

Longwood University

## Digital Commons @ Longwood University

---

Ruffner Family History Records

Ruffner Family Association Collection, LU-163

---

2023

### The Ruffners

Unknown

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.longwood.edu/ruffnerfamily\\_records](https://digitalcommons.longwood.edu/ruffnerfamily_records)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Unknown, "The Ruffners" (2023). *Ruffner Family History Records*. 79.  
[https://digitalcommons.longwood.edu/ruffnerfamily\\_records/79](https://digitalcommons.longwood.edu/ruffnerfamily_records/79)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Ruffner Family Association Collection, LU-163 at Digital Commons @ Longwood University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Ruffner Family History Records by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Longwood University. For more information, please contact [alwinehd@longwood.edu](mailto:alwinehd@longwood.edu).

THE RUFFNERS

*D. of Joseph* Elizabeth friend wife of John  
D. 4/18/1910 - 85-8-13  
John 8/15/1890 - 71-5-27

The Ruffners of Virginia, West Virginia, Ohio and states west to the Pacific Ocean, are descendants of PETER RUFFNER who emigrated from the German border of Switzerland to America in 1732. *Jefferson friend died infancy*

He may have been a native of Hanover in Germany and of the Teutonic-German stock. It is definitely known that he was the third son of a German Baron who owned large landed estates in Hanover. *James Friend 1863 76 yrs*

He spoke High Dutch (Hoch Deutch) and was a Protestant of the Martin Luther school. He attended an Agricultural College but left without his parents knowing it to join some other youths coming to America. The German papers carried glowing descriptions of the new country.

He was nineteen years old, tall and fine looking, well over six feet, of strong mind and body with great energy of character, proving to be a man of influence in the community to which he moved.

He located in one of the interior counties of Pennsylvania, (probably Lancaster) where he soon met and married Miss Mary Steinman, a daughter of a wealthy German farmer. *Joseph Steinman Steinman Steinman*

Said Steinman was from the Kingdom of Wurtemberg, Germany and was of the Teutonic-German stock, speaking Plati-Deutch. He had emigrated with considerable means and added to his wealth, investing surplus funds in the "promising bad lands of Virginia".

Steinman gave to Peter and Mary Ruffner a large tract of land along the Shenandoah River and on each side of the Hawksbill Creek in Shenandoah County. They settled on a plantation which grew to 49,800 acres.

The children of Peter and Mary Ruffner:

1. Joseph, the oldest son, settled along the Kanawha - progenitor of the W. VA. Ruffners.
2. Benjamin, *3 Benjamin*
3. Reuben, *6 Reuben*
4. Peter, *7 Peter*
5. Elizabeth all settled in Virginia.
6. Emmanuel, the youngest son, was a teamster in the Revolution, using his pay to buy land in what was later Fairfield County, Ohio. The land lay north of Zanesville-Maysville pike, eight miles east of Lancaster. Emmanuel was the progenitor of the Ohio Ruffners.

Many Slavonic-Germans from Pennsylvania went to Va. They spoke Low-Dutch. It was with these people that Peter Ruffner and his descendants became identified and with whom they married.

Looking East from Luray, Va. you see the Blue ridge Mts. To look South you see the Ruffner holdings. Only part of this beautiful country can be viewed from one point. The man who brought the name of Ruffner to it had enterprise and good judgment, proven by the way he increased his Holdings.

There is no definite information about the land added to the original tract except for that purchased from Lord Fairfax in 1761. The original deed is somewhat mutilated. It may be seen in the state museum at Charleston, West Va. The handwriting is quite ~~impossible~~ legible.

The style of the deed is antique: 'The right honorable Lord Fairfax Baron of Cameron, in the part of Great Britain called Scotland, proprietor of the northern neck of Virginia. To all whom this present writing may concern, sends greetings.

Know ye that for good causes, for and in consideration of the compensation to be paid, and for the annual rent hereafter named, I have given, granted and confirmed, and do hereby give, grant and confirm to Peter Ruffner ----- on the branches of the Hawksbill --- to have and to hold ---- Royal Mines excepted ---- and a full third part of the lead, copper, tin, coal, iron mine and iron ore. Said Ruffner shall pay yearly rental on the first day of Saint Michael the free rent of one shilling sterling for every fifty acres. Given at my office the fifth day of May, the first day of his Majesty George III, 1761.'

At the time the market towns of the products of the Shenandoah Country were Fredericksburg and Alexandria.

The most accurate description of Peter Ruffner's holdings is as follows: Peter and Mary Ruffner came to Frederick County, later Shenandoah and then Page, bringing back livestock and conveniences. He brought money and had the ability to make money, proved by his rapid accumulations. His original patent took in a stream close to Luray, continuing up the branches of the creek for eight miles, later extending four more miles, improving the character of the estate.

Peter Ruffner established his dwelling at the big spring near the edge of Luray. In this home, and on this land, his son, Peter, and after Peter a Grandson, Jonas, lived and reared large families and died.

The Luray Caverns were known as Ruffner Caverns on early maps. They were discovered by one of Joseph's sons, 1793-4. He chased a fox into a hole and while digging for it saw a formidable, vertical opening which extended downward for some thirty feet. It was in 1795 that a Ruffner leaving a gun by the entrance descended into it. He fell and tangling his feet overthrew the light, becoming lost in the labyrinth of passages. Friends discovered the gun and brought him out some forty eight hours later.

It was Jonas, grandson of Peter, who was to inherit Big Spring Homestead. He donated the land on which Luray, Va is built. He jestingly remarked - "the land is poor and much of it is too steep to plough. You may have it".

Peter Ruffner lived and prospered where he settled. Forty nine years passed. He died in 1798, aged seventy six. His wife outlived him by ten years. She was eighty four when she died. Posterity had reached a thousand by 1900, 165 years.

This information was taken from the W. VA. Historical Magazine. (This may be viewed at Ohio State University Archeological Museum). More information may be obtained from the old country. There is a book in Switzerland on the Ruffner family, written by a Ruffner, "Cronif der familie Rufener 1500-1900" by Godfried Rufener, Langenthal 1935.

