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RUFFNER ROOTS & RAMBLINGS

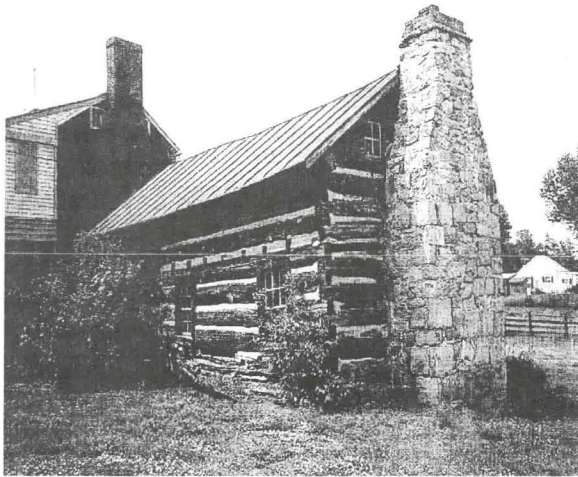
Volume 4, Issue #1

February 2001

The Ruffner Family Reunion Luray, VA ~ June 14-17, 2001

By now you have probably received your 2001 Reunion announcement and registration form. We hope you will join us in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley to enjoy all the festivities planned by Nancy (Ruffner) Shifflett, Sam McNeely and the 2001 Ruffner Family Reunion Committee. It promises to be an outstanding affair. On the inside pages of this issue, you will find highlights and a schedule of events.

During the 1997 Ruffner Family Reunion, we were treated to delightful bus tours of the historic sights in and around Luray. This year, the tours will all be self-guided with directions, maps and history provided by the hospitality staff in Luray. You will have time to tour the countryside at your leisure, snap some photos and, perhaps, even take a picnic lunch to enjoy on the way.



One of the oldest and most unique tour attractions will be the Reuben Ruffner log home (shown on the left). Reuben, the 4th son of Peter & Mary (Steinman) Ruffner, was born October 20, 1748. The log cabin is thought to be the first home of Reuben and his family. The cabin is constructed of giant logs, notched and chinked with mortar. There is a large stone chimney at the rear of the building where there is a tremendous fireplace. At the back of the fireplace there are two old iron sides of what must have been an old stove with this inscription in German: "Hier ist ein jaeger auf der jagt also," which translated means "here is a hunter on a hunt therefore." Reuben's later home, a large brick structure, stands in front of the log cabin. Reuben sold this property and moved with his family to Kentucky in the 1780s.

Other historic sites on the tour will include, but not be limited to: the Massanutten Monument (erected in 1929 to the memory of the area's early settlers); Herbert Barbee's Confederate Monument

(Herbert was married to Blanche Stover, a descendant of Peter Ruffner, Jr.); Massanutten School (restored by the Page Co. Heritage Assn.); Willow Grove Mill in Mundellsville (original location of Joseph Ruffner's mill); Benjamin Ruffner's Home (now known as "Yankee Sam's"); Emanuel Ruffner's Home (formerly called "Locust Grove"); the Mauck Meeting House (original Mill Creek Church, ca. 1770); Calendine (Herbert Barbee's home); Mill Creek Primitive Baptist Church (attended by Ruffner ancestors), and The White House (built in 1760 by Martin Kauffman II).

Don't miss this experience ~ register today!

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— and much more

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WE NEED YOUR SURVEY FORMS

The Branch Captains of the Publications Committee and the Committee members face a very difficult circumstance. As editors for the updated Ruffner history, **we're running out of time!** Our period to contact family members and obtain their completed Survey responses is growing shorter and shorter. **We need your help and cooperation!**

The scenario of our work has gone something like this. As we have worked composing the Survey Form, distributing it, searching for contacts from missing family lines, sorting and compiling the responses received, and mentally contemplating the format for the "Update," there always seems to be a thorn in the lion's paw. Overall, we have expanded the information available for many lines, including those only mentioned or non-existent in the original books. Add to this the information we've received bringing many lines up to the present generations and the progress looks even more exciting. Along the way, numerous items have been uncovered which tell us more of the story for some individuals. As we add these, we're impressed by the unfolding story of these family lines. This progress has not been as rapid as any of us would have wanted, but it is progress and we'll take it. **What's bothersome?** These many additions only give us an immense **"SubTotal."**

Just as we've found contacts for a previously unknown family line, we've had a relative neglect to return their completed forms. Or we find persons to whom we are related who seem to be searching for their family connection, but they don't respond to the efforts made to help them with this identity. We find items, which tell a family story, but they also indicate things needing documentation; e.g.—the actual date and builder of the Ruffner house at Eleanor, WV. Without the information to fill these gaps, we'll not have a complete summation.

As we approach the final stages of putting our information together, we need your assistance if we are to realize a **"Grand Total."** Here's our shopping list—some things every family member needs to be doing:

- Communicate with your relatives—your brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles, etc. Make sure they have been sent a Survey, and they have completed and returned it. If not, let them know how to immediately get this accomplished. Offer to help them with it.
- If you have any information about those family lines which aren't listed in the original books about *"Peter Ruffner and His Descendants,"* be sure the appropriate Branch Captain (their names and addresses appear on the left) knows about this information and has access to it.
- Don't sit and wonder what the "Update" will look like and how soon it will be available. Spend this time contacting your Branch Captain to volunteer your assistance in the final push to complete our information gathering. Help them do some last minute research on documenting information, or find a contact for getting the information about a lost family line.
- Send in **your completed personal Survey.**

Everyone, pitch in! We will soon put the search to rest and finish compiling the information. Add something to this sum of information. Help make it a very impressive **"Grand Total."** With your help we'll have an outstanding publication of our genealogy and history—an accurate and complete work. ▣

***"Our thanks to all the Ruffner Cousins
from their Publications Team."***

A Message From the Association President Sam McNeely

Betty and I send greetings and Happy 2001 from the beautiful Page Valley of our ancestors. Christmas has come and gone. Before you know it, we will all be gathering here for our family reunion.

