

A History of the Riddlebarger (Rötlisperger) Family

*Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
bears all its sons away;
they fly forgotten, as a dream
dies at the op'ning day.*

-- Isaac Watts, from "O God, Our Help in Ages Past"

Summer 2019

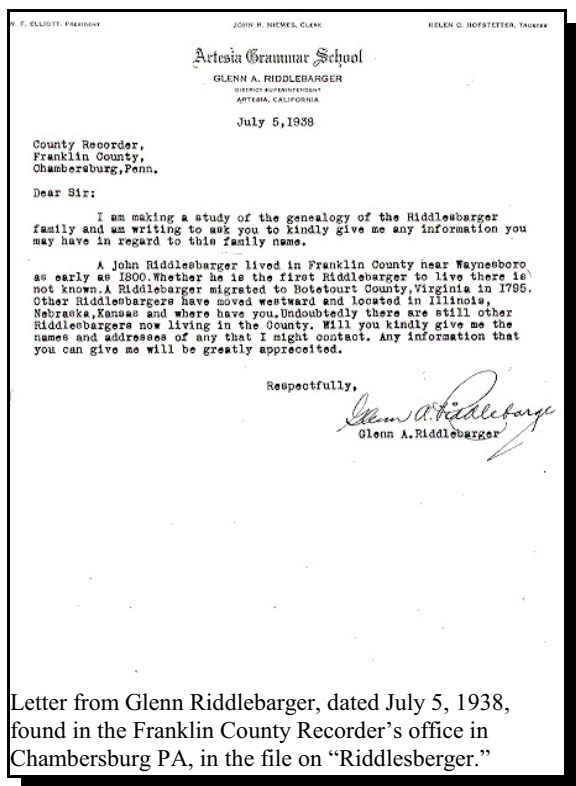
Dr. Kim Riddlebarger

Introduction

(2005, 2013, and Revised in 2016/18/19)

The biggest danger with a family history is that it may inadvertently turn out to be the history of the author! Such is not my intention, but I make no pretense of objectivity. This is a history written by a Riddlebarger for other Riddlebaggers and interested parties. The specific purpose of this humble effort is to compose a factual account of those forebears I did not know and an oral history of those I did, to pass on to my beloved sons (David Clayton and Mark Thomas) and to their children's children something I wish I had—a history of the life and times of those who have gone before me and whose long and multi-syllabic name I now bear.

Family legend had it that my own grandfather, “Pop” (Glenn A.), had done some genealogical research on the Riddlebarger family, but this was long thought to be lost—the unfortunate casualty of those hectic days in 1978 when my grandmother Ruth (known to us by her nickname “Dine”) was moving from her Lakewood, CA, home on 5208 Hanbury Street into convalescent care. Somehow Pop’s work disappeared without trace in the chaos. In March of 2012, Lynne Riddlebarger McMahon (my late first cousin), emailed me to let me know that Pop’s genealogical research had been discovered among the papers of his daughter-in-law, Heloise Riddlebarger, who died on November 26, 2011. What was thought lost was suddenly found. Although Pop’s work provided scant new information, it did confirm much of my research and included several important family photos which I had no idea even existed. Little did I know when I began this project back in 1997 that one of “Pop’s” query letters, written more than sixty years earlier, would surface in a



Letter from Glenn Riddlebarger, dated July 5, 1938, found in the Franklin County Recorder's office in Chambersburg PA, in the file on "Riddlebarger."

long forgotten Riddlebarger family file in the Franklin County Recorder's office in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. The thought occurred to me that my own humble effort to set forth our families' history may, in fact, serve to complete the effort to find our forbears which my own grandfather began back in 1938. I have no doubt that Pop would be pleased with my humble efforts.

I began with only the faint childhood recollection from my father Clayton that the Riddlebaggers originally came from Switzerland to America in the late 1700s and settled in Pennsylvania. As it turns out, this was pretty close to the mark. Going through family papers some time after my mother's death in 1992, I found my grandmother

Dine's scrapbook, which turned out to be a treasure trove for tracing the family roots. From the faded and crumbling typescript of my great-grandfather Albert Emery Riddlebarger's obituary and funeral service, I discovered that my great-great grandparents, David Henry and Elizabeth Garrison Riddlebarger, had lived in Lee County, Illinois. I was perplexed and saddened by the fact that I had never heard of Albert Riddlebarger nor his parents David and Elizabeth, before finding the obituary. In fact, no one in our family could recall any of them, although Lynne McMahon had decoupage pictures of them in her home given her by Dine many years before. Who were these people who died professing faith in Christ, and whose DNA was passed on to me and to my sons? It became my passion to get to know them as best I could and share that knowledge with others in the family so that their memory would not be lost to future Riddlebargers yet to come.

Traditional genealogical research was largely a matter of spending hours in libraries pouring over published records, as well as sending query letters to various historical societies, county clerks, government agencies, and people with the same last name, looking for various bits of information. The worst part of this early phase of my research was waiting for a response. Patience was required every bit as much as was detective ingenuity. Many people that I contacted were very helpful, gladly sending copies of important documents and other historical materials. A few were completely indifferent and could have cared less. But families are like that. You take the good with the bad.

But times have changed—as has genealogical research. With the advent of the Internet and the rise of on-line ancestry companies devoted to genealogical research (such as Ancestry.com), much of my own research became a matter of sending e-mail queries to various genealogical web-sites and searching through a seemingly endless mass of on-line cemetery records, deeds, obituaries, census data, and newspapers, as well as checking the query pages in those counties where our kin may have lived. The rise of modern search engines made it abundantly clear that no records existed for a “Riddlebarger family” in Europe—Switzerland, Germany, or Austria—the places you would expect someone with the surname of “Riddlebarger” to find ancestors. Since the searches came up empty, this meant our surname was Americanized at the time our forebears arrived in the New World. This was a potential brick wall.

On-line searches did turn up Riddlebargers in Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio, and Illinois. My queries here were a bit more fruitful. E-mail correspondence with various genealogical/historical societies eventually turned up a core group of Riddlebarger family researchers—most of them previously unknown distant cousins—all trying to cover much of the same ground. Then came the advent of DNA testing which solved the biggest riddle of all—our family's European roots. Little did I know when this project began, I would find the exact location of our family's European origins (the Röhliisberg—a small hill—in Langnau im Emmental, in the Canton of Bern, Switzerland) and actually meet a living European cousin (Urs Rötliisberger). DNA testing provided answers impossible to find otherwise.

But technological advances did not change the fact that finding the widely scattered traces of the history of our forebears is grounded in old-fashioned historical research, and then by carefully placing each puzzle piece of information together to see the larger picture. And like a jigsaw puzzle, the picture kept changing even while it was

becoming clearer. It is interesting to go back and read my early correspondence with people to see where I was headed in the right direction and where I was dead wrong. There were many wonderful breakthroughs and many disappointing dead-ends.

Help in uncovering our family history has come from a number of sources. After finding Albert Riddlebarger's obituary, I first contacted the *Lee County Genealogical Society* in Dixon, Illinois, in June of 1997 and I was soon off and running. They quickly provided a great deal of information about David Henry, his father Daniel, as well as the Garrison family. I was now back six generations and could trace our kin as far back as Pennsylvania. I knew I was getting warm!

Another big break came shortly after, when I found Dine's address/date book for the year 1969. In the alphabetical listing in the phone directory were several Riddlebargers of whom I had never heard. There was also a return address sticker off a Christmas card from an "H. Riddlesberger" who lived in Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, where I now suspected that Daniel Riddlesberger and his son David Henry had been born. This was too intriguing to let go by, so I did a quick Internet phone search and found a "John Henry Riddlesberger," living nearby in Carlisle, PA. I wrote to him, waited several months for a reply but eventually forgot all about it. Then on Thanksgiving night 1997, I received an e-mail from John Henry, who informed me that his late grandfather "Henry" was the mysterious "H. Riddlesberger" living on Broad St. in Waynesboro, and that his grandfather had spent many years researching the Riddlesberger family! It was not long before John Henry and his brother Merchline Mills Jr., graciously sent me a copy of Henry's extensive work on our family history (Henry's "notes") which filled in a great many holes in my research, and gave me names, dates, and anecdotal information about our family, which otherwise, I would never have discovered. To my utter amazement, Henry makes reference to correspondence in the 1930's and 50's with Glenn A. Riddlebarger, then of Artesia, which related to Pop's research for his family history. Much of that correspondence was among the papers Lynne McMahan discovered. Henry and Glenn would be quite pleased, I think, that their grandsons collaborated in this effort over forty years later!

Another big break came when the Vice-President of the Georgia Salzburger Society put me in touch with a Mr. Michael G. Moss, a descendant of the "**Riddlespurger**" family, widely scattered throughout the south. Mr. Moss was also investigating his possible connection to the "**Riedelsperger**" family who were among the "Salzburger" refugees, fleeing from Roman Catholic persecution in Austria, and who came to the New World, helping to found an historic Lutheran settlement at Ebenezer, Georgia in 1734. Mr. Moss, in turn, introduced me to Marie Kline, another Riddlespurger descendant who saved me much grief and great embarrassment. At the time, I was fully convinced that we were descendants of one of the Georgia Salzburgers—Stephan Riedelsperger—and was trying in vain to prove the connection. I was dead wrong.

Riddlesberger researchers were looking for our ancestors in the seemingly endless lists of German immigrants to Pennsylvania through the Port of Philadelphia. We didn't think to look in South Carolina. Riddlespurger descendants were looking for their roots in South Carolina, and didn't think to look in Philadelphia. It was not until Marie, Michael, and I started comparing notes, that we all realized that we did indeed have a common

ancestor. We are all descendants of Christian Riddlespurger of the Charleston and Orangeburgh areas of South Carolina. Christian arrived in Pennsylvania in September of 1733, onboard the ship, *Pink Mary*, and left Pennsylvania before finally settling in South Carolina in 1742. It was Marie Kline who supplied me with the critical missing link, the one document I needed to connect all the disparate pieces together and which otherwise made no sense—Christian Riddlespurger’s will. At long last I was now able to tie things together. I had been wrong about a possible connection to the Salzburgers, but I had finally “reached the boat.” I was back nine generations with sufficient documentation to prove it!

