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Ruffner Family Association

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RUFFNER ROOTS & RAMBLINGS

Volume 4, Issue #2

May 2001

Special 2001 Reunion Issue

Biennial Reunions Were the Vision of Benjamin Ruffner Descendants

George Edward Ruffner and his cousin Lester Ward "Budge" Ruffner began to talk about a family gathering back in 1977, when George and his wife, Ruth, were visiting Budge and his wife, Bette, in Prescott, AZ. It would be 1991, before the reunion plans would finally take shape when Budge called George and asked, "when are you going to have the first Ruffner family reunion?" George thought for a moment and finally said, "how about this year?" Budge said, "that would be great and could we have it at Mason, IL as that was where all of Harrison N. and Kate Ruffner's children were born." Harrison (Peter, Sr. - Benjamin, Sr. - Benjamin, II - Andrew) lived the majority of his life on the land purchased by his father before 1842.

George's cousin, Gary Gene Ruffner, was president of the new Mason Civic Center at that time, so he called him about getting the center for the reunion. With a great deal of help from Gary, plans for the first Ruffner Family Reunion were underway.

Budge's daughter, Melissa Ruffner, had completed an extensive research on the Ruffner family history, which made it possible to get in touch with many more family members by the time of the next reunion in 1993, held in Prescott, AZ. It was decided to meet next in 1995, at Charleston, WV to commemorate the two hundred year anniversary of the arrival of Joseph Ruffner (brother of Benjamin I) and his family in the historic Kanawha Valley. Shirley Ann Sheets of Denver, CO agreed to chair the event and well over 50 descendants of Joseph, Benjamin and Emanuel assembled to walk in the steps of their Ruffner ancestors. The size of the reunions and list of interested cousins were growing by leaps and bounds.

In 1997, son of George and Ruth, Doug Ruffner of Inola, OK chaired the reunion at Luray, VA. Approximately 145 Ruffner family cousins, descendants of all of Peter & Mary (Steinman) Ruffner's children, came together from 19 different states - north to south - coast to coast. It was apparent that the time had come for further organization of the family. Under the tutelage of Organizing Chairman, Robert Newman Sheets of Denver, CO, a Board of Directors was established and the Ruffner Family Association was born.

Two years later, in 1999, Roberta (Ruffner) Kirwin of Lancaster, OH chaired the reunion in her home town to commemorate the migration of Emanuel and Magdalene (Grove) Ruffner (Peter & Mary's youngest child) and their family to the Northwest Territory in 1803, to homestead in Fairfield County, OH. The reunion boasted 172 registrants from 22 states. There, the Association was chartered and incorporated; and its first president, Sam McNeely, installed. Plans were initiated to update the Ruffner Family History compiled and published by Doris (Laver) Ruffner & Olive (Taylor) Ruffner in 1966 and 1969.

As we meet once again at Luray in the land of our ancestors for our 6th biennial reunion, the progress made to preserve our family history will be very apparent. The Ruffner Family homestead is once again owned by two of Peter & Mary's descendants, Jim and Judi McNeely. The vision of George Edward Ruffner and Lester Ward "Budge" Ruffner for an ongoing gathering of the Ruffner family has become a reality.

(See bios of George & Budge on page 4 and 2001 Reunion information on pages 5 thru 8 of this issue.)



Lester Ward Ruffner



George Edward Ruffner at Victoria Falls, South Africa, 1999

INSIDE THIS ISSUE—

RuffnerFamily WebSite Page 2
 The RFA Needs You! Page 2
 Message from the President . Page 3
 George Edward Ruffner and
 Lester Ward Ruffner Page 4
 The 2001 Reunion Schedule . Page 5
 Touring Luray Page 6
 Reunion Highlights Page 7
 Preserving Family History . . . Page 7
 Lodging for Lexington Tour . Page 7
 Picture This! Page 8
 Trekking - OH, WV & VA Page 9
 Family News Page 11

— and much more

Definition of Ancestors

Ancestors are found along with old furniture and captive skeletons in all our best regulated families.

Ancestors consist of forefathers and foremothers, to say nothing of fore-uncles and aunts, who have done something grand and noble, like being beheaded by a king or having a relative who was governor of a colony. This enables them to be pointed out with pride by their descendants forevermore.

Being an ancestor is one of the easiest and most attractive jobs. It merely consists of being boasted by one's descendants. Thus, many ancestors have been enabled to make good after they are dead. More than one ancestor who has gone out of this life a poor person, and only a few jumps ahead of the sheriff, has had the good fortune a century later to become the ancestor of some ambitious family with plenty of money and has become so famous in consequence, that his tombstone has had to be greatly enlarged and improved.

Ancestors are one of the most valuable and satisfactory of possessions. They are non-taxable and cannot be stolen. Their upkeep is practically nothing and they do not deteriorate with age and neglect. In fact, they increase in value as they grow older.

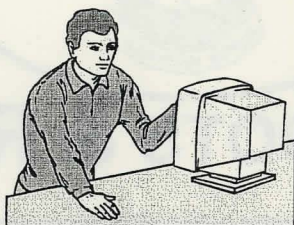
An ancestor 600 years old is worth a whole mass meeting of 56 year old ancestors. Adam is the oldest ancestor. He is 6000 years old and has a fine record, but is a common possession like education and liberty, so he is not valued very highly.

Almost all rich people own and operate ancestors, but the poorest men have them too. Many a man who hasn't two vests to his name, and cannot hold a job two minutes, has ancestors which are the envy of his two automobile neighbors. We cannot buy ancestors if we do not have them, but we can buy them for our children by marrying discretely. We should be proud of our ancestors, but not out loud.

**~ Pierson W. Manning
 from March 1963
 The Genealogical Helper**

The RuffnerFamily WebSite is Alive!!

[\[http://www.ruffnerfamily.org/\]](http://www.ruffnerfamily.org/)



Just in case you haven't heard, the Ruffner Family website is now online for your viewing pleasure. We are indebted to **K. Daniel Ruffner of Cincinnati, OH** and **Dan Ruffner of Washington, DC** for the work they have done to get the site up and running. They have done a marvelous job and we "thank" them for their work.

It does not contain an extensive genealogy of our family. This is not the intention. The site introduces the viewers to our Ruffner family, and provides information about the Ruffner Family Association and its activities.

Take a look at each of the site's active Topic pages, familiarize yourself with the information they contain, and pass along the site's address to your family members. Other Topics will be activated as soon as possible.