The Ruffner House was once again beautifully decorated by Sonia, Judi, Jim and Jim, Jr. There were several functions held there during the holidays and all the guests came away talking of the charm and beauty of the place.

Prior to Christmas, we had a visit from our son Lee, his wife Rebecca and their three children. They live in Florida and it was the first time the children had seen mountains and snow. Like all of our family, Lee and his fell in love with Luray and mused about how they too would love to reside here. The night before they left, Santa Claus came riding through our neighborhood on the decorated fire truck. Only in small town America does this happen.

Nancy Lee and the committee are getting into high gear for the upcoming reunion. I hope all have received their registration form. Please return it as soon as possible so the many facets of the reunion can be finalized. If you know of people who have not received a registration form, please advise us. This promises to be the largest family gathering of our family since reunion activities were started in 1991.

On another front, our family website is being updated by some of our dedicated family members. This will be a tool for all of us to learn more about our ancestry as we go forward into the "information era." If there are others who wish to be involved with this aspect of our family activities, you are encouraged to contact Dan Ruffner [see page 8 of this newsletter].

We continue to hear of some of our senior members with ongoing health problems. I urge us all to keep them in our thoughts and prayers until they are back to normal.

May God continue to bless us individually and as a family. ■

Lancaster/Fairfield County, Ohio ~ celebrates its Bicentennial



The proud 200 year history of the Lancaster-Fairfield County area was celebrated on Friday and Saturday, November 3-4, 2000, with the premiere of a special video production at the Lancaster High School Auditorium. The video, "**Lancaster, Ohio~The Birth of an American Culture,**" was produced by Varga Communications; adapted from the David R. Contosta book, *Lancaster,*

Ohio 1800-2000-Frontier Town to Edge City, published by The Ohio State University Press. It was the culmination of a 4-year effort by the Bicentennial Committee to "disseminate information for educational purposes with an emphasis on the history of Lancaster and Fairfield County." Their hope is for a better understanding and appreciation of the men, women, and events that helped shape their home community.

Barbara Rowles (desc. Emanuel) has a segment on the video with the Ruffner Conestoga Wagon. Barbara is a member of the RFA Publications Committee and is heading up the research of Emanuel's line for the updated edition of *Peter Ruffner and His Descendants*. She is the daughter of Marge & Bob Rowles on whose farm the Ruffner Family picnic was held in June of 1999. A photo of the wagon appeared in the August 1999, issue of Ruffner R&R.

Copies of the tape can be ordered from: **Lancaster-Fairfield County Bicentennial Celebration, PO Box 842, Lancaster, OH 43130**. The cost is \$30 plus \$3 for shipping and handling (payable in advance). Include your name, address and telephone number with your order. ■

BOARD OF DIRECTORS Ruffner Family Association Samuel H. McNeely, President Luray, Virginia

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Ruffner Roots & Ramblings

is published by

The Ruffner Family Association

PO Box #351

Luray, VA 22835

Chartered and incorporated in 1999, to maintain a society of members who will research 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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In the News

Families share link to Booker T. Washington

By Ann Carnahan

Denver Rocky Mountain News Staff Writer

November 26, 2000—Two families met Saturday for a tea party at a home in Denver, their invitations set in motion 129 years ago. Two granddaughters and a great grandson of Booker T. Washington rang the doorbell shortly after 3 p.m. They were kissed by four cousins of Viola Ruffner, the wife of a wealthy coal mine owner who lived in West Virginia during the Civil War. Ruffner hired Washington, a former slave, as her houseboy when he was 15. She exposed him to books and nurtured his longing to learn. She allowed him to go to school every day and gave him the skills that made him a success. Eventually, he became one of the most influential black leaders of his time.

On Saturday, their ancestors converged. "My bosom pal!" exclaimed 96-year-old Virginia Rigg, a Ruffner cousin, as she hugged Edith Johnson, one of Washington's granddaughters. "I feel a bond with them," Johnson said. "I'm very grateful to their ancestors. They helped my grandfather at a time when everybody didn't do that."

This was the third get-together for the black and white families. They found each other last year when a grandson of Viola Ruffner perused a black history Web site. The two clans had always heard about their connection, but they didn't make contact until spring 1999, when Joe Ruffner saw Johnson's name on a Web site. He called the site's designer and got Johnson's telephone number at her home in Ohio. They talked for an hour. "I felt like I had known him for a very long time," Johnson said. Ruffner invited Johnson and her sister, Margaret Clifford, to the Ruffner reunion planned for that June in Ohio. When the women showed up, it was very emotional, said Robert Sheets, a Ruffner and a host of the party. "People were in tears," Sheets said.

Then this past summer, Sheets and Rigg and 13 other Ruffner descendants attended the dedication of a Booker T. Washington memorial at the plantation in Virginia where he was born in 1856. Now, six months later, Clifford and Johnson are visiting Johnson's two sons, who live in Denver.

At the tea party, Sheets gave Clifford and Johnson a framed photograph of them and Rigg at Washington's birthplace. Clifford told the story of her grandfather, who founded the Tuskegee Institute, the model vocational and teachers' school for blacks in Alabama.

"As a young boy, he desperately wanted to go to school," Clifford said, "but his stepfather wouldn't allow it." "His mother heard of a job as a houseboy at the home of Mrs. Viola Ruffner," Clifford said. "Her demands were strict. She didn't keep houseboys for long."

In his autobiography, *Up From Slavery*, Washington said he soon began to understand Viola Ruffner, that she wanted everything cleaned systematically, but above all, she wanted honesty. "From fearing Mrs. Ruffner, I soon learned to look upon her as one of my best friends," Washington wrote. "Mrs. Ruffner always encouraged ... me in all my efforts to get an education."