Judge Drew of Kanawha, while in school at Heidelberg University, met Baron Ruffner of Switzerland, and in 1776 a Ruffner from Berne, Switzerland was exhibiting chemicals.

The family was probably of Italian origin. In a book of Italian notables it is spelled Ruffinier and Ruffinier. The Latin people often drop the final 'r'. In the Gallic War there was a General Ruffinius.

A young Max Ruffner, recently graduated from college in Switzerland, visited the U S in 1949. He spoke several languages fluently and used very fine English. This was noticeable when he used technical terms in describing details of their business. His home was in Langenthal, Switzerland. He was 6' 3" tall, blond and handsome. There was a striking resemblance to Ruffners who had been in this country for several generations.

He mentioned that he had been given warning at the coffee hour on the day before he left, not to let meeting any American girl become too serious a matter. The family was probably remembering how Peter Ruffner had come to this country and then decided to stay here.

Besides the W. VA. Historical Magazine (pages 31-8, Emmanuel Ruffner) other references are: History of Fairfield County by Wiseman, Pg 249- , Pioneers of Fairfield and Perry Counties by Heer printing Co 1901 pgs 229-232, History of Fairfield and Perry Counties, A A Graham, Forerunners by Henry Strickland. The Brunback family history contains material on the Ruffner family. This is in the down-town State Library. Up from Slavery by Booker T Washington makes reference to the Ruffners. He was born on their plantation.

Booker T Washington states that his desire for learning was encouraged by Col Ruffner's Yankee wife. Even after the Civil war there was a fine sense of loyalty between Booker T Washington and the Ruffner family.

Booker T and his mother, wishing to visit the Charleston branch of the family, made the trip on foot. He tells how grateful they were to find shelter in a deserted cabin one night, only to learn that rattlesnakes had taken first possession.

Indian relics which had been gathered up from Ruffner land had been kept in the attic of the Isaac Ruffner home. His son, Edward Ruffner, gave these to the Ohio State University Archeological Museum.

#### DESCENDANTS OF PETER RUFFNER

Joseph Ruffner, oldest son of Peter, was born along the Hawksbill Creek in Va in 1740. He married Ann Heistand, a neighbor. She was tall, beautiful, and had the German virtues. Joseph inherited the raven black hair of his mother. He was above medium height, full of energy and on occasion, vehement, though he was usually natural and quiet. Joseph and Ann had 8 children and all who lived went ultimately to Kanawha to establish the W Va family of Ruffners.

Joseph's farm lay above his father's land, on both sides of Hawksbill Creek. It consisted of 1200 acres of fertile land and included the north fork where the two branches met. Here his family and farm buildings were erected. There was also a grist mill which became known as Willow Grove Mills. He operated extensively and successfully.

Among other things he dealt in bear skins for the French Army. Skins of bear, deer, otter, beaver and raccoon, as well as skins of other animals were an important item of trade. Flour, whiskey, butter, beeswax, dried fruitwood, flaxseed etc constituted outgoing domestic products.

Fredericksburg was the chief market town. Joseph kept on the road a wagon (conestoga) covered with bear skins and drawn by six large horses. The wagon was known not only for miles around, but from Spotsylvania to Fredericksburg. What freight was carried in this lumbering ship of the mountains is a guess. Salt was a valuable commodity. Most things were made at home. Pennybacker's combined iron furnace was near. Screws and nails were made in the blacksmith shops.

Wagon, farm and domestic tools, implements and furniture were made in the neighborhood; carpets, bedding and clothing in the house. Tan yards supplied leather. Coffee and tea had not yet taken the place of bean soup and potato soup for breakfast. There was mush and milk for supper. Maple syrup gave the long and short of sweetening. Herbs gave the old women their materia medica. Lead came from the mines and shotguns were made in the settlement.

Gradually there was need for stores. In 1794 Willow Grove Mills got one. The village was called Mundellville after the owner of the store.

For thirty years Joseph Ruffner pursued his prosperous career, filling his barns yearly with grain, raising and marketing cattle, hauling to and from Fredericksburg, while his sons Joseph II, David, Tobias, Samuel, Daniel, Abraham and daughter Eve grew up sober and industrious. Samuel, known for his long headed business sense found another channel of work.

This prosperous Virginia scene was suddenly marred by an event which changed the course of the family history. Ruffner's Switzer barn crammed with the 1794 crop, having 7 cows and 7 big horses stabled in the basement, was burned, causing the loss of 4 horses and all the cows. Shortly another stable was burned. There was no insurance. It may have been done by a negro against whom Ruffner had been called to testify in court - a point never proven - but it accounted for Joseph Ruffner setting out to hunt iron ore along the upper part of the James River.

Joseph met Col. Dickerson and during their famous march was told about the Kanawha Valley. This in due time had him to get hold of the buffalo lick. This was a briny swamp on the north bank of the Kanawha River five miles from where Charleston, West Virginia was to be located. At this time this section was still part of Virginia. Buffalo, deer, elk, came in great numbers making deep gullies.

Col Dickerson was from Point Pleasant. When he found that Joseph Ruffner had money he emphasized the importance of the salt swamp. Before Joseph left he had not only bought the salt swamp but part of the whole survey for 600 pounds (\$2,000). He gave up the thought of getting iron and returned home.

In the spring of 1795 he rode horseback to Kanawha alone. From Greenbrier he followed the track of Mad Ann Bailey for one hundred miles where the gauntlet had been run by the Indians as the whites tried to get ammunition to Fort Clendennin.

How Joseph got across Gauley River was told by a witness: "Seven miles from the mouth, where the river runs high and strong with no path leading to it, I saw a man on the opposite bank. Surely he wouldn't be fool enough to try ~~inft~~ to ford or swim it! He took a short handled axe to chop wood from a chestnut fallen by the cliff. He nailed the lengths together into a makeshift raft and stacked supplies on it. Tying the raft to the horse's tail, he forced the horse into the water, and jumping onto the raft encouraged the horse by talking to it. They got across. He knocked theraft apart and put the nails into the saddle bag. His name was Joseph Ruffner. It was still 25 miles to the salt licks. I wonder if he was disappointed when he saw how small the salt licks were."