One of the greatest difficulties I encountered early was the generation-by-generation spelling change of the family surname. When search engines turned up nothing in the European databases, it became clear to me that there were no “Riddlebargers” living in Europe. This was a good indication that our family surname was changed from something else. But what? Christian’s surname was spelled **Retelsberger** in the *Pink Mary*’s passenger log—this is the way the name sounded to the immigration clerk when he recorded the names of those who disembarked from the ship—although the spelling **Riddlespurger** is most frequently used in records related to Christian which appear in South Carolina beginning in 1742. Ethel Spurger Sheehan, a genealogist and distant cousin (who died in November of 2006), pointed out to me that there are at least fifty various spellings of the family surname. Though the spelling “**Ridelsperger**” first appears in connection with our immediate line in Pennsylvania birth records in 1770, the most common spelling in our line was “**Riddlesbarger**.” Without some definitive way to get behind Christian’s obviously misspelled name in the passenger manifest, it looked as though the original spelling would unknown to us. All we would have to work with are the variously-spelled anglicized versions of the way the name sounded to the English ear, accounting for the widely-varied spelling. But DNA testing changed all that, proving that **Retelsberger** was a distortion of the Swiss surname **Rötlisperger**.

My efforts to determine Christian Retelsberger’s European origins took many twists and turns. Henry and Glenn found Christian’s name in Rupp’s volume *A Collection of Upwards of Thirty Thousand German, Swiss, Dutch, French and Other Immigrants in Pennsylvania from 1727-1776*, but they did not know if this individual was tied to **John Riddelsperger** of PA/VA, known to be our common ancestor. One theory I encountered early on was advanced by Ethel Spurger Sheehan. She located a **Richtelsperger** family living along the Enns River in Austria with family records as far back as the late 1300’s. This sounded promising, but no positive connection was ever established between Christian Riddlespurger and the “Richtelspergers,” though “Richtelsperger” and Retelsberger could be easily confused by an English-speaker trying to spell the name phonetically. Another possibility was that Christian was a son of one of the **Rittelsperger** or **Redelsberger** families known to be living in the German-speaking Alsace region of France in the early 1700’s. Both families hailed from the Canton of Bern in Switzerland and relocated along the Rhine in the Alsace region in the 1680’s because of persecution of Anabaptists in Bern. There is also an area in the ancient province of Limburg (a state now in the Netherlands, not the city in Germany known for its cheese) along the Maas (Meuse) River where a cluster of similar surnames appear. A Christianus Michel **Reutelingsperger** was born about 1675 in the city of Broekhuizen, and died May 8, 1737 about 62 years of

age. There are a number of known children from this family, all born about the time that our Christian was most likely born. But the trail went cold at the dock in Rotterdam, where Christian embarked upon his journey to America. I thought I had hit the dreaded brick wall.

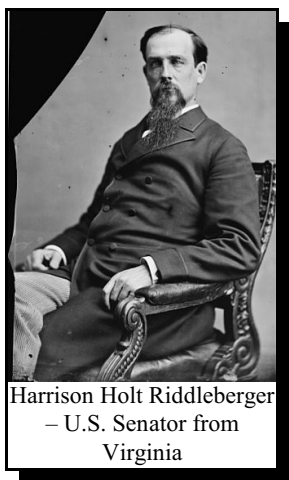
Given the seeming impossibility of finding Christian's European roots with current evidence, and in light of the now obvious fact that there are no records of any "Riddlebarger" cousins in Europe, I determined to take a y-DNA test and hope that a living European male had also contributed DNA, and that we would have a common ancestor. This would enable me to find our original family name and identity. When the results from the test came back in June of 2012, I was dumbfounded and then thrilled to see that a name surfaced—Urs Rötlişperger living in Switzerland near Bern. Better yet, he was a twelve point match! This means that Urs and I have a common male ancestor somewhere between 12-24 generations ago. Mr. Rötlişperger's ancestral history is well-documented and traces back to a Cunradt (Konrad) Rötlişperger who lived in Langnau im Emmental of the Canton of Bern in 1530. Therefore, we now know for sure that Christian Redelsberger is a descendant of Konrad Rötlişperger or one of his male relatives, although we still do not yet know how Christian ended up on the dock in Rotterdam to board the *Pink Mary*. In fact, several of the above scenarios may still be viable because these families are possibly tied to the Rötlişpergers of Bern. Either Christian immigrated to America directly from Bern (and was born between 1708-1718), or more likely, his family moved from Switzerland to the Alsace, or to Limburg, several generations prior.

We do know that Rötlişperger became "Retelsberger" on the dock in Philadelphia and was eventually anglicized to "Riddlespurger," "Riddlesperger," and even "Riddlesberger," which sound much the same to the English ear. In our immediate family line the anglicization continued as our family moved south and then west and the name was spelled through the generations variously as "Riddelsbarger," "Riddlesbarger," and then, finally, its present form, "Riddlebarger." Apparently, there was not much care given to the precise spelling as Albert E. Riddlebarger spelled his name variously as "Riddelsbarger" or "Riddlebarger" on the same document (Pop's report card from Belleville High) over a four-year period. Albert's wife Paulina, on the other hand, consistently used the "Riddlebarger" spelling on the same document. A generation earlier, Albert's father, David Henry had spelled his name "Riddelsbarger" as his father Daniel did on occasion, while his wife Elizabeth consistently used the "Riddlesbarger" variation. What does this tell us about our forebears? Hopefully, not much!

It also did not take long after my research began to discover that there are "Riddlebargers" widely scattered across the United States, and there are two noteworthy "Riddlebarger" families—one in Ohio and the other in Virginia—and with which our immediate line has had little if any contact, even though we have common ancestors. Based upon the evidence of early Riddlesberger ancestors we do have, we now know that these various Riddlebarger family lines diverged from **John Riddelsperger**, the oldest son of Christian, who with wife Catherine, were known to have been living in Manheim, in Lancaster County, PA. as early as 1770 (also spelled "Ridelsperger" in a 1773 listing). According to the book *American Revolutionary Soldiers of Franklin County*, by 1777, the same "John Riddlesberger" had received a land grant in Antrim Township (now Washington Township) and served as a 2nd Lieut. in Company 1, Eighth Pennsylvania Battalion which was organized in Waynesboro, in Franklin County, PA.,

where our direct ancestors were known to have resided.

The largest of these Riddlebarger families, originating in the Portsmouth, Ohio, (Scioto County) area, has a significant number of folks bearing the same names as our own beloved kin, “Marian,” “Ruth,” “Glenn,” “Albert” and “William.” This line boasts of their very own “Riddlebarger Road,” which runs through portions of both Jefferson and Harrison Townships. The Scioto County group are descendants of a “William Jacob Riddlebarger,” a blacksmith, who was born in 1795 in Virginia and probably a grandson of John. “Jacob,” as he is usually identified, eventually made his way by boat down the Ohio River Valley with his wife Mary Penner, by way of Butler and Armstrong counties in Northwestern Pennsylvania. The numerous descendants of Jacob Riddlebarger, still living in Ohio, hold an annual reunion on the second weekend in August, a practice they have maintained for more than eighty years.



Harrison Holt Riddleberger
– U.S. Senator from
Virginia

A second area where a significant number of Riddlebergers can be found is in western Virginia. Divided into two distinct groups—the “valley” Riddlebergers who tend to be located in the Shenandoah Valley (this group often uses the “Riddleberger” spelling), and the “mountain” Riddlebergers who remained in the hill county of Botetourt County near the original family home. These Riddlebergers too, are the descendants of John Riddleberger, as John and his family moved from Franklin County, PA, along with a number of other families to an area near the small town of Fincastle in Botetourt County, Virginia. John Riddleberger purchased 560 acres of farmland here in 1787, where he and his family resided for a time before two of his sons, John and Jacob, moved back to Franklin County. The valley “Riddlebergers” (dropping the “s”) or “Riddlebergers,” have produced a number of luminaries,

including a U.S. Senator; **Harrison Holt Riddleberger**, 1844-1890, who served as the United States Senator from Virginia from 1883-1889. Senator Riddleberger was the author of the “Riddleberger Bill,” dealing with reconstruction after the Civil War, and also edited a number of newspapers, including *The Tenth Legion*, *The Shenandoah Democrat*, and *The Virginian*. The son of Madison Riddleberger, another grandson of John, Senator Riddleberger was elected to the Senate as an independent and was known “as a constant source of apprehension to both sides (Republicans and Democrats) when political questions are involved.” Involved in two duels and forcibly removed from the Senate chamber while inebriated, “Senator Harry” must have been quite a character.

This line also produced a Career U.S. ambassador and diplomat; James Williams Riddleberger, 1904-1982, grandson of Harrison Holt, who served as U.S. Ambassador to Yugoslavia, 1953-57, U. S. Ambassador to Greece, 1958-59, and U. S. Ambassador to Austria, 1962-67, and whose recently published papers reveal interesting conversations with both Herman Goering and Adolf Hitler immediately before the war, along with discussions about the division of Germany after the war. There is a famous news photo of ambassador Riddleberger sitting between Yugoslavia’s Marshall Tito and Nikita Krushchev on the receiving end of one of Krushchev’s famous rants. There is

also a major league baseball player: Denny Riddleberger, who was a relief pitcher in the late sixties-early seventies for the Senators and Indians, and who played for the legendary Ted Williams, who laughed when Riddleberger three slow curve balls to legendary Baltimore Orioles “over-swinger” Boog Powell. Other descendants of this line are university professors (Patrick Riddleberger, at the University of Southern Illinois, and James Riddlesperger, author and professor of political science at TCU), Pastors (Dr. Statt Riddlebarger, who is the pastor of Pearsall Road Baptist Church of San Antonio, TX) and one, K. A. Riddleberger, is a noted expert on crocodile and manatee habitats in the southern United States.

Many of the Virginia Riddlebergers served in the Confederate Army, which came as a surprise to me since my immediate ancestors were all avowed “Yankees” and had lost all memory of the Riddlebergers residing in the South. H. H. Riddleberger was a captain in the 18th VA Cavalry after serving in the 10th Virginia Infantry. The future senator was just seventeen when he signed on with Colonel Imboden’s legendary unit, and apparently, saw action as a scout during the many actions against Union Generals Banks and Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley campaigns. The 18th VA Cavalry was also in Gettysburg those three fateful days in July of 1863, serving as headquarter’s guard when Lee’s army of Northern Virginia was defeated by the Army of the Potomac. Elias Riddleberger served in the 5th VA Infantry, and Joseph Riddleberger was in the famed McNeil’s Rangers, and Samuel, Frederick and Duiguid were in the 60th Confederate infantry, the “James River Rifles” a unit formed from the Fincastle area of Botetourt County. In fact, one of our family members from this line—Jesse Riddlesbarger, a hugely successful Kansas City business man—was ruined by the direct order of a Union general (Thomas Ewing) and may even have lost five of his sons to the great conflict which divided our nation.



