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Spring 2010

### Ruffner Roots and Ramblings, Vol. 13, Issue 2

Ruffner Family Association

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# ***Ruffner Roots & Ramblings***

Published quarterly by the Ruffner Family Association  
Volume 13, Issue 2, Spring 2010

Annual Board Meeting  
***Ruffner Family Association***  
***August 13, 2010 in Boston***



*Minuteman Monument - Old  
North Bridge*

All family members are welcome and urged to attend annual board meetings of our association. This year, we have been invited by the Newman Family Society to share our meeting opportunity and join with them in their reunion August 13-15<sup>th</sup>, celebrating the thirty-fifth Anniversary of the founding of their society. This Boston gathering is a marvelous opportunity to expose our children and grandchildren to the story of Robert Newman and the showing of the two lanterns in the steeple of the Old North Church at the request of Paul Revere, April 18, 1775. That was the signal beginning the American Revolution involving many of our Ruffner ancestors thirty-six years after Peter & Mary homesteaded in Page County, Virginia.

The Newman Family Society has planned a significant three-day event which we are privileged to share including ~

- Reception, Concord's Historic Colonial Inn
- Tour of Historic Salem and Danvers
- Walking Boston's Historic Freedom Trail
- Lantern Service ~ The Old North Church
- Tour at the American Antiquarian Society in Historic Worcester

Please let President Phyllis Hershock know if you plan to attend the board meeting <[chershock@cyberia.com](mailto:chershock@cyberia.com)> or call 717-755-6574. Contact Bob Sheets 303-733-4935 or <[Rnsheets@aol.com](mailto:Rnsheets@aol.com)> for the Newman Family Society Reunion registration information.

***We hope to see you in Boston ~ August 13-15<sup>th</sup>.***



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## **Mission of the Ruffner Family Association**

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.

## **A Message from our President**



As I sit here at the computer, I think of how electronic communication has changed the way folks keep in touch.

Reunions have been a longstanding practice to bring families together that didn't have the luxury of sharing their news and photos via email or facebook. Our reunion founders, George and Budge Ruffner, would be surprised and delighted to know we are all just a couple clicks away from each other. A teacher friend of mine said her extended family joined one of the social networking options and stay in touch coast to coast all year long. So do plan to keep in touch with us via email, snail mail and sending articles to Joan Reid for our newsletter.

I am officially one happy camper. This spring has been a unique experience for me, busy as ever, but knowing retirement was at the end of this school year. After decades of full time and substitute teaching, I will now have time to devote to family and friends instead of juggling them with the students in my life. All my retired buddies tell me that I will be as busy as ever but will now be able to make many choices.

As I putter around my yard enjoying the many greens from the flowers and vegetables, I feel blessed to live where there is such beauty. Mary Steinman must have felt very much at home with her surroundings after leaving neighboring Lancaster County for the Shenandoah Valley. My first cousin, nurse Cathy Anderson from WA, is finishing her tour in Iraq, and her comments on facebook about her surroundings make me appreciate how wonderful it is to live here in the mid-Atlantic.

Our RFA board meeting will take place in August, and I would encourage any and all of you to join us in Boston. We will be sharing hugs and laughter while visiting another location of our great U.S.A. Who knew we'd expand our history and geography backgrounds by joining a family association?

Happy day,  
Phyl Hershock  
[chershock@cyberia.com](mailto:chershock@cyberia.com)



## In the News

*From the Charleston Daily Mail*

*Monday April 19, 2010 (reprinted with permission)*

### Holly Grove mansion returning to splendor

by Sara Gavin, Daily Mail Capitol Reporter

Built in 1815 by a salt industry pioneer, the Holly Grove mansion has been going through a slow-moving but comprehensive multimillion dollar makeover. The handsome brick structure has stood vacant since 2004 when the Bureau of Senior Services moved its offices to Charleston Town Center.