Although not all Topic pages are active, this beginning is very exciting and the site's future use has great potential as we utilize it to spread the word about the family, and the Ruffner Family Association and its activities. As it informs the viewers who are not familiar with the Ruffner Family Association, it will also effectively serve the RFA membership.

Presently, the following printable forms are also posted: A Membership Application; the 2001 Reunion Registration, and a Response Form to the Publications Committee's Survey initiative. The RFA members, or the site's other viewers, can easily print and use these forms. Now you can easily get a copy of the Membership Form to renew your membership, or to sign-up a cousin. Just print the form you need, fill it out, and send it in. At a later date, it might be possible to fill out your forms online and send them electronically.

Hope you enjoy the RuffnerFamily website! Look at the picture of the White House! Yes, it's on there—go find it!

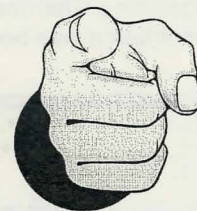
Help Wanted!

We need a couple of people to assist with the website. No technological expertise is needed. We need people with internet and e-mail access to monitor the GuestBook and Bulletin Board. These will be the next items added to the website. When these features go online and are active, they need to be regularly read and a brief reply given to the inquiries. In replying, the person would direct the inquirer to the best source for further assistance. Most often, this would be one of the Branch Coordinators. This can be a shared responsibility and the more volunteers we have, the easier it will be for each one.

To apply, send an e-mail note to: Joe Ruffner <jruffner@bellsouth.net>

The RFA Needs You!

The Nominations Committee is soliciting your assistance to find candidates to serve as an Officer of the Association, or as a Board Member. At the annual meeting of the Board in Luray, this June, we would like to present a full slate listing the names of those who wish to serve their fellow family members.



The functioning of the RFA, and each of its activities, depends on those who are willing to serve. Through the unselfish dedication of their time and efforts, those presently serving have helped the RFA reach its present status. Here is a brief listing of what has been accomplished:

- Continuing our Family Reunions with their unique tours and programs.
- This outstanding Family newsletter you are reading with its stories and news.
- A Publications Committee, whose members are working hard to update our genealogy and history.
- Our collective efforts, past and present, to memorialize and honor various ancestors.
- A fledgling, but very nicely presented, family website [www.ruffnerfamily.org].

(Continued on page 3)



**A Message from the Association
President Sam McNeely**

Greetings to each member of our ever-expanding family. Spring is in the air here in the land of our ancestors. It is delightful to watch the mountains turn green ever so slowly from their base on up to the higher elevations. It is also enjoyable to sit in our living room and watch the sun rise each morning over the beautiful Blue Ridge. It is gradually moving from South to North as spring arrives. It is easy to see why our family who settled here were devoted religious people.

Plans are being finalized for our upcoming reunion. Based upon registration, this should be the largest gathering of our family. It is encouraging to see people we have never met planning to attend this year.

I urge all of you to bring family artifacts for display during the reunion. Also, any item you might have to donate for our family auction will be deeply appreciated.

I was privileged to present a history of our Ruffner Family at the quarterly meeting of The Page County Heritage Association on Sunday, April 22nd. Many people in Page County are familiar with our family name, but are unaware of the accomplishments of the children of Peter and Mary who migrated to the western frontier. This gave me the chance to more deeply research our family and learn many interesting facts I did not previously know.

Our daughter, Pam, her husband Mark and granddaughter Anna, who are stationed in Germany, had the recent opportunity to tour Maienfeld, Switzerland. Through the technology of the Internet, they sent us pictures of their visit. Betty and I look forward to hearing first hand of their trip.

By now everyone should have completed and returned their family survey forms to their respective family representative. Once our reunion is completed, we will begin the task of assembling this information in a form allowing us to update and expand our family genealogy records. The results will be put into book format to continue the work begun by Doris and Olive Ruffner in the 1960s.

Finally, I encourage you to visit our family website and see the work recently added to this effort. Heartfelt thanks go out to the dedicated group that has brought this project so far in such a short period of time.

See you in Luray in June!

The RFA Needs You!

(continued from page 2)

☛ A Cemetery Preservation Committee compiling the names, locations, and status of the family burial sites.

As a family there are actions we could and should be taking, but we need your help in order to initiate any further projects. Without an infusion of people, their ideas, and their commitment, we can go no further than the activities mentioned above.

The Association needs you. We would love to receive an indication of your own willingness to serve.

The Officers are: President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Beside these officers, we have room on the Board of Directors for your involvement and ideas.

To respond to this appeal, contact either:

Joe Ruffner
11511 Jade Lane
Huntsville, AL 35803
(256) 882-6645
jruffner@bellsouth.net

Robert Sheets
1675 South Steele Street
Denver, CO 80210
(303) 733-4935
rsheets@aol.com

**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
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- Joseph Wilson Ruffner . . Huntsville, AL
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- Patsy (Reed) Ruffner . . . Riverview, FL
- Robert Newman Sheets . . . Denver, CO
- Shirley Ann Sheets Denver, CO
- Nancy Lee (Ruffner) Shifflett . Luray, VA
- Sally (Ruffner) Spangler . . . Lorton, VA
- Jane (Munro) Webber . . Broomfield, CO

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<http://www.ruffnerfamily.org/>

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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The Ruffner Family Reunion Founders

George Edward Ruffner, son of Walter Ray Ruffner and Theta Logan Ruffner, was born September 27, 1925, in Union Township, Mason, Illinois in the home of his great grandfather, Harrison Ruffner. He and his parents lived there one year before moving to their own farm home. He had five siblings: Robert (Bob), Wanda, Rhea, Lawrence and a half-sister, Pamela.

George attended East Union School for his elementary education; Mason High School for three years and then graduated from Effingham High School in 1942. He worked on a farm in northern Illinois and then in an ordinance plant in Joliet, Illinois until January 1943. George then entered the U.S. Army where he served for almost three years. For two years, he was in the South Pacific and was wounded in action on the island of Luzon on April 9, 1945. George was awarded the Purple Heart and received his discharge on October 24, 1945.

On Thanksgiving Day, November 22, 1945, he married Ruth Byers in Effingham, Illinois. They have six children: Marsha Kay, born November 6, 1946; son Mason on November 29, 1947; Rebekah on November 28, 1952, Janella Sue on January 25, 1955, Roger on July 9, 1960, and Douglas on October 19, 1962.

George worked in the oil fields until February 18, 1948, when he was appointed Postmaster in Mason, IL. He served in that position until June 15, 1953, when he transferred to a rural route carrier position. Due to health problems, he then transferred to Hurst and Bedford, Texas routes on June 15, 1965. He worked there until January 1, 1972, but retired after having three back surgeries. After recovery, George went to work for Absolute Security Company as a security chief in Hurst, Texas.