It did not take long to discover that in many instances, the history of our immediate family line is connected with the missionary efforts and migratory patterns of the German Baptist Brethren, or the “Dunkards,” as they are often known. Why did John Riddelsperger (Riddlesberger) leave Pennsylvania and move down the Cumberland Valley into the Shenandoah in 1787? We may never know for sure, but there is a tantalizing hint that he may have returned to an area where his father, Christian, marked land for a possible claim and land grant. There is also a substantial Brethren migration from the Antietam region of lower Franklin County to Botetourt County in 1787, the same year John purchased land near Fincastle. Why did Daniel Riddlesberger leave Pennsylvania in 1857 for Franklin Grove and the plains of North-Central Illinois? Again we may never know for sure, but we do know that his two younger brothers, Jacob and Samuel, and their mother Josephine Foreman Riddlesberger, had already made the move west in 1845, probably traveling in wagons along the National Pike, or by boat down the Ohio River, with a number of other Brethren families from Washington Township in Franklin County, all heading west together.

Wherever the Brethren went, whether it be from Pennsylvania to Virginia in 1787, from Virginia back to Pennsylvania in the 1820's, from Pennsylvania to Illinois in 1845, from Illinois to Kansas in the 1880's, from Kansas to Idaho in the 1890's, and from Idaho to California in the 1900's, it seems that our branch of the Riddlebarger family went also. Coincidence? Not likely.

One major obstacle in producing a Riddlebarger family history quickly became apparent as I began my own research. There are many areas where there simply is not much information about our forebears—for example, we know little of Catherine Riddelsperger, wife of John. Nor do we know much about Jacob Riddlesberger, son of John and father of Daniel. And there are the sixteen years that David Henry Riddlesbarger and family spent in Marshalltown, Iowa, during the 1870's and 1880's about which we know very little. Were it not for Henry Riddlesberger's research, we would know nothing definitive of the connection between our line and the Virginians and Ohioans as each of these lines had lost memory of the other several generations prior. There are also quite a number of well-preserved family pictures without names or dates, a source of great frustration. But the nature of historical research is that there are always gaps and holes in the record—especially so in the case of a family of mostly farmers, such as ours, who lived in rural areas and eschewed the more complicated but better documented lives of urban dwellers.

There are many avenues of investigation which have at this point produced dead ends or which simply have yet to be investigated. A family “*tree*” is exactly that and by the 6th generation of tracking ancestors there are some sixty-four distinct family histories to investigate. A family history such as this humble effort, is a project which in one sense is never completed. Perhaps my own descendants will see fit to continue the research and expand these humble efforts over the years to come—for a family not only has a past, through the grace of God it has a future too. Given the inevitable progress of technological innovation, there is no doubt that future generations will be able to make great progress in filling in the gaps that I have been unable to fill.

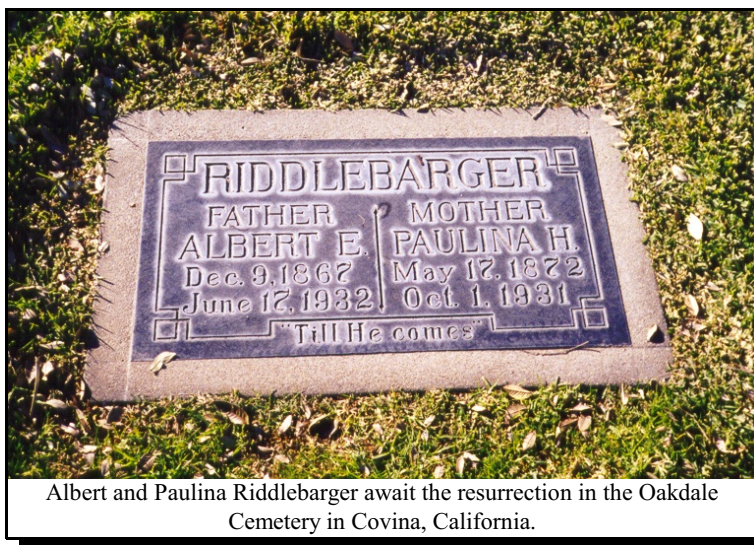
It might also be useful for me to say a word about my sources. It is the genealogist's creed to “document,” “document,” “document!” To prove any bit of family history to the satisfaction of a professional genealogist, you must have at least three independent sources. But I am not a genealogist. I am trained as an historian and am quite used to working with much less documentation. In many cases with our family history, ample documentation has been uncovered which would satisfy the most ardent of genealogists. In other cases, there is very little information about our ancestors available. I have footnoted published and unpublished sources—such as internet materials and correspondence—and when necessary, such common documents as census records. When I think a single source is good enough to support my conclusion, I say so. When I think the source is wrong—as in the case of many of the LDS Ancestral Files for our family—I try to indicate that as well. When I use words like “probable,” “family tradition,” and “family legend” I am indicating what I think is the quality of the source I am using. If something is “probable,” I am of the opinion that the case is quite good, even though there are not three independent sources. Reliable “family tradition” indicates something which seems to be correct, but comes from an oral source which cannot be independently verified. A “family legend” is that which is more than likely not true.

Another problem I encountered is with anecdotal and other oral materials, such as that recorded in Henry Riddlesberger's extensive "Notes," which are based largely upon interviews conducted in the late 1950's with various Riddlebarger family members. Henry's notes, like my own family history, are only as good as the sources we have been able to find. In certain places, especially with those lines where Henry was able to find things like Bible records and eye-witness testimony, Henry's notes have been remarkably accurate. Yet, there are places where Henry's sources were bad or incomplete, and when lacking hard evidence, Henry made guesses, some of which have not panned out. I hope that future family historians will find such holes in my own work, for that only means we are getting a better and more accurate picture. In any case, were it not for Henry Riddlesberger's "Notes," much of my own work would have been impossible.

Though I have already discovered many long-lost cousins and made many new friends—who knows how many are still out there waiting to be discovered?—the biggest blessing about this effort has been that many in our branch of the Riddlebarger family tree are justified sinners whose only comfort in life and in death was their faithful savior Jesus Christ. Christian Riddlespurger's religious roots are to be found in the Reformed Church, but most of the Riddlebargers of our immediate

line—from Jacob Riddlesberger, down to my own father, Clayton—were closely associated with the "German Baptist Brethren" and later with the "Grace" Brethren movement, an evangelical offshoot of the Brethren church. I am thankful to have been able to visit the graves of all my direct ancestors whose burial sites are known. Each time, it was moving experience.

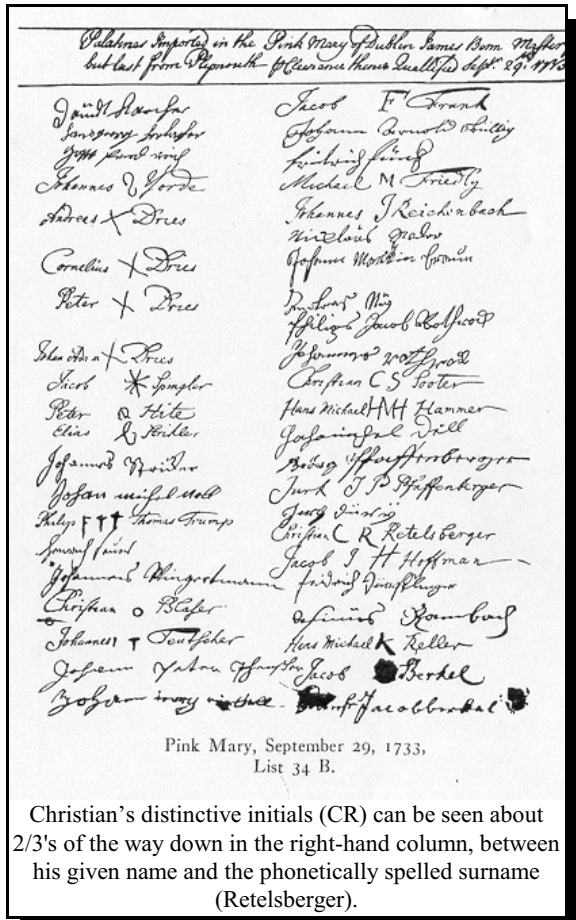
Thankfully, our immediate branch of the family tree is replete with consistent and confident expressions of trust in Jesus Christ for eternal life and our family history bears witness to God's covenant faithfulness unto a thousand generations! Those Riddlebargers who have ended their labors in this life and gone on to their reward in the next, are now among that great cloud of witnesses awaiting the great resurrection to come and a glorious final reunion with us in the heavenly city! On that day, all of our questions will be answered or rendered unimportant.



Albert and Paulina Riddlebarger await the resurrection in the Oakdale Cemetery in Covina, California.

Chapter One

Christian Riddlespurger Arrives in America



The clerk at the dockside wrote down the man's name as best he could. The young man did not speak any English and could only write his name in high German script. The given name was clear—Christian. The surname was not so easy. R-E-T-E-L-S-B-E-R-G-E-R.¹ The clerk spelled the name as it sounded in English, handed the quill pen to the man, who then dutifully made his mark in the ledger book by placing his distinctive initials—"CR" between the given name and the surname. He had seen others in line ahead of him do the same thing and he simply followed suit, as all male passengers above sixteen years of age were required to do. The date was September 29, 1733. Our first ancestor had arrived in the New World.²

The ship that had just arrived was the *Pink Mary*,³ of Dublin, whose master, James Benn, had brought the ship safely into the harbor after originally departing from Rotterdam, Holland, several months before. The vessel previously stopped at Plymouth, England, where they undoubtedly took on additional provisions before making the voyage across the North Atlantic, eventually heading up the Delaware Bay for the Port of Philadelphia in the

¹ Unfortunately for many of us with Germanic surnames, it has been said that "owing to the adoption by the English [immigration] clerks of the maxim that 'anything would do for the name of a Dutchman,' [the] appellations are wonderfully disguised and disfigured." See Lucy F. Bittinger, *The Germans in Colonial Times*, reprint ed. (Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, Inc., 1986), 215.