Sometime later, Washington wanted to attend Hampton Institute in eastern Virginia. He aced the entrance exam, which was to show his skill at cleaning a room. "He earned his way because of what Mrs. Ruffner taught him," Johnson said. Johnson's ties to history go even deeper. Her godfather was George Washington Carver, a close friend of her father.

Talk of connections continued. Ernest Hughes, a great-great grandson of Washington, wondered aloud if his first name might be linked to the Ruffners. Viola Ruffner's only son was named Ernest - the same name Booker T. Washington gave to his own son, which was passed down to Ernest Hughes, who now lives in Denver.

After two hours, the goodbyes began. Clifford gave Rigg two boxes of chocolates and pecans, which were made by the candy business her mother started at Tuskegee Institute in the 1920s. The two families pledged to see each other at the Ruffner reunion next year in Luray, VA. In turn, the Ruffners will join the Washingtons at their reunion in the summer of 2002 in Malden, W.Va.

"The intertwining of these two families is unbreakable at this point," Sheets said. ■

(Reporter Katie Kerwin McCrimmon contributed to this story.)

© Denver Rocky Mountain News

"Listening children know stories are *there*. When their elders sit and begin, children are just waiting and hoping for one to come out, like a mouse from a hole."

~Eudora Welty (One Writer's Beginnings)

Making Progress at 'the Brick'

In past articles, you were introduced to the **Joseph Ruffner** house at Eleanor, WV. The people of Eleanor also affectionately know it as '**the Brick,**' or '**the Red House.**' The house is known to have been a Ruffner residence in the 1830s and 1840s, but the "Joseph" part is still a mysterious unknown. Since the town's inception, '**the Brick**' has been at the heart of their community. Although its history is incomplete and its stories are mostly unproven, they, along with its role as the center of their early civic life, have been important aspects in the lives of the individuals and the community.

With the town of Eleanor now the house's owner, it will once again be the community's civic and social center. The planned renovations will showcase the beauty and craftsmanship of its original look and make the spaces functional. The large interior will accommodate the town's civic offices and also host many community functions. Work on the civic office spaces has been completed with the offices recently being occupied. Presently the central staircase and other first floor spaces, including the kitchen area, are being worked on, and new paint is giving a clean look all around. Even as this work has been in progress, community functions have been hosted at '**the Brick.**' It is once again alive with the activities of the community and its people. As it resumes and continues this life of community service, perhaps the story of its origin and past will also be uncovered.

You can assist the fine people of Eleanor with their labor of love. A proposal has been presented to the RFA President to support the Red House Building Committee's renovation and restoration efforts. Upon approval by the Board of Directors, an appropriation will be presented on behalf of the RFA to the Red House Building Committee. Send your contribution(s) to support this, and other Memorial projects, to the RFA Monument Fund.

RFA MONUMENT FUND

Contributions to the Monument Fund make it possible for the RFA to erect appropriate Memorials and support projects which have a recognizable connection to our family or educate the public about our family's civic involvement and contributions.

To support these efforts by RFA, you can make contributions to the Monument Fund at any time.

Make checks payable to:

Ruffner Family Association

Designate for: RFA Monument Fund

Mail to: **Ruffner Family Association**

PO Box 351

Luray, VA 22835



'the Brick' (photo from the Ruffner Family Library)

MURPHY'S GENEALOGY LAWS

by Florence Dummel

1. The will you need is in a safe onboard the Titanic.
2. You finally find the wedding record for your g-grandfather only to discover he married Mary SMITH whose father was John SMITH and mother was Mary JONES!
3. You have finally found the information you needed to solve the family mystery you have been working on for 2 years and your elderly aunt says "I could have told you that!"
4. You find an old family photo album and upon close examination, there are no names on the pictures.
5. You learn that your great grandmother's family bible (passed down through the family for 3 generations) was sold at an estate sale in New York City.
6. You find your family in the census and write to the county where they lived for 40 years, only to receive a letter stating all the county records burned.
7. You learn there is a county history on microfilm of the county your ancestors originated from. It has 16,000 pages and is not indexed.
8. The public ceremony in which your distinguished ancestor participated and at which the platform collapsed under him, turned out to be a hanging!

Where is that guy Murphy anyway? I really do have a few things to say to him!

Crawford Family Reunion

by Jack L. Bailey, Jr. (desc. Joseph)

During the weekend of October 13-15, 2000, approximately 55 Crawford "cousins" met for a family reunion in Alpharetta, Georgia, just north of Atlanta. The reunion was organized and planned by Mimi Ohlinger. The group met for Friday night dinner and Saturday morning breakfast at the Courtyard by Marriott in Alpharetta. Mimi was the hostess for the entire group at her new home for Saturday lunch and dinner. It was a wonderful experience as we renewed old acquaintances and made new friendships with our cousins. Participants came from Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Ohio, Indiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia and Panama.

The Crawford connection to the Ruffner family comes from Anne Ruffner Putney Thayer (1852-1932), who married David Willett Crawford in 1871, in Malden, WV (near Charleston). She was the great great granddaughter of Joseph Ruffner.

One of the highlights of the weekend was the attendance of 93-year old Beatrice "Aunt Bea" Raynes Crawford. She is the widow of Lewis Calvin Crawford, who was the grandson of Anne Ruffner Putney Thayer Crawford. Another highlight was the Crawford Family History Album put together by Jack and Pat Bailey, which was enjoyed by many at the Reunion. It included pictures back to the 1870s, genealogy charts, cemetery records, obituary notices, marriage announcements and letters dating back to the late 1800s and early 1900s. Also in attendance was Elizabeth "Boo" Crawford Ohlinger, one of 18 children of James Ernest Crawford, Sr., and the only one of the grandchildren of Anne Ruffner Putney Thayer able to attend the reunion. One lasting treasure of the weekend was the first edition of the Crawford Family Cookbook, with many wonderful recipes from the cousins, compiled by Mimi Ohlinger.