In 1974, George moved his family to Niotaze, Kansas to serve with Cookson Hills Christian Children's Home. He managed the ranch there. He and Ruth were aunt and uncle to some of the children; grandma and grandpa to others. After one year there, he was transferred to the main unit in Kansas, Oklahoma where he served as superintendent and Ruth worked in the office. They kept some of the children in their home for the next four years.

In 1979, the family moved to Miami, OK, where George served on the police force, with his daughter Janella, for the next nine years.

In January 1986, George began traveling with World Mission Builders (WMB) building churches and holding crusades, mainly in third world countries. This year, WMB has traveled and built churches in Missouri, Arizona and North Carolina. The photo on page 1 of this newsletter shows George on one of his many overseas missions to South Africa.

Most of the 28 years George spent working for the U.S. Postal Service, he also farmed, raised and showed American Saddle bred Palomino horses. He still enjoys trail riding and goes when he can find the time.

George writes, "The Lord has so richly blessed us with a wonderful family of six children, six grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. I count one of my blessings as seeing the Ruffner Family Reunion grow where it is today. It has been such a joy to meet all the cousins that I would never have known if it had not been for these reunions."

George is also a member of the Ruffner Family Association Board of Directors and its Cemetery Preservation Committee. We hope you have a chance to meet George and Ruth at the upcoming reunion. That "germ of an idea," to which George responded, "how about this year," has bloomed into a beautiful fully-branched family tree. ■

Lester Ward "Budge" Ruffner (1918-1996)

Budge was born in Prescott, Arizona on March 17, 1918, into a pioneer Arizona family who had arrived in the territory in 1867. His great-uncle, Morris Andrew Ruffner, filed the first copper claims near where Jerome now stands.

His parents were Mary Ethelyn (Ward) Ruffner, the first public school music teacher in the Arizona Territory, and Lester Lee Ruffner. Lester Lee operated the Ruffner Funeral Home, a business which his brother, George, won at the Palace Saloon on Whiskey Row in January of 1903. The wager that night centered around an unpaid livery bill owed by the undertaker, Frank Nevins, to Ruffner's Plaza Stables. In the best tradition of the old west, the business changed hands at the turn of a card. The business continues and is today the only funeral home from territorial days still in operation.

Budge was an unremarkable student until he attended Brophy Prep in Phoenix, where strict Jesuit priests taught him to study to remember, read to think, and write to inform, persuade and amuse. He spent two mid-teen summers as a Model A Ford driver and camp cook for expeditions led by Barnard College anthropologist, Gladys Reichard, for field studies in Navajoland in and beyond northeastern Arizona. "She taught me," recalled Budge sixty years later, "to judge people by their standards and not my own."

He attended Loyola University in Los Angeles and graduated from Cincinnati College of Embalming in 1939. Upon returning to Arizona, he entered the family business. In August of 1940, he married Elisabeth "Bette" (Friedrich) Ruffner of Cincinnati, Ohio, and they honeymooned in Arizona's Indian country. Subsequently, Budge enlisted in the Army Air Corps and served until 1943.

A giver to his community and state, Budge organized the 20/30 Club in 1943 to facilitate the continuation of Prescott's Frontier Days celebration and the World's Oldest Rodeo, which his Uncle George had helped to organize in 1888. He was chairman of Prescott's Centennial Commission and was chosen "Man of the Year" for 1965-66. In 1964, he became a columnist for the Prescott Courier, penning stories of the Southwest which he loved so much. Over the years, he wrote articles and reviews for Arizona Highways magazine, New Mexico magazine, Arizona Attorney magazine, Southwest Art, Western Folklorist, *Poems Southwest* and *Arizona Anthem*.

Budge was also the author of three books, *All Hell Needs Is Water* (1972), *Shot In The Ass With Pesos: A Collection of Frontier Tales* (1979), and *Ruff Country: Tales West by Southwest* (1994). With his daughter, Melissa, he co-authored the *Arizona Territorial Sampler: Food and Lifestyles of a Frontier* (1982, now in its 3rd edition).

His long list of community and state involvement includes charter member of the Prescott Corral of Westerners in 1962, and acting as its president in 1964. He was a charter member of the Arizona Historical Foundation, at the invitation of his lifetime friend, the late Senator Barry Goldwater. He served two terms as its president and was recipient of its coveted Al Merito award. Budge introduced Barry Goldwater on the steps of the Yavapai County Courthouse for every announcement the Senator made for national office (including his presidential bid), save his last senatorial race. Budge was a member of the Indian Commission of the State of Arizona and a member & chairman of the Arizona Lottery Commission, appointed by then Governor Bruce Babbitt.

(continued on page 8)



Back to the Shenandoah Valley for the 2001 Ruffner Family Reunion Luray, Virginia

The members of the Ruffner family are certainly the founders of the Town of Luray. Isaac Ruffner conveyed in 1812, the fee simple title to the purchasers of the first eighteen lots on which it was established. His brother, Jonas Ruffner, was one of the trustees appointed by the legislature. William S. Marye, another trustee, married his sister, Mary; and John W. Abbott, a third trustee, married his sister,

Nancy. In 1997, we met in Luray to honor the memory of our first ancestors in America, Peter & Mary (Steinman) Ruffner, who emigrated from Lancaster, Pennsylvania in 1739, to live on a land patent given as a wedding present by her father, Joseph Steinman on the banks of the Hawksbill Creek. This year, we return to honor Isaac, Jonas and the other descendants of the Peter, Jr. and Elizabeth (Burner) Ruffner branch of our family.

GENERAL SCHEDULE OF REUNION ACTIVITIES

Thursday, June 14:

Early Registration (Days Inn/Reunion Headquarters)
Publications Committee Meeting
Self Guided Tours of Luray (see page 6)
Genealogy Research at Page Public Library
(open until 9:00pm)

Friday, June 15:

Reunion Registration (Days Inn/Reunion Headquarters)
Hospitality and Sales Room Open (Days Inn)
Displays of Family Photos & Artifacts (Days Inn)
Self Guided Tours of Luray
Genealogy Workshop
Reception at The Ruffner House on the Homestead

Saturday, June 16:

Reunion Registration (Days Inn/Reunion Headquarters)
Board of Directors Meeting
Self Guided Tours of Luray
Civil War Living History Encampment at
Mauck Meeting House (see Highlights, page 7)
Children's Special Activities (see Highlights, page 7)
Tour of Luray Caverns (see details on right)
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:

Monument Dedication
Family Church Service
Family Picnic at Lake Arrowhead
Family Group Photo
Auction of Family Donated Items (see Highlights, page 7)
Close of Family Reunion

Luray Cavern Tours

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 enclosed reunion registration form.