² Ralph Beaver Strassburger, *Pennsylvania German Pioneers*, ed. William John Hinke (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1966), I.133-135; III.121. Cf. I. Daniel Rupp, *A Collection of Upwards of Thirty Thousand German, Swiss, Dutch, French and Other Immigrants in Pennsylvania from 1727-1776* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1967), 92-93.

³ *Mary* is the name of the ship, *Pink* is the type—a vessel with a high narrow stern.

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

On board the *Mary* were 171 passengers: fifty-five males above sixteen, thirty-seven females; thirty males and forty-nine females under sixteen.⁴ No doubt, such voyages were extremely difficult and perilous and tested human endurance to the limit. Those with young children or in fragile health had an especially difficult time, as spoiled food, contaminated water, and chronic seasickness sapped people's strength. Those with little physical reserve could not withstand the rigors of the journey. Many arrived at the "other shore" before ever seeing the shores of Colonial America.

Those on board *Mary*, were all described as "Palatines," German-speaking folk generally from the Pfalz province of the Rhineland, though the term "Palatine" was a catch-all term applied to any German-speaking emigrant from southern Germany, the Alsace, Switzerland, or even what is now Austria. The Palatines came to America for a number of reasons: economic opportunity; to escape from political oppression and/or religious persecution; or simply to pursue the spirit of adventure. Many more left their homeland when enticed by "recruiters" who received a bounty for each person or family they convinced to emigrate to the particular colony which they represented. Some of these were quite successful and promised laborers, peasant farmers, refugees, and other outcasts that America was the land of "milk and honey," with success and prosperity virtually guaranteed. For many it was. For others the voyage to America was disastrous.

Since the passengers on the *Mary* were lumped together as "Palatines" without distinction, it is impossible from the ship's log to determine with any degree of certainty where Christian Retelsberger lived before setting sail from Rotterdam and arriving in Pennsylvania on the *Mary*.



Rotterdam harbor, about 1740

Yet, we do know something about several of Christian's shipmates which provides a helpful context in which to understand Christian's journey to the New World.⁵ Georg Pfaffenberger and wife Anna Martha-whose names appear on the passenger list above Christian's-were from Ulmet in Zweibrücken-Palatinate. They baptized their sons as Lutheran, but their daughters as Reformed (in Ulmet). Such "mixed" Lutheran-Reformed marriages were not uncommon. Another passenger on the *Pink Mary*, Georg Friedrich Köhler, was from Soultz-sou-Forets, in

⁴ Strassburger, Pennsylvania German Pioneers, I.133-135.

⁵ Annette Kunselman Burgert, Eighteenth Century Emigrants from the Northern Alsace to America, First Edition (Camden ME: Picton, 1992). See indices for various family names. Thanks to Harriet Imrey for the referral to this volume.

the Bas Rhin (the southern Alsace), an area where Christian's family possibly lived before his journey to the New World (see below). Köhler was married to Swiss-born Elizabetha Kessler in a Lutheran ceremony (Preuschorf Lutheran). Still another passenger, Jacob Löscher and his wife Catharina Barbara were from Pfaffenhoffen, (in the Bas Rhin) and baptized their children at Urhwiler Lutheran Church. Upon arrival in America, they were communicants at both St. Michael's and Zion Lutheran in Philadelphia. Johannes Slabach from Wissenbourg (on the German side of Rhine across from Strasbourg), listed Bas Rhin as his home although he was in Zweibrücken when he left for America. He too was a Lutheran and had his children baptized at Birlenbach Lutheran. Yet, his "son Heinrich christened all of his kids at Muddy Creek Reformed (Lancaster Co PA)."⁶ All of these folk come from regions which are possible locales for Christian, who, like his shipmates, confessed the Reformed faith most of his life, but then spent his later years worshiping in the Lutheran Church in Charleston with second wife Elizabeth ULDRICK.

As the passengers disembarked from the *Mary* and gathered together their possessions, all the new immigrant's names were to be entered in the official ledger. This was not all. German-speaking immigrants were also required to take an oath of allegiance to the King of England. Once the passengers had gathered themselves and collected their belongings, they were escorted *en masse* to the nearby Philadelphia courthouse, where that same day the Honourable Patrick Gordon, Esq., lieutenant governor of the Commonwealth, conducted the ceremony in which all males above sixteen swore the oath of allegiance to King George II. Christian Retelsberger's name is found in the list of those who "took the oath" and thereby qualified for entrance into the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.⁷ Since Christian died in 1790, 57 years later, this would seem to indicate that Christian Retelsberger was a young man when he arrived, but over the sixteen years of age limit required for the trans-Atlantic crossing. If we suppose that Christian was 75 years of age when he died in 1790, he would have been born in 1715, and was eighteen when he arrived here in 1733. Not an unreasonable assumption.

According to an advertisement placed by Peter Purry (a well-known recruiter among German-speaking Swiss) in the British publication, *Gentlemen's Magazine* of August 1732, able-bodied men were being sought to accompany Mr. Purry to the new colony of Carolina. This is interesting for several reasons. For one thing, Christian Retelsberger eventually ended up in South Carolina, about 100 miles distant from the Purrysville German-Swiss settlement on the Savannah River. For another, this advertisement, published about the same time Christian left for the new world, gives us a rather fascinating insight into what was required of those interested in traveling to one of the new colonies. It is likely that Christian left for America under similar arrangements.

According to the terms Purry offered, interested parties must have some particular skill (carpenter, planter, husbandman, or laborer), they must have 3 or 4 shirts and a suit of clothes, and they must serve the interests of the colony for three years. Those who can pay their own passage to Carolina will receive 100 livres per annum as wages

⁶ Correspondence with Harriet Imrey of May 4, 2016.

⁷ Strassburger, Pennsylvania German Pioneers, I.135-136.

for their labor, while those who did not have such means, must serve out the three year term as indentured servants.⁸ A great many people took Mr. Purry up on his offer, as the large number of Swiss and Germans living in the Carolinas during this period attests.

Apparently, Christian Retelsberger had come to Pennsylvania alone, as no family members are to be found in the passenger list for the *Mary*, though such lists were hardly exhaustive or entirely accurate. Unfortunately, little if any historical evidence has turned up about Christian's background, and nothing concrete is known of his parents or his place of origin. One unsubstantiated Riddlespurger family legend holds that Christian had acquired the title "Von" through an act of valor before coming to America. According to the Ella Fay Riddlespurger Letter, "My great-great-grandfather, who came to Holland from Germany had in some way acquired the title of 'Von'....How my great-great grandfather acquired this title is not known to me, but it was dropped from the family name after his death."⁹ Just what that act of valor was, and how the title was acquired, as well as why it was dropped from the family name are completely unknown. "Von" does not appear in any record in which Christian's name appears.¹⁰ This legend is probably just that—a mere legend—and there is no corroborating evidence to support the claim.

Some Thoughts on Christian's European Roots

Since all of those onboard the *Mary* were listed as Palatines (a catch-all term for German-speaking immigrants to America) there was nothing specific in the ship's passenger list which identifies where Christian lived before arriving at the dock in Rotterdam. Christian's surname is followed by an asterisk, an indication his name was spelled phonetically by an English-speaking dock clerk. Since Christian probably wrote in German script which the dock clerks could not read, (therefore, he made his mark instead of writing his name),¹¹ his surname was not accurately identified. This reduced my initial search for Christian's roots on the European side to those surnames which sound like Christian's to the English-speaking ear—not a very good starting point. Given the fact Christian was

⁸ Gentlemen's Magazine, Vol. 2 (August 1732), 886.

⁹ The Ella Fay Riddlespurger Letter was contributed to the USGenweb Archives by Richard A. Rainey. When Ella speaks of her great, great, grandfather, she is in error. Her grandfather, Thomas, was son of Erasmus, or "Ris" as he was called. Erasmus was the son of Thomas Riddlespurger, who in turn was son of Christian. This means that Christian was her great, great, great grandfather.

¹⁰ One Riddlespurger researcher is convinced that this is simply not true and after years of searching in the Netherlands (church, military and civil records) does not believe this story to be anything other than legend. Correspondence with Ethel Spurger Sheehan of October 29, 1998.

¹¹ According to George F. Jones, the fact that a newly arrived immigrant in Philadelphia "made his mark" does not necessarily mean that the person was illiterate. Germany had a higher literacy rate than did England, but the English clerks could not read German script, so they simply spelled the names phonetically, and had the person then make their mark. See George F. Jones, German-American Names (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1990), 53. Jones mistakenly connects our current surname to the Riedelspergers of the Salzberger community in Georgia.

clearly a Protestant (see below) the most logical place for me to search was among the Protestant refugee populations throughout the Rhine River valley, including the Palatinate and the Alsace. Such a search turned up several intriguing possibilities which certainly merit further research—especially in light of DNA evidence (see below).

One possibility is a **Rittelsperger** family whose roots can be traced back to the Canton of Bern in Switzerland, as early as 1677. A Daniel Rittelsperger appears in baptismal records there as the son of a Nicholas and Anna Rittelsperger.¹² By 1702 Daniel had moved to Baldenheim, Bas-Rhin, in the Alsace region of the Rhine River Valley. According to church records, he married Barbara Fischer on November 12, 1702. A number of children were born to them: Johann Jacob in March of 1703; Anna Maria in March of 1705; and Magdelena in 1707. Another son named Johann Jacob was born in January of 1711, as was another daughter, Anna Barbara in 1715. All of these baptisms were in the Avengelic Kirche (Lutheran), Baldenheim, Bas-Rhin, France. An Anna Marie Rittelsperger was born in 1738, but that is the last record of this family being in the area, or anywhere else for that matter. The surname subsequently disappears from all known French and German church, civic and property records. We do know that people from this region were immigrating to America (as well as other areas in Europe), the same time as was Christian.

Rittelsperger certainly sounds like “Retelsberger” and the dates of Daniel and Barbara’s marriage in 1702, and births of their children in 1703 through 1715, fits the time frame in which Christian would have been born. In addition, the historical circumstances and the increasing persecution of German-speaking Protestants in the Alsace by Roman Catholic authorities could explain the family’s disappearance from the area and Christian’s emigration to the New World. However, Protestant baptismal records from this area are widely available, and to date, no such record for Christian has been found.