Plans are underway for an email distribution list and possible development of a newsletter and Crawford family website. The Crawford cousins will be given more information about the Ruffner Family Association, *Ruffner Roots & Ramblings* and the 2001 Ruffner Family Reunion in Luray.

Anyone wanting more information about the Crawford lineage from the Ruffner Family can contact me, Jack Bailey at jbaileyjr@aol.com. ■

RUFFNER FAMILY TO VISIT WASHINGTON & LEE UNIVERSITY

Prior to the Ruffner Family Reunion in Luray, your cousins and friends will be attending some special events in Lexington, Virginia and on the beautiful campus of Washington & Lee University. Like Luray, VA; Lancaster, OH; Mason, IL; Charleston/Malden, WV and Prescott, AZ, Lexington is a town steeped in the history of our family. We will gather at 1:00pm on **Tuesday, June 12, 2001**, at the Lexington Visitor Center, 107 East Washington Street. Following a tour of their facility and the Rockbridge Historical Society across the street, we will visit the Ruffner Historical Sites in the area. Highlights will be the two homes of Dr. Henry Ruffner when he was on the faculty and later President of then, Washington College. Those homes were featured in the last issue of the *Ruffner Roots & Ramblings* "What Is It - Where Is It" column. We will also visit the historic Timber Ridge Church where he served as pastor 1819-1831. You will get to see the famous home and property of his son, William Henry Ruffner, "Tribrook Farm" now a part of the Country Club. We will hold a flag ceremony in the historic "Stonewall Jackson Memorial Cemetery" at the Ruffner Family Plot where William and his family are buried. The day concludes at a group dinner with local historians and university representatives.

Wednesday, June 13th we begin the day on the campus of Washington & Lee University, viewing the Ruffner Manuscripts and Historical Collection at the Library and Archives. Here we will see the documents that made Henry Ruffner a player on the stage of slavery abolition and that gave William the title of Father of Public Education in Virginia. Following a tea with university officials, we will visit the beautiful, historic Chapel & Tomb of Gen. Robert E. Lee and his family. He was president of Washington College at the end of the Civil War. He died in 1870, and the next year the college became Washington & Lee University. We will see the famous reclining statue of Lee by Edward Valentine.

After our visit to the Lee Chapel and Museum, we will drive to Luray with stops at historic sites and a special visit to the Museum of American Frontier Culture and the German Farm. Bring your video cameras to record how our Ruffner Ancestors lived back in 1739, as demonstrated by this living history museum.

If you are interested in this special pre-reunion activity, Email Bob Sheets <rnsheets@aol.com> or Joe Ruffner <jruffner@bellsouth.net>. You can also write Bob Sheets at 1675 South Steele Street, Denver, CO 80210 to receive a printed schedule of events and lodging arrangements. For more information on W&L University, log on at www.wlu.edu and click on to University History link. **See you in Lexington.**

You're cordially invited to participate in the publication of this newsletter ~

1. By submitting your family stories for publication.
2. By submitting your family news including obits, marriages, births, etc.
3. By sending copies of old family photos with their history.
4. By submitting photos & history for "What Is It? Where Is It?"
5. By sending in queries.
6. By making suggestions for future issues.

**IN OTHER WORDS - THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER
AND WE WELCOME YOUR INPUT.**



*The bells are ringing - calling you back to the Valley for the
2001 Ruffner Family Reunion in Luray, Virginia*

Perhaps they are the bells from the old Massanutten School or from the Mauck Meeting House, but they, and we, are calling you to attend the 6th Biennial Ruffner Family Reunion in Luray, VA on June 14-17, 2001. It promises to be our biggest family reunion ever and we hope you will be a part of it. Some of the highlights, lodging accommodations and a schedule of events are listed below. We have also included another copy of the registration form with this newsletter. Make copies—pass them on to your relatives. If you haven't registered yourself—do it today! If you haven't attended a Ruffner Family Reunion in the past—you'll be in for a pleasant surprise.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Special activities for children: We have some fun and exciting activities planned especially for the younger children. At the historic one-room Massanutten school-house, they will hear stories about some of our family ancestors and their times. They will also have an opportunity to participate in some school activities reminiscent of the early schools. Following these school activities, they will be treated to a Pool Party.

The Reunion Auction: This is always a delightful and sometimes "challenging" event. The proceeds are used to support the Ruffner Family Association's various activities and projects. Items of every description are offered for your bidding including beautiful handmade items, collector pieces and nostalgic articles. Where do these items come from? They are donated by attendees and non-attendees. If you have something you would like to contribute—bring it with you to the Reunion Registration area. If you can't attend—send it to the Ruffner Family Association, c/o Nancy Shifflett, 917 West Main Street, Luray, VA 22835.

Tours of Luray and Ruffner Historic Sites: See the front page of this newsletter. Luray is the location where our first American family of Ruffner ancestors homesteaded. You will be thrilled to see old homes of your ancestors that have been lovingly preserved by their present owners and the people of Page County.

LODGING:

Days Inn of Luray (Reunion Headquarters):

138 Whispering Hill Road, Luray, VA 22835
Phone: (540) 743-4521 [www.daysinn-luray.com]
Standard-\$49/night; Antique Room-\$59/night
Jacuzzi Room-\$90/night; Rollaway-\$5/night extra
Mention Ruffner Reunion to get these special rates.
Special rates available until April 1st!!!