For General Reunion Information, contact:

Nancy Lee Shifflett
2001 RFA Reunion Chair
PO Box 351, Luray, VA 22835
Email <pyramid@shentel.net>

LODGING IN LURAY:

Days Inn of Luray (Reunion Headquarters):

138 Whispering Hill Road, Luray, VA 22835
Phone: (540) 743-4521 [www.daysinn-luray.com]

The Cardinal Inn: 1-888-648-4633

1005 East Main Street, Luray, VA 22835

Luray Cavern Motels: (540) 743-4531

US Hwy 211 West, Luray, VA 22835

The Mymilyn Inn: 1-800-296-5105

401 West Main Street, Luray, VA 22835

Yogi Bear Jellystone Park (for RV & Camping)

on US 211 - Phone (540) 743-4002

For additional lodging information, contact:

The Luray-Page County Chamber of Commerce

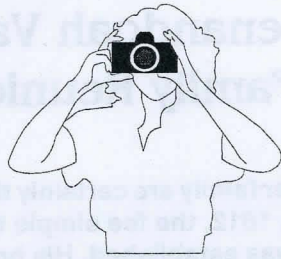
Telephone: 1-888-743-3915

Internet: www.luraypage.com

Email: pagecofc@shentel.net

Touring Luray

Directions and maps have been prepared for reunion registrants to go on self-guided tours of Luray and vicinity. A sampling of those historic sites are as follows:



Barbee Confederate Monument

Herbert Barbee was born in Luray on October 8, 1848, a son of William Randolph Barbee, a distinguished sculptor. In 1878, he went to Italy to study art. After his return to America, he had studios in New York, Baltimore, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Washington and Luray. His wife was Blanche Stover, a descendant of Peter Ruffner, Jr. They had four children.

The statue of the Confederate infantryman was suggested by a Confederate picket whom Barbee saw one day standing at the summit of Thornton Gap on the Blue Ridge in a snow storm with the muzzle of his rifle pointed down to keep out the snow. The monument unveiling took place July 21, 1898, with much celebration in the town of Luray.

Massanutten School

The restored one-room school is a project of the Page County Heritage Association. They moved it from the Massanutten area of Page County to its present location at the Inn Lawn Park. The building's move, restoration and furnishings were made possible by donations of interested citizens of the Luray area. Inside are sixteen double desks, a central heating stove made of cast iron, a hand-made teacher's desk and chair, old wooden slates and many other relics used when the school was in service. On display are over 180 pictures and other antiques.

Willow Grove Mill

Located at Old Mundellsville on the west branch of Hawksbill Creek, the area where Peter and Mary Ruffner's oldest son, Joseph, and his family lived prior to migrating to Kanawha County. It was here that Dr. Henry Ruffner, distinguished author and educator, was born.

Joseph Ruffner was the original owner of the mill on this site. It was burned in October 1865, as part of the Union Army Campaign to destroy the Confederate food supply. The mill presently standing produced flour from about 1885 to 1943.

Reuben Ruffner Home

The exterior of this house remains the same as it was with few exceptions. The interior has been remodeled and beautifully furnished and decorated in keeping with the style of the house. The house is made of hand-made brick, produced on the property. The log house out back is the original home of Reuben Ruffner. It is constructed of giant logs, notched and chinked with mortar. There is a large chimney at the rear of the cabin and a tremendous fireplace (see *Preserving Family History* on page 7). Reuben eventually sold this property and moved to Kentucky in the 1780s.

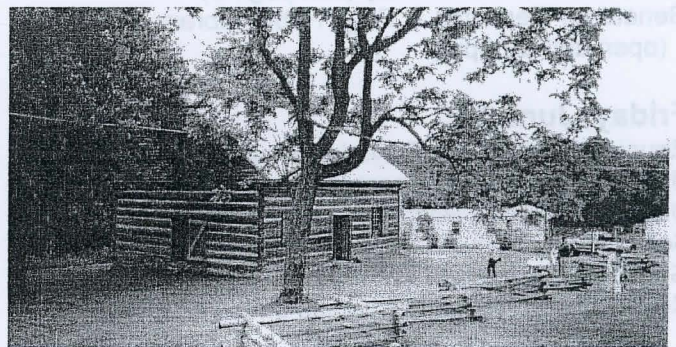
Benjamin Ruffner Home

Benjamin was the second son of Peter & Mary (Steinman) Ruffner. He is believed to have built the original part of this homestead, however subsequent owners have added to and modernized the property using the original log structure as the center of the house. Benjamin Ruffner married Catherine Burner and they had six children. After her death, Benjamin married Elizabeth Heistand and had six additional children.

Emanuel Ruffner Home

Emanuel married Magdalene Grove and settled here in 1785. The house is a tremendous log building covered with frame and constructed in an L-shape with large columns on the front porch. There are some 10 or 12 rooms in the building and an immense chimney rises on the west side of the home. The house was called "Locust Grove."

In 1805, Emanuel Ruffner sold his property to Ulrich Biedler and moved with his family to Fairfield County, Ohio. He served in the American Revolution and lived over 90 years. He is buried in the Ruffner-Friend Cemetery near Lancaster, Ohio.



Mauck Meeting House

(photo from Ruffner Family Library)

The Mauck Meeting House is listed in the Virginia Historic Landmarks Register. The original log structure was built by the neighbors for religious purposes. The neighbors, most of whom were Mennonites from Switzerland and Southern Germany, built it around 1770. It was constructed of large pine logs neatly dovetailed at the corners, whitewashed inside and out, and roofed with chestnut shingles typical of most local construction of the time. In winter, the building was heated by a large six plate stove made at the local iron furnace and inscribed, "D. Pennybacker 1799."

Mill Creek Primitive Baptist Church

The present church was built in 1889 after leaving the old church at Mauck Meeting House. Elder John Koontz was the first moderator of this church and its predecessor. The church was built by the congregation and the bricks for it were made nearby. Presently services are held once a month in this building. Ruffner descendants have been regular attendees and influential members of the congregation.

2001 REUNION HIGHLIGHTS

Following is just a sampling of special reunion events.



Special Activities for Children: We have some fun and exciting activities planned especially for the younger children. At the historic one-room Massanutten schoolhouse, 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.