In 2005, the state Department of Administration added Holly Grove to its list of capital improvement projects and committed \$3.5 million to interior and exterior renovations. Now, roughly five years later, Holly Grove is starting to show signs of improvement.

"Exterior restoration began in August and is wrapping up," said Department of Administration spokeswoman Diane Holley-Brown. Alleghany Restoration from Morgantown is the contractor for the work, which included painting and repairs to masonry, wood, gutters, downspouts, and window frames. The exterior phase cost \$364,776. A \$2 million portion of the funding has been set aside for evaluating and documenting the interior. Holley-Brown said this process has taken longer than expected and is crucial to mapping a design.

"Through the evaluation and documentation work, the original paint colors, finishes and even wallpaper were identified," Holley-Brown said. "The mansion was renovated in 1905, so it required us to look deeper to uncover the history of this mansion from a structural aspect."

Named for holly trees that surrounded it, the mansion was built next to the lot that has been occupied by the Governor's Mansion since 1925.

Holly Grove contains 5,675 square feet of floor space. It was built by Daniel Ruffner of the pioneering family that moved into the Kanawha Valley from the Shenandoah Valley. The Ruffners were a force in developing a booming salt industry and they welcomed many distinguished guests into their magnificent 15-bedroom home. Among them were Daniel Boone, Henry Clay, Sam Houston, John Audubon and President Andrew Jackson.



See note ►

## Lancaster County, PA celebrating 300 years 1710 - 2010

They call it "Lancaster Roots 300" and it will celebrate the arrival of the first permanent European settlers in Lancaster County in 1710; the contributions of the Native Peoples who lived there before and after the 1710 settlement, and the rich diversity and many peoples who make up Lancaster County today.

The events which began in January will continue from July 17 through December 4. Self-guided driving tour and 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary history booklets are available.

For more information, contact ~  
Lancaster Mennonite Historical  
Society 717-393-9745 or  
[www.LancasterRoots300.org](http://www.LancasterRoots300.org)



***Our past is not a dead past  
but still lives in us .... Our  
forebears had civilization  
inside themselves, the wild  
outside. We live in the  
civilization they created, but  
within us the wilderness ....  
lingers. What they dreamed,  
we live; and what they lived,  
we dream.***

~ Thomas King Whipple

**Editor's Note:** Holly Grove was built by Daniel Ruffner (Peter-Joseph). A history of the mansion was featured in Vol. 3, Issue #1, March 2000 RR&R.



# THE STORY OF ALBERT RUFFNER, A PIONEER OF THE COLORADO PLAINS

*As told by him to a relative*

## **Introduction**

*Al Ruffner's grandson Bruce Ruffner (son of Forrest) gave permission to the Ruffner Family Association to publish his grandfather's remembrances of his life. Bruce thought the story was told to and written down by Anna Ruffner, the wife of Harry Bender Ruffner. Anna was a schoolteacher. Dorothea Russell and I became acquainted with Bruce Ruffner when we were researching the Tiny Ruffner story (RR&R – September 2004). We were contacting all the Bruce Ruffners in the U.S. In hopes of locating Tiny Ruffner's son Bruce. Instead we came in contact with a Bruce Ruffner from California, who doesn't seem to be connected to our family, but had this very interesting pioneer story. Judging by the pioneering spirit of Al Ruffner, I am inclined to believe that somewhere along the line, he is a relative of our Ruffners.*

**Betty Gaeng, RFA Historian**

Albert (Al) Ruffner was born in Pennsylvania in 1842. His grandfather had located in this country from Holland or Germany about 1790. His father, probably Peter Ruffner, was a barrel stave maker. During the plague of 1850 to 1854, all of the immediate family were wiped out except Al and his brother John. Al was 12 and John 8. An uncle, probably the brother of the boys' mother by the name of Groosnickle (Grossnickle) took the boys to raise. Some of the descendants of the Groosnickles still live in Colorado. Either the family moved to Iowa then or at a later date. They settled in the Indianola, Iowa area where the uncle raised horses and cattle.