Cardinal Inn:

Phone: 1-888-648-4633 / Rates: \$60-\$70/night

Luray Cavern Motels:

Phone: (540) 743-4531 / Rates: \$60-\$70/night

Mymlyn Inn:

Phone: 1-800-743-5105 - Rates: \$60/\$70/night

Yogi Bear Jellystone Park (for RV & Camping):

Phone: (540) 743-4002

GENERAL SCHEDULE OF REUNION ACTIVITIES:

Thursday, June 14:

Early Registration (Days Inn/Reunion Headquarters)
Genealogy Workshop
Tour of Luray
Page Public Library (open until 9:00pm)

Friday, June 15:

Reunion Registration (Days Inn/Reunion Headquarters)
Publications Committee Meeting
Hospitality and Sales Room Open (Days Inn)
Displays of Family Photos & Artifacts (Days Inn)
Reception at The Ruffner House on the Homestead

Saturday, June 16:

Reunion Registration (Days Inn/Reunion Headquarters)
Board of Directors Meeting
Children's Special Activities (see details on left)
Tours of Historic Areas (see details on left)
Tour of Luray Caverns (see details below)
Guest Speakers (Days Inn)
Family Banquet (hosted by the Page County School system at the Luray Elementary School)
Election of Officers
Special Presentations

Sunday, June 17:

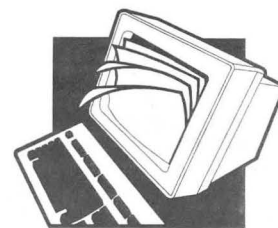
Family Church Service (Luray Christian Church)
Family Picnic (provided by the Luray Christian Church at Lake Arrowhead)
Family Group Photo
Auction of Family Donated Items (see details on left)
Close of Family Reunion

If you or other members of your family wish to tour Luray Caverns, a group discount admittance can be obtained. Please indicate the number of tickets you need on the reunion registration form.

See you in Luray!

RuffnerFamily WebSite

The prospects of having a new look and a few new pages of information on the *RuffnerFamily WebSite* in the near future are very good. This does not mean it will be complete by any definition. We've previously mentioned developing the guidelines to follow in constructing the website. The next step was to structure a few sample pages and check them to determine their compatibility with the network servers' working parameters. Simply stated, this assures the viewer sees what you wish them to see in the same way you wish it to be seen. At this writing, we've begun to put together the pages we will post first - some general information about the Ruffner family and the RFA to tell people who we are and to help them determine whether they are related, and some specific information about the RFA to promote the Association's memberships and attendance at the 2001 Reunion at Luray. Look at I, II, III, V, VI, VIII & X below for the priority pages, plus XI & XII will be among the first.



"Be Prepared!" - You might try joining the Boy Scouts, but that is the wrong direction! It would be better if you visited the *RuffnerFamily website* at www.RuffnerFamily.org. While you are there, be sure to "bookmark" the site and return to it often. Then you'll be ready when the updates of new information and features start appearing. We plan to have a regular column about the website in each issue of your *RR&R* newsletter, but you'll want to see the new items as soon as they appear. Also, tell your relatives and any interested friends about the *RuffnerFamily website*. Here is a look at the enumerated web pages with a brief description of the purpose for each.

Homepage - Welcome to the *RuffnerFamily website* and an index to the other web pages.

- I. **Peter and Mary (Steinman) Ruffner** - A brief introduction and history of our ancestors with an introduction of the first generation children - our Family branches.
- II. **Early Generations** - Brief listings of the first 3 generations' children with marriages, etc., and a short narrative describing them and any movement to help people identify their roots by names and possibly locations.
- III. **The Ruffner Family Association** - This will tell the what, why, where, how and for whom about the RFA and the activities sponsored through the Association.
- IV. **Cemeteries, Historic Sites and Monuments** - This is primarily a tourist guide of locations, not histories.
- V. **Ruffner Family Reunions** - The where, when and how of past and present reunions.
- VI. **The Ruffner Roots & Ramblings Newsletter** - Showcasing our best membership benefit with an occasional posting of an out-of-print feature article from the *RR&R*.
- VII. **Ruffner Family Photo Album(s)** - Selected photos grouped in collections by time, event or family featuring sites, people, activities, artifacts, etc.
- VIII. **Publications Committee and the Family Genealogy/History** - This is where we will promote and encourage participation in the Genealogy Survey and our present efforts to update and print the latest information available about the Family Genealogy and History. We will also promote the continuing need for families to periodically submit updates to their information for archiving and any future updates of our Family publications.
- IX. **The Ruffner General Store** - Here's where we could offer some of our wares. This might require some of us to attend a few classes in basket weaving or pottery to find a way to contribute.
- X. **Printable Forms** - An easy way to get a membership form for your "lost cousin" or for yourself. Maybe you need a reunion registration form, or perhaps you want a prepublication order form for the update of the Family genealogy and history we're presently working on.
- XI. **Our Family GuestBook** - Some people might wish to just say, "Howdy," and tell us where they are from! That's such a nice way to make new friends!
- XII. **Our Family's Bulletin Board** - Ask a question! Get an answer? We've got one or two. There are a few which are marginally mentionable. Better save those for another time.
- XIII. **Related WebSite Links** - Here you will be able to make a quick visit to some sites about early collateral surname lines to which some part of the Family is related. Maybe one of your lines is included.

It has a look of excitement, doesn't it? But, please understand, the *RuffnerFamily website* will not tell everything about the Family genealogy and history. We repeat, it will tell enough to possibly help a person determine a relationship, and it will showcase some interesting sites and events, but not tell their complete story. Mainly, we wish it to encourage and assist our "lost relatives" with the discovery of their relatedness, and to promote the affiliation and participation by all our relatives with the RFA - its present activities and its wonderful body of members.

Help Wanted! - Even as we progress with the *RuffnerFamily website* development, we continue to look for those persons who will help with its operation. If you'd like to be a part of this, don't hesitate because you're inexperienced or lack the knowledge. Take the challenge! With a little initiative and effort, any required learning can be a rewarding experience. Having a computer, internet access, and an e-mail address are necessary.

