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### Ruffner Roots and Ramblings, Vol. 6, Issue 4

Ruffner Family Association

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# RUFFNER ROOTS & RAMBLINGS

Volume 6, Issue #4

December 2003

## The Spirit of Christmas Lives On

Imagine a Christmas of long ago. It is the year 1724, in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Our family matriarch, Mary Steinman, the oldest child of Joseph & Fronica, is 10-years-old. It has just been 6 years since her father purchased the land on which their home stands. There are four other children in the household this Christmas: Anna, age 8; John, age 6; Joseph, age 4 and Elizabeth, age 2. Three additional children would be born in the years ahead.

Did they have a Christmas tree? We hope so! After all, it was the German settlers who introduced the tradition of "dressing" a tree to America in the early 1700s, although more than a century would pass before the Christmas tree would be accepted as a religious symbol in American homes. Pioneer families living in rural settlements made simple decorations for their trees. The ornaments were generally made from materials gathered in nearby woods or fields. There may have been clusters of nuts, berries and pine cones nestled in its branches. It may not have been as glittery as today's trees, but oh it must have been a great thrill to see the tree Joseph brought home after it was so beautifully bedecked. Perhaps they even decorated the rest of the cabin with green branches and other homemade decorations.

Did they have presents? Fronica could have made dolls for her daughters out of scraps from old dresses, leftover yarn or corn husks. She may have knitted stockings for each child and filled them with small homemade gifts, nuts and fruit. Maybe Joseph found time after the harvest to carve wooden toys or build footstools out of leftover wood.

On Christmas Eve, the whole family may have gathered around a cozy fire while Joseph or Fronica told the story of Jesus' birth. Perhaps they made the holiday brighter for less fortunate neighbors and friends by sharing their bounty. Christmas Day would certainly have included a visit to the meeting house where they would sing praise to God in the strong Mennonite tradition to thank him for the blessings he bestowed that year. And, afterward they would return home to a special Christmas repast, planned for weeks in advance.

In today's world, we often become overwhelmed by Christmas. But, how would we possibly manage if we lived in a crude home, made all our presents out of scraps, chopped down our own tree, dragged it home by hand, made its decorations and cooked dinner in a fireplace? Not very well, say we! Despite all the hardships those long-ago ancestors endured - they managed to keep the "Spirit of Christmas" alive and pass its tradition down through generation after generation.



### *I am the Christmas spirit!*

I enter the home of poverty, causing pale faced children to open their eyes wide, in pleased wonder. I cause the miser's clutched hand to relax, and thus paint a bright spot on his soul. I cause the aged to renew their youth and to laugh in the old, glad way. I keep romance alive in the heart of childhood, and brighten sleep with dreams woven of magic. I cause eager feet to climb dark stairways with filled baskets, leaving behind hearts amazed at the goodness of the world. I cause the prodigal to pause a moment on his wild, wasteful way, and send to anxious love some little token that releases glad tears ~ tears which wash away the hard lines of sorrow. I enter dark prison cells, reminding scarred manhood of what might have been, and pointing forward to good days yet to be. I come softly into the still, white home of pain, and lips that are too weak to speak just tremble in silent, eloquent gratitude. In a thousand ways I cause the weary world to look up into the face of God, and for a little moment forget the things that are small and wretched.

*I am the Christmas spirit! ~ E. C. Baird*

May the "Spirit of Christmas" remain with you forever.  
Joyous greetings to one and all from the Ruffner Family Association



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~ and much more

## A Message from the President

*K. Daniel "Dan" Ruffner*

I have just returned from a wonderful weekend trip in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Of course the main destination was Luray and I was fortunate enough to stay at the beautiful Ruffner House Bed and Breakfast. Staying at the Ruffner House is special due to the ownership of this historic home by Jim and Judi McNeeley. Jim is an 8<sup>th</sup> generation Ruffner, and he and his wife Judi are continuing to add historical items of Ruffner interest. Many books which tell the history of the area and the Ruffner family can be found in the parlor room. They recently received some interesting pictures from RFA member Sara Lytle which provide a historical record of how the home looked fifty to sixty years ago. Sonia Croucher, the Innkeeper, provided an excellent breakfast each morning of my stay.

With so much important work currently proceeding within the Ruffner Family Association, there was time set aside to meet with RFA Treasurer and COO, Sam McNeely. I greatly appreciated Sam's time to meet with me one-on-one, as well as with Bill and Nancy Shifflett, former RFA Treasurer. See page 3 of this issue for Nancy's latest news.

I was very pleased to get the chance to spend some time in the beautiful home of Pam and Mark Flasch. We met to go over their extensive work with the publication of the update to "*Peter Ruffner and His Descendants*." So much has been accomplished on the publication project up to this point and we are beginning to push this project through to the final stages. Unfortunately, that work will take much time and effort to see it through to completion. Pam and Mark have done a wonderful job over the last couple of years compiling the information into a database, as well as uncovering many interesting and important stories of our past. As promised, there will be a report put together for the membership, and those who have already purchased subscriptions for the book, to let everyone know where things stand, plus the expectation and form of the final publication. Watch for more information in the next Ruffner Roots & Ramblings.

As mentioned in the previous newsletter, the success of the Ruffner Family Association and its projects are the result of volunteer efforts of an active membership. Some items I would like you, or someone you know, to consider are:

- **The Publications Committee** - We, as an organization, are greatly indebted to the work that Pam and Mark have done so far on the book. We are looking for those that are willing to help review, write, and to be part of a group which will see the publication project through to completion. Most of the next steps will begin after January 1, 2004.
- **The Reunion Committee** - We are still in need of additional members for this standing committee. The duties include working with other members of this committee to help organize the biennial reunions the Ruffner Family Association sponsors.

*(continued on page 3)*

## 2004 Board of Directors Meeting

The Ruffner Family Association Board of Directors will meet in **Cincinnati, Ohio** on **June 18-19, 2004**. The stated purpose of this gathering is for Association business, but there will be time set aside for touring the area, research and fun. **This meeting and its attendant activities is open to all members of the Association.**

Cincinnati is an important city in the history of the Ruffner family. Many Ruffners lived there or passed through it on their way west. Colonel Ernest Howard Ruffner lived his final years in the home which was President William Howard Taft's birthplace. This residence is now part of the National Park Service and open for tours. Daniel Ruffner of the Charleston area (and resident of Holly Grove) is buried across the Ohio River in Northern Kentucky. In the 1800s, Cincinnati was the national leader in meat production. The salt produced from the Ruffner mines in Malden provided a means to cure the meat during this dominant period in Cincinnati's history. The Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County has an extensive collection of genealogy resources.