Another possibility for our European roots was the **Redelsperger** family who are from the same regions in Switzerland and France as the Rittelspergers, and who have a very similar history. A number of Redelspergers appear in the city of Trub in the seventeenth century, also in the Canton of Bern, Switzerland. Trub was a noted center for Anabaptist activity, but baptismal records for this family show them to be Reformed, not Anabaptists.¹³ There are records of a Michel Redelsperger living in Trub as early as 1630. Apparently, a much larger family than the Rittelspergers, a number of Redelspergers were living in Trub during this time: Anna, 1660, who also appears in Aubere in the Alsace in 1712; Abraham (1685); while Michel (son of the man whose name appears earlier in 1630?) is living in Trub in 1655, but dies in Aubere in the Haut-Rhin region of the Alsace in 1712 (May 13). He is listed as a farmer on an estate (fermier seigneurial a la Schluck—i.e., “according to the manorial system”), as was a son, Jean-Jacques.

By the late 1600's, a number of Redelspergers are residing throughout the Haut-Rhin region, especially in the vicinity of Aubere: Emmanuel, (b. April 12, 1694 d. April 21, 1775—St. Marie Aux-Mines); Jean-Martin, (b.

¹² LDS records.

¹³ Most of these people were baptized shortly after their births, indicating that they are Reformed.

1685); Louis, b. January 4, 1689); Marie 1697; Vereena, 1691; Jean-Jacques (b. 1690 d. December 17, 1759, Ribeauville). By the middle of the 1700's, many folk bearing this surname are residing in nearby Sainte Marie Aux Mines. This is a large family and church records are from Protestant (and later) from Catholic churches.¹⁴ Later generations of this family have immigrated to the United States and a number still reside in France (primarily in the Alsace), with all memory of their Swiss roots and German tongue probably now but distant memories. This family is a possible source of Christian's origin because of the phonetic sound of the surname, known Protestant/Reformed affinities, and geographic local. There are a number of Redelsperger families in the right place and right time from which Christian may have come. Furthermore, a French language history of immigration from this region to America, *Les Voyageurs De La Princess Augusta*, documents a number of families leaving this area and arriving in Pennsylvania onboard the *Princess Augusta* in 1736, just three years after Christian arrived in Philadelphia.¹⁵

Another possibility is the ancient province of Limburg along the Maas (Meuse) River. A Christianus Michels **Reutelingsperger** was born about 1675 in the city of Broekhuizen, and died May 8, 1737 about 62 years of age in the same city. Christian married Maria HENDRIX on the 29th of April in 1703 in Broekhuizen. Maria Hendrix was baptized on July 4, 1680 in Broekhuizen, and also died on April 14, 1735 in Broekhuizen. There are a number of children from this family, including: Michael **Reutelingsperger** (baptized on June 29 1703), Petronella **Reutelingsperger** (baptized on February 26 1705 and died in Broekhuizen on May 14, 1748), another Michael **Reutelingsperger** (baptized on September 21, 1706), Joannes **Reutelingsperger** (baptized on the 24th of Feb 1708), Joannes Wilhelmus **Reutelingsperger** (baptized on September 19, 1710), Petrus **Reutelingsperger** (baptized May 19, 1712), Maria Christiani **Reutelingsperger** (baptized on August 3 1714), Petrus **Reutelingsperger** (baptized March 9, 1716), Helena **Reutelingsperger** (baptized April 12, 1719), and Henricus **Reutelingsperger** (baptized May 6, 1722) and died in Broekhuizen on November 29, 1750. Any one of these sons may have used the father's name "Christian" as their Christian name as was common practice. Those male children not buried in Broekhuizen are all of proper age to be our "Christian" Riddlesburger. All the recorded baptisms took place in the local Roman Catholic church. It is possible, but very unlikely, that Christian is one of these sons, and he eventually converted to the Reformed faith explaining his appearance in various church registries in America of the German Reformed Church—see below.

Limburgers have their own local dialect, (known as "Limbourgish" which officially recognized by the EU) which is a combination of German (mostly) and Dutch (some). The various spellings of the surnames below reflect the fluidity of Limbourgish, and include the following variants: Reutelinsperger, Ruthligsbergen, Rutligsbergen, Rutlingsbergen, Riddelsperger, Retislespergh, Rutlighserger, Ruetligerspegger, Rutelingsperger, Ruthelingsperger, Rutelingsperger, Ruetelingsperger, and Ruetelingsperger. Several Europeans who have done genealogical work on this family cite Christian Retelsberger's name being among the passengers on the *Mary*, as an indication that one of

¹⁴ LDS records.

¹⁵ Monique Maria-Francois, *Les Voyageurs De La Princess Augusta: Migrations du Ban de la Roche* (Janvier 2005).

these sons possibly made his way to the New World. But this is nothing but speculation on their part, since these researches found the same source documents I had found, and hold out the same possibility.

The Rötlispergers of the Canton of Bern



With Urs Rötlisperger on the Rothlisberg, near Langnau, in September 2015

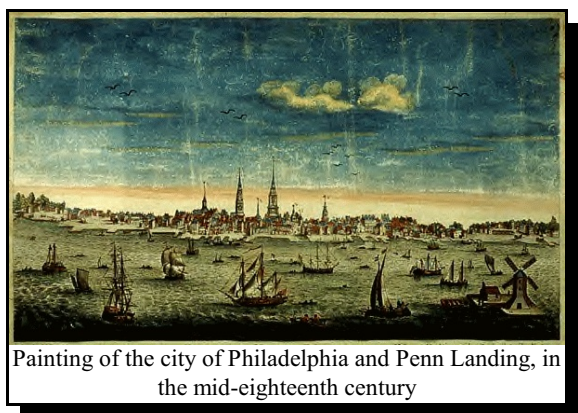
To resolve the impasse in finding our European roots (the dreaded “brick wall” of genealogical research), in April of 2012, I took a y-DNA test, hoping to find a living European male who had also contributed DNA which matched mine. If I could find a living male who was a match to my y-DNA, then I knew I could find a common ancestor and just might be able to resolve the riddle of Christian’s origins. When the results of the y-DNA test came back,¹⁶ I was shocked to discover that I was a match to an Urs Rötlisperger who lives in Switzerland near Bern, and who submitted his DNA for testing in 2009. In fact, at the DNA-Y 12 maker level, there is a 91% chance that Urs and I share a male ancestor in common between 12-24 generations ago. Finally, I had found Christian’s family—the Rötlispergers—and they were exactly where I had been looking all along!

In addition to the definitive DNA match, Mr. Rötlisperger can trace his own ancestry back to a Cunradt (Konrad) Rötlisperger who was born in Langnau im Emmental of the Canton of Bern in 1530, and who presented his son, Cunradt, for baptism on April 27, 1561 in the Reformed Church of Langnau.¹⁷ Based upon the DNA evidence we know with certainty that our Christian Redelsberger is a DNA descendant of Konrad Rötlisperger, or one of his male relatives or ancestors.¹⁸ When I traveled to Bern in 2015, Urs Rötlisperger took me to a small hill in Heimisbach near Langnau named the Rötlisberg (see photo). The Rötlisberg was either named for the family, or the family is named for the hill. But it was the thrill of a life-time to stand upon the same hill where our ancestors had lived since the 1500's, and which I had been seeking all along but never even knew existed until informed of the Rötlisberg’s existence by Urs.

Give the concrete ties to the Rötlisperger family, there are several possibilities worth consideration in

¹⁶ Kit # 239312 from Family Tree DNA. Our haplogroup is H2-P96, a rare and ancient DNA. Our ancestors were likely among the first people moving into Europe after the Ice Age began to abate. According to the Wikipedia entry on our haplogroup, “Haplogroup H2 (P96) seems to be primarily European, and very ancient. It was recently found in Linear Pottery culture and Neolithic Iberia and may have entered Europe as long ago during the Epipaleolithic. It was found to have a somewhat higher average concentration in Western Europe, but was also found amongst many ethnicities of the Near East, most notably Armenians and Iranian peoples, as well as in India and other countries of Southern Asia.”

¹⁷ See appendix three for an image of Cunradt Rötlisperger’s baptismal certificate of 1561



Painting of the city of Philadelphia and Penn Landing, in the mid-eighteenth century

determining Christian's European roots. Either Christian immigrated to America directly from Bern (with his date of birth likely between 1710-1717), or at some point his family moved from Switzerland to the Alsace (more likely), or to Limburg several generations earlier (in the 1600's). The Bernese keep very good records of those who leave the Canton, and Christian's name is nowhere to be found in these documents. This would seem to indicate that Christian's family was possibly among those families just discussed who left Bern in the 1600's and moved into the

Alsace. Future research should focus on finding from which of these families our Christian comes. At least we now know that Christian Redelsberger was a descendant of the Rötlişperger family of Bern. And so are we. The y-DNA test proves this to be the case and ties us (at least genetically) to other families of Switzerland and America (the Ringlespaugh and Rindlisbacher) who share DNA ties to the Rötlişperger family.

Although we do not yet know from which of these specific family lines Christian's Rötlişperger family came, we do know a great deal about the religious and political upheaval which led to these families moving from Switzerland to the Alsace and then, possibly, on to America. At the time of the Protestant Reformation, Strasbourg, the most important city in the Alsace region, was not only thriving economically, the city largely embraced the Reformation, although the surrounding area did contain a mixture of Catholic and Protestant communities. The Thirty-Years War (1618-1648), brought terrible devastation to the region of the Pfalz. As the result of continuing warfare and the movement of armies across the farmlands and communities, the area was left desolate and many inhabitants were killed or fled elsewhere. When the war finally ended, huge number of refugees (many being Anabaptists from the Canton of Bern, and specifically the city of Trub) moved into the region. This probably explains the movements of both the Rittelspergers and the Redelspergers from the Canton of Bern into the Alsace. We do not know if the same holds true for the Reutlingspergers.