To volunteer, or for more information, please immediately contact:

K. Daniel Ruffner, II
7534 Fallsridge Lane
West Chester, OH 45096
Phone: (513) 779-0977

E-mail: druffner@cinci.rr.com

(E-mail is his preferred means of contact and correspondence)

Knowing Your Board of Directors

Samuel Hearst "Sam" McNeely of Luray, Virginia

(Second in a series)



Sam McNeely at The Ruffner House

Our president's Ruffner Family ties are deeply rooted in the Charleston/Malden area of West Virginia. His great-great grandfather, General Lewis Ruffner, was the first white child born in Kanawha County on October 1, 1797. Many years later, February 9, 1936 to be exact, Samuel Hearst McNeely was born in his parents Malden, West Virginia home. The first child of Samuel Clarence and Aileen Ruffner McNeely, he was named after his father and a family friend, Joe Hearst. His sister, Sandra Kay, arrived on September 23, 1938, and brother James was born on July 5, 1940.

Sam began his schooling at the Malden Elementary School at age 5. In 1941, his family moved to Oak Ridge, Tennessee where his father was employed at the Oak Ridge nuclear facility. The family was not destined to remain long in Tennessee. In 1942, they moved to Pasco, Washington and his father went to work at the Hanford nuclear facility. While in the 5th grade, Sam was sent to live with his Uncle "Toot" (Herman Ovis Ruffner, Jr.) and Aunt Margaret in Charleston for several months while his father went to Indiana to work at the Charlestowne nuclear facility. Sam's family ties would bring him back again to the Charleston area where he completed his 9th grade education at the Thomas Jefferson Junior High School and his 10th grade at Charleston High School. In June 1951, his family moved to Barnwell, South Carolina. During high school, Sam worked at Bolen's Grocery Store.

Upon graduation from Barnwell High School in 1953, Sam enrolled in the University of South Carolina at Columbia. In August 1954, he joined the U.S. Marine Corps and underwent boot camp training at Parris Island, SC. From there, he was assigned to the Topographic Company at Camp Lejeune, NC and attended topographic computing school at Fort Belvoir, VA. During his military career, he served in Turkey and the Panama Canal Zone. After completing his three year enlistment, Sam returned to USC under the GI Bill to continue studying Mechanical Engineering.

In 1959, he met Betty Jean Henderson and they were married on July 2, 1960, at Allendale, SC where she was employed by Davan Manufacturing. Not long after, the newlyweds returned to Columbia so Sam could complete his college work. He worked summers at the nearby Savannah River Plant where he was permanently employed after his college graduation in January of 1962.

On February 13, 1962, their first child, Pamela Jean, was born. She would be followed shortly by the birth of their second daughter, Debra Kay, on May 24, 1963. Their son, Samuel Lee, was born on December 24, 1966, and the family moved back to Barnwell, SC. Carrying on the family's "movin'" tradition, in April 1968, Sam was transferred to Martinsville, VA by DuPont and they settled into their new home in Ridgeway, VA. On October 9, 1968, their last child, Kimberly Aileen, was born at Martinsville Hospital.

In 1976, the family moved to Summerville, SC when Sam was transferred to the DuPont Cooper River Plant. Sam decided to leave the DuPont Company after 17 years and, in 1978, accepted a job with Borg-Warner Chemicals in Parkersburg, WV. In 1980, an opportunity to return to DuPont at The Savannah River Plant was accepted and the family moved to Aiken, SC.

Sam retired from The Savannah River Plant, now owned by Westinghouse, in 1993. He and Betty settled down in their condo in Aiken to enjoy their retired life and spend more time with their seven grandchildren.

No one who attended the June 1997 Ruffner Family Reunion in Luray could ever forget the vision of a man in a red shirt, khaki shorts and ball cap, who intensely observed the proceedings of what was to be the formation of a family association to preserve the history of his ancestors. Little did we know at that time that he had already "taken up the torch."

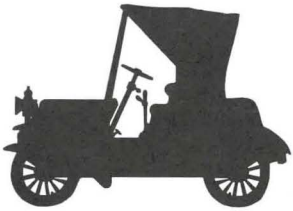
On September 27, 1997, Sam, Betty, his brother & sister-in law, Jim & Judi, went to Luray and constructed a fence around the Ruffner Burial Ground Monument that had been dedicated at the reunion. This unselfish gesture was a gift to the Ruffner Family Heritage from the McNeelys. It would not be their last act of Family dedication.

When Jim & Judi McNeely stepped forward and purchased the Ruffner ancestral property in Luray in March of 1999, Sam and Betty packed their bags once more to move to Luray and help in the restoration of the property.

Sam was officially given the torch to bear on June 5, 1999, at the Ruffner Family Reunion in Lancaster, OH when he was installed as the first president of the Ruffner Family Association.

By now, Sam and Betty have become Luray natives. Sam not only serves as president of the RFA, but is its best "goodwill ambassador." He greets all the Ruffner descendants who visit Luray; keeps the Association moving ahead, and still manages to juggle all his other duties including preparations for the 2001 RFA Reunion.

Above all, Sam and Betty have spread their love, friendship and concern for others throughout their new community. With the move of the Association's headquarters to Luray, it is reassuring to know that it is in such caring and capable hands. ■



Trekking thru OH, WV, and VA

(My trip to the Ruffner Family Reunion and beyond - June 1999)

By Joseph Wilson Ruffner

(Part 4 of Joe's remembrances on his visit to the land of his ancestors)

June 9, 1999—This morning I planned to visit the West Virginia State Archives in Charleston before leaving for Lexington, Virginia, my next destination. So after meeting part of the group at breakfast and seeing the others afterward, I made my departure from the traveling troupe. It had been a wonderfully nice experience to spend all this time with these new found relatives. I had now been back and forth to downtown Charleston enough times to easily find my way to the Archives. My plan had been to do some research. After only a couple of hours of pouring through indexes and having copies made, I had a strong urge to get moving. If everything I was going to look at was in a library or archive book, or on microfilm, I could have copies made and sent to me. I already had the manuscript numbers of the collections I was interested in. I was more interested in the sites or places of my ancestry than thumbing through books.