Built within seven hills along the Ohio River, Cincinnati has its own unique charm and character. The Museum Center at Cincinnati's Union Terminal is an art-deco masterpiece. Music Hall, built in 1878, is home to the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. The John Roebling Suspension Bridge, which crosses the Ohio River between Cincinnati and Covington, was built between 1856 and 1866. Roebling went on to build the famous Brooklyn Bridge. Opening in the summer of 2004, will be the National Underground Railroad Museum. With IMAX Theatres, sports, amusement parks, zoos, aquariums, museums, shops and restaurants, Cincinnati will provide the backdrop for a wonderful weekend of family business and fun.

Additional information will be included in the March 2004 issue of RR&R. **We hope you and your family will plan to join the members of the RFA Board for this weekend of family camaraderie in beautiful Cincinnati, Ohio.**



**A Message from the President** (continued from page 2)

The upcoming 2005 Lancaster County, Pennsylvania reunion is in the development stages. Be a part of one of the most visible and ongoing activities of our organization.

- **The Endowment Fund and the non-profit status of the Ruffner Family Association** - These are actually two different concerns, but each needs people willing to work with the business details of the organization.

I would love to hear from you if you have an interest in participating in one or more of our initiatives. If you would like more information before deciding, please contact me. Remember, you will not be alone. In each of these positions, you will have peers along with advisors. Please feel free to contact me by e-mail, letter or telephone. These opportunities will allow you to play a key role in the future of the Ruffner Family Association.

**Dan Ruffner**  
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**Will Luray have a ‘Ruffner’ Mayor?**

It is possible! **Nancy Lee (Ruffner) Shifflett** was quoted in the November 20<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Page News and Courier* ~ “Because of strong encouragement from Luray citizens and our business community, I have decided to seek the position of mayor for the town of Luray in our upcoming May elections.”

Nancy is serving her second four-year term as a member of the Luray Town Council. She was first elected in 1998, and was the top-vote getter with 315 votes. Re-elected in 2002, her present term ends in 2006, so if her bid for mayor is unsuccessful, she can still serve out the remaining two-years of her term on council. She is the only female member of the council. If elected in May, she would be the **first female elected mayor** in one of Page County’s three towns. There was a female appointed mayor from 1978 to 1980.

In her newspaper interview, Nancy stated: “I feel we need leadership to return to the professional management we have enjoyed in the past several years. Projects such as downtown revitalization and the historic district, town hall renovations, purchasing the Wrangler Annex facility, plus continuing economic development and the train depot need to be continued. All of the projects we’ve started, we need to keep them going.”

Nancy, a Luray native, is an eighth generation descendant of Peter & Mary (Steinman) Ruffner through Peter Jr., John, Reuben, John B., Lester L. and Malcolm E. Her father, Malcolm E. Ruffner, served on the Luray Town Council for 16 years. Well versed in the historic and business community of Luray, Nancy has been active in the Page County Heritage Association, worked in the business community for 31 years and taught in the Page County school system for 5 years.

Could it be possible that 192 years after the founding of Luray in 1812, and 265 years after the settlement of the Hawksbill Patent, that a Ruffner daughter would be elected to the highest seat on the land of her forebears? We’ll just have to wait until May of 2004, to find out. In the meantime, **best wishes are extended to Nancy Lee (Ruffner) Shifflett for a successful race.**

**Ruffner Family Association**  
Luray, Virginia

**K. Daniel Ruffner, President** . . . . . Ohio  
**Phyllis (Rinker) Hershock, Secretary** . . . PA  
**Sam McNeely, Treasurer & COO** . . Virginia

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 Nancy Lee (Ruffner) Shifflett . . . . . Virginia  
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 Jane (Munro) Webber . . . . . Colorado

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Chartered and incorporated in 1999, to support an association of members who will research and preserve their common heritage through the collection of artifacts and documents which form the basis for knowledge and appreciation of the historic role played by the Ruffner Descendants and their collateral lines in the settlement and development of the American Frontier.

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## Reflections of the 2003 Reunion

The 2003 Ruffner Family Reunion in Prescott, Arizona was a wonderful event. Its success was enhanced greatly by the participation of the director and staff of the Sharlot Hall Museum (see RR&R, September 2003). Melissa Ruffner, chairman of this year's reunion, received the following letter from Richard Sims, director of the museum in August, and is graciously sharing it with our readers.

Dear Melissa:

*The Sharlot Hall Museum is deeply grateful to be included in the Ruffner Family Reunion 2003, and for the donation from the extended Ruffner clan in the amount of \$500.00. Your monetary support will apply to the many services of the Museum, including the archival work so useful, we are pleased to know, to your reunion.*

*I often remark, humorously I intend, that during my workweek at the Museum, occasional days are a "blur of Ruffners," what with Elisabeth consulting and cajoling me about matters of historic preservation, Becky conspiring with and cajoling me about matters of open spaces and antelope country, George the scientist generally confounding me, and you, Melissa the historian and festival manager . . . well, just cajoling me.*

*If normal times are a blur of Ruffners, then what I encountered a few weeks ago, with scores of your kinfolk coming to Prescott, was a "perfect storm" of Ruffners. From the piedmont of the Virginias, to the rolling plains of the Midwest, to the basin-and-range country of the Southwest, the fast-moving front of Ruffners created their own weather, which was evident in the precipitation of memories, the gently buffeting winds of change, and the promise of sunrise and clear skies in your youngest generations.*

*The Sharlot Hall Museum is honored to have been a part of Ruffner Reunion 2003.*

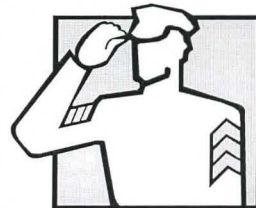
Sincerely,  
Richard Sims  
Director



Richard Sims & Melissa Ruffner

## A Salute to Emanuel

If you are a descendant of Emanuel Ruffner, you are eligible to join the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) or Children of the American Revolution (CAR).



