

*Ruckers 1749-1844*

# the Rucker Family Society

## NEWSLETTER

Volume 3

Number 2

May 1992

### LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE 1992 RUCKER REUNION

To my Rucker kin:

22 April 1992

As everyone knows by now our Board Members selected the Essex County area for our 1992 Rucker Reunion. We were asked to locate overnight lodging, meeting rooms, and locate some historical Rucker information.

This has been a very tough job due to my recent work load. The basic economics we are all facing today has not helped in trying to keep the cost affordable. I am the first to admit that the cost is going to be slightly higher than our last two reunions, but I am sure that you all will enjoy the fine program we have put together.

I have enjoyed seeing and being with all of you during previous reunions, when we had approximately 150 members present. Knowing the will and determination of the Rucker bloodline, I am sure we will all set aside time and attend the 3rd Annual Rucker Reunion.

We are also looking for new volunteers to serve on the Rucker Family Society Board. At our meeting we will elect officers to serve for the next term. If you have any questions regarding this matter, you can contact either Rod Mason, President, or any of the other board members.

Let's make this reunion an even greater success. Looking forward to seeing all of you.

Sincerely,

Roland Pittman  
Vice President

P.S. - Approximate mileage from Fredericksburg to Vawter's Church, surrounding places of interest, and back to Fredericksburg - 75-100 miles (round trip). Several places we wish for you to see will be on private property and will have to be visited as a group. Unfortunately, there are no Rucker homes. We have found several areas that Peter Rucker lived, and we feel these will be of interest to all. Bring your cameras!

JEANNIE-ALOGY

## Middle Names

Some people who are sending in their genealogies are naming ancestors, born before the Revolutionary War, as having middle names. This cannot be, as, it was against British law to have a middle name. The old English law was very definite as to the naming of children: "A man cannot have two names of baptism." It was a requisite "that the purchaser be named by the name of his baptism and his surname, and that special heed be taken to the name of baptism."

Two hundred years ago, double names were very uncommon. The English used to dodge the law at times by ingeniously compounding names. You sometimes find names such as Marianna, made up of Mary and Anna (Wood, p.46); Lucinda, combining Lucy and Linda (Wood, p.122), but the norm was to have only one Christian name.

After the Revolutionary War, when America broke from British rule, people began the tradition of two Christian names. Some examples:

1. Some named children after the wife's father: Henry Tate Rucker (Wood, p.118, only child of 14 to have a middle name) and Anthony Rucker Ogden (Wood, p.162).

2. Sometimes parents' and grandparents' Christian names were combined: William Ambrose Rucker (Wood, p.52--named after the father and wife's father), and William Michael Rucker (Wood, p. 182--named after both grandfathers' first names).

3. Sometimes they were named after great heroes or presidents: Marinda James Monroe Rucker (Wood, p.51); and James Madison Rucker (incorrectly listed in Wood, p.112, as James<sup>6</sup> Monroe Rucker).

4. Some even named them after places: Virginia Tennessee Rucker (Wood, p.36--her parents moved from Virginia to Tennessee and she was the first born child) and Western Tennessee Rucker (Wood, p.126).

This was brought to my attention when a newly-found cousin submitted her forms and gave her ancestor as John Washington Wingo, b. 2 Oct. 1761. After search, I found the name was John Wingo, mistaken for his grandson, John Washington Wingo, b. 4 Nov. 1828.

Please note that a son with junior after his name does not mean that his father had the same name. The father may have been John Rucker and the son John Smith Rucker (made up name), called John Rucker Jr. Do not assume that the father was also named John Smith Rucker. Senior and junior were used to distinguish between an older person and a younger.

"When middle names got going it became fashionable. The law having dropped into disuse, parents went to work combining names for their offspring. One custom was done away with in England in consequence of this, the plan of naming the eldest son for the estate, particularly where he succeeds to that estate through his mother. The old practice is still followed to some extent in the country by the mother's maiden name being given to the eldest son, and identifies the boy when he reaches manhood, and so has some purpose." Today most everyone has a middle name, but no one did before the Revolution.

(From an article in Harpers Magazine, early 1900s, via "Smoke Signals," publication of the Ottawa County Genealogical Society, Miami OK; Decatur genealogical society Newsletter, May 1990; and "News 'n' Notes," Oct. 1990, newsletter of the Genealogical Research Institute of Virginia, DeRoy Beale, editor. I have edited it and added examples from Sudie Rucker Wood's The Rucker Family Genealogy--Editor.)