Daniel Boone was living on the other side of the Kanawha at this time. It was three years later that Boone's canoe flotilla was to glide through Elk's Shoals. They cried to see him go, but the time had come when hunter had to give way to farmer and manufacturer.

As Joseph Ruffner went to Fort Clendennin a new sight greeted him; there was a beautiful plain of 1,000 acres on which Charleston W. Va. now stands. It was covered by virgin forest. The trees were larger than those on the other side of the mountains which Joseph had just crossed. He took heart.

Clendennin Fort was a cluster of six small cabins and a blockhouse on the north bank of the Kanawha at its juncture with the Elk. It had been laid out by the Clendennin brothers who had come from the east six or seven years before - about 1788. It was a garrison when Mad Ann Bailey made her trip to Lewisburg. Her husband was one of the garrison.

Joseph's trip to the garrison was a new power which he was to create, strengthen and abide. He saw countless resources about him, timber and easily cultivated soil. The Kanawha was alive with fish, and full of possibilities as a navigable stream. There was elk, buffalo, raccoon and bear enough to feed all the armies in Europe. This is what his penetrating eye saw. He began buying until he owned all the land along the Elk River from 'the head to the bottom'.

After making this purchase he started back to the Shenandoah to dispose of the land he held there.

In the autumn of 1795 he moved his family to the Clendennin settlement along the Kanawha. They lived in a small cabin down stream. Later he built a hewed cabin in which he lived until his death. It was rough living in the forests by the Kanawha. The family became riflemen by necessity. Panthers screamed about the house at night. Bears shared the corn crop. Squirrels came in a onslaught like locusts.

Joseph died in 1803, age sixty three years, six months. In his mind his western career had just begun. He left his work to able bodied sons: Joseph II, Tobias, Daniel, Abraham, and Samuel who was an invalid from being burned while in his cradle. A daughter Eve married a Mr Wood and moved to Ohio.

Joseph was probably the one who had the most penetrating vision. He left the home to his wife, dividing the land among the children. The salt licks were owned jointly.



When the time came to carve the names of Joseph and his wife on their slab tombstones in the old burying ground at Charleston, W. Va. an ample record was written. On the stones were these words: "Let their spotless integrity, useful industry, and sincere piety be remembered and imitated by their descendants".

David Ruffner, son of Joseph and grandson of Peter, was the one who most strongly impressed himself upon the Kanawha country. For about 40 years his fine brain led in a multitude of enterprises, both economic and moral.

His thinking was characterized by his originality, and his energy seemed tireless. His philanthropy and public spirit, especially in the latter part of his life, seemed to dominate over private interests.

He was born in 1767 in Virginia on his father's farm near Luray. He lived there until he moved to Kanawha in 1796. His mental grasp showed ~~his~~ his mind superior to the accepted way of thinking. He loved books and along with his limited schooling he got books from the storekeeper, Mandell.

He began building his library when he was 18. He had a spelling book and the New Testament, Aesop's Fables and Bailey's English Dictionary. (Mandell speaking English was a help). He subscribed for the Fredericksburg Herald and Johnson's Gazette.

At 23 he was appointed Justice of the Peace, Shenandoah Co., which was no small job in those days of intelligent and high toned magistrates. This was the beginning of his magisterial career, continuing until his death 53 years later.

In 1799 he married Ann Brumbach of Harrisburg, Rockingham Co. She was the sweet tempered Mother Ruffner of the Kanawha Salines. She lived to a great age.

When David was old enough to help his father he was assigned to the care and responsibility of the mills. Here the grain was ground and the lumber sawed for the mountain schooner to haul to Fredericksburg. He followed his father to Kanawha in 1796 living in Clendennin settlement.

In 1798 David's first child was born in the blockhouse at Clendennin Fort. It was the first white child to be born in the location that was later to be Charleston, W. Va.

David spent his time clearing the bottom lands. After his father's death he took over the salines. He also got hold of the salt tracts and with his brothers decided to drill a well in the salt licks. This took inventive genius. They worked 8 to 10 months trying to drill a well.

What cozed out was more salty than the spring. This was midsummer 1807. They must go through bedrock to get quantity, which would require new drilling equipment. They got strong brine at 28 feet but kept on drilling while they completed a furnace.

In January 1808 they struck a good well. In February they lifted the first salt. Then the price of salt fell from \$5.00 a bushel to \$2.00. Thus was drilled, tubed, rigged and worked the first salt well west of the Alleghenics. It was not that it took 18 months to drill the well that was the wonder, but that it succeeded at all.

Along with these business ventures, it was only three months after David came to Kanawha that he was elected to represent the county in the House of Delegates, 1799 - 1811.

While in Richmond he helped rescue people when the theatre burned on the night following Christmas 1811. His height and size made it possible for David to catch people as they jumped from the flames.

Along with these Richmond activities he was still trying to improve living conditions at the salt mills.

Col. Ruffner died in 1803, aged 77. He said to his son Lewis, "I die in peace with all mankind".

Let us remember him as a man of inventive genius and fine business ability. He was the father of the Presbyterian Church in Charleston, Va. He did much to contribute to the higher things in the community and was well thought of by the Bar. Little children remembered him for their hilarious rides through town.

HENRY RUFFNER, oldest son of David and grandson of Peter, was much like those mentioned above. He could recall the years spent in the Shenandoah country and the trip to Kanawha.

He helped his father at the salt mills but was leaning toward literary things by the time he reached his teens. His father sent him to Lewisburg in

1809 where he came under the influence of a great preacher. He tried to master what they taught. Later at George Washington University he finished in a year and a half the four year course of study, getting highest marks in every subject when he took the examinations before the trustees.