Emanuel served in the capacity of Teamster and was best known for Public Service. Those who performed "Public Service" had MAJOR responsibilities. Perhaps Emanuel carried a gun and fought at times, but most likely the majority of his time was spent in carrying out crucial tasks such as making sure soldiers were taken care of, that they received medical treatment when needed and the transport of the soldiers to and from the battle field. His duties also would have included the care of horses and mules making sure they were always ready to go and overseeing the transport of armaments. Whatever tasks he performed, his service played an important role in the American Revolution.

**What are the DAR, SAR and CAR?** They are the most inclusive genealogical societies in the country. They are service organizations dedicated to promoting patriotism, preserving American history and securing America's future through better education for children. They afford us a way to honor our ancestors who fought for the freedom and love of our country.

**How do you become a member?** Recently, I went through the process and can tell you it is not difficult, but it is a rather time consuming procedure. You need to prove your lineage through a primary source, such as birth and marriage certificates, or a secondary source, such as wills, probate, census records, Bible records, or school records. You work with the Chapter Registrar in your area and they will help you gather all the necessary documentation you need. Once your application is complete, it will be sent to Washington, DC where it will take 4 to 6 months to process. During this time, you can attend meetings and functions, and participate in most of the activities.

**What are the members like?** Each chapter has a personality of its own. If you are not comfortable with the first chapter you visit, don't hesitate to visit others until you find the place which is just right for you. When I visited our local DAR chapter, I felt right at home. The members were somewhat casual and ranged in age from 25 to 85. All ages mingled, worked together and there were no cliques. There are 72 members in our chapter with anywhere from 20 to 40 attending each meeting. Being a mother of 3 children and working full time, I was worried I would be pressured to donate large amounts of time. That was not the case at all. The members assured me I was welcome to attend meetings when it was convenient for me and participate in activities as much or as little as I wanted.

**What are the meetings like?** The meetings begin with the Pledge of Allegiance; proceed to old and new business,  
*(continued on page 5)*



**A Salute to Emanuel** (continued from page 4) treasurer's report and other officer reports. There is a 20-30 minute program followed by coffee, snack and social time. The programs are very interesting and educational. Some of our chapter's recent programs have been a visit from a Circuit Court Judge, A Witch from Salem, Antique Stitchery, American POWs in W.W. II and a visit from Abigail Adams (an educational performance).

**How do you become a member?** The website for the DAR "How to Become a Member" is <http://www.dar.org/natsociety/content.cfm?id+92&hd+n&pf=n>. It takes you step by step through the process. There is a link in step #3 for locating a chapter in your area.

This is the website for the SAR: <http://www.sar.org/states/statchap.htm>. On this page there are instructions for contacting local chapters for assistance in becoming a member.

If you have children under 18 years of age, you can assist them in becoming members of the CAR through your local DAR or SAR chapter, after you receive your membership.

By: **Marria Blinn, Orland Park, IL**  
Email: [Mari104123@aol.com](mailto:Mari104123@aol.com)

*Editor's Note: According to DAR records, descendants of Joseph and Benjamin are also eligible for membership.*

## Making Plans for the 2005 Reunion



Left to Right - Phyllis (Rinker) Hershock, Dorothy (Ruffner) Rinker & Betty (Marion) Addison

In August, Phyllis (the RFA Secretary) and her mother, Dorothy, who live in York, PA, paid a visit to Betty Addison in Lancaster, PA to discuss Steinman history and plans for

the 2005 Ruffner Family reunion scheduled to take place in Lancaster County.

As requested in the September issue of RR&R, Phyllis is still seeking information and volunteers for the reunion planning - particularly pinpointing areas with Steinman or Stoneman (also referenced as Stehman, Staneman, Steman or Staman) family connections. **CAN YOU HELP!** Please contact Phyllis before the end of this year at [chershock@cyberia.com](mailto:chershock@cyberia.com) or 2575 Sandy Lane, York, PA 17402.

## Windstorm Claims Ancestral Tree

Sam McNeely, RFA Chief Operating Officer, reports that extremely high winds uprooted the huge shade tree at the Ruffner Cemetery in Luray, Virginia on November 13<sup>th</sup>. The beloved tree was located on the knoll where some ancestral graves of the Ruffner family are located on the grounds of The Ruffner House. It fell across the old antique fence surrounding the grave sites. The fence is severely damaged, but did its job by possibly saving the grave stones from irreparable damage. The Ruffner Monument, erected in 1997, was not disturbed by the event.

Tentative plans call for determining the age of the tree, salvaging of the wood, saving all possible pieces of the fencing and ascertaining whether additional grave sites have been exposed.



Photo by Sam McNeely

## Website Update

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

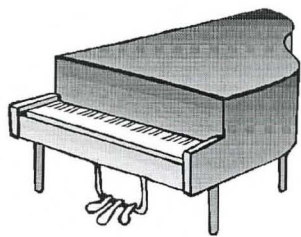
Photos and information from the 2003 RFA Reunion held in Prescott, Arizona are available on the website.

Our web traffic numbers have increased substantially this year ~ 491 visitors in July, 455 in August and 480 in September. In 2002, we averaged between 200 and 300 visitors in good months.

**Log on and check your family website today!**



## Virginia Rigg Fund Established at Denver University



As Virginia Rigg celebrates her ninety-ninth year leading up to her centenary on July 2, 2004, she is being honored by her former students, family and friends who have established a Fund in her name at the University of Denver, Lamont School of Music. Known as the Virginia Rigg 'Seat' Fund, it will go for the naming of chairs in her honor in the newly built Newman Center for the Performing Arts. Dedication of these seats will take place at a special event during her birthday week of celebrations next July.

Cousin Virginia is one of the founding members of the Ruffner Family Association and has attended all of our reunions since 1993. But, the very first reunion to which she traveled was by train in 1915, when she and her mother, Alma Ruffner Rigg, traveled from Denver, back to Alma's birth place, Mason, Illinois.