**THE RUCKERS HARPSICHOARDS**  
by Michael P. Rucker

**DESCRIPTION OF THE HARPSICHOARD--part III**

Dr. Lambrechts-Douillez provides the following commentary, "Because of the legendary reputation that the Ruckers family gained in the 18th century, trade in their instruments became an important commercial factor in the lives of many people in France, England, Flanders and the rest of Northern Europe. Many instruments were re-built to suit the needs of the later music to such an extent that they became almost unrecognizable in comparison with their original state. Counterfeit instruments were built in the style of the Flemish instruments with decorations imitating the original state or, more usually, the state of a re-built modernized instrument. The result of the efforts of these rebuilders and fakers is a heritage of instruments with vastly different decorations and different compasses, dispositions and scalings - but all signed with the name Ruckers. The process of authenticating an instrument in the face of the great variety of appearance in both the genuine and the fake instrument is not a simple one. Fortunately, there are still a number of instruments of undoubted authenticity which are in an almost original state."

As was the custom of the day, each craftsmen who belonged to a guild identified his work with a distinctive "trademark." The harpsichord builders generally incorporated theirs into the soundhole of each instrument. This device, called a rose, is in many instances, the only means of attributing an instrument to its proper source. The rose of Andreas II is shown to the right. Additionally, a number of Ruckers instruments were boldly engraved with an inscription, e.g. "HANS RVCKERS ME FECIT" or "IOANNES

RVCKERS ME FECIT"; an early instance of increasing the value of a product through "vanity branding."

The Ruckers harpsichords were notable for their decorations. They were generally decorated inside and out. The soundboard was often painted with birds, insects, flowers, fruit, angels and sometimes village scenes with people. The inside of the case and lid were covered with block printed paper. Mottos in Latin were sometimes painted on the inside of the lid. A marbled finish was generally painted on the outside of the case and lid. In fact, nearly every square inch of the instrument was covered with paint or paper. Many owners, particularly those who possessed larger, more expensive instruments, often contracted to have them painted by the artists of the day. Peter Paul Rubens, Jan Brueghel and a number of other "Dutch Masters" are known to have decorated Ruckers instruments.

However beautiful the Ruckers instruments may have been, it was their remarkable sound that established their importance in the musical world. This sound quality is the result of their extremely sophisticated design.

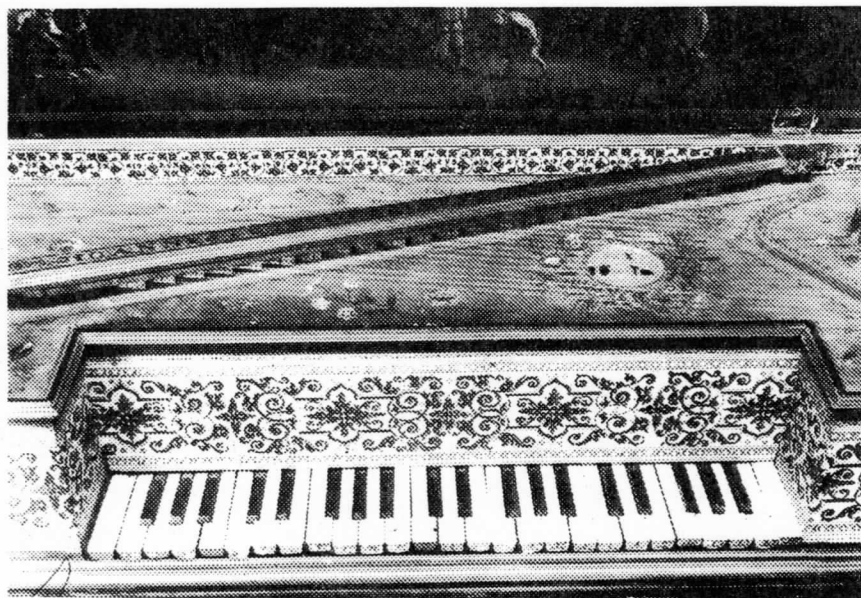


The "Rose" of Andreas Ruckers

The lengths, gauges and materials of the strings were chosen with the greatest of care. The soundboards and bridges were of the highest quality wood which was carefully selected to provide the optimum stiffness in each part of the range. The Ruckers soundboards were particularly thin, thereby providing excellent acoustics. Also, the area of the radiating soundboard was contrived to give an equal balance to the bass, tenor and treble ranges of each instrument.

The resulting sound was rich and resonant without any part of the register dominating another. Additionally, the sound of Ruckers instruments was renowned for its sustaining quality. Some experts even claim the sound of their "pluck" was less obvious than in their competitors' instruments. However, so few of the Ruckers instruments escaped rebuilding that it is difficult to really ascertain what most of them sounded like four hundred years ago.