He spent a year studying theology under Dr Barter and then received his license to preach under the presbytery. His ministerial life began at Kanawha. Later he taught and preached at the academy when it was opened at Charleston. He was as tireless a worker as his ancestors. Invited to the chair of Classical Languages in Charleston College he served for 30 years as teacher and president of the college.

WILLIAM HENRY RUFFNER followed in his father's footsteps. He held two degrees from his father's college and took his theology at Princeton. He was a writer and editor and preached in one of the largest churches in Philadelphia. He was Head of Public Instructions and was one of the leaders who helped to establish free education for women.

He contributed fine scientific work, examining and reporting on coal mines and quarries. He assembled fine biographies and wrote a history of Washington and Lee University. He was a member of the Board of Trustees for the University for many years.

He moved back to the old home place at Lexington, Va in 1868. His career was such a distinguished one that it is not difficult to find many sources of material about his life.

#### THE OHIO RUFFNERS

Emmanuel Ruffner, youngest son of Peter, was the progenitor of the Ohio Ruffners. He used the pay for his services as a teamster in the Revolution to procure land in the part of the country which later became Richland Twp., Fairfield County, Ohio. Emmanuel's son-in-law, Mr Friend, at one time had in his possession a note for \$250 redeemable at the Virginia Treasury, on or before Dec 30, 1792.

Emmanuel moved his family <sup>from Virginia</sup> to the new country in 1805. The Ruffner tract of land lay north of the Zanesville Maysville pike eight miles east of Lancaster, Ohio.

The settler's cabin which they built is still standing back of a large brick house built at a later date. Below the settler's cabin is a spring and on a knoll a short distance away is a family cemetery which they soon had need of.

Emmanuel was born in Shenandoah Co., Virginia March 31, 1757. He was of giant size and strength; 6' 3" tall and his arm was said to have been as large as an ordinary man's leg. In Virginia he lived on a farm near where Blackford's furnace stood. When he sold this he bought Ulrich Biedler's farm on Hawksbill Creek.

Emmanuel ~~married~~ married a Virginia girl, Magdalene Grove, daughter of Christian and Ann Grove who lived in or near Luray.

CHILDREN OF EMMANUEL AND MAGDALENE RUFFNER

- |                             |                    |                        |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| ✓1. Jacob 1st 1781-         | married            | Magdalene Bibler       |
| ✓2. Barbara 1782-1831       |                    | David Pence            |
| ✓3. John 1785-1865          |                    | Mary Rhodes            |
| ✓4. Henry Ruffner 1789-1806 | - Feb 15 72 yrs    | Thomas Kraner          |
| ✓5. Anna 1790-              | 5/21/1863 - 73 yrs | Christian Baker        |
| ✓6. Magdalene 1795-1875     |                    | William Hill           |
| ✓7. Mary -1829              |                    | M. Garner              |
| ✓8. Elizabeth - 1860        |                    | Rhoda Davis            |
| ✓9. Joseph 1796-1871        | Feb 10 - 1871      | David Keller           |
| ✓10. Susanna                | 1871               | 1. Barbara Harshbarger |
| ✓11. Emanuel 2nd            |                    | 2. Elizabeth Whitman   |
| 12. Joshua                  |                    | Mary Ann Marye         |
| 13. Peter - 1806            |                    |                        |
- Handwritten notes:*  
 ✓4. Henry Ruffner 1789-1806 - Feb 15 72 yrs  
 ✓5. Anna 1790- 5/21/1863 - 73 yrs  
 ✓9. Joseph 1796-1871 Feb 10 - 1871  
 ✓11. Emanuel 2nd  
 12. Joshua  
 13. Peter - 1806  
 Thomas Kraner & B 9/13/88 & 10/1/60  
 Rhoda Davis & 4/16/63 62 yrs 7 mo 9 day  
 - son of Peter Ruffner Jr? daughter of Mary + was stage manager?

All of the children were born in Virginia and some traveled with their parents to Ohio in 1805, others came later.

The trip was made in a conestoga. It served as shelter and home while the settler's cabin was being built. The name of RUFFNER was on the side of the conestoga. (On August 31, 1963 most of the wagon was still stored in an old barn near the original cabin. We found two wheels, the sides and tailgate - there may be a bit more around. FOR Jr)

Emmanuel and his son Jacob drove the conestoga back east many times, stopping for the family supplies at Baltimore and Fredericksburg. It is said that the family resented the railroad which was later built across this part of Ohio for that meant eliminating the trips east which meant visiting relatives as well as getting supplies.

Emmanuel and Magdalene are buried in the family cemetery on the hill above the cabin. The DAR have placed a marker at Emmanuel's grave in memory of his service in the Revolution. Magdalene's sister Elizabeth is also buried there. Emmanuel married her after Magdalene's death. ~~His~~ <sup>Sr</sup> Jacob Ruffner and his family are buried near by in the Stevenson cemetery. Other Ruffners are buried in the West Rushville cemetery and in Pleasant Run cemetery between West Rushville and Pleasantville.

Family reunions were a yearly diversion in pioneer days. The Ruffner reunions were held beneath a huge elm tree not far from the cabin. Relatives from Virginia and W. Virginia attended. Following the picnic feast the kin swapped stories of the past year's events. If an eastern relative had enjoyed a trip abroad it could easily be outtold by an Ohio member of the family who had been lost returning from a crossroads store. The children following their own imaginative promptings alternated wading in the stream with recounting how the boys slept in the barn when there was no longer room enough to sleep all of them in the cabin.

---

Emmanuel lived near Yeager's Spring, VA, but moved to the Big Hawkbill about 7 miles south of Luray about 1785. In 1805 he sold this farm to Ulrich Biedler and moved to Ohio.

This beautiful old home has been in the possession of the Biedler family since Ulrich purchased it from Emmanuel. The dwelling is surrounded by ancient locust trees and is appropriately called "Locust Grove". It was probably built by Emmanuel.

