faith supported by love of family, we reaffirm their spirit by dedicating this their Homestead.

**Nancy Lee [Ruffner] Shifflett**, representing the Page County Commissioners, gave the introduction, and a presentation on the history of the Ruffner Family was made by **Vicki Cyphert**, Librarian for the Page County Public Library.

Dressed in period costumes of the 1850s, **Shirley Sheets and Dick Armstrong** from Denver provided musical selections "Home in the Meadow" and "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny." Sam delivered a deserving tribute to his brother Jim and wife Judi who then with a silver shovel turned the earth to symbolize the return of the Ruffner Family to the Valley. They then tied together a ribbon of red-white and blue that connected the main house out across the pasture to the ancient burial ground. Following remarks from Jim and a tribute to their parents, we all walked the ribbon to the cemetery.

There in the shade of the old Locust Tree by the 1997 Ruffner Monument and the old burial sites we gathered to sing "Amazing Grace" led by Shirley and Dick. **Bob Sheets** invoked the memory of our pioneer ancestors who homesteaded this very ground and whose children and grandchildren followed the roads west to become a part of the fabric of this great nation. He reminded us that the Ruffner Family History is the history of our United States and as the words of the song that opened this ceremony again awaken our family spirit, "I am bound for the promised land, Oh who will come with me," we together keep alive that spirit in the Ruffner Family Association.

Bob called upon **Rev. Paul Mishler** who dedicated our monument in 1997 to again come forward to close our ceremony of dedication. His words and his presence as always has very special meaning for us and connects us to the spiritual roots of those we honored that day. We closed with singing "Edelweiss" in honor of the European roots of Peter and Mary. Following our return to the Ruffner House, we attended a splendid and festive reception hosted by Jim, Judi, their son Jim, Jr. and **Sonia Croucher**, the Ruffner House Innkeeper. As the sun set on a balmy June evening, Ruffner cousins, friends and invited town guests celebrated an historic moment in the Ruffner Family History—the Homestead is back in the Ruffner's loving care. 🍷



Judi & Jim McNeely [center] on the front porch of The Ruffner House are flanked by [left to right] Shirley Sheets, Dorothy Michael, Dick Armstrong, Virginia Rigg and Billie Ruffner in period dress.

## A NOTE OF THANKS

*Jim and I want to express our thanks and appreciation to the Ruffner Family Association for the wonderful Rededication Ceremony held at The Ruffner House in Luray, June 2, 1999. This day will always be remembered and cherished. What a very special day it was to have so many Ruffner cousins present to share this wonderful event! Our fondest memories will always be of the sweet spirits, smiling faces, and the abundant laughter that seemed to penetrate every nook and cranny of The Ruffner House, and overflow out onto the porches and the lawns. Thank you for your many thoughtful gifts and notes. We look forward to seeing you'all again.*

*Jim and Judi McNeely*



**Jim and Judi McNeely tying the ribbon**



**Bob Sheets and Frank Brown—Frank and his wife Clara were official greeters for the Ceremony**



**Shirley Sheets & Dick Armstrong  
"Home in the Meadow"**

## FAMILY NEWS

### VIRGINIA RIGG TURNS 95

On her return to Denver, our cousin Virginia Rigg was honored at her home with a reception for her 95th birthday on July 2nd. Over seventy friends, family and former piano students gathered to hear her tell of the surprise reception she had received at the Ruffner Reunion this past June 5th. Sharing the party with Edith Johnson, both sporting corsages from the Ruffner Association, Ginny was toasted by her former student David Schrader of Chicago playing a Mozart's Piano Sonata on his Viennese Piano. She presented to the Ruffner Family Library a copy of her just published book, "Harrison and Catherine Ruffner in the Valley of the Little Wabash." Ginny had compiled the memories of her Ruffner relatives with Joysa Maben Winter, editor and designer of the book. Joysa, who was with us in Lancaster, is a Sheets cousin of Shirley Ann and Bob.

Ginny was born in Denver, July 2, 1904 to Samuel & Alma [Ruffner] Rigg. She is a descendant of Peter & Mary [Steinman] Ruffner through—Benjamin I to Benjamin II to Andrew to Harrison to Alma. She has taught piano in the Denver area for over eighty years and was on the faculty at the University of Denver School of Music. She is still teaching four students but has found a new interest in writing on her memoirs and early Denver History.

[Editor's Note: Copies of her book are available for \$10 by writing Shirley Ann Sheets, 1675 South Steele St., Denver, CO 80210.]

### WELCOME TO THE NEWEST RUFFNERS

**Jeffrey E. Ruffner** (desc. Benjamin) and **Janis [Symmonds] Ruffner** adopted **Noah Tate Ruffner** (DOB 8/5/95) and **Gabriel Brian Ruffner** (DOB 1/30/97) on December 23, 1998. The family resides at 1302 E. Pennsylvania Avenue, Urbana, Illinois.

**Gregory and April [Neff] Kritzwiser** (desc. Emanuel) of Waverly, Ohio are the parents of an 8-pound, 15-ounce son, **Andrew Allen**, born May 31, 1999, at Adena Regional Medical Center, Chillicothe. Grandparents are Verlin and Helen Kritzwiser of Waverly and Bill and Barbara [Ruffner] Neff of Williamsport, OH. Great-grandparents are Merrill and Mary Kritzwiser of Waverly and Lloyd Neff of Williamsport.