In 1685, King Louis the XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes (which had brought an end to the Thirty-Years War), prompting a large number of Protestants living in the Alsace to flee across the Rhine into the Palatinate. The loss of population, plus the willingness of the Protestant Palatinate to take these Protestant refugees, prompted King Louis to send an army of nearly 100,000 into the Palatinate to punish the Elector, Frederick William. When the fighting officially resumed in 1702-1713 during the so-called War of Spanish Succession, many more Protestants fled the area. Since William Penn had visited the region in 1708-1709 inviting people to the new colony of Pennsylvania, nearly 14,000 took him up on the offer and had moved Pennsylvania by the end of 1709.¹⁹ All of this upheaval created a fifty-year time-frame during which thousands of these people made the arduous journey to

¹⁹ Parke Rouse, The Great Wagon Road (Richmond: The Deitz Press, 2001), 21.

America. Somewhere in all of this is the story of Christian Riddlespurger (Retelsberger) and his family, the Rötllispergers, our European ancestors.

Christian in Pennsylvania

Nothing is known of Christian Retelsberger's whereabouts for the three years after he arrives in Pennsylvania. The next time Christian's name appears in any official record is when he serves as a sponsor for a baptism at the First Reformed Church of Lancaster, PA, in 1736—the baptism of Rudolph Brack's daughter.²⁰ Brack was from Mimbach in Zweibrücken, and arrived in Philadelphia the month before Christian on the ship *Hope*. He demonstrates an odd “Reformed-Lutheran” indifference, baptizing a son at Zweibrücken Reformed, a daughter at Zweibrücken Lutheran, and then another son and 3 daughters at Mimbach-Webenheim Reformed. As Harriet Imrey aptly puts it, “the criterion for picking a church in 18th century Pennsylvania seems to have been ‘they speak German and they’re not Roman Catholic.’”²¹

This is an important point because it refutes the claim that the Christian Retelsberger who arrives on the *Mary* in Philadelphia in 1733 is, in some way, connected to the **RIEDELSPERGER** family living among the famed Georgia Salzburgers, who arrived in the Savannah area from Austria in January of 1735.²² Several Riddlespurger family researchers have prepared family trees and/or family histories of the various lines of Riddlespurger-Riddlesberger families and incorrectly concluded that the Christian Retelsberger/Riddlespurger who appears in the Orangeburgh-Charleston areas of South Carolina after 1742 is, in some way, connected with the Austrian Salzburgers (specifically the Riedelsperger family).²³ Based upon known church affiliation, Christian was sympathetic to, if not a member of a German-speaking Reformed Church in Pennsylvania. This was the same kind of confessional Reformed church which Christian would later help to found and then serve as an elder while living in South Carolina.²⁴

²⁰ Annette K. Burgert, "The Western Palatinate" in *Eighteenth Century Emigrants*, Vol. II; and cited in Swantner, *The Riddlespurgers*, 43. Note that Christian's surname is spelled “Redelsberger” in the church ledger.

²¹ Correspondence with Harriet Imrey of May 4, 2016. Dr. Imrey is a noted epidemiologist and is widely known as one of the most capable genealogical researchers working with South Carolina sources and families. She has been an invaluable resource—proven by the number of times I cite her materials.

²² George F. Jones, *The Salzburger Saga*, 179. The Riedelspergers arrived in Ebenezer on the so-called “second transport,” the ship *Prince of Wales*, on January 13, 1735.

²³ See Coleen Swantner's book, *The Riddlespurgers: A Colonial Family of the South* (Baltimore: The Gateway Press, 1988), as well as the paper on the Riddlespergers written by Ellen Wineland Week.

²⁴ Book M-3, 118, 24 May 1751, Gift in Trust. “William Baker, planter, of Saxegotha Township, Berkeley Co., for good & pious considerations, conveys to Christian Rhetetsperger, William Baker, John Plowman, & Jacob Schneider, elders of the German Congregation of the Dissenting Protestants at the Congarees, & their successors, half an a. within the limits of said Township, part of 350 a. between lands belongig to Christian Rhetetsperger & Herman Geiger; said half a. counding N on Santee

In addition to y-DNA evidence which dispels any connection between Christian Retelsberger and the Salzburgers (a matter to be discussed shortly), Christian's church affiliation and arrival in Philadelphia confirms that Christian Retelsberger is not in any way associated with the Salzburgers—Austrian Lutherans fleeing Roman Catholic persecution, and who had established the Ebenezer Colony on the Savannah River two years earlier, about 20 miles northeast of the present city of Savannah, Georgia.²⁵ It would be an honor to be numbered among the Salzburgers, but this cannot be the case.

Unlike the less strident folk who seemed rather ambivalent to Reformed-Lutheran differences as described above, the Georgia Salzburgers were militant Lutherans who regarded Reformed Christians as sectarians who imbibed deeply from the supposed Calvinist heresy.²⁶ As a Reformed theologian, I will resist the temptation to return the favor and speak of the Lutheran heresy! We do know that the Lutheran Pastor in Ebenezer, Boltzius, was particularly zealous in ensuring that the Salzburger Lutherans had as little contact as possible with their Reformed neighbors living across the Savannah River from their Ebenezer settlement.

Since Christian Retelsberger was a sponsor for a Reformed baptism in Lancaster PA in 1736, there is little merit to the claim made by Coleen Swantner—the author of a significant book on the Riddlespurger family—that the Austrian Riedelspergers may have had family connections in the Philadelphia area, and that this may account in some way for Christian Retelsberger being in Pennsylvania.²⁷ The fact that Christian participates as a witness to a Reformed baptism, along with his presence in Lancaster in 1736, is strong evidence that Christian Retelsberger is not connected to the two Christian Riedelspergers associated with the Georgia Salzburgers. This also places Christian in the Lancaster area, near Manheim, PA, where Christian's son, John Riedelsperger (Riddlesberger) first appears in



River; other sides on the 350 a.; with the Meeting House built thereon; for the sole use of said German Protestants of the Helvetii or Walloone Confession as well as of that of Augsbourg in common. Livery & seizin made. Witnesses: Philip (his mark) Pool, Peter (German script) Rott. Before Stephen Crell, J.P., on 7 June 1751. Recorded 24 Dec. 1768 by Fenwicke Bull, Register.” This information was given me by Harriet Imrey. See also appendix four for an account of the history of the Sandy Run Lutheran Church, later founded by members of this church.

²⁵ See George Fenwick Jones, The Salzburger Saga: Religious Exiles and Other Germans Along the Savannah River (Camden, ME: Picton Press, 1997); and the eighteen volumes of the Detailed Reports on the Salzburger Emigrants Who Settled in America, also translated and edited by George F. Jones.

²⁶ See George Fenwick Jones' lecture, “The South Carolina Swiss,” (The Orangeburgh German-Swiss Genealogical Society, 1991), 13.

²⁷ Swantner, The Riddlespurgers, 31-32.

PA state records in 1766, thirty years later.²⁸ This is especially important in light of Christian's will, to be considered momentarily.

Christian Riddlespurger Moves to South Carolina

Before turning our attention to the trail of evidence Christian Riddlespurger left behind in South Carolina, it might be useful to explain the circumstances which led to my seeking our family's roots there rather than Pennsylvania. When I began my research in an attempt to trace our family's history, I soon found the Riedelsperger family among the Georgia Salzburgers. As a church historian, I was immediately drawn to these refugees whose story was both compelling as well as tragic. It was also not long before I ran into several "Riddlespurger" family researchers—now known to be distant cousins—who also traced their roots to the Salzburgers through Christian Riddlespurger. But after reading through the seventeen volumes of the *Detailed Reports of the Georgia Salzburgers*, it was apparent that the two "Christians" among the Salzburgers Riedelspergers—father and son—had both died by 1760 after great suffering due to the hardships of living in swampland replete with malaria and other waterborne diseases such as dysentery. Christian Riddlespurger of South Carolina, on the other hand, did not die until 1790, leaving behind many heirs and much property. It was also highly probable from the accounts given in the *Detailed Reports*, that none of Christian Riedelsperger II's children survived past adolescence. And yet, it is clear from what we know of Christian Riddlespurger of South Carolina, that he had at least six children: sons **John, Abraham, Christian II, Thomas** and **David**, and daughter **Ann**, from two different wives (Ann **Struck** and Elizabeth **Ulbrich**). These children and their probable birth dates do not correspond with the account of Christian Riedelsperger's children in Ebenezer. Although they lived at approximately the same time, with very similar names, and only about seventy-five miles apart, Christian Riedelsperger and Christian Riddlespurger are not related or connected in any way.

Since it was impossible for either of the Salzburger Christian Riedelspergers to be John Riedelsperger's father for the reasons mentioned above, instead, I sought a connection between Salzburger refugee Stephan Riedelsperger, who left Ebenezer for an unknown area of Pennsylvania, 100 miles distant from Philadelphia,²⁹ and John Riedelsperger, our immediate ancestor. After searching PA records high and low for any trace of Stephan Riedelsperger and wife Catherine Valentin, and not finding either of them, I had thought we had finally hit a dead end, and assumed that there would be no way to find John Riedelsberger's father.

It was then that I came across Christian Riddlespurger's will. Hard evidence finally surfaced which not

²⁸ Kenneth D. McCrea, *Pennsylvania Land Applications, Volume 1: East Side Applications, 1765-1769* (Strasburg, PA: Palatines to America, 2002), ES-1925. A John "Redelsberger" applied for 20 acres of land on October 8, 1766 in Elizabeth Township, Lancaster County.

²⁹ See *Detailed Reports*, Vol. VII (1740), 160.

only named John Riddelsperger as Christian Riddlespurger's son, but which fit perfectly with the Riddlespurger family legend which held that they were in some way connected to the Riddlebergers of Virginia, the very place where John Riddelsperger had relocated in 1787.³⁰

Like many other German emigrants to Pennsylvania, Christian Riddlespurger moved to South Carolina by December of 1742, when he received title through a royal grant to one hundred acres of land in Saxe-Gotha Township in the Orangeburgh District of South Carolina.³¹ As we will see, Christian traveled south from Pennsylvania taking the Great Wagon Road through the Shenandoah, along with a number of other German-speakers from Pennsylvania who made the same journey at the same time, most arriving in Saxe-Gotha in 1742.³² Christian's land grant was located along the Congaree River (now Santee) at Myrick's Ferry on the southeast edge of Saxe-Gotha Township, immediately adjacent to Amelia Township (see the Plat Map in Appendix Two). This helps explain why documents from this period (1742-1773) variously list Christian as owning land in either the "Orangeburgh District," Saxe-Gotha, or Amelia Townships. His increasing land-holdings in this area actually straddle the boundary of the two townships (Saxe-Gotha and Amelia) with some of it being located in unincorporated areas of the Orangeburgh district. The value of his first hundred acres must have appreciated greatly after Richard Myrick, who lived next door to Christian, received the concession to operate the ferry across the Congaree River in 1749. Christian later sold this land to Melchior Hoffman in 1759 for a considerable sum of money (240 pounds).³³

That this is one and the same Christian Retelsberger who arrived in Philadelphia ten years earlier is apparent simply by examining Christian's distinctive mark—the initials "CR"—written in his own hand, and which appears on various deeds and other documents written over the course of his life in South Carolina, including his Last Will and Testament of 1790.³⁴ Though many variations of the spelling of his surname continue during his years in South Carolina, the most frequent spelling of his name is "Riddlespurger," the spelling still used by many of his ancestors.