Virginia was born in Denver, Colorado, the youngest child of Samuel ([1854-1929] and Alma Rigg [1860-1966]. Not many people alive today can claim their parents were alive during the Civil War. Her early piano training was at her mother's side. Alma was known in the Denver area as the Horse & Buggy Teacher, traveling all over the area giving piano lessons, often for barter. At the age of seventy, Alma began a second career as a writer, a path Virginia has also followed having written for the 1999 Ruffner Family Reunion, "*Harrison and Catherine Ruffner in the Valley of the Little Wabash*." She is currently at work on her memoirs which includes a narrative on the history of music and education in Denver for the past 100 years.

Virginia began teaching at the age of fourteen along side her mother. She studied at the Denver College of Music before becoming an assistant professor of piano and music theory. She taught at Colorado Women's College and the University of Denver. She returned to private practice in 1960, and has never completely retired, still giving a few lessons a week in her home studio. This is the home she has lived in for fifty years and has just completed the building of a new addition. Here she will welcome many of her Ruffner cousins who are planning to be in Denver for her Centenary Birthday.

The Performing Arts Center, known officially as the Robert and Judy Newman Center for the Performing Arts, was opened this summer and is a premier facility in the major expansion and building program at the University. Beside the Lamont School of Music, it houses the Gates Concert Hall, the Byron Theatre, the Hamilton Recital Hall, a Music Library with keyboard/computer lab, a Recital Salon and Recording Studio. The Lamont School of Music has become the 27<sup>th</sup> "All-Steinway School" in the nation.

If you would like to participate in the **Virginia Rigg 'Seat' Fund** for the endowment of chairs in the Newman

Performing Arts Center at the University of Denver, you can do so by sending a check made out to the "**University of Denver**" with notation to the "Virginia Rigg 'Seat' Fund." Such a gift to the University is tax exempt under 501-c3. Mail the check to **Richard W. Holz, Office of Gift Planning, University of Denver, 2190 South High Street, Denver, CO 80208**. Enclose with a note designating your gift. Send a copy of your note to Bob Sheets, 1675 South Steele Street, Denver, CO 80210 so the family can acknowledge your gift.

## News from the Past

### A PLEASANT AFFAIR MARRIAGE OF MISS ANNA STAHL December 13, 1871

Yesterday afternoon between the hours of two and three, the long and anxiously looked for event which has created so much talk and anxious anticipation on Wyandotte Street, came off with the expected eclat. The residence of the bride's father, C. W. Stahl, esq., was literally packed with the bon ton of Kansas City society, the occasion being the marriage of Miss Anna Stahl, one of our belles, to Frank Ruffner of Charleston, Virginia.

An unusually large number of invitations had been distributed throughout the city; consequently long before the hour appointed the parlors commenced filling with expectant and anxious guests. Never was there a more brilliant crowd assembled to do honor to such an occasion. The toilets of the ladies were not only elegant but brilliant; it appeared as though it had been understood EN-TOUT that they should vie with each other, to see who could appear to the best advantage. We noticed among the different toilets, several stunning silk and satin dresses, with elegant overdress. The gentlemen, as is usual upon such occasions, were out in their best Sunday-go-to-meetings, and when we say this, the description is complete, with the exception of one or two gentlemen who, being deeply impressed with the importance of the occasion, and feeling also that the affair was applicable to themselves, had indulged in swallow-tails and white kids.

At precisely 2:30 p.m., the bridal party made their appearance, and as they took their places before the officiating clergyman, the loud murmur of the many voices was instantly hushed to a silence which would soon have become painful but for the voice of the minister as he calmly and impressively commended the bride and groom "to the care and watchful tenderness of the Giver of all good." Asking "for them a share of all of life's joys, and trusting that He would ward off all of life's cares, sorrows and ills."

Scarcely were the solemn words, "I pronounce thee man and wife" uttered, scarcely had the minister ended his  
(continued on page 8)



# The Marye Family Story

By Kimberly (McNeely) Fulcher

William Staige Marye came to the Ruffner family by marriage and into Page County history, not just by achievements, but by the events that brought him to Page County.

The Marye family emigrated to Colonial Virginia from England in the early 1700s. William, the son of Peter Marye and grandson of the Rev. James Marye of Rouen, Normandy, France, was born February 15, 1775, in Culpepper County. In 1794, at the age of 19, William, just out of William & Mary College, came to the Massanutten Valley, where he became acquainted with Peter Ruffner, Jr., owner of the land upon which the town of Luray would later be founded.

On May 16, 1802, William married Mary Ruffner, daughter of Peter and Elizabeth (Burner) Ruffner, who William would later describe to their son, James Theodosius, in a letter ~ "Your mother was the most beautiful young lady, I think, I have ever seen." They began their married life at Hillside Farm, now in East Luray. They became the parents of 15 children: Elizabeth (1803), Eleanor (1804), Peter (1807), William Staige, Jr. (1808), Diana (1809), Frederick Augustus (1811), John Green Ruffner (1813), James Theodosius (1814), Ann Maria (1816), George Thomas (1817), Abram Sowers (1819), Lewis Conner (1821), Mary Ann Staige (1823), Simon Bolivar (1825) and Willis Young (1827). Due to the lack of antibiotics and preventive medicine, a mainstay today, they lost William Staige, Jr. at age 4, Ann Maria at 1, Abram at 8, Peter at 24 and Lewis Conner at 26.

Long before "baby books" were available for marking important moments in the life of your children, the family Bible was used for keeping such notations. The lives of the Marye children were recorded in not just any Bible, but a Bible printed by John Adams and William Hancock in 1803. Sadly, on the first page is a passage written by William to his son and namesake: "I give this Bible to my son William Staige Marye, Junr. This son never enjoyed the above mentioned bequest as he departed this life not long after the bequest was made, February 3, 1812."