**Ruffner Roots & Ramblings welcomes all family news. Please report family births, deaths, weddings, and other announcements to:**

**Joan [Ruffner] Reid, Editor**

**120 Rita Court, Columbus, OH 43213**

**Phone: (614) 237-8264 / E-mail: Jokereid@aol.com**

## FAMILY RECIPES

The following recipe was received from **Ruth E. [Mrs. Edwin M.] Shepherd** (desc. Joseph) of Charleston, WV too late to include in the Ruffner Family Cookbook. Ruth writes: "The enclosed recipe has been used in my family for at least 75 years and was given to us by a Ruffner cousin—Nina [Ruffner] Stout. A very good healthful brown bread, warm or cold—served with butter or cream cheese. Keeps well."

### NINA'S BREAD

2 cups graham flour

1-1/2 cups white flour

1/2 box raisins

1/2 cup molasses

1/2 cup brown sugar

1 teaspoon soda

1/3 cup hot water

1 rounded teaspoon of baking powder

1 teaspoon salt

1-1/2 cups of sweet milk

Mix and bake one hour at 350 degrees in a lightly greased loaf pan.

### SPECIAL REQUESTS

**From Jim & Judi McNeely**

**THE RUFFNER HOUSE, Luray, VA:**

"We are delighted to take you on a tour of THE RUFFNER HOUSE, BUT PLEASE give us the courtesy of a phone call first. THE RUFFNER HOUSE is a Bed & Breakfast and we respect the privacy of our guests. Please give us as much advance notice as possible—(540) 743-7855. Thank you."

**From Marge & Bob Rowles, Lancaster, OH:**

"A lovely ivy plant was delivered to our home the week after the 1999 Ruffner Reunion picnic was held on our farm. It was delivered in an unmarked van and there was no sender's name on the card. The plant is just beautiful, growing daily, and is a welcome addition to our home. We want to send a note of thanks for this thoughtful gesture, but we don't know where to send it. Please let us know. Many thanks!"



## THE BOOK SHELF

### UP FROM SLAVERY

By Booker T. Washington (Autobiography) 1901  
[Reprints] Pub: Carol Publishing Group, University  
Book Titles [1989] or Gramercy Books, New  
York—Library of Freedom [1993]

[Includes memories of Booker T. Washington  
when he worked in the home of Gen. Lewis &  
Viola Ruffner in Malden, West Virginia.]

### KANAWHA COUNTY IMAGES—A BICENTENNIAL HISTORY 1788-1988

By Stan Cohen with Richard Andre [1987]

Pub: Pictorial Histories Publishing Co.

Charleston, WV [Loaded with Ruffner information  
and great pictures.]

### THE ANTEBELLUM KANAWHA SALT BUSINESS & WESTERN MARKETS

By John E. Stealey III [1993]

Pub: The University Press of Kentucky

Lexington, KY [Loaded with Ruffner information  
and one of the best histories on the salt business  
taking the Ruffners from the salt to the coal and  
eventually the oil business.]

### PIONEER PERIOD AND PIONEER PEOPLE OF FAIRFIELD COUNTY, OHIO

By C.M.L. Wiseman [1901]

[Reprints] Pub: Walsworth Publishing Co.

Marceline, MO 64658 / Phone: (816) 376-3543

Copies available from Fairfield Heritage Assn.,

105 E. Wheeling Street, Lancaster, OH 43130

Cost: \$39.51 (includes sales tax & postage)

[An early history of the settlement of Fairfield  
County, Ohio with profiles of distinguished  
pioneer families including the Ruffners and their  
collateral lines.]

*If you could not accept the past and its  
burden, there was no future, for without  
one there cannot be the other....*

*If you could accept the past you might hope  
for the future, for only out of the past can  
you make the future.*

*Robert Penn Warren  
"All the King's Men"*

## FROM THE EDITOR



A message of appreciation to all of who  
have contributed so much to this issue of  
Ruffner Roots & Ramblings. First and fore-  
most, **Bob Sheets**, the contributing editor of this newsletter and  
its chief reporter. Bob continues to astound me with his  
phenomenal literary talent, sense of recall and historic knowledge.  
When I sit down to put an issue together, I know that Bob will  
come through with all the latest news and, most importantly, his  
help.

To **Sam McNeely**, who hardly had his bags unpacked from the  
reunion, before he had to sit down and write his first president's  
column. And, what a beautiful job he did!

To **Roberta [Ruffner] Kirwin** for a wonderful 1999 reunion  
which we will all remember for a long, long time.

To **Anita [Neff] Weidinger**, who contributed "How do you live  
your dash" on page 9 of this issue.

To **Judi and Jim McNeely** for sending quite a few of the photos  
you see in this issue.

And, all the others who sent queries, announcements and  
family news.

I am pleased to announce that your family newsletter is being  
archived by many prestigious libraries and genealogical societies  
throughout the United States. I hope all the individuals receiving  
a copy of this newsletter, who have not paid their 1999 dues,  
will respond to the Ruffner Family Association in Denver so we  
can continue with our endeavor to "put a face on the Ruffner  
Family Association."

I am deeply honored to continue as editor of RR&R and will  
strive to make each issue better than the last.

Please send articles, press clippings, photos and all other  
information you wish to contribute to Ruffner Roots & Ramblings,  
120 Rita Court, Columbus, OH 43213.

With thanks & love,

*Joan [Ruffner] Reid*

Editor, Ruffner Roots & Ramblings

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**COPY DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE - OCTOBER 15, 1999**



"Fillin' our plates" at the Sunday Picnic.



"All for One and One for All"

# Fun Times at the 1999 Reunion



NOTE: The above photo was taken by Judi & Jim McNeely. See page 7 of this issue for details on how to order the official 1999 Reunion group photo from Garry's Studio in Lancaster, OH.