My lifelong question had been: What were those places of my ancestry like? What was it like in Luray, Malden or Charleston? I wanted to be in those places and claim for myself the feelings they would help unveil. At that moment, I wanted to be on the way to the next place, Lexington. I wanted to spend what time I could leisurely touring the place, seeing the sights, hearing the sounds, and feeling whatever came to me. Page 345 on the filmstrip, Ms 24a, just didn't interest me.

By now I was prepared for the rolling contours of the highway. But, as indicated earlier, I didn't expect so many tolls. Do they charge when you enter West Virginia, or is it just when you're leaving? I don't believe I paid on crossing into West Virginia from Ohio, but I had to pay either 3 or 4 separate times to get out on the drive to Virginia. What parts of the scenery it was safe to look at were fascinating. I was disappointed they didn't have some overlooks included along the way so one could stop and get a better view. Driving and looking definitely isn't the safe thing to do. My thoughts kept going back to how Joseph and all his family ever found a way across such terrain. It is hard to imagine all the hardships they endured for those weeks, or months, it took to move from Page County to the Kanawha Valley.

The exit I took to get to Lexington was much similar to the one for Greenfield. It must have been the back entrance for it took me through the lovely rolling hillsides past numerous small farms. As I approached what I perceived to be the outskirts of Lexington, I was suddenly surprised to see a roadside marker with a familiar inscription. It was the marker for the Liberty Hall Academy, the predecessor institution of Washington and Lee University. This succession of institutions all began in 1749, when the pioneers founded a small classical school called, Augusta Academy. In 1776, in a wave of patriotism, the name was changed to Liberty Hall. Liberty Hall was chartered and empowered to grant degrees by the Virginia Legislature in 1782. This legislation also changed the name to Liberty Hall Academy. The ruins which remain and are preserved today are from the original building erected in 1793. This was the year the Academy and its eventual successor institution moved to the Lexington site. The ruins are from a fire in 1803. Thus were the beginnings of what is now proudly called, Washington and Lee University.

I drove on past and in a short distance came to Lexington. After getting directions, I parked beside the Episcopal Church and walked onto the Campus of Washington and Lee University. I knew it was 1999, but at the moment, I was in this place in another time. There before me, surrounding the beautiful green of the quadrangle, was Great Uncle Henry's Washington College. The very same site where he and Grandfather Lewis, his brother, had attended college. After a few minutes of just standing in awe and wonderment, I walked to the Lee Chapel on my right. Inside was a beautiful little sanctuary with a balcony across the back. Shortly before his death, General Robert Edward Lee, then president of Washington College, had the chapel built for the students. His funeral was one of the first events to take place in this Chapel. There is much interesting history about this place and especially about General Lee. Taking the stairs down to the basement, you find the Lee Museum. Here, also, are found the burial vaults for members of the Lee family. While I was in the Museum, the hostess from the Chapel came up to me. She said she didn't know why she didn't mention it when I introduced myself upstairs, but she just wanted me to know her husband was completing a book on the Timber Ridge Presbyterian Church. This church is on the outskirts of Lexington. She mentioned it would have a good bit about Henry Ruffner in it as he had at one time been the minister there. She indicated the publication was expected to be out in the Fall of 1999, about September or October.

Exiting the Museum from its basement level entrance, you see immediately to the side of the walk, the burial site and marker for General Lee's favorite horse, Traveler. Going around the chapel and up across the quadrangle to the Colonnade, I decided to sit down on the steps and take a picture of the Chapel back across the quadrangle. As I started to sit, I noticed how deeply worn the steps were. I immediately wondered how many times one of my ancestors or relations had placed their feet on those same steps. Looking across the yard in preparation for taking a picture, I could almost see the students of all those past eras moving to and from their classes.

(continued on page 11)

Trekking thru OH, WV, and VA (continued from page 11)

After taking my pictures, I just sat there for a few minutes. Unexpectedly, I heard the door behind me opening. As I turned my head to look, out walked a tall handsome gentleman. We spoke and he immediately inquired as to whether he could be of assistance. Rather than say yes or no, I introduced myself and told him I was just seeing the sights of the place for the first time. I told him my gr-gr-grandfather and his brother had attended Washington College here, and the brother, Henry Ruffner, was once president of Washington College. We talked for a few minutes. He said he was a new employee in the Development Office. He gave me his name, mailing address, phone number and e-mail address, indicating he would be happy to be of assistance in the future. I thanked him for his gracious offer and we parted.

Reluctantly, I walked to the car to go back out the road I was on as I came into town. I would check out the motel I'd spotted. On the way, I could stop off at the Academy sign I had seen. They weren't too far from each other. Just a short distance off the main road, you see the Academy ruins. They are hauntingly magnificent. From where they sit on their small rise of land and facing to the east, they overlook the campus of Washington and Lee University and the valley beyond. Far off, beyond this valley, you see the mountains over which the morning sun must climb as it begins each day's journey across the sky.

The motel was adequate and inexpensive. After unpacking a few items, I went back to town and found a place to eat. It wasn't fancy, but it was satisfactory. Since it was not quite dark, I took one of the side streets and soon discovered the Visitor's Bureau. They were already closed, but now I knew where they were. Back at the motel, I took a few minutes to call my son and report on my whereabouts. I then turned in bringing to a close another satisfying full day.

June 10, 1999—Although I'm more than a little accustomed to rising very early and witnessing the sunrise, on this morning I missed the event. After a cup of coffee and a bit of breakfast, I was off to the Visitor's Bureau. They opened at 8am and I was there only a few minutes past their opening. The very congenial hostess gave me the information and directions to the Jackson Cemetery and other sites. The first site on my list of places to see was the Preston House. This was the home of Henry Ruffner during the first part of his tenure at Washington College. It had just recently been sold to a private owner and showed signs of their obvious loving attention. It looked freshly painted and there was work being done on the grounds. From here it was only a very short drive to the Jackson Cemetery. It took a few moments before I found someone to point me in the direction of the burial site for William Henry Ruffner and his family members. As I walked through the cemetery's older section toward the burial plot, I passed the monument and statue honoring "Stonewall" Jackson. A few steps down the path is the resting place of William Henry. After taking a few photos, I sat beside each marker and copied the inscriptions from them. As I departed the place, which was very lovely in the early morning hours, I felt very fortunate that I had the opportunity to make this journey. So far, through the events and places visited, I had actually been able to connect a physical place with my long-held imaginings. All my senses affirmed those things I had hoped to one day see and experience.