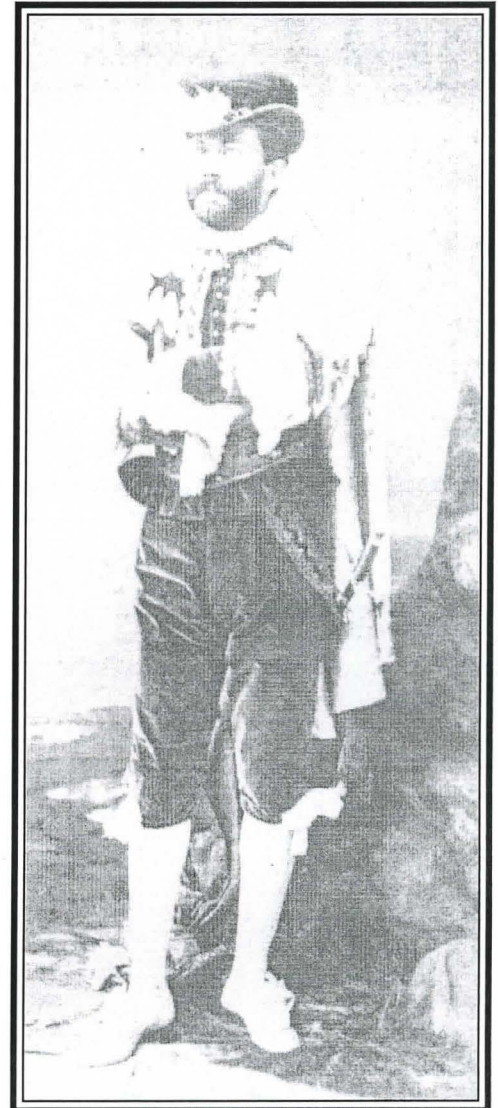
William Staige Marye made a name for himself in the community not just as a businessman and farmer, but as a forerunner in the efforts to establish the town of Luray as a potential seat of government for the creation of a new county. It was his hope that residents of the area could one day attend to their legal matters in the Massanutten Valley rather than in Shenandoah County, which was a 30 mile trek over the New Market Gap to Woodstock. Marye and other prominent citizens petitioned the Virginia General Assembly to create the new town of Luray. Under the Act of 1812, ten acres of land, the property of Isaac Ruffner, would be laid into lots to establish the town of Luray. William Marye, John R. Whiting, John W. Abbot and Jonas Ruffner were appointed as trustees.

William continued to serve the people of Page County until his death in September 28, 1837. Mary Ruffner Marye stayed at Hillside until her death September 26, 1852.

Their oldest and youngest sons, Frederick Augustus and Willis remained in Virginia. Frederick Augustus was a county surveyor, appointed by the Governor in 1831 (7 years) and again in 1838 for 7 years. Their son, James Theodosius left Page County in 1835, and settled in Mississippi. His younger brother, Lewis Conner died in New Orleans on September 12, 1847. Their remaining sons, George Thomas and Simon Bolivar, would later be drawn west by the 1849 Gold Rush in California.

George Thomas found he had a mind for business and after clerking in a store in Luray, he moved to Baltimore, Maryland where he opened his own store and later married. He joined a group of "Forty Niners" in August of 1849, on their journey to San Francisco. There he became what Page County historian Harry Strickler described as "one of the giants in that new city in banking and brokerage." He later moved to Virginia City, Nevada where he was a prominent citizen in the business and political life of that mining boom town. He owned the Marye Hotel, which was a popular spot for Nevada silver barons. The hotel burned in 1951.

*(continued on page 8)*



George Thomas Marye, Jr., 1870



**The Marye Family Story** (continued from page 7)

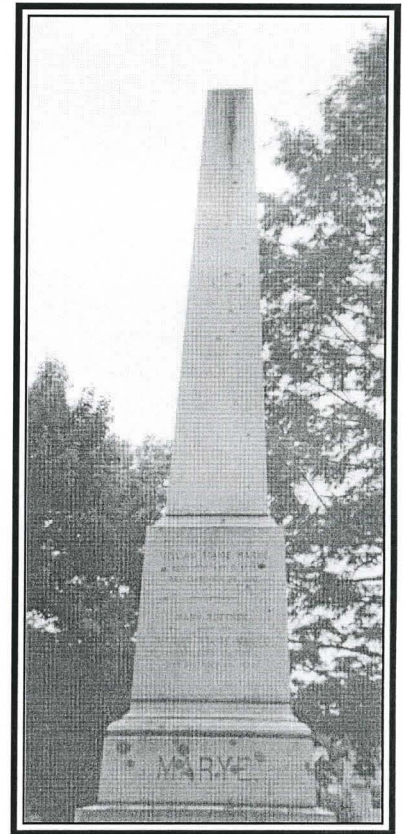
Simon Bolivar received his A.B. and Bachelor of Law Degrees from William & Mary College. He went to the Yucatan in 1848, where he served as an officer of the revolution. In 1849, he settled in California and became the first States Attorney. Beginning in 1852, he lived in Oregon, Washington, DC, Memphis, Tennessee and spent his remaining years in Bolivar County, Mississippi.

George Thomas Marye's two sons had careers in the military and diplomatic fields. The oldest, William A. graduated from West Point and rose to the rank of Brigadier General. The youngest, George Thomas Jr., born in 1849, was a gifted scholar, successful businessman and a high ranking diplomat who studied in Italy, Germany, France, Spain and England. He received the degree of Bachelor of Law at Cambridge with first honors. In 1875, he was admitted to the California Bar and practiced for a time in San Francisco. Thereafter, he joined his father in the banking business in Virginia City. He eventually became president of the San Francisco Stock Exchange. He also achieved the rank of Major in the U.S. Army. His illustrious career continued when he was made Ambassador to Russia, from 1914 to 1916. He was the last U.S. Ambassador to the Czar's government. Czar Nicholas, II conferred upon him the "Order of Saint Alexander Nevsky," one of the last two he would bestow. In later years, George Thomas Jr. lived and practiced law in Washington, DC, where he passed away on September 2, 1933.

George Thomas Marye, Jr. never forgot his roots in Page County. In the 1920s, he had a tall staff placed in the center of Green Hill Cemetery in Luray in memory of his grandparents, William Staige Marye and Mary Ruffner Marye, inscribed with their names and dates.

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*Editor's Note:* The photograph of George Thomas Marye, Jr. on page 7 was contributed by **Jane Ruffner Lucas**. It was the property of her father, **Jacob Daniel Ruffner**. According to Harry M. Strickler, written on October 21, 1950, the photo was made around 1870, in San Francisco.