³⁰ Swantner, The Riddlespurgers, 48.

³¹ South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia S.C., Vol. 42, p. 196, Roll AD643. A public notice of a land grant made to a "Christian Rehtelsperg" of Sax-Gotha Township, appears in the South Carolina Gazette, dated August, 1743. There are also a number of land memorials cited in; Swantner, The Riddlespurgers, 53-55, and listed at the end of this chapter, demonstrating that Christian sold this land in 1763.

³² See A. G. Roeber, Palatines, Liberty and Property: German Lutherans in Colonial British America (Baltimore: John's Hopkins University Press, 1998), 210-219.

³³ Correspondence with Harriet Imrey of July 19, 2002. Cf. Thersa Hicks, Saxegotha Neighbors, 33.

³⁴ A number of these documents are reproduced in Swantner, The Riddlespurgers, 38-41. As Christian gets older, his hand is a bit shakier, but the initials all appear to be written by the same hand.

It is not known when, exactly, Christian married Ann Struck, daughter of John Struck.³⁵ Since Christian received a land grant of 100 acres in 1742, and since 50 acres were given for each individual, it seems very likely that Christian was already married to Ann by that time, but they were still without children.³⁶

One family researcher contends the Strucks arrived in Philadelphia around the same time as Christian, in September or October of 1733.³⁷ While it is possible that Christian married Ann Struck while both resided in Pennsylvania (perhaps as early as 1734, before moving to SC in 1742), rather strong evidence to the contrary seems to indicate that the Strucks arrived in South Carolina in 1736/37, directly from Europe, when a warrant “on the bounty” for 350 acres in Saxe-Gotha was granted to John Struck and then later certified by the surveyor general’s office in 1744. Such a warrant “on the bounty” was given only to those who had arrived directly from Europe, with 50 acres given for each family member.³⁸ This indicates that John Struck was married and had five children when he arrived from Europe and was given the warrant by the council in Charleston.

According to the *Council Journal* for the township of Saxe-Gotha, dated August 2, 1749, a “Christian Rottlespurger” is mentioned as the brother-in-law of John Struck Jr. (then fifteen years of age), after John Struck Sr. died. Christian petitioned the council that John Struck Sr.’s land should pass directly to his son (John Jr.), then a minor. We read that the prayer of the petitioner (Christian) was granted on July 28, 1749, and John Struck Jr. was

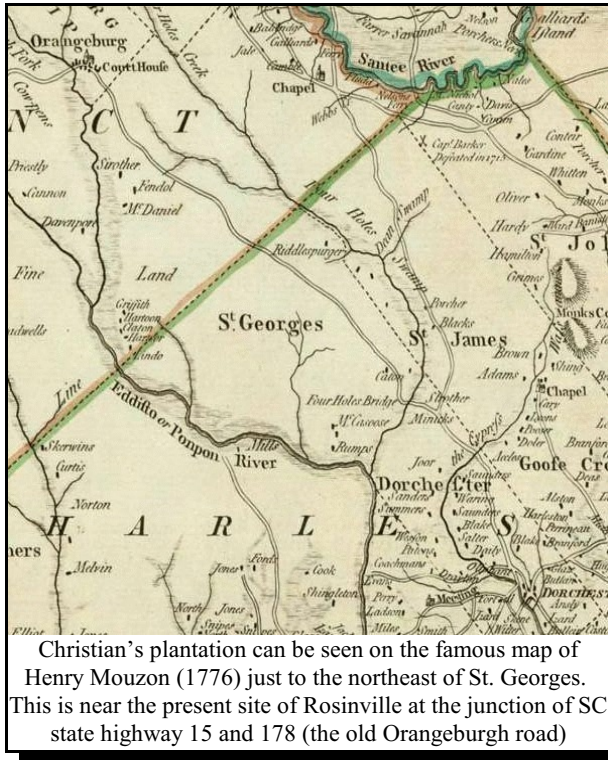
³⁵ SC Council Meeting of Wednesday P.M. 2 August 1749: Pages 564-565: Read the Petition of Christian Rottlesperger Brother in Law to John Struck son and heir to John Struck deceased setting forth That the Petitioners Father in Law had a Warrant for 350 acres of Land and a Town Lot in SaxaGotha on the Bounty and the same being run his said Father in Law built & improved the same and his Family was now still in Possession of the said Land, the Plat for the said Land was returned into the Surveyor Generals Office and Certified by the Surveyor General the 8th Nov 1744 as by the Plat annexed to the Petitioner, But the Death of the said John Struck the said Father prevented any further Proceeding on the same, and his Son now about fifteen, Therefore the Petitioner prayed that the Grant might pass to the said John Struck the Eldest son, and as before Granted on the Bounty. Signed Christian Rottlesperger (CR), 28 July 1749. The Prayer thereof was Granted. Source: Brent H. Holcomb, Petitions for Land from the South Carolina Council Journals, Volume II: 1748-1752 (Columbia SC: SCMAR, 1997). This information was given me by Harriet Imrey.

³⁶ According to Harriet Imrey (correspondence of May 4, 2016), “The will of Catherine (Dürrenberger Eglin) Road (Roth) named her son Martin Ygly and her son-in-law George Strock as legatees. By default, it was Barbara Eglin/Ygly (born 3 Aug 1732) who married George Struck prior to 1760. The only Strock/Struck family in the province was that of John Struck, father-in-law of Christian. The Struck plat of September 1737 in Saxegotha was adjacent to that of Gov. Hans Jacob Geiger (a 7th g-grandfather of mine) and surveyed on the same day—also both grants were sold together to Henry Hartley in 1762. The Strucks had evidently arrived with the extended Geiger family on the ship Prince of Wales in Feb 1736/7. The Christian R. land warrant dated Jan 1741/2 was for 100 acres, so he’d married Ann Struck no later than 1741.”

³⁷ Records on file with Ethel Spurger Sheehan, and mentioned in correspondence of October 30, 1998. According to Mrs. Sheehan, “I have actual records [of] . . . John Struck, Sr., and Jr. arriving in America by way of PA in the same year [1733] and received land in SC in the same location and at the same time [as Christian Riddlesperger]. While [Christian Riddlesperger] arrived in America with no wife mentioned, he married Ann Struck either before leaving PA or after arriving in SC.”

³⁸ Correspondence with Harriet Imrey, July 18, 2002.

indeed given his father's land. This fact confirms that Christian and Ann were married well before that date.³⁹



Like his father and brother-in-law, John Struck Jr. was a planter living in Saxe-Gotha, living with his wife Ann, in Berkeley County. Colleen Swantner speculates that the Strucks were Dutch, hoping to explain another Riddlespurger family legend that Christian's family spoke Dutch in the home.⁴⁰ Much more likely, however, the Strucks were German speakers, and that like the term "Palatine," the term "Dutch" (a play on "Deutsche") was loosely applied to German speaking people by Brits (i.e., English speakers).

There are a number of deeds, tax records and other land transactions between the years of 1754-1759 in which Christian's wife, Ann, is mentioned. Since Christian's wife at the time of his death was Elizabeth Ulbrich, this indicates that Ann Struck died some time *after* 1759 but *before* 1773, when deeds for property in the Charleston area mention Elizabeth Riddlespurger, nee Ulbrich/Uldrick, as Christian's wife.⁴¹

Christian did not remain in the Orangeburgh District. Beginning in 1754, Christian began selling parcels of his land in Saxe-Gotha and Amelia townships, and then bought land a few miles to the south in St. George's Parish in the Charleston District of what is now Dorchester County, just across the border from the Orangeburgh District (as seen on the Mouzon Map of 1776). By 1760, Christian had amassed some 1,023 acres along "Four Hole Swamp,"⁴²

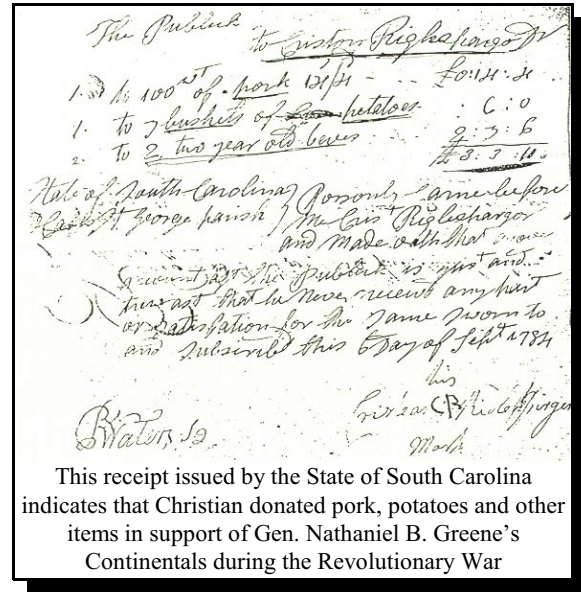
³⁹ See Brent H. Holcomb, Petitions for Land from the South Carolina Council Journals, Volume II: 1748-1752 (Columbia SC: SCMAR, 1997).

⁴⁰ Swantner, The Riddlespurgers, 44. See also the Ella Fay Riddlespurger letter: "they all spoke Dutch and live like Dutch."

⁴¹ See the Index To Deeds of South Carolina [1719-1885] and the Charleston District [1785-1800], 280; 732. Many deeds and various land transactions can also be found in, Swantner, The Riddlespurgers, 53-55. Christian "Retelesperger" is mentioned in four public notices and a paid advertisement for the sale of a "plantation," in the South Carolina Gazette between October 23, and December 25, of 1762.