As I got in the car, I decided to make another attempt to drive through Virginia Military Institute. On the previous evening, after driving past the Visitor's Bureau, I'd tried to find the entrance by which I could drive through the campus. After a brief look at the map I had obtained, I was on my way. I had the same luck as the previous attempt—none! I ended up going the wrong way on a one-way street, turned around, and headed off in another direction. Circling the block brought me right back where I had been the previous night, at the front entrance to Washington & Lee, not V.M.I. As the direction I was headed took me to the highway out of town, I took it. I was soon on my way toward Luray. Along the first few miles, I tried spotting the turnoff for the Timber Ridge Presbyterian Church, which had been mentioned to me the previous day. I never saw anything that would give me a clue as to its location, so I just kept driving. I don't remember many details about the drive, but I very soon found myself at the turnoff for New Market and the highway leading to Luray.

Driving through New Market, I momentarily thought of the battlefield and the V.M.I. students who had stood in the front lines of the conflict there. But, as quaint as some of the shops appeared and as intriguing as the battlefield and its history was, I couldn't turn off nor stop. I would go over the mountain into the great Shenandoah Valley. After seeing firsthand the very basic mode of transport the Conestoga wagon would have provided, I was once again impressed with the arduous task the early travelers overcame in their quests. After a few minutes driving up the steep and winding highway, I came to the Massanutten Gap. There before me lay the Shenandoah. I was disappointed again there was no pull-off for an overlook at the crest of the mountain. I would have liked to stop and stare for even a brief moment. Even as I drove down the other side, I could not keep my eyes from looking as far off into the valley as I could see.

In the next RR&R, Joe arrives in Luray.

*The farther backward you can look,
the farther forward you are likely to see.*

~ Unknown



In Memoriam

Raymond C. Martin
New Market, VA
November 5, 1920 ~
December 20, 2000

Raymond C. Martin, 80, of New Market, Virginia, passed away on Wednesday, December 20, 2000, at Rockingham Memorial Hospital in Harrisonburg, VA. He is survived by his wife, Edna Turner Martin (desc. Peter Ruffner, Jr.).

Raymond and Edna were married on April 13, 1946. She is the daughter of Elma Virginia Ruffner Turner.

A Memorial Service was held at the Manor Memorial United Methodist Church in New Market of which he had been a member.

Raymond was born November 5, 1920, in New Market and was the son of the late Jesse and Virginia Golladay Martin.

He was a graduate of the former New Market High School and served with the U.S. Army during World War II.

Raymond was a retired poultry inspector for the federal government. After retiring, he was employed by the Harrisonburg Auto Auction.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by two sons: Rodney Martin, Mount Crawford; Jerry Martin, New Market; and one granddaughter, Alison B. Martin of Atlanta, Georgia.

Memorial contributions can be made to the New Market Volunteer Rescue Squad, PO Box 399, New Market, VA 22844.

RFA CEMETERY RESTORATION FUND

Many of the Ruffner ancestral grave sites need our attention. The RFA established this fund in 1999, for the development of a national survey of Ruffner Burial grounds with a photo inventory and directory of individual Ruffner Grave Stones. Our goal is to survey and process a list of those sites that need improvement, restoration or protection and take the necessary steps to safeguard these sites for future generations. Your contribution to support these RFA efforts are always welcome and gratefully appreciated.

Checks should be made payable to:
Ruffner Family Association
 designated as "Cemetery Restoration"
 and mailed to:
PO Box 351, Luray, VA 22835

The Editor's Desk

*"When a knowledgeable old person dies, a whole library disappears."
 ~ African proverb*

Are you one of the fortunate ones? Do you have living parents and/or grandparents? I don't! Come to think of it—I have probably become what most people consider to be an "old person" myself. All I know is I no longer have to ask for the senior citizen discount when I go shopping—alas, it has become an "automatic." Oh well, life has been good to me and I only have a few regrets. One of those is that I didn't take a yellow pad and pencil with me when I made daily visits to my mother in her comfy little home.

Even though I was just stopping by on my way home from work, she would fix me a bowl of popcorn and a soft drink. I would escape back in time—to the world of my childhood—when I was still young enough to sit on my mother's lap. We would chat about the family and she would recall little things from her past. Some of these events I remember, but others have escaped my overcrowded memory.

The most delightful thing she would do was sing some of her mother's songs. Her mother had been in Vaudeville and traveled all over the country with the Keith Circuit. She was billed as "Blanche Adelle - The Sunshine Girl." The songs were the cute little ditties performed on stage during the "Gay Nineties." Blanche, born Rosemary Fimbell on March 28, 1880, in the Alsace Lorraine region of France, came to this country when she was 8 years old. The family settled in New York City and her father opened a deli to support his growing brood. However, Rosemary had other ambitions. She ran away from home when she was 13 to join the circus. From there, she changed her name and launched her stage career. Unfortunately, I never thought to record my mother singing those delightful songs or even to write the lyrics down. My grandmother's songs are lost forever. Oh, how I would love to hear them again!

Don't be like me—ask questions of your parents and grandparents! Write their memories down! Record your own memories! Your children and grandchildren will thank you for it.

**With appreciation & love for your continued support,
 Cousin Joan**

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MARK THESE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR:

- April 1st - Next RR&R deadline**
- June 12-13 - Lexington, Virginia Tour**
- June 14-17 - Ruffner Family Reunion**
 Luray, Virginia