**The Marye Monument**

**News from the Past** (continued from page 6)

congratulations, when the happy pair were surrounded by friends, who for twenty-three minutes poured in their congratulations. Exactly forty-two ladies kissed the bride during these few moments, and if the groom had not come to the rescue, taking his bride off nearly per force, there probably soon would have been nothing left but the orange blossoms and veil. As soon as the congratulations were ended, the bridal party and friends led the way to the dining room, where the guests were feted and feasted, and where a genial and jolly time was had until the hour arrived for the departure of the bridal couple for their southern home.

The bride was attired in an elegant garnet trailing silk, low neck and short sleeves, trimmed with very rich white satin and fringe. White kid gloves of a beautiful pattern, heavy gold bracelets, neck chain of rough gold, hair a la coronet, tulle veil and orange blossoms and white kid boots, completed her toilet.

The first bridesmaid, Miss Ella Sites, was superbly attired in a velours garnet silk, trimmed with fringe and velvet. Miss Sites looked charmingly, notwithstanding this is the third wedding in which she has officiated as bridesmaid, within the last forty-eight hours. The second bridesmaid, Miss Perry of St. Joseph, wore a silk traveling dress, which was elegantly trimmed with velvet and fringe. The groomsmen, Mr. G. F. Ballingall and Capt. Baylor, as they were attired as is usual upon such occasions, it is not necessary to enter into particulars.

The groom, Mr. Ruffner, was neatly attired in black broadcloth, except his vest, which was white, white kids and tie. The presents to the bride from friends were numerous and elegant. From Mr. Ruffner a tea set of thirteen pieces, solid silver and of beautiful design and finish. From Mr. and Mrs. Jewett beautiful and costly pickle jar. From Mrs. Geo. Schooley solid silver card receiver. From Mr. Stahl solid silver water pitcher and tray and full set of silver goblets. From Mrs. Stahl an elegant neck watch chain.

At six o'clock p.m., the newly-married couple took the North Missouri train for St. Louis where they visit for a few days, thence to New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and thence home to Charleston by Christmas. Thus has gone one of Kansas City's fairest daughters, "May she live long and be happy."

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*Editor's Note:* The foregoing article was contributed by **Betty L. Addison of Lancaster, PA**. Anna Stahl and Frank Ruffner were her great-grandparents. Frank was the son of Benjamin Franklin Ruffner, grandson of Tobias Ruffner and great-grandson of Joseph Ruffner, Sr.



# Letters from the Past

The following letter is one of two passed on to RR&R. We will include the text of the other in the next issue. Copies of the letters, with transcriptions, were received third-hand, therefore we do not know who we should credit with the transcription of same. However, our thanks go out to that person and we will reproduce them in accordance with their interpretation.

The letters were written by Catherine Ann Ruffner [1799-1849], the daughter of Daniel & Elizabeth (Painter) Ruffner, to her first cousin, Martha Jane Ruffner [1813-?], daughter of Joseph Ruffner, II, who resided in Cincinnati, Ohio. Daniel [1779-1865] and Joseph Ruffner, II [1769-1837] were the sons of Joseph Ruffner, I [1740-1803] & Ann Heistand [1742-1820], and the grandsons of Peter & Mary (Steinman) Ruffner.

The occasion of this first letter was the death of Martha's father, Joseph II on May 10, 1837, in Cincinnati, Ohio. When these letters were written, Catherine, who was married to David C. Ruffner [1803-1846], son of Benjamin Ruffner II [1772-1831] & Anna Coffman [1778-1853], lived in Fairfield County, Ohio.

Of particular significance are those mentioned in the letter ~ Silas Ruffner [1807-1871], son of their Uncle Tobias; Benjamin Ruffner III [1810-1876], David C's younger brother; Abraham Ruffner [1781-1854], their uncle; Martha Ann Ruffner [1814-1835], daughter of Abraham Ruffner, and Eliza Ruffner Haskins [1809-1887], Martha's older sister. It further illustrates the kinship and love through the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> generations of the Ruffner Family. Though separated by what would have been many miles in those days, their closeness is evident in every line of Catherine's letter.



Pleasantville May th 28 1837

Dear Martha

*In the trying and afflicting scene of Gods providence which you have been called to pass through, the tenderest sympathy has been awakened in my heart. Oh! Martha it was a scene particularly trying - - how much do these circumstances require wry divine consolation and direction to make your dear father's death a salutary warning to us all. The guardian of your tender years, he who under God has been made an instrument in giving you existence. Your father, your nearest earthly friend where is he? The cold clods of the valley cover him - can it be I often ask myself that my uncle, my much loved uncle lies cold and lifeless beneath the earth. Yes he has finished his course while he leaned his head on Jesus breast he breathed out his life sweetly there. What a consolation who as who would wish a dear friend back released from the thorny paths of this deluding world.*

*Taken from our sight but a little while and we shall soon be united. You are not left friendless. He who has promised to be the father of the fatherless and the widows. God will enable you to receive grace in time of need. Dearest Martha, what shall I say. I feel cheerless. The birds are singing so merilly [sic]. It condemns one, stupid wretch that I am, why belief in him, but I fear I have grown cold in discause [sic] - or the death of my relatives would not cause me so much grief when all is well with them why mourn only look well to my own salvation and soon we shall worship forever together. I was all mirth the evening I received your letter. Cousin Silas Ruffner was with us - my spirits were unusually high - just as we were arising from tea, Benjamin came in with your letter - I walked in the next room to read it; all wished to see or hear the news; I laid it on the bed - looked at the seal - laid it down again. Prepare me most merciful father for what may come. I walked out where no one could see me. Benjamin followed, I read but a few lines; I had lost all fortitude. I could proceed no farther.*

*I have felt ever since as if I shall never be without affliction - several weeks before I could recover from the sorrow of my dear Uncle and Aunt's affliction yet I know it was gain to dear Martha Ann. She was dear to her parents yet her heavenly father considered her too precious to leave her here to become entangled with the cares of this world - - when you see Aunt and Uncle my love to them. D[avid] & I would be very happy to see either or both families. Perhaps Uncle A[braham] could leave this summer all might come - my husband is at Columbus, but I will his with my love to your dear Mother and Elisa if she is with you. Do let me hear from you very soon - Kiss Eliza's dear little children for me - I feel as if I am sending you a poor xx but know me - if you could read my heart xxx would learn my warmth and good will xxx dearest Martha - It will and has ever burned xxx dear girl - May God protect and direct xxx all your actions through life is my wish.*

Your cousin  
Catherine

Editor's Note: The xes indicate portions which were non-legible in the time-worn letters.