Civil War Living History Encampment: On June 16-17, the 10th VA Infantry, in conjunction with the Ruffner Family Reunion and Page County Heritage Association, will conduct a Civil War Living History Encampment. It will be held at the Mauck Meeting House where Stonewall Jackson's army camped at the beginning of his famous Valley Campaign on the outskirts of the town of Luray. There will be life of the soldier, drill and firing demonstrations on both days.

~The Ruffner Family Auction ~

The culmination of our Ruffner Family reunion is always a picnic (after church) and a high-spirited auction. The proceeds are used to support the Ruffner Family Association's reunions, publications and other special events.

We need your help in two ways:

First, donate something to be auctioned off. Items with a Ruffner family connection are especially valued—a book written by or about a Ruffner, a quilt made or used by a family member, a tool, picture frame, basket, hat or other clothing items. Whatever you wish to donate should be brought to registration. Please include information about its origin, significance and/or value and your name, as well. All and any item—large or small—is gratefully accepted.



Second, bring cash or checks and come prepared to outbid all comers. Items will be on display at the Reunion Headquarters Hotel and the picnic prior to the auction for you to preview. Your purchase price will help defray reunion costs while we all have a heck of a good time!

Can't make it to the reunion this year, but you would like to contribute an item? Send it to the Ruffner Family Association, c/o Nancy Lee Shifflett, 917 West Main Street, Luray, VA 22835.

Melissa Ruffner

2001 RFA Reunion Auctioneer

Preserving Our Family History

At reunion time, it is important to give thought to a lasting memorial to our family at the place we gather. This year as we meet again in the town founded by our ancestors, we thought it would be appropriate to honor this achievement and erect a monument that would stand through future generations.

The Mayor and Members of the Luray Town Council have approved our proposal for a monument to be erected at the park at the Page Public Library. It will be dedicated to the memory of Isaac Ruffner, upon whose property the town of Luray was founded in 1812, and the other descendants of his parents, Peter Ruffner, Jr. and Elizabeth Burner.

Having gained permission to erect a monument, we subsequently learned that a very important part of our history was in need of repair and restoration. **The Reuben Ruffner Log Cabin**, which is possibly the oldest Ruffner dwelling in existence, needs our attention. The cabin is presently owned by the Koontz family and they have undertaken its restoration.

What can we do to help? We would like to make a monetary contribution toward this effort on behalf of the Ruffner Family Association and have a plaque placed on the cabin commemorating it as the first dwelling of Reuben Ruffner and his family.

Our family members have successfully supported the erection of the 1997 Peter & Mary Monument at the original Homestead Burial Ground and the 1999 monument to the Ohio Ruffners at the family burial ground in Lancaster, OH.

How can you help? By sending a contribution to the **Ruffner Family Association**, PO Box #351, Luray, VA 22835. Please designate that your contribution is for the **Ruffner Memorial Endowment**.

Please send a donation toward these projects and preserve our family history for your descendants.
Thank you!

Lodging Arrangements Set for Lexington Tour

As reported in the February issue of this newsletter, the Ruffner Family will visit Lexington, Virginia and Washington & Lee University on June 12th and 13th. Since then we have received a **Group Rate with Lexington-Days Inn Keydet General**, 325 West Midland Trail (US-60). Please call for your own reservation: **(540) 463-2143** or by calling: **(800) 329-7466**. The Group Rate for one night, June 12th is: two people - two beds, **\$49.95** plus tax. For each additional person: **\$5.00**, added rollaway: **\$5.00**. Children 12 and under are free. Pet **\$5.00**. The Group Rate will hold until June 1, 2001. Say you are with "**The Ruffner Family Reunion**" group. The motel is located one mile from Historic Lexington Town Center on the ancient Midland Trail.

If you plan to attend this special pre-reunion activity, we need to know ASAP so we can alert our hosts in Lexington and at Washington & Lee University of the number of Ruffners they can expect. Please 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. For more information on W&L University, log on at www.wlu.edu and click on to University History link. **See you in Lexington.**



Picture This!

Just imagine, you have a very important document relating to an undiscovered part of the family's early history. Or, maybe, it is a collection of letters which provides some significant information about your own family's history. Now pretend, no one other than you knows about it - not even your children. Being tucked away in a drawer or in some box in the attic, they don't get a chance to tell their story, do they?

And, this is precisely the way a lot of these items are lost. Or, they remain obscure from the sight or knowledge of those who wish to know about them and the information they contain.

Each of us has heard something similar to: *"I remember that old Family Bible grandmother used to always have on her bedside table. I wonder what became of it?"* or, *"Who has grandpa's old family photo albums and the collection of his grandfather's letters?"*

And, each of us knows these things tend to get scattered, forgotten, and/or lost. Let's do something to prevent any further loss and allow them to tell their part of the family story.

We're not asking you to give us any of your items, but we would like to know about them and have copies of documents, letters, or photos of artifacts which relate to the Ruffner family. So, we encourage you to make copies of them and also make an inventory list of all the items in your possession. Then, share a copy of each of these with the RFA. As you can imagine, these would be tremendous assets and most helpful to the Publication Committee's work in writing the family history. At the Reunion, there will be a collection area designated for you to drop-off your contribution of copies and your inventory list. If you will not be at the Reunion, send your copies to the Branch Coordinator for your family branch. Please put your name, date copied and source, on the back of each copy.

To assist you in this project, you may bring the more significant of your family documents, especially the family bibles, to the Reunion. We will make digital photos of them to preserve and share the information they contain. We won't be able to do everything you own, but we will do what time allows with the selection you bring. You will be given a digital copy of your items by mail or electronic file transfer after the Reunion.

In some future year, one of our descendants might say: *"Wasn't it thoughtful of them to preserve copies of these documents, pictures and stories about our early ancestors? While I was looking through them, I found my gr-great grandfather. He was...!"*

We hope we get to share with you all of the activities of the Reunion in Luray in June. Ask at the Reunion Registration area for information about the collection area and getting your items recorded. If you comb your hair and put on a nice smile, we'll also want to get a photo of you! ■

The Ruffner Family Reunion Founders

Lester Ward "Budge" Ruffner *(continued from page 4)*

Budge also taught as adjunct professor of Southwestern history and literature at both Yavapai College and Prescott College.