There was a mill on the portion of land he obtained from his father, Peter in 1773. This was evidently at the mill site just below Luray. The Biedler home is of log construction.

In 1803 Emmanuel came to Ohio and made a treaty with the Indians. He paid ten dollars per acre and gave the Indians permission to hunt. This deed was signed by Thomas Jefferson in 1806.

Emmanuel brought his family to Ohio in 1805 and settled in the western part of Richland Twp on what was known as the Wilson section. His son Peter came at the same time and settled near Edward Murphy on the "Old State Rd". He was a farmer and distiller but died quite young in 1806. Emmanuel's daughter Barbara and her husband David Pence were also in the party.

In C.M.L. Wiseman's history, "Pioneers of Fairfield County, Ohio", it states as follows: Emmanuel Ruffner was a teamster in the Revolutionary War (1775-1783) and his son John drove a team in the War of 1812."

Emmanuel's son Henry was helping his father erect a cabin and was killed by falling timber at the age of 17. He was the first person to be buried in the Ruffner-Fried family cemetery on the knoll.

(Note - to go back to page 12 of this chronicle - before moving to the farm Emmanuel sold to Ulrich Biedler he lived on a farm near Luray where Blackford's furnace stands. He sold this property to Derrick Pennybacker before moving to the Big Hawkbill.)

PETER RUFFNER born somewhere between 1710 and 1713 died 1798, buried Virginia  
 married  
 Mary STEINMAN in 1739 She was born Sept 1, 1714, died 1798  
 in Lancaster, Pa

PETER AND MARY'S CHILDREN

- |                   |                  |  |  |
|-------------------|------------------|--|--|
| 1. Joseph Ruffner | Sept 25, 1740    | married                                      | Ann Heistand   |
| 2. Benjamin       | Aug 14, 1743     |  | 1. Burner<br>2. Heistand   |
| 3. Catherine      | May 15, 1744     | - died young                                 |  |
| 4. Peter Ruffner  | 2nd Dec 13, 1746 |  | Elizabeth Burner   |
| 5. Reuben R.      | Oct 22, 1748     | - settled in Kentucky                        |  |
| 6. Tobias         | Aug 4, 1752      | - died at 15 years - accident with a saw-log |  |
| 7. Elisabeth      | March 4, 1755    |  | Jacob Stover   |
| 8. Emanuel        | March 31, 1757   | <i>d 11/14/48 91-2-21</i>                    | 1. Magdalene Grove <i>11/20/22 65 yrs 8 days</i><br>2. Elizabeth Grove <i>17/1/42 63 9 mo 6 ds</i> |

(Note some of the material in this resume came from "Fore-Runners of Strickler Families" by Henry Strickler, also "History of the Ruffner Family" by Charles Hedrick.)

On April 16, 1746 Peter "Ruffnough" qualified as administrator in the Augusta County Court for the estate of Abraham Strickler. One of the requirements of the court was that the administrator determine whether or not Abraham left a will. Presumably this Abraham Strickler was the husband of Peter's only sister Mary who was said to have accompanied him to America in 1732.

This is a letter written by William Staige Marye to his son James. William was married to Mary Ruffner, daughter of Peter II, granddaughter of Peter.

Hillside  
Shenandoah County, Virginia  
July 4, 1835

To my son James Theodosius Marye:

As desired by you on the eve of your departure to Mississippi to reside, I have taken my seat to pen you a short genealogy of the Ruffner family who lived on the Hawksbill Creek in this county when I came here from my native county of Culpeper many years ago, I already having given you a short genealogy of the Marye family, as desired, before you left the home of your birth.

I was married the 6th day of May AD 1802 to Miss Mary Ruffner, at the home of Peter Ruffner, Mary's father.

Mary's grandfather, Peter Ruffner, the elder is the first of the Ruffner family of whom we have intelligence in this country. He was of the Kingdom of Hanover in Germany; was of the Teutonic stock; was the third son of a German baron, who owned large landed estates in Hanover. He spoke High Dutch languages, was in religion a protestant of the Martin Luther school. He was at an agriculture college and before he got through his studies (with other students) he left college without the knowledge of his parents and came to the United States, having been attracted hither by the glowing descriptions of America published in the German States. On arriving in this country he located in one of the interior counties of Pennsylvania (Lancaster, I believe it was) where very soon he became acquainted with and married Miss Mary Steinman, daughter of a very wealthy German farmer, who owned large landed estates in the valley of Virginia. Said Steinman was a native of the kingdom of Wurtemberg in Germany. He spoke the Low Dutch language; he, Steinman, had migrated to this country some years previously with considerable means and had made a respectable fortune by farming and grazing, and had invested much of his surplus funds in Virginia along the Shenandoah River and on both branches of the Hawksbill Creek, in Shenandoah County. Steinman gave to Ruffner a very large body of land located on both branches of Hawksbill Creek, to which said Ruffner and Mary removed and settled and is the plantation now owned, and on which your uncle, Jonas Ruffner, resides on the Hawksbill Creek, adjoining the

the town of Lurey where he lived many years with his wife Mary and by her had the following children, to wit: Joseph, Benjamin, Reuben, Peter, Samuel, Elizabeth.

"Said Peter Ruffner, the elder, was about 19 years of age when he came to the United States. He was a tall man, being 6 feet 3 inches, very good looking, of strong mind and of great energy of character, was a man of mark and of such influence in his neighborhood and country. His wife is said to have been possessed of equally good parts and they were both well calculated to get along well in the world. They were industrious, thriving and prosperous farmers for many years and acquired much additional landed property.

They lived to a good old age and died and were buried on the plantation on which they had settled, having raised all their children and settled them on good farms near to themselves. At the time Peter Ruffner, the elder, migrated to settle in the Shenandoah, there was a considerable lot of Slavonic Germans, mostly from Pennsylvania, the stock being of that extraction of Germans with some few "foreign Germans" who all spoke the Low Dutch (Platt Dutch) language. Indeed at that early day that part of the valley of Virginia was almost exclusively of that class of Germans and it was with that class of Germans that said Peter Ruffner became identified and afterwards intermarried."