RR&R Serial Feature - Part 2

*For the Building of a Kingdom  
A Polygamist Family ~  
The Saga of Robert & Catherine Ann (Williams) Owens*

**Re-introduction:** No story is more dramatic than the beginnings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Near Palmyra, New York in 1823, Joseph Smith, a farm boy, experienced a revelation which would culminate in his organization of the Mormon Church. It is a story of religious persecution which brought about the violent death of Joseph Smith and a story of the religious devotion of the converts, who would journey westward to the shores of the Great Salt Lake, led by Joseph's disciple, Brigham Young, to establish the Mormon Zion in Utah.

This story is about Catherine Ann (Williams) Owens, great-granddaughter of Joseph Ruffner, I and her husband, Robert Owens, who were among those converts in 1846. We continue their saga in Part 2, as the family is reunited in 1847, after Robert completed his service with the Mormon Battalion.



**Joseph Smith, Mormon Founder  
sees the Angel Moroni, 1823**

When Robert arrived in Salt Lake City, he was completely worn out from the long trek. He met Brigham Young and said he wouldn't possibly be able to start back for his family. To his relief, Brigham told him Catherine and the children were here. He bowed to his knees and thanked God in tears. He was overjoyed to be reunited with his family and friends again.

Robert and Catherine lived by the Jordan River. They named their first baby born in the valley, Sarah. She was their sixth child. They had little to eat. Catherine would dig segos, gather greens and such to make a meal but she, being in delicate condition, was not able to eat what she prepared. She would go once a week and do work for a lady who was a little more fortunate than she. The lady had some white flour and would make Catherine hot biscuits and coffee. They would practically last her until the following week. Therefore, when Sarah came into the world, she was a little delicate eighth month baby. Catherine was fortunate enough to raise her.

Robert received his Patriarchal Blessing under the hands of John Smith, Patriarch. This was on April 9, 1849. He was told that he is of the tribe of Levi. He was in the 34<sup>th</sup> Quorum of Seventies.

Many colonists left forts in the spring of 1848 and began to spread out a few miles to establish other neighboring colonies. Robert settled in the Big Cottonwood area of Salt Lake Valley to the southeast of Salt Lake City. Catherine had two children born there: Sarah, then Robert named for his father in November 1849.

In his home, Robert was sealed to his wife, Catherine Ann on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March 1850. Following this sealing, he was married and sealed to Martha Allen as a plural wife by Heber C. Kimball. Brigham Young and Thomas Bullock served as witnesses.

Martha Allen was born the 7<sup>th</sup> of March 1823, in Somerset, Pulaski, Kentucky, the daughter of Margaret Evins and Rial Allen. She was invited to go with a neighbor girl to hear the preaching of the Mormon missionaries. When she heard Wilford Woodruff preach, she believed it to be true. Before retiring that night, she prayed for a testimony and straightway there came a light in her darkened bedroom. Accepting this as a divine manifestation, she joined the church in 1838, at the age of fifteen. Three of her brothers: James, Andrew Jackson and Lewis also accepted the Gospel and immigrated to Utah. Martha came to the Valley with her brother, Andrew Jackson and his family in September 1847, with the A. O. Smoot Company. Her other brother, Samuel and his family, followed the Oregon Trail settling in what became Lane County, Oregon.

Robert moved his families to Iron County. June 1850, found Robert, Catherine with her four children, and Martha with her six month old daughter, Margaret, all living together. His property was valued at \$1300. Little Margaret was born partially blind.

In January 1851, the colony of Parowan was established in Iron County. The following August 27<sup>th</sup>, Robert arrived there with the Captain Shirts Company. Martha had her second baby daughter there in February 1852, and named her Mary. The family returned to Big Cottonwood. Brigham Young, who was a friend to them as he was to all, visited them in their home. He would say to them, "Just give me the skim milk that you take off the top."

During a special conference, August 28 and 29, 1852, the Saints were admonished to welcome the new emigrant Saints into their communities and share with them the abundance of their gardens which the Lord gave to them. They were to treat the weary pilgrims as they would wish to be treated. This was at 10 AM in the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City.

Next, Brigham Young spoke on opposition. He said, "Do you suppose I am sorry because of persecution? No! I have thanked God a thousand times that the devil is not yet bound for if he had been, the Saints would have gone to sleep. Light,



**For the Building of a Kingdom (continued from page 10)**

knowledge, truth, wickedness of every kind, the words of the Almighty, and the works of the Devil, all conspire to roll on the great work that the Lord Jesus Christ is doing upon the earth."

Before concluding, the objective of this special conference was announced. With about two thousand elders and their wives assembled in the Old Tabernacle, President Young made clear the necessity of sending out missionaries. He asked what would have happened if the Church had sent missionaries to the four quarters of the earth six years earlier, shortly after leaving Nauvoo? Where would the converts have gathered? We needed to build up Zion first as a gathering place. Now we were ready as a Church to carry out this important step.

At the end of the morning session, President Brigham Young asked his counselor, Heber C. Kimball to read the names of those who had been selected. At that time, he read 96 names of individuals who had been proposed for Missions to Nations of the Earth to preach the Gospel. One and a half hours later, at 2 PM, the conference was again called to order by President Brigham Young. At this time, the elders were appointed to their several missions. A total of 108 were actually sent out. The list seemed to go on and on of missionaries who were being called to almost everywhere: Washington, Iowa, New Orleans, Nova Scotia, Texas, England, Wales, Ireland, France, Germany, Gibraltar, Denmark, Norway... Then came the calls to Asia - Hindustan was first. Shock registered in the faces of Martha, Catherine and Robert Owens when they heard Robert's name called to the Hindustan in the Australasian Mission. Others received calls to China, Siam (Thailand), Africa, Australia and the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii).

Nine were chosen to go to Calcutta East India. They were: Brothers Nathaniel Vary Jones, Samuel Amos Woolley, Richard Ballantyne, Truman Leonard, William Fortheringham, Robert Hodgson Skelton, Robert Owens, William Furlsbury Carter and Amos Milton Musser. There had been no forewarning for these missionaries and their families. A hymn was sung and the benediction given by George A. Smith. Robert was set apart this same day to labor in Madrus.