The Ruckers and Couchets were a remarkable family of outstanding craftsmen. It is awe inspiring to contemplate the range of skills they commanded which per-



Joannes Couchet Harpsichord, 1650

mitted them to craft some of the world's finest musical instruments. Their accomplishments are all the more remarkable considering that they lived and flourished during one of Europe's most turbulent periods.

The lineage of Peter Rucker, the immigrant to America, has not been established. It is possible, however, that he was related to the famous harpsichord builders of Antwerp.

At least, I like to believe he was.

(Note from Mike: The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians contains an inventory of all known extant Ruckers' instruments. Only five instruments that can definitely be attributed to Hans survive. Thirty-eight of Joannes's instruments are listed along with thirty-three of his brother Andreas. Only seven of Andreas II's instruments have been identified.)

A booklet on Ruckers Harpsichords, including bibliography, will be compiled in time for the Rucker Reunion. Many thanks to Michael P. Rucker for writing an excellent paper--Editor.

#### RUCKERS GENOOTSCHAP:

The society to study the history and influence of Ruckers' and other early harpsichords is located in Belgium. The society sponsors exhibits, summer courses and publishes reports on their activities. It is located in the Vleeshuis, a 16th century building in Antwerp, now a museum containing a collection of Ruckers harpsichords. Any one traveling to Europe might consider visiting the museum, which is open every day except Monday.

For information or membership, write:  
Ruckers Genootschap vzw,  
p/a Museum Vleeshuis,  
Vleeshouwersstraat 38-40,  
B-2000 Antwerpen, Belgium.

## Questions and Answers

**SALLY RUCKER--JOHN TANNER:** Your name was sent to me by George B. Arbuckle of Eastsound, WA, when I wrote to him looking for information on my Sally Rucker. Sally was the third wife of John Tanner, b. @1732, d. 1812, Cape Girardeau, Missouri Terr., Louisiana. I would appreciate any help you might be able to provide re: Sally Rucker - John Tanner and their descendants. John Tanner's Will shows their children to be: Rucker, Nancy, Polly, Pamily, Tabitha, and Joseph.

I have a fair amount of information on them that I will be happy to share with anyone interested in this family. From JUNE MOOSBERY SHERMAN; Rt. 1, Box 54; Lockney, TX 79241.



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**SARAH (SALLY) RUCKER -- HENRY MASSEY MEDEARIS:** I recently entered my first subscription to your newsletter. I am looking for any information on my great-gt-gt-grandmother SARAH (SALLY) RUCKER, b. ca. 1810-1822, Charlottesville, VA; married HENRY MASSEY MEDEARIS, b. 1805, in VA or TN. They lived in Knox County, TN. Their children were: 1. Narcissus ("Narse") Medearis, b. 1838; 2. Jane Frances Medearis; 3. James Wilson Medearis, b. 1839; 4. John Medearis, 1843-1851; 5. Elizabeth Ann Medearis, b. 1847; 6. Thomas Whittier Medearis.

Reply to: Timothy James Ryan, 5840 Cameron Run Terrace, #714, Alexandria, VA 22303; (703) 960-3303.

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**TEMPLE, TEXAS, RUCKER REUNION:** Nov. 1991 was the second Rucker reunion (1st was in 1989) here in Temple--the surviving five of nine of my father's brothers and sisters attended (ages 69 to 92). We lost one of the brothers, 82 years old, in January of this year. We had 53 in attendance and 35 were descendants. We had 73 in attendance in 1989 with 41 Rucker descendants.

My brother, Ray Knight Rucker, and I are working on lineage charts from JOHN E. RUCKER to date. There are some 135 descendants, now 18 to 20 are deceased. Most of the descendants live in Texas. Frances Willess and Alice Rucker Allen led me to the Rucker Family Society.

Our line is as follows: Peter<sup>1</sup>; Thomas<sup>2</sup>; John<sup>3</sup>; Joel<sup>4</sup>; Elzy<sup>5</sup> (b. 1783) m. Mary Burton (Wood, p.181); Joseph<sup>6</sup> Burton Rucker (b. 1808) m. ?; John<sup>7</sup> Elzy Rucker (1842-1901) m. Alice Medora McLin; William<sup>8</sup> Joseph Rucker (1872-1932) m. Blanche Jones; William<sup>9</sup> Glenn Rucker Sr; William<sup>10</sup> Glenn Rucker Jr. (me).

Dr. J. Larry Black has a marriage certificate of Joseph Burton Rucker and Susan Seward, 20 July 1835, Rutherford Co., TN. Yet, the 1850 Tennessee census shows Joseph's wife as Rebecca: Joseph Rucker 38, b. VA; Rebecca 35, b. GA; Mary 13, Nancy 9, John 7, Allen 5, Sarah M. 4.