In 1994, Don Deder, his longtime friend and colleague at Arizona Highways magazine wrote:

"Then what are we to do with this huge, western-dressed *hombre* with a laugh loud enough to fell ponderosa pines? Who lurches through social gatherings, shamelessly bragging about his honored historian wife, Elisabeth, their three children and eight grandchildren, one-of-a-kind cronies, his sassy and sometimes snooty hometown, its surrounding countryside, and the hosts of Indians, Jews, Mexicans, Slavs, Blacks - ministers, murderers, politicians, priests, lawmen, sainted and painted ladies - fools, leaders, connivers, gamblers and achievers - that he met in the flesh or encountered in history?"

"What to do with this minstrel who into his eighth decade continues to commit to paper his discoveries and ideas? At least, he is a living treasure of Yavapai County. Probably of Arizona. Possibly of the nation."

"Why...let us ENJOY him!"

On May 14, 1996, Budge Ruffner, this treasured man, passed away, leaving us with a legacy of stories, memories and the realization of his vision - the reunification of Peter and Mary (Steinman) Ruffner's descendants.

Budge's wife, Elisabeth, and daughter, Melissa, both members of our RFA Board of Directors, will be attending the 2001 Ruffner Family Reunion in Luray. They will have copies of Budge's first book - *All Hell Needs Is Water* - for sale to benefit the Ruffner Family Association. Try to stop by - say hello - and take time to read one of Budge's stories. ■

Editor's Note: The staff expresses their appreciation to those who helped us with the reunion story on page 1 and the bios of our reunion founders on page 4. To George Ruffner for sharing his memories, his photo and his inspiring life story. To Elisabeth Ruffner for her memories of the first reunion and the photo of her late husband, "Budge." To Melissa Ruffner for sharing her accomplished father's bio she wrote for the reprint of his book, *All Hell Needs Is Water*, from which we generously took excerpts.



*A man has three names -
the name he inherits,
the name his parents gave him,
and the name he makes for himself.
~ Author Unknown*

Reminder
Have you paid your 2001 dues?
We need your support!

Trekking thru OH, WV, and VA

My trip to the Ruffner Family Reunion and beyond,
June, 1999

by Joseph Wilson Ruffner

The final episode - Joe arrives in Luray

June 10, 1999—There before me, across the road, past the fence, on beyond the pasture with its little shaded burial plot, standing against the slope of the rise, was the Ruffner House. I didn't have to read the sign, although it confirmed as much. I knew I had arrived. I believe I might have had to wait for a car or two to pass. I don't remember. I only know I was compelled to make it onto the little gravel road circling the fence.

The little road is too narrow to sightsee if you're unfamiliar with it, but I did take a few quick glances toward the burial site in the pasture and the house. Stopping along the road to look never entered my mind. I drove to the house, stopped, and got out. Here stood the very place, which only a week before had been the focus of a gathering of family members and guests. They had assembled to rededicate the Homestead and its return to family ownership. It was purchased earlier in the year by James Ruffner McNeely and his wife, Judith. As I stood there, the manager of the house, Sonia Croucher, came forward to greet me. After introductions, she offered to show me about. The next few moments were, and remain, like an oft repeated dream. I remember what I saw and heard, but can't put it to any order. After a tour of the house, we ended up in the kitchen. I asked to use the phone to call Nancy Lee Shifflett. She was delighted to hear I was in town and had called. We had spoken in Lancaster about my plan to visit Luray and I had told her I would call. She invited me to meet her and her husband, Bill, for dinner, which I accepted. Up to this point, no thought had arisen on my part as to where I would stay. As I continued talking with Nancy Lee, I thought I'd just get a room at the Best Western where I was to meet them. As soon as I hung up the phone, Sonia said, "Would you like to stay here?" What a great solution. Yes, indeed, I would love to stay there and I did. I had hesitated to inquire since I'd given no prior notice of any kind. Sonia provided me with some ice cold tea to drink and went off to prepare a room for my stay.

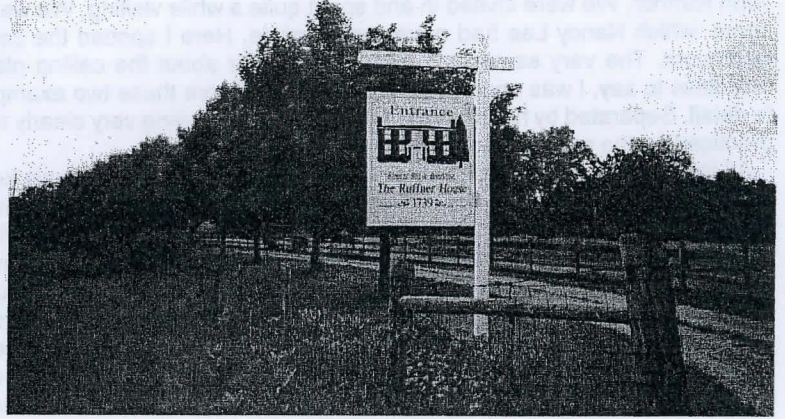
I decided to walk out to the burial ground and have a look. After spending some time there in reflection, I walked back to the house and had a look at the exterior. As I relaxed on the porch, I let my thoughts wander back and forth between those visions I had from reading and hearing parts of the family history. What I could now visualize in its actual state proved not too dissimilar.

My room was ready and I unpacked a few items to get freshened up and go meet Nancy Lee and Bill. After a most pleasant meal, I followed them to their house where I left my car as Nancy Lee and I went off on a tour. I can't begin to enumerate nor name all the sites she showed me, but that doesn't diminish the pleasure it gave me to see all of them. Before parting we agreed to meet after lunch the next day. Back at the homestead, I spent some time sitting on the porch and then retired for the night.