Of the nine elders who were called with him to Hindustan, Brother Musser wrote, "I was somewhat acquainted with all of these brethren. A few of them I had known since the battle at Nauvoo. But we got to know each other considerable better before we all returned home. I have never known a more devout, courageous, dedicated group of men in my life."

Robert's call, like many others, had come at the lowest ebb of his fortunes. It meant a mission to the other side of the globe when he was already destitute and both of his wives were expecting babies in the near future. How could his families survive without him during these critical times. What kind of a place was Hindustan? If the call was a shock to Robert, it was an even greater shock to his companions. On the way home from the meeting, tears were shed, lips quivered, and the icy hand of fear seemed to claw at their hearts, but numbly and silently they began to make plans.

Leaving wives and children behind, as most of this group did, was terribly difficult. In addition to the emotional strains, it placed financial and other burdens on families that took years to overcome. But, they accepted the Lord's call. Nathaniel Jones, Levi Savage, Jr. and Robert Owens had already served in the Mormon Battalion before coming to Utah and fought the battle of the crickets.

In the days that followed this new call, the two women went to work to outfit Robert for the journey. With aching hearts they darned his socks, mended and scrubbed his frayed shirts and underwear. They patched his worn coat and from homespun made a new suit for him.

Several training meetings were held in which various topics were discussed and plans developed. The leaders decided these missionaries would travel by wagon train by way of southern California, as had been suggested by Elder Willes in a letter from India. This plan required the purchase of wagons, horses and mules (ox drawn wagons were too slow), harnesses, and all that went with such travel. Of course, it would be necessary to camp on the way so they also had to take cooking gear and utensils, food, blankets, tents, and everything one needs for minimal comfort on a long journey.

During the next two weeks, they assembled themselves into a wagon company. Then one morning, as the first streaks of dawn broke in the east, Robert threw the last bundle into the wagon and walked to the two women waiting to bid him adieu. He kissed them and his young children fondly, gave them each a kind word of counsel, pleading with them to think of him in their prayers, to live the gospel and take care of each other. He told his wives, "If you need anything go to the Brethren." Brigham Young had promised to look after them if things got too bad. "Trust in the Lord and never doubt his watchful care over us. All will be well." Robert then promised to write as soon as possible and kissing each in turn, he climbed quickly into the wagon and started the mules down the road. Wanting to be as much like the Apostles of old, they truly went without purse or script.



**Early on, Joseph Smith preached to American Indians**

**To be continued in the March 2004 Issue of RR&R,  
with Robert's long journey to India.**



## In Memoriam

**Phillip E. Vaughn**, age 16, was killed in a traffic accident on his way to school on Friday, November 21. Phillip, a descendant of Benjamin, is survived by his parents, Dee Ann & Andy Vaughn of Mt. Olive, North Carolina, sister, Chelsea Vaughn, and grandparents, Lawrence & Patsy Ruffner of Dade City, Florida.



The funeral service was held on Monday, November 24<sup>th</sup> at the Piney Grove Baptist Church, with burial at the church cemetery.

Phillip was a member of the RFA Youth Board of Directors (see RR&R, September 2003). He also participated in the unveiling of the Ruffner Monument in Luray, Virginia in 2001 (see RR&R, September 2001).

Our thoughts and prayers are with Phillip's family.



## BIRTHS

**Chiara Angelina Brown**, was born Sunday, the 28<sup>th</sup> of September 2003, weighing in at 6 pounds, 9 ounces and 19 inches long. Chiara, a descendant of Peter, Jr. is the daughter of Gary & Yanny Brown. Her proud grandparents are Donna & Bob Brown of Great Falls, Virginia.

### Hayden Finn Leffler,

a descendant of Emanuel, was born on August 10, 2003. He weighed 9 lbs, 5 oz. and was 21 inches long. **His** proud parents are Heather (Gillilan) and Michael Leffler. **He** is the grandson of Rick & Donna (Ruffner) Gillilan of McArthur, Ohio.

*Editor's Note:* We ran Hayden's birth announcement in the September issue of RR&R. Unfortunately, we erroneously reported the gender of this "new Ruffner." **IT'S A BOY!** Our apologies to the proud parents and grandparents.

## Plans announced for 2004 Booker T. Washington Family Reunion/Conference

The BTW Family Reunion/Conference will be held June 25-27, 2004 on the campus of Hampton University, at the McGrew Towers Conference Facility.

The Hampton University campus is located on Tyler Street in Hampton, Virginia in the Tidewater area, centrally located between Virginia Beach and historic Williamsburg.

Registration costs are \$110 for adults and children, 12 & older, and \$60 for children, ages 4-11.

Lodging cost may vary from \$40 per night, per person (on campus in the Residence Hall), to \$120 per night for hotel accommodations, depending on specific room needs.

For additional information, contact Edith Charles at [EWC1113@aol.com](mailto:EWC1113@aol.com).

## Important News ~ Change in Ruffner Family Association Membership Year



At the 2003 Family Reunion, the RFA Board of Directors voted to change to a fiscal year for membership running from **July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>**. Therefore, all those who have paid their 2003 dues will not receive another dues invoice until **June of 2004**, with a due date of **July 1, 2004**.

**If you have not paid your 2003 dues**, please send your check, made payable to the **Ruffner Family Association**, to **Sara (Ruffner) Lytle, RFA Membership Chairman, 310 Carriage Trace, Seneca, SC 29678**; phone 864-882-8656.

Annual amounts are \$20 for single membership, \$30 for family and \$500 for lifetime.

## The Editor's Desk



As the year draws to a close, thanks go out to all our writers, news contributors and readers for their support. We couldn't do it without your help. On behalf of the volunteer editors and staff of RR&R, **best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a New Year of peace and hope.**

Love,  
Cousin Joan

## RR&R Editorial Board

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**Deadline for the next issue is February 1, 2004.**  
**Please send your news, articles and/or photos to:**  
**Ruffner Roots & Ramblings**  
**120 Rita Court, Columbus, OH 43213**  
**or E-mail to Joan Reid - [Jokereid@aol.com](mailto:Jokereid@aol.com)**  
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