John E. Rucker, b. 4 May 1842, at Murfreesboro, Rutherford Co., TN, brought his family of seven to Bell County, TX, from Tennessee in 1886. He died in 1901, age 59, and is buried with his wife at the Oenaville, TX, Cemetery, a small town just east of Temple.

Question: Does anyone have proof of the wife of Joseph Burton Rucker? Did he marry Susan first and Rebecca second? Please write to William Glenn Rucker, 4205 Eagle Drive, Temple, TX 76502.

**QUERY OF THE QUARTER:** The Rucker-Eaves House in Rutherfordton, NC, was recently advertised for sale in the Historic Preservation Newsletter. Through research concerning this house we have located new information about WILLIAM<sup>4</sup> MARTIN RUCKER's family (Wood, p.248). If you have additional information or are a descendant of this family, please write: Michael P. Rucker, 1003 W. Centennial Dr., Peoria, IL 61614.

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**NORTH CAROLINA RUCKER REUNION:** Ruckers who descend from Mordecai<sup>3</sup> (William<sup>2</sup>, Peter<sup>1</sup>) and his second wife, have held a Rucker Reunion for a number of years. "In August of 1978 on a Sunday after the middle of the month, my wife and I attended one of their reunions. It was held at a country church, as I recall, several miles west of Rutherfordton, NC. My wife and I and her sister and husband got up at 4:30 a.m. in Waycross, GA, and drove about 500 miles, arriving at the church where the reunion was held about 3 miles west of Rutherfordton between 12 and 1 p.m. The people there were just finishing their lunch. At 1 p.m. they had a short business meeting and awarded prizes. We got \$1.00 for coming the farthest to the reunion. I think the meal was pot luck." From George Roland Peirce, 908A Colorado Ave, Urbana, IL 61801-6305, whose wife, Mary Elizabeth Rucker, descends from Mordecai Rucker.

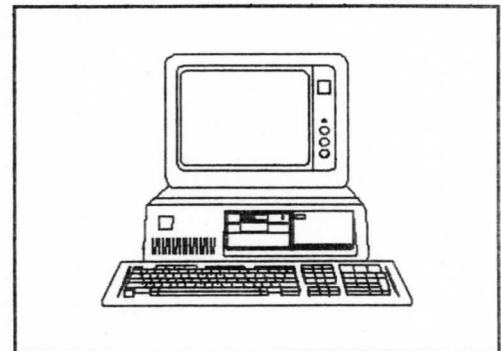
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**JAMES RIVER BATTEAU FESTIVAL:** The Seventh Annual James River Batteau Festival will take place June 13th through 20th, 1992. The festival is an eight-day event featuring authentic replicas of the tobacco boats invented by Anthony and Benjamin Rucker, of Amherst Co., VA, sons of John<sup>2</sup> Rucker. The Rucker family visited the launching of the batteaux, in Lynchburg, at the 1990 Rucker Reunion.

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**LETTER FROM THE EDITOR**

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to the Rucker Family Society Newsletter. Sometimes I am busy and don't have time to answer your letters right away. If, by any chance, you don't hear from me within three months, or if your query doesn't appear in the next newsletter, please send me another copy of your letter. I try to answer, but I am very busy compiling updated material on the computer, and your letter gets over-looked. Sorry for any inconvenience that may have been caused. Please keep in touch, even if I don't always answer.



**The Rucker Family Society** is open to any interested person. \$5.00 dues include 4 newsletters a year and notice of biennial reunions. President: Rod Mason, 5015 Battery Lane #602, Bethesda, MD 20814.

Remember to send:

Lineage charts and updated material to Doris W. Edwards, 2017 43rd SE U-2, Grand Rapids, MI 49508; Membership dues of \$5.00 to Lewis M. White, Treasurer, 9751 Firth Court, Vienna, VA 22181; Reunion reservation and money to Carolyn S. Billups, 440 Tanglewood Court, Mechanicsville, Maryland 20659; and Your stories, queries, 50th anniversaries, and obituaries to the Editor, Jean B. Robinson, 304 Charmian Road, Richmond, VA 23226.

The Rucker Ruckus is a separate newsletter; cost is \$15 annually. Send to Mary Rucker Snyder, 1516 Elliott Drive, Jeffersville, IN 47130.

RUCKER REUNION OCT 9, 10, & 11, 1992  
Fredericksburg, VA.

EACH PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING OWN ROOM RESERVATIONS.