#### JOSEPH RUFFNER

"Joseph Ruffner married Miss Ann Weistand and settled on the farm now owned by Samuel Ferrer, just at the junction of the Little and Big Hawksbill Creeks at Mendellville. He afterwards sold out his farm and moved to the county of Kanawha in this state where he purchased an immensely large landed estate and from thence has descended most of the Kanawha Ruffners and some others in the State of Ohio. He had the following children: David, Joseph, Tobias, Samuel, Eve, Daniel and Abraham.

Joseph Ruffner and myself were intimate friends for many years and we kept up a correspondence for years after he removed to the western country.

#### BENJAMIN RUFFNER

Benjamin Ruffner married Miss Burner (aunt of your mother) and settled on the farm now owned and on which Kendrick and Ferrer reside on the Big Hawksbill



Creek, about a mile south of Mundellsville. He had the following named children, to wit: by his first wife, Peter, Benjamin, Mary, Regina, Martin, Ann, by his second wife, Emanuel, Reuben, Abraham, Barbara, Michael, Elizabeth. He lived to a good old age and died on the plantation on which he first settled. After his first wife died he married Miss Heistand.

"REUBEN RUFFNER"

"Reuben Ruffner married Miss (name forgotten) and settled on the farm now owned and on which the widow Hoffman resides on the Big Hawksbill Creek about two miles south of Mundellsville. He afterwards sold this farm and removed to the State of Kentucky before I came to ~~Shenandoah~~ Shenandoah to reside.

PETER RUFFNER II

"Peter Ruffner, your grandfather, married Miss Elizabeth Burner (the sister of Benjamin's wife) and settled on the farm on which his father (Peter Ruffner, the elder) lived and died and on which your uncles resides. He has the following named children, to wit: Isaac, Elizabeth, Jonas, Joshua, Christian and Mary (your mother), Hester, Nancy, John, Barbara, Catherine.

"Your grandfather, Peter Ruffner 2nd and wife lived to a good old age, died and were buried on the farm in the Ruffner burying ground, after having raised all their children.

EMANUEL RUFFNER

"Emanuel Ruffner married a Miss Grove and settled on the farm where Blackford's furnace now stands but he afterwards sold it to old Derrick Pennybacker and moved to the farm on which Ulrich Biedler now lives on the Big Hawksbill Creek. He afterward sold the farm and moved to the State of Ohio, where he now lives.

ELIZABETH RUFFNER

"Elizabeth Ruffner married Jacob Stover near "Stoverstown", Shenandoah County, where she lived. She had a large family of children, whose names I have forgotten - and died there.

"Your mother was the most beautiful young lady, I think, I have ever seen I lived at Mundellsville when I courted and married her. Her father's place was about one and a half miles down the Hawksbill Creek from Mundellsville. I visited them for a long time with much pleasure to myself in my young days.

I moved from Culpepper to Shenandoah in 1794 at the age of 19 years. Your mother and I have had 15 children. I suppose you will come to the conclusion by reading this and the Marye genealogy that your ancestors were a good stock of breeders. When I left Culpepper I was a mere boy, just out of William and Mary College. Nothing was spoken in this part of the country but the German language - the Low Dutch. I procured a number of German books of the very best authors and soon became the best German scholar in all this region. I learned to read, speak and write the Hoch Deutsch and the Platt Deutsch (high and low Dutch) languages and as you well know/<sup>I am</sup> to this day beloved by all the German families and some of them as my best friends.

In this I have only given you an account of Peter Ruffner, the elder, and his children. You can readily now fill up the remaining pages with the history of the Ruffners from the materials in this neighborhood before you go south or at some other time.

My knowledge of Peter Ruffner, the elder, is from his son, Peter Ruffner (your grandfather) and from old papers which have come down through the family to me when I married in the family.

In conclusion, James, I will say to you that the Maryes have brains and pluck; the Ruffners have good sense, honesty and virtue. Both families so far as I know, have come down to you without blemish of character, so that ~~the~~ blood that flows through your veins is pure. I will therefore admonish you to ~~in~~ transmit through your generation and day in like manner as it has come down to you. I am proud of my family and equally proud of your mother's family. You have the person of your mother, with much that is best of both Maryes and Ruffners. So I will depend upon you to hand down a good name to the future Maryes. Let our motto be "Onward and Upward". I could say a great deal about the early settlement of this country and its peoples, history, etc that would be highly interesting to posterity, but at this time I cannot commit it to paper. At some future day I may resume my pen upon this subject. I am your father, William Staige ~~Maye~~ Marye.

"Copied this day, April 28, 1865  
By S. L. Ruffner"

(As I interpret this information, the "letter" written by Wm S Marye to his was written in a ledger rather than ordinary stationery - then copied some 35 years later by said S L Ruffner. OTR)

Charleston, W VA

From information received from Anne M. Ruffner/sometime prior to  
1914 - the following -

"The early Ruffners were Mennonites, an anti-war sect and could not be expected to furnish many fighters, but Schunicht mentions George Ruffner as a noted Indian fighter. The early fighters belonged probably to the family of Emanuel. He had a large family and was, himself, a giant in size and strength. In 1805 he removed to Fairfield County, Ohio.

Ruffner, ( we think she was referring to George Ruffner), who lived on the bank of the Ohio, was roused from sleep one winter night by the violent barking of his dogs, which were driving some animal into the river. Ruffner dashed down the bank, thinking the animal was probably a deer, and when he found that the dogs and their game had taken to the water, he plunged in after them. Ice was running freely in the water, but on he went, and when he reached the other side, he found his dogs in fierce conflict with a large black wolf. But the wolf slashed the dogs so savagely as to clear the space around him, and there he stood ready to fight the master. Ruffner was in his night clothes and without any sort of weapon, but he set the dogs on the wolf again and while they were scuffling in the edge of the water, he seized the wolf by the hind legs and tried to drown him, but, failing in this, he swung him high in the air and brought his head down upon a rock, crushing his skull."