June 11, 1999—Early the next morning, I spent more time on the porch just enjoying the new day's beginning. The time was very pleasant and unhurried. I didn't have to move unless I wanted to. Allowing for plenty of time to explore Luray's main street and have lunch, I got ready to meet Nancy Lee. One of the first places I noticed was the Luray/Page County Visitor's Center. I stopped in and got some information. I didn't ask for much as I had my own guide to the area. I did inquire about a book which I had heard mentioned. They recommended I go down the block a couple of doors and inquire there. I made my way to the shop and entered. They, too, were out of the title I wanted. After a few moments of pleasant talk about the Luray area, I left. I drove out to the little shopping center and stopped long enough to purchase more film. As I drove back with thoughts of eating lunch, I remembered the little place next to the Visitor's Center. I parked and went in. It was spacious and very nice in a quaint sort of way. By no means gaudy. The fairly good number of customers scattered about indicated to me it was probably good. They usually are if frequented by the locals. It reminded me of the lunch counters of the 40s and early 50s. I decided to try the Reuben sandwich, which turned out to be an excellent choice. As I took my last bites, I decided I had a few more minutes before meeting Nancy Lee. I would remain here in this pleasant place, relax a moment, have a cigarette and wait for the time to go. I believe I must have blinked at least a couple of times when the lady at the table next to mine said, "Is your name Ruffner?" Was this a wild guess by some local or did they question every stranger about who they were and what business did they have in Luray? I didn't know, but I politely told her that, "Yes, I am a Ruffner. My name is Joe Ruffner." She told me her name was Isabel Fleharty and said, "We're related." We carried on a "who are you" kind of conversation for a few moments and I moved a chair over to her table to talk. About this time, her lunch partner returned to the table and I was introduced to Emalice Jewell, yet another relative. Sonia had been eating there when I had walked past going to the little shop and back. She had pointed me out to them. What an amazing set of coincidences. I had been in town less than 24 hours and already the natives knew who I was. We continued our pleasant talk until they had to leave and I had to meet Nancy Lee. Those few moments made me feel great. Sort of like Sam McNeely must feel, as he mentioned recently, when someone speaks to him as he visits the Luray post office.

I met Nancy Lee at her office and we decided to drop my car off at her house and continue the sightseeing. She had lots more places to show me. Again, we saw way more than I can remember or name at this time. We did take a short run up onto Massanutten Mountain from which I got a few decent photos. From this vantage point, you can look down on the Shenandoah Valley and see the Shenandoah River, the Hawksbill Creek and its branches, and the town of Luray. On this day, the air was slightly hazy so the photos aren't great, but they'll do till I get better ones. I'll be better prepared for 2001, when the next Family Reunion is in Luray. From there it was off to more

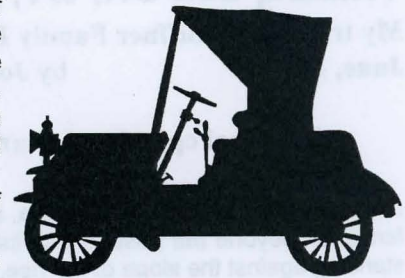
(continued on page 10)



Trekking thru OH, WV, and VA

(continued from page 9)

to more sites. Somehow and sometime in this afternoon's excursion, we ended up at the farm of John Ruffner. We were invited in and spent quite a while visiting. We were then given a tour of the home, which Nancy Lee had never been inside. Here I spotted the same fine beadwork on the woodwork. The very same as I mentioned earlier about the ceiling planks in Emanuel's cabin. Needless to say, I was once again amazed. Here were these two examples of the same attention to detail. Separated by hundreds of miles, but each showing very clearly the handiwork learned and practiced by the respective builders.



All the time before, between, and after visiting the various sites, we kept up a steady stream of conversation. Nancy Lee was full of ideas about sites to include in the itinerary for the 2001 Reunion. I believe I not only saw the sites of the 1997 Reunion, but got a glimpse at most of the sites for 2001. Back at Nancy Lee and Bill's house, we continued our conversation and I got to view some of her collection of Ruffner artifacts. All too soon I felt I must excuse myself so they wouldn't be imposed upon any longer. Also, they had other plans for the evening to get ready for and I needed to get out of the way. We said our goodbyes as I was planning to leave in the morning. I am most grateful they spent so much of their time and effort on making this part of my trip pleasurable. These past two days had been very exciting and wonderful, but even two days with an experienced native to guide me didn't cover it all. It would take many days and closer looks. Think I'll just plan to spend some extra time before and/or after the 2001 Reunion in the Luray area. Also, spend some more time at Lexington, either going to the Reunion or coming home.

After parting, I got a quick bite of KFC and headed out to the Homestead. I took some photos of the house and grounds in the favorable late afternoon daylight. Then it was porch sitting time. For more than two hours, I sat on the porch watching the sun go down and just let my mind have its whimsical thoughts. I looked out over the pasture burial ground and said a silent thank you to our ancestors resting there for their vision and fortitude in coming to this land, and being an influence in its and our own shaping. I looked at the huge box woods in their semi-circular pattern and imagined the other travelers who were greeted by the sight of them when they came calling. I will one day tell you the story of the time long ago when I made my first trip and walked past them for the very first time.

When this night's time to retire finally came, I broke this reverie and made my way up to the room knowing that I was most definitely satisfied with the whole experience of this trek. I thought to myself what a wonderful time these days had been for me. Seeing old friends, meeting new ones, and going to all the places I'd gone. Each was etched on my mind and in my heart for posterity. Even if the photos were no good, I had the memories. Tomorrow I would make the journey back home.

June 12, 1999—Once again, the morning's light broke softly and quietly here over the Shenandoah Valley, and I enjoyed it in all its glory. We had been given yet another day. As I sat on the porch and slowly drank my coffee, I hurriedly tried to absorb every look and feel of this place.

Soon it was time to load the car. I settled the bill for the stay, thanked Sonia for the warm and gracious hospitality. As I left Luray and the Shenandoah Valley and drove toward the Heart of Dixie, I felt very much at ease. I had actually lived to see these places of the family stories and the imaginings I had developed as I heard those stories. I was full of the past 10 days' visions and feelings. ■



Postscript from Joe:

I am indebted to a great number of people for helping make this trek the indescribable experience it was. In this case, I won't name any. Each of you truly know the part you played in this experience. So I simply say with much warmth and humility: **"THANK YOU, I LOVE YOU ALL."**

MARK THESE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR:



- June 12-13 - Special Ruffner Family Visit to Washington & Lee University, Lexington, VA**
- June 14-17 - Ruffner Family Reunion, Luray, Virginia**
- August 1st - Next RR&R Deadline**

Participate in this publication by sending us your family stories; by submitting your family news including obits, marriages, births, etc.; by sending us copies of old family photos with their history; by submitting photos and history for "What Is It? Where Is It?"; by sending in queries and by making suggestions for future issues.

We look forward to hearing from you!



In Memoriam

**Radio and TV voice
of Ohio farming for
38 years is silent.
G. Edwin Johnson
(desc. Emanuel)
Delaware, Ohio
February 12, 2001**



Ed Johnson

Ed Johnson, son of Della Marie George and James Johnson, died suddenly at Grady Memorial Hospital in Delaware, Ohio at 63 years of age. His great grandmother was Rebecca Ruffner, who was a great granddaughter of Emanuel Ruffner.