1. The Sheraton, Fredericksburg, is holding a block of 50 rooms for Oct 9 & 10. Reservations at the Sheraton must be made by Sep 9. Rate \$65 per night/double # (703)786-8321.
2. Fredericksburg Colonial Inn, (block of rooms) - Rate \$45 per night/single or double, \$50 per night/suite # (703)371-5666.
3. Best Western, (block of rooms - ask for Helga) - Rate \$36 per night single/double includes continental breakfast - # (703)786-7404 or 800-528-1234 (also known as Thunderbird Motel)

Friday - October 9 - 6:30-7:30 - Social Hour (Sheraton - Hospitality Room)

Saturday - October 10

Bus Trip will be available - (We need 46 people to be able to reserve a bus.) - depart Sheraton at Fredericksburg at 9:00 a.m. to go to Vawter's Church & other places of interest. Return 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Meeting & Lunch - at Vawter's Church.

- 10:00 - 12:00 - Meeting
- 12:30 - 1:30 - Lunch
- 1:30 - 2:30 - Meeting
- 2:30 - 4:30 - Bus tour of area
- 6:30 - 8:00 - Social Hour (Sheraton -Hospitality Room)

Sunday - October 11

Meeting & Buffet Lunch - at the Sheraton

- 9:00 - 10:00 - Newly Elected Board Meeting
- 10:00 - 12:00 - Meeting
- 12:30 - 1:30 - Lunch

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REGISTRATION FORM      Deadline:    **By October 1, 1992**

Registration Fee  
 - \$2.50 per person    # \_\_\_\_\_ people    Cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Bus Trip (Sat, Oct 10)  
 - \$6.50 per person    # \_\_\_\_\_ people    Cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting & Lunch at Vawter's Church (Sat, Oct 10)  
 - \$13.00 per person    # \_\_\_\_\_ people    Cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting & Buffet Lunch at Sheraton (Sun, Oct 11)  
 - 13.00 per person    # \_\_\_\_\_ people    Cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\* Meals include tax & gratuity.                      Total Cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send check & form to: Ms. Carolyn Billups  
 440 Tanglewood Court  
 Phone # 301-884-5577                      Mechanicsville, MD 20659

COLONIAL INNKEEPERS

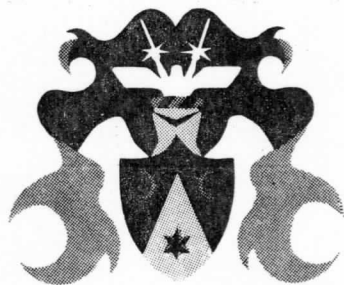
Carolyn S. Billups, 440 Tanglewood Court, Mechanicsville, Maryland 20659, at the 1990 Rucker Reunion, told us about an organization, Flagon and Trencher, the Colonial Innkeepers group. Descendants of John<sup>2</sup> Rucker and James<sup>2</sup> Rucker are eligible to join as both kept Ordinaries in their homes in Orange County, VA, in colonial times.

"License for Keeping Ordinary at his own house in this county is granted to Capt<sup>n</sup> John Rucker on his petition he having according to Law entered into Bond and paid the Governours [sic] fees." Orange County Order Book, Appointments and Licenses, p.240, Sept. 24, 1742.

"On the petition of James Rucker, he is allowed to keep Ordinary at his house in this county for one year from this time giving security whereupon he with George Taylor and Edward Spencer, Gent., entered into and acknowledged their bond for keeping the said Ordinary according to Law." Order Book, p.104, 27 Nov. 1746, Orange Co., VA.

If interested, the fee is \$40 for a life membership. Write to Mrs. Barbara Carver Smith, CG, Keeper of the Tavern Records, 850-A Thornhill Ct, Lakeewood, NJ 08701, for an application form.

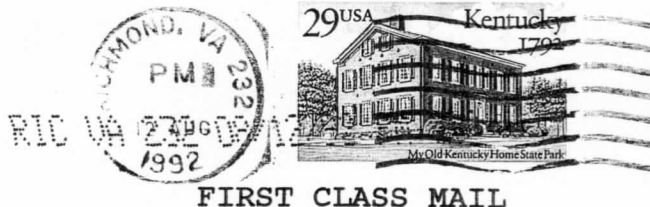
1992 RUCKER REUNION, OCTOBER 10 & 11, FREDERICKSBURG, VA  
See Registration Form, p.7  
Please sign up as soon as possible



THE RUCKER FAMILY SOCIETY

Jean B. Robinson, Editor  
304 Charmian Road  
Richmond, VA 23226

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



Mrs. Alice J. Rucker  
13331 Gridley St  
Sylmar, CA 91342