(I now refer you back to page 6 to the account of how Joseph crossed the Gauley River - and to the 'witness')

The witness who saw Joseph cross the Gauley River was one Paddy Huddleston, a tavern keeper, at which tavern ~~was~~ Joseph then stayed overnight. "A warm diet dinner" could be had for 16  $\frac{2}{3}$  cents, a good bed and clean sheets for 8  $\frac{1}{3}$  cents. If that was too rich for your purse, a "cold diet dinner" could be had for 10  $\frac{1}{2}$  cents, a bed with no sheets, but with a bed companion - whoever might come along - could be had for 5  $\frac{1}{2}$  cents. The tavern was often visited by Daniel Boone when he was hunting and trapping in that region.

Daniel Ruffner, son of Joseph, of Charleston built a large brick house at 1710 Kanawha Blvd in 1815 on the site of Joseph's log homestead. In those days everyone's home was open to travelers. The following article appeared in the newspaper "Western Virginian" on October 26, 1826.

"To Travellers - The subscriber has opened a house of private entertainm<sup>t</sup> at his commodious residence, situate 1 mile and  $\frac{1}{2}$  from the town of Charleston, leading thence to Lewisburg. Every effort will be to render the lodging of the traveller comfortable, and his diet palatable. His pastures are extensive and corn abundant. He will therefore be amply prepared to accomodate the cattle or hog merchant. For travellers on horseback, or in carriages, he will be able to furnish good stables well supplied with all kinds of provender for horses.  
September 13. Daniel Ruffner "

Daniel Boone, Henry Clay, Samuel Houston, John Audubon, and in October 1832, President Andrew Jackson - were said to be among those visiting Daniel's home.

From the Lancaster, Ohio Eagle-Gazette, Saturday, September 15, 1903

"EAGLE-GAZETTE NATURE NOTES"

By Charles Goslin

"LOOKING INTO THE GUN BARREL - To connect the Foresman's mill on the bank of Rush Creek north of the Rushvilles with the state road, a road was laid out in 1834. That road began at the east end of the Rush Creek bridge, and followed the bottomland north along the east side of Rush Creek, abutting the farms of Jacob Ruffner and Caleb Copeland.

To lay out this road, Simon Hartman and Daniel Dudrick served as chairmen, Jonas Ruffner was the marker and Earl Giffner the surveyor. In 1861 this road was extended farther north, following the east bank more or less, of Indian Creek. This is now designated Richland Township Road 415 and known to many of the older residents as the Gun Barrel Road. It was probably called by this name because of the many creeks and turns. It may have been likened to the bore of the hunting rifles used by the early settlers of Fairfield County. ~~xxx~~ In the distance is a covered bridge - the Mary Ruffner bridge over Rush Creek, and near which once stood the Foresman Mill. (A picture of the bridge is shown)

## PETER RUFFNER'S WILL - 15th January 1778

IN THE NAME OF GOD, AMEN, I Peter Ruffner Senr, of the Parish of Beckford in the County of Dunmore being of sound mind and perfect memory thanks to God for the same do make & ordain this my last will and Testament in the manner and form following, that is to say, first of all I recommend my soul to God who gave it and my body to the Earth from whence it came to ~~be~~ buried in a Christianlike manner at the discretion of my executors hereinafter mentioned and as to what worldly estate it hath pleased God to bless me with I dispose thereof in the manner (Viz)

Inprimis my will and desire is that all my just debts and funeral charges be first paid and satisfied. Item I give and bequeath unto my son Peter Ruffner all that Tract of Marcell of land whereon I now live except the part that is surveyed to the Mill Tract to him and his heirs for ever my wife Mary Ruffner thirds excepted he paying to the ~~following persons~~ follow-pers on the sums of money hereafter mentioned. That is to say One hundred and fifty pound to Jacob Stober my son in law as the same is stated that is to say the first year after my Death he shall pay Twenty five pounds and so on at the same rate till the whole at Twenty five pounds a year is paid and three hundred and fifty pounds to be paid to my beloved wife Mary Ruffner in the manner following that ist essay fifty pounds a year from my Death until the whole is paid to her, to be given to her and her heirs and at the disposal of my Beloved wife Mary Ruffner at her Deceased so that my beloved wife pay unto my son Manuel Ruffner the sum of fifty pounds on the day of his marriage so that its One year after my Deceased .. Item I give unto my son Joseph Ruffner one shilling besides the lands already given .. Item I give to my son Benjamin Ruffner One shilling besides the land already given .. Item I give unto my son Ruben Ruffner one shilling beside the land already given.. Item its my will and desire that my son Manuel Ruffner shall have the mills and the tract of land joining the same with the Price that was surveyed of the Tract that I now live on which I think was Twenty five acres. The line is marked, I give and bequeath all my Horses &c., that are now Possessed with to my son Emanuel Ruffner except the Blue Roan horse and white horse which I bequeath to my beloved wife Mary Ruffner her and her heirs ... Item I give and bequeath to my beloved wife May Ruffner all my moveable estate not yet mentioned, she paying all my Just Debts in ~~the~~ During her Natural Life or widowhood and after her Deceased or Marriage the same or to equal to be divided among my children .. Last, I do hereby make constitute and appoint my loving wife Mary Ruffner Executrix and my loving son Joseph Ruffner and my friend Benjamin Strickler exors of this my last will and Testament hereby revoking disanulling and making void all other wills by me heretofore made declaring and confirming this only to be my last will and Testament. In Testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 15th January 1778.

his  
Peter P.R. Ruffner (Seal)  
Mark

signed, sealed published and declared by the Testator to be ~~his~~ his last will and Testament in the presence of:

Edwin Young  
Selby Foley  
Jacob (written in German)

Jacob J.B. Burner  
Christian C.C. Groves

At a Court held for the County Shenando the 28th day of May 1778.  
The last will and testament of Peter Ruffner Deceased was Presented.