Oregon Territory was a thriving country during the years of 1850 to 1865 and a large amount of goods had to be transported by wagon freight. The boys' uncle took a contract to haul freight using six four-horse wagons. The first runs were made from St. Louis, Missouri. Al, though under 15, made his first trip driving a four-horse team hitched to a wagon loaded with wagon repair parts, harnesses and feed. Some of the wagons were loaded with whiskey, which was rather a risky load as the Indians raided the wagon trains for whiskey and horses.

Al said that he was scared, but didn't let on to the other drivers as they would have made fun of him, and he wanted to be a man. At one time on the first trip, the Indians raided the train, but were bribed by a gift of whiskey and a crippled horse. Two weeks later, the lame horse caught up with the train. This disturbed the men as they thought the Indians were letting the horse lead them to the liberal wagon master. Nothing happened before the train reached the mountains, however.

It was in the spring when they made their first trip, and the weather was of great concern. Following up the rivers was the longest way, but water and grass were available most of the way.

The horses had to live off the land as they traveled so most days were shortened so the animals could feed. Most of the drivers walked where possible, and it was a long day when they made twenty miles. Crossing the mountain passes was a very slow process. Washouts and slides caused by spring rains and melting snow had to be repaired. Timber had to be cut to build bridges and rocks had to be blasted for fills. All of this took time. Al said that the first trip seemed a lifetime, and he was thrilled when they reached the camp on the Columbia River.

After unloading, some of the horses and wagon were sold, and most of the drivers remained in Oregon where they would start a new life. The return trip was much faster, but the Indians were still a bother as they wanted horses. No mention was ever made that lives were lost on this trip, but on later trips some of the men did lose their lives.



## **The Ruffner Family Came West**

While sitting on the porch of his home in Ault, Colorado one afternoon, Mr. Albert Ruffner was complaining about the trees on the John Belcher place which had grown up over the years and were obstructing the view of Mr. Ruffner. Years before he had purchased this home because it had an open view of the Rocky Mountains. He explained to me that the view of those mountains was one of the beautiful sights of his youth and that he would love to spend the remainder of his life looking and remembering. This brought on the story of why the Ruffners came to the west.

On the fourth and last trip he made to the Oregon Territory, he spent quite some time camping along the Poudre River west of what is now Greeley. The reason for their layover was a sickness which had hit the horses, and at that time they could not trade for replacements. The settlers told them that the horses had eaten loco weed and there was no known cure. For three days they had tried to work the horses, but at least one of the teams would go loco. Weeks later they found a herd that had to be broke, but the job was soon done, and the train made it to Oregon.

After this trouble, Al's uncle had had enough of freighting and Al was ready to get a place of his own and make a stake so he could return to Colorado. After returning to Iowa, he began to tell all who would listen all about the wonderful fertile valleys of the mountains and what a wonderful opportunity there was for cattle and sheep raising. The days were clear and the sun went down every night under a blanket of red.

In a few years, Al gathered a sizable herd of cattle and horses. On March 4, 1878, he and Nancy Buckendorf of Indianola, Iowa, were married. They continued to live in Iowa, and after the death of their first son, began to make plans to move to Colorado. Before they left Iowa, they had another son, Harry, who in later years became a champion bronc rider and horse trainer. Though Harry was a champion bronc buster, he never let a one of his three sons touch a horse. In early 1883, Al loaded two wagons with his family and possessions and driving a large herd of cattle and horses, they took off for the west.

Nancy's family, the Buckendorfs, had gone to Colorado from Nebraska the year before and had settled in the Ft. Collins country. They had written the Ruffners that the Ft. Collins country was able to support stock the year round and plenty of open land was available north of the settlement, so this was the place the Ruffners planned to settle.

The trip of the Ruffners was slow, and as the stock had to be given time to eat, the trip took longer than they had planned. Some days it was necessary to make long jumps as the season was dry and feed was sparse. They followed the Platt River to east of Greeley and the Poudre to Ft. Collins.