He is survived by his wife, Marilyn; children, Dr. Julie (John Lima) Johnson, Bart (Sheryl) Johnson, foster child, Julie (Kevin) Volbert; grandchildren, Adam, Eric and Nathan Johnson, Sarah and Elizabeth Lima, Gage and Lauren Volbert; brothers, J. Lyndon Johnson and Gary Johnson; sister, Karen Johnson.

Ed was a native of Fairfield County, Ohio, raised on a 230-acre general livestock farm. He graduated from The Ohio State University with a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics and agricultural education.

He worked as a teacher before going into broadcasting. Ed was recruited by the Ohio Farm Bureau to work in Fairfield, Pickaway and Ross counties and started doing brief radio programs for that job.

In 1972, he founded Agri Communicators, parent company for his radio and TV programs and *Ohio's Country Journal*, where he continued to serve as president and chief executive until his death.

From a studio at his cattle and grain farm in southwestern Delaware County, he broadcast his morning radio show five days a week.

His 30-minute Saturday morning TV show *Agri Country* was carried statewide by ONN, as well as the Home and Garden cable channel, the national satellite Channel Earth, and 11 central Ohio affiliates. In addition, his Agri Broadcast Network radio program had 75 affiliates in the Midwest.

He was inducted into the Ohio Agricultural Hall of Fame in 1997. The same year, Agricultural Communicators in Education honored him with the national Reuben Brigham Award for his contributions to the understanding of agriculture.

He was a member and lay leader of Bellpoint United Methodist Church in Delaware County, and a veteran of the U.S. Navy.

Following services at the Bellpoint church, Ed was laid to rest at Oller Cemetery. A scholarship fund has been set up in his honor at the College of Agriculture, The Ohio State University.



***Though little, I'll work as hard as a Turk,
If you'll give me employ,
To plow and sow, and reap, and mow,
And be a farmer's boy.***

~ The Farmer's Boy
(Anonymous, before 1689)

Betty (Staten) Ruffner September 6, 2000

Betty Ruffner, 81, Lancaster, Ohio, passed away at Fairfield Medical Center. She is survived by sister, Alice Montavon of Portsmouth, OH; brothers, William (Lois) Staten of Lancaster and Thomas (Mary) Staten of Lancaster.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Robert Pearl Ruffner (descendant Emanuel); parents, Carl and Geraldine Staten; brother, Jack Staten; and sisters, Alma Shumaker, Helen Gang and Marjorie Willis.

Betty's husband, Robert, was a great-great-great grandson of Emanuel Ruffner. He served in War II and was a Deputy Sheriff in Fairfield County, OH. During the Korean War, Robert went back in the Naval service as a career Petty Officer. He later served in Viet Nam.

Wedding Congratulations



Mr. & Mrs. Thomas E. Teele on their honeymoon
at The Ruffner House, Luray, Virginia - May 1, 2000

Announcement is made of the marriage of Tammy S. Getz and Thomas E. Teele on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 2000, at 2:00 pm. The informal ceremony took place in Manassas, Virginia.

A small, intimate wedding reception took place on Sunday, April 30, 2000. Tammy and Tommy honored their deceased parents with a Unity Candle Ceremony and the 2nd dance for which they played the song, "I Will Remember You."

Tammy is a descendant of Peter, Jr. She is the great granddaughter of Elma Virginia (Ruffner) Turner. She and Tommy are both memorialists for Kline Memorials in Manassas, VA. Tommy carves and installs cemetery headstones. Tammy is a designer and manages two offices for the business.

QUERY

Identity of girls in photo sought



Do you know who the little girls are in the above photo? The lady holding them is Mary Elizabeth (Turner) Getz. Mary Elizabeth was the daughter of Elma Virginia (Ruffner) Turner and the grandmother of the inquirer, Tamara Getz Teele. Tammy was just 2 years old when her grandmother died. She treasures her grandmother's beautiful crochet work, quilts, and embroidery she inherited, but only knows bits and pieces about her. Tammy has been told that the children are Ruffner descendants. Can you help Tammy with this mystery?

Please respond directly to:
 Tamara Getz Teele
 9240 Niki Pl. Apt. 302
 Manassas, VA 20110

The Editor's Desk

Editing equals enlightenment and education

One of the greatest perks in editing the RR&R is all the information you receive. I have found out more about the Ruffner family than I thought I would ever know. Of course, it doesn't hurt to have some of the best family historians on the Editorial Board.

I know the Ruffner family had some illustrious ancestors back in the 18th and 19th centuries, but it is becoming quite apparent from the stories in this issue that the family has produced some pretty notable descendants in the 20th & 21st centuries.

When we started the newsletter in 1998, I had no idea there were so many Ruffner stories. It makes me think there are many others to be told. I can still use some more enlightenment and education. How about sharing?

Appreciation is expressed to Tammy Getz Teele for sharing her family information and Roberta (Ruffner) Kirwin for keeping us advised of what's going on in Lancaster, OH.

Please keep our Association in the "black" by mailing your 2001 dues to the RFA.

And, please try to attend the 2001 Reunion in Luray. Nancy Lee (Ruffner) Shifflett, 2001 Reunion Chair, and President Sam McNeely have been working tirelessly to put together a great affair. Stop by and say hello to the RR&R staff when you're there.

With thanks & love,
Cousin Joan



Ruffner Family Historian celebrates 93rd birthday

Doris Laver Ruffner celebrated her 93rd birthday April 1, 2001, with her husband Caleb and daughter Sara (Ruffner) Lytle.

When Doris Laver Ruffner and Olive Taylor Ruffner began their research of the Ruffner family, there were no personal computers; there was no Internet. They traveled all over the country exploring old burial grounds, searching libraries, visiting and interviewing numerous descendants to get the information they needed. Then they sat down and used a typewriter to record the information. This information, in the form they created, ultimately became the actual pages of our family history, *Peter Ruffner and His Descendants* and its supplement, published respectively in 1966 and 1969.

We hope you will join the Ruffner Family Association in extending warm birthday wishes and overwhelming thanks to Doris Laver Ruffner.



Doris Laver Ruffner at the 1997 Reunion Luray, Virginia

Happy Birthday Doris and many, many more

We love you!

RR&R Editorial Board

- Robert Sheets, Contributing Editor Denver, CO
- Joe Ruffner, Contributing Writer Huntsville, AL
- Bill Myers Mission Viejo, CA
- K. Daniel Ruffner II West Chester, OH
- Melissa Ruffner Prescott, AZ
- Nancy Lee (Ruffner) Shifflett Luray, VA
- Shawn Williams Catawissa, PA

Registration Forms for the 2001 Ruffner Family Reunion are enclosed. Don't miss this event! Register today!