(Note - anything crossed out was done by me - the typewriter is not working properly. OR)

(Will of Emanuel Ruffner, copied from the original at Court House, Lancaster, Ohio)  
In the name of God, Amen.

I Emanuel Ruffner of County of Fairfield and State of Ohio being in good health ~~of~~ and of sound and disposing mind and memory consider in the certainty of death and the uncertainty of the time thereof and being desirous to settle my worldly affairs and thereby be better prepared to leave this world when it shall please God to call me home do therefore make ordain constitute and publish this my last will and testament Revoking and making void all former wills by me made at any time heretofore made, <sup>I bequeath</sup> in the manner and form following that is to say

First. And principally I commit my soul unto the hands of Almighty God who gave it and my body to the Earth to be decently buried; and after my just debts are paid I devise give and bequeath as follows.

Second. I give and bequeath unto my son Joseph Ruffner and to his heirs and assigns forever all and every part of a tract of land on which I now live and being in the County and State afforsaid, Containing two hundred and two acres it being a part of section number thirty in Township number seventeen in Range number seventeen with all the improvements and appertanances thereunto belonging to be held and enjoyed <sup>by them</sup> forever, on Conditions that the said Joseph Ruffner his heirs or assigns shall well and truly pay unto my son Jacob Ruffner and his children the sum of one hundred dollars. To Barbara Pence and her Children the sum of one hundred dollars. To my son John Ruffner his heirs or assigns the sum of one hundred dollars. To my daughter Anna Kraner her heirs or assigne the sum of one hundred dollars. To my daughter Elizabeth Ruffner the sum of one hundred dollars. To my daughter Magdalene Baker her heirs or assigns the sum of one hundred dollars, To my son Emanuel Ruffner his heirs or assigns one hundred dollars. To my daughter Susannah Keller her heirs or assigns one hundred dollars. To my daughter Mary Hill and her heir John Hill the sum of ten dollars.

Executors

Third. It is further my will that after my death that my ~~Children~~ <sup>children</sup> shall make sale of my personal property ~~and~~ and equally divide it/ among ~~themselves~~ <sup>my children & their heirs</sup> the executors to be present and keep an account of Every thing sold and settle the same it is further my will that the Legatee Book shall be taken in consideration that my Children shall share ~~xxx~~ & share alike.

And lastly I do hereby constitute and appoint my friend Thomas McNaughton of Walnut Township and John Fry of Rusherock Township in said County to be executors of this my last will and testament Ratifying and Confirming this and no other to be my last will and testament. It is further will that my-son Joseph Ruffner shall pay all my Expenses ofl ast sickness & funerell expenses.

In testimony whereof I emanuel Ruffner have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal this Twenty fifth day of December in the year of our Lord Eighteen hundred & forty three.

Emanuel Ruffner (L S)

Signed Published and declared by the above Emanuel Ruffner as e for his last will and testament in presence of us who at his Request have signed as witnesses to the same.

Attest John Bretz  
Henry Bretz

(Last will and testament of one Peter Ruffner of Fairfield Co, Ohio - copied from the original at the Lancaster Court House. Note - we are not sure just who this Peter was - but we think he was the son of Benjamin. We will find out eventually)

"In the name of God Amen.

I Peter Ruffner of Richland ~~stunt~~ Township in Fairfield County & State of Ohio considering the uncertainty of this mortal life and being of sound and perfect/<sup>Mind and</sup>Memory Blessed be Almighty God for the same, do make and publish this my last will and Testament, in manner and form following. (that is to say)

First I give and bequeath unto my beloved wife Catharine Ruffner one hundred and fifty acres of land of this half section I now live on, Together with all the improvements and out buildings and appurtenances & whatsoever to the said land Messuage or farm belongs. (except one spring of water which rises near the south line and near the south corner of this half section) Together with all and singular the profits rents and issues of the same during her widowhood. I further will and order that the remaining part or quarter section in this half section shall be leased together with the above excepted spring of water, for the benefit of my heirs, And I further will, and order, that at or immediately after the Marriage or Death of my widow, that the land Messuages and appurtenances whatsoever I have heroby bequeather to my wife shall be leased out for the benefit of my Heirs also and I further give and bequeath unto my beloved wife Catharine Ruffner ~~xxxx~~ one feather bed and Bedding. Forever. I also give and bequeath unto my beloved wife one horse beast in value not above twenty pounds and a Saddle & bridle during her widowhood which Beast, saddle and bridle shall be paid for out of my Estate. I Also give and bequeath unto my wife all the grain on my Premises for ever. I also give and bequeath unto my beloved wife one cow & a calf, one ewe & a lamb which she shall take at the Appraisement which stock & the increase thereof shall be hers during her widowhood. I Also give and bequeath unto my beloved wife a Pen, a Pot and a Dutch Oven to be taken at the appraisment & to be hers during her widowhood. I further give and and bequeath unto my beloved wife one third part of my Personal Estate. And I further will and order that the monies arising from the sale of my Personal Estate



shall be paid out for the land which land when bought shall be leased for the benefit of my Heirs. I further will and order that the stills and vessels be sold with my personal property. And I further will and order that my Executors shall make Isaac Ijams as good a Title as I myself could do provided he the said Ijams do well & truly pay his share of said land and agree to the Division line that was when I bought said land. And I do hereby appoint Andrew Hite Senior and Jacob Musselman both of Pleasant Township in county & state aforesaid and Catharine Ruffner my beloved wife my Executors of this my last will and Testament hereby revoking all former wills by me made. In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and Seal this Eighth Day of April in the year of our Lord One thousand Eight Hundred and Five.

Peter Ruffner

Signed, Sealed, Published and declared by the above named Peter Ruffner to be his last will and Testament in the Presence of us who have hereunto Subscribed our names as Witnesses in the Presence of the Testator.

Christian Cagy

Isaac Hite

Jesse Smith

Filed for probate 4 May 1905 (F G R Sr, 9-11-1968)