The first trip took about six months. Later trips took longer. The trip which started in the late summer took much longer as they were caught in snow storms which delayed them for weeks. Three other trips were made by Al and his uncle. New men had to be hired for each trip since most of the drivers just signed on as a way to get to the coast. This made a good deal, as most of them worked for little pay and got a passage to the west. Some of the men had families left at home, and they hoped to send for them at a later time. Each wagon train would be made up of 20 to 30 wagons. Sometimes they would split up into smaller numbers thinking to mislead the Indians. This didn't always work, and the smaller group had some real fights.

On one occasion, a large band of Indians attacked a train of over twenty wagons. Four wagons and teams were taken by the Indians, but no lives were lost. The next day the scout was killed while looking for buffalo for food. From then on two or more scouts were used. When the streams were high from floods, it was better to wait for the water to go down than to look for a crossing farther upstream. The Indians would look the train over, and likely the next day they would make a raid. The wagon masters knew the habits of the Indians and tried to outguess their next move. In later trips the Indians were getting very put out at the white man. The trappers and buffalo hide hunters were killing off the game that the Indians needed for food, and they were not only making raids for what the trains had, but were out to kill the intruders. This trouble caused Al's uncle to give up the freighting business and return to stock raising in Iowa.



Al said that it was a thrill to see the plains of Wyoming. When they had reached the red desert, it seemed as though they were near half way to Oregon. The trail from here had been shortened since the first trip and some of the mountain passes were made better. The four years that Al spent freighting across the wild west had matured him to a man, and with a desire to settle down on his own. He had seen the plains of Colorado, and had seen the beautiful sunsets west of the mountains and had made up his mind to settle in Colorado some day. To do this he had to get a stake, and his uncle being the logical one to help, gave him horses and cattle to start on his project. Al rented a farm near Carlisle, Iowa and remained there for fifteen years when he loaded his wife and son in a covered wagon and started to his promised land in Colorado.

The events after that are another story and will have to wait for another time.

**The end of Albert Ruffner's story will be continued in the next issue of RR&R.**



*Albert & Nancy Ruffner and their family*

In the photo above, Albert is holding Sadie; next to him are Hallie and Blanche, then Nancy holding the baby John.

In between them are Archie and Forrest, and Harry is in the back with his hand on Al's shoulder.



## **North Bend, Washington and the Snoqualmie Valley proposed as site for 2011 Ruffner Reunion**

How far away from Luray and the Ruffner Homestead can you go and still find the name of William Henry Ruffner? The answer is: The Beautiful Snoqualmie Valley in Washington State. The Ruffner name abounds in the history of the area. Stories of the scions of Peter's sons, Joseph, Peter, Jr. and Reuben have appeared in RR&R Vol. 7, Issues 3 and 4, September and December 2004, and Vol. 8, Issue #1, March 2005. Thanks to Betty Gaeng, our talented Historian, author and resident of the Evergreen State, the Ruffner name has been linked coast to coast.

North Bend is located just 30 miles east of Seattle. The town name was derived from its location near the north bend of the South Fork of the Snoqualmie River. The town was made famous by David Lynch's television series *Twin Peaks*. This gateway to the Cascade Mountains offers an outstanding vacation locale for all family members. Recreational opportunities include hiking, bicycling, kayaking, fishing and climbing. Surrounded by stunning vistas of Mount Si and Rattlesnake Ridge, North Bend's Historic Downtown offers an eclectic mix of dining and shopping, including a factory outlet mall.

With an elevation of over 4,100 feet, Mt. Si dominates the skyline of the Upper Snoqualmie Valley. This local landmark is a popular destination for hikers of all skill levels. The Mount Si Trail is an 8-mile round-trip hike with an elevation gain of over 4,000 feet. Atop the mountain, hikers can enjoy expansive views of the Valley, rich displays

of wild flowers and distant views of Mount Rainier, the Seattle skyline and the Olympic Mountains on clear days.

The Northwest Railway Museum offers train excursions during the Spring, Summer and Fall weekends between the Snoqualmie and North Bend depots and Snoqualmie Falls. The falls are one of Washington's top scenic attractions. At 268 feet, the falls reach 100 feet higher than Niagara Falls.

Another favorite attraction is the Snoqualmie Valley Historical Museum in North Bend, established over 50 years ago, which features Indian and pioneer artifacts. The Native Americans who inhabited the Valley, led by chief Patkanim, sided with settlers in the wars of the 1850s. The first permanent settler in the valley was Jeremiah Borst in 1858.

Nearby Seattle's numerous attractions include its waterfront, Woodland Park Zoo, the Seattle Aquarium and the Space Needle, erected in commemoration of the 1962 World's Fair celebration.

We hope you will be excited about these reunion plans and look forward to receiving your comments.



*Mount Si*



## Remembering our Departed

### Norman Stuart Ruffner



quietly passed away on April 6<sup>th</sup>, after 79 vibrant and inspiring years a few months shy of his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. He was born in Columbus, Ohio, in 1930 to Ruth and Everett Ruffner. As Norm became an adult, he spent eight years with the U.S. Air Force. Norm moved to Tacoma, WA in 1949 where he met his wife to be, Marilyn Letourneau.

They were wed an amazing 60 years. After his service with the Air Force, Norm took a job with Darigold Farms and worked for them for 32 dedicated and loyal years.

The "milkman" leaves behind his sister Joan Reid of Columbus, OH, his loving wife Marilyn, 10 children: Norma (Jon), Michael, Patrick (Vicki), Mark, Jeffrey (Julie), Dana, Kelly, Scott (Janice), Christopher, and Steven (Beth); 14 grandchildren, and 6 great-grandchildren. After being an only son, Norm made certain that his Ruffner name would carry on for generations and generations to come.

A Memorial service, with military honors, was held at the Tahoma National Cemetery in Kent, WA.

### The Editor's Desk

I am honored to return as editor of Ruffner Roots & Ramblings and look forward to hearing from the membership. I would love to receive photos with obits, birth announcements or other family news.



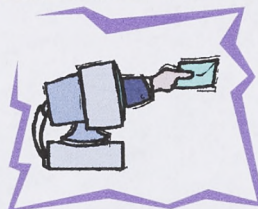
I was so pleased to receive the following letter from Marjorie Rowles. I will never forget the gracious hospitality of the Rowles family during the 1999 RFA reunion. The picnic on the site of their beautiful home on Emanuel's homestead was truly one of our group's most memorable days. We share in Marjorie's loss and wish her well in her new home. We were delighted to hear that granddaughter Megan's family will continue to enrich the family legacy of the house

that Joseph Ruffner built.

I hope to produce the RR&R on a quarterly basis and I'm looking forward to discovering some new writers among you. Don't be shy – you never know until you try.

Deadline for the September issue will be August 31<sup>st</sup>. Copy can be sent to me at 4705 Wenham Park, Columbus, OH 43230 or <[Jokerreid@yahoo.com](mailto:Jokerreid@yahoo.com)>.

With summer greetings, I am  
your cousin, Joan (Ruffner) Reid



### Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

*I wish to thank you very much for listing Bob's obituary in your recent newsletter. He was very proud of his heritage as his children, Barbara and Roger. He had a massive stroke in 2007, from which he never recovered. His last month of life was very difficult for him and his family.*

*I am getting ready to leave this home, which is bittersweet, as thirty-five years of memories are here. The home and grounds are just too much for me to take care of so I am building a small home here on Coonpath Road. Our granddaughter Megan, her husband and three children are moving here. She is excited about the move, which pleases me very much.*

*I still remember the reunion here in 1999 and how much we enjoyed getting the property ready for the Ruffners and friends who attended.*

*Wishing all the Ruffners the best and thanks again for remembering Bob.*

Sincerely,  
Marjorie Rowles