⁴² "Four Hole Swamp is the large swamp which forms the upper half of the northern boundary of Dorchester County with Orangeburgh and Berkeley Counties. It is said to be so named because the water in the swamp starts from four holes or springs. It derives its name from the four large pits which alternately suck in and expel the waters of the swamp. From the discharging holes the water boils over like a mighty well, and into the receiving holes it plunges with considerable noise." See Elias B. Bull, "A Brief Survey of Dorchester County," in Names in South Carolina, XV (Winter 1968), 27-28.

in the NE portion of St. George's Parish. Christian was given an additional 150 acres by warrant between 1772-1773, probably indicating that Christian and new wife Elizabeth had three children during this time.⁴³ A number of families originally from the Zweibrücken area (i.e., the cities of Mimbach, Webenheim, Ingwyler, Einöd and Ernstweiler) also settled in the Orangeburgh area, after crossing the Atlantic in bilander *Oliver* in 1735. Like Christian, several of them stayed briefly in Orangeburgh before moving to the area near Indian Field Swamp. In fact, Lewis Linder (who arrived from Mimbach in 1735) surveyed a tract for Christian 1773, and also owned an adjacent property.⁴⁴



Christian's will indicates that his profession was an "Innkeeper," but he was also a planter and slave owner, raising "cattle, horses, hogs and poultry in addition to [various] crops. He was apparently a hardworking, industrious, and consequently, successful man."⁴⁵ Christian may have been engaged in timber cutting as well. The village at the crossroads near his land is known as "Rosinville," presumably because of the pitch and turpentine which came from the area—along with timber, a valuable commodity in nearby Charleston with its harbor and ship-building. Christians owned 14 slaves and 1400 plus acres—perhaps too much to farm with so few laborers, but certainly enough to cut timber.⁴⁶ Christian was also a jurymen in the Parish of St. George, Dorchester⁴⁷ and served as witness to the Last Will and Testament of John Aberly, patriarch of one of the more noted families of the area.⁴⁸

⁴³ Thersa Hicks, *Saxegotha Neighbors*, 144-150; and Holcomb, *Petitions for Land from the South Carolina Council Journals, Volume VII: 1771-1774* (Columbia SC: SCMAR, 1999).

⁴⁴ Correspondence from Harriet Imrey of May 5, 2016.

⁴⁵ Swantner, *The Riddlespurgers*, 44.

⁴⁶ Correspondence with Ron McCall, August 29, 2017.

⁴⁷ Gelee Corley Hendrix and Morn McKoy Lindsay, compilers, *Jury Lists of South Carolina, 1778-1779*, 7, 17. In the jury list the surname is spelled "Ridlesparger." Christian is listed as a "petit juror" in 1757, and then a "grand juror" in 1778-79. A petit juror paid 20 schillings in quit rents (property taxes), while a grand juror would have paid at least 5 pounds. This indicates Christian's economic status increased greatly over the years.

⁴⁸ Caroline T. Moore, compiler and editor, *Abstracts of the Wills of the State of South Carolina 1760-1784*, 75. Christian witnessed the will on November 30, 1766, by the use of his mark—the initials "CR"—and his name is spelled "Ridlesporger" by the recorder of the will.

Did Christian Own Land in Virginia?

The question raised by the previous data is “under what circumstances did Christian leave Pennsylvania (where he last appears in 1736) and then head to South Carolina (where he shows up in 1741/2)?” The evidence demonstrates that Christian made his way from Pennsylvania south following the Great Wagon Road into Virginia, where he claimed several plots of land, briefly settling on at least one of them, before moving on to South Carolina.

There is a deed recorded in Augusta County, Virginia, dated September 1804, which speaks of a “Christian Riddleberger” previously buying this 400 acres of land in the Shenendo [sic], from a Peter Bowman, who had purchased it from Jacob Stover.⁴⁹ According to John Wayland’s *A History of Rockingham County*, “September 21, 1737, Jacob Stover sold 400 acres on the west side of Sherundo River to Peter Bowman (witnesses Lightfoot and Nichols).” Then comes the following entry. “On October 22, 1738, 400 acres; Peter Bowman to Christian Redlicksberger.” This is probably the same tract that Bowman had purchased from Jacob Stover in September of the previous year. Dr. Harriet Imrey (a South Carolina genealogical researcher) speculates that this may be land that Christian and Bowman purchased through land speculator Jacob Stover, while still in Pennsylvania before moving to South Carolina. All three men (Bowman, Stover, and Christian) were known to be in Pennsylvania prior to moving to Virginia or South Carolina. In Peter Bowman’s will (executed in 1764 in Augusta County), his daughter Eve is listed as Christian’s God-daughter.⁵⁰ In Chalkey’s *Chronicles*, we read of another piece of land on which Christian may have settled; “same to same 150 pounds, 280 acres on a branch of Buffalo Creek, corner Christian Rutlishberger (Rutlishber).”⁵¹

The earliest land claims in the Orange/Augusta area that later became Botetourt county in 1769, were initially surveyed in 1739. The first land patents were issued in 1742. One way to establish one’s “intent” to claim a particular parcel of land was known as a “Cabin Right.” A settler could build a cabin and harvest a single crop of grain (even a small crop) which then entitled him to 400 acres of land. After building a cabin and the initial harvest, the settler was to travel to the nearest land office, request and pay for the land to be surveyed, and check that the title was clear so that the land could be patented. Another way to begin the process was called a “Tomahawk Right,” in which the settler marked trees (deadening them, and/or leaving his initials) to mark the intended boundaries of land he hoped to formally claim at a later time. But there was no legal claim in such circumstances until the land was settled by “Cabin Right.” Land claimed under “Cabin Right” or Tomahawk Right” was often abandoned before beginning the formal process of surveying and establishing a patent (legal title). A patent could be forfeited if the settler did not reside on the land, cultivate at least three acres for every fifty acres in the claim, or pay Quit Rents

⁴⁹ Deed Book 929 4/A923

⁵⁰ Correspondence from Harriet Imrey of May 5, 2016.

⁵¹ Chalkey’s Chronicles, Vol 3, 466, from deed book 14, Augusta County, page 280 August 7, 1767.

(taxes).

Apparently, as Christian headed south through the Shenandoah Valley, he made several such claims including the one mentioned above near “Buffalo Creek” on the west side of the Blue Ridge. Indications come from patents of later settlers in the area (James Rentfroe in 1745, and Archibald Graem in 1747), that Christian had at one time attempted to settle land adjacent to the plot in question.⁵² According to Harriet Imrey—who graciously supplied me with this material,

. . . the wording of the patent implies that a person named Christian Rutlickberger *had* held a claim of some sort to the land adjacent the 1749 patent of Archibald Graham. Since no patent was listed under that name, the reference may be to a ‘Cabin Right’ or a prior survey that was never processed into a patent. The name is part of the land description of these 280 acres, but does not imply current residence at the time of the survey in 1747 or earlier.

According to the information supplied by Dr. Imrey, Christian failed to pay taxes on this land, and ownership of the land returned to the Commonwealth of Virginia. In Patent Book No. 34 we find the following entry:

John Madison, 490 acs. Augusta Co. on Shenando Riv., on a Bank of Rocks above the Riv.; 7 Aug 1761, p. 908. £2. 400 acs. part being a part of a Pat. for 5,000 acs. Gtd. Jacob Stover 15 Dec 1733 (PB 15, p. 127 or p. 129, Spotsyl. Co.) the right and Title of which 400 acs. afterwards became Vested in Christian Riddleburger and he having failed to pay the Quitrents and to Cultivate & Improve the same, the sd 400 acs. on the Petition of the sd John Madison was by our General Court of our sd Colony on the 17th of Oct 1757 Adjudged to be forfeited [sic] and Vested again in Us and 90 acs. the Residue being part of the sd Jacob Stovers Pat. aforsd the Right of which sd 90 acs. is since become Vested in the sd John Madison.⁵³

It appears that Christian may have settled on this land, but later moved on and abandoned the property, failing to pay taxes on it, before arriving in South Carolina where he received a land grant in 1741/42. The John Madison mentioned above is the uncle of a future president, James Madison.

But there is still more of interest here. In F. B. Kegley’s *Kegley’s Virginia Frontier: The Beginning of the Southwest. The Roanoke of Colonial Days 1740-1783*, we find mention of these same patents with more precise locations given. “From these early grants we learn that the main river of Roanoke was called Goose Creek, that its north branch now called Tinker Creek was called Buffalo Creek with its lower part designated Smith’s Creek, and the south branch of Roanoke as later, called the South Fork of Roanoke.... James Rentfroe’s 148 acres lay north of

⁵² The progression is as follows: Initial claim: VA Patent Book, No. 24, 38: James Rentfroe, 148 acs. Orange Co. on the West side of the Blue Ridge, near the Buffillo Cr.; 20 Sep 1745. 15 Shill. Disposition: Augusta County Deed Book 1, 259: May 1, 1747, Archibald Graem, of Augusta, 148 acres near Buffalo Creek of *Roanoke*, from James Rentfroe, of Lunenburg, Pat. 1745. Disposition II: VA Patent Book, No. 29, 42: Archibald Graham, 280 acs. Augusta Co. on a Br. of Buffalo Cr., adj. *Christian Rutlickberger*; 15 Dec 1749. £1.10.

⁵³ Dennis Ray Hudgins (Ed.), *Cavaliers and Pioneers: Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants*, Volume Six: 1749-1762 (Richmond VA: Virginia Genealogical Society, 1998), 411.

the Cloverdale Furnace Place.”⁵⁴ This indicates that The Buffalo Creek (of the *Roanoke* River) upon which Christian had settled was identified as Tinker Creek after the Revolution, and runs between Daleville and Cloverdale Virginia in current Botetourt County.⁵⁵

Christian’s oldest son, John Riddelsberger (about whom we’ll read much more in chapter two) was a blacksmith who previously resided in Cumberland County Pennsylvania (a portion of which later became Franklin County), later purchased property in Botetourt County in 1787, and again 1794, both properties on tributaries of the James River. According to *Kegley’s Virginia Frontier*, John Riddelsberger had a survey of 216 acres conducted on the north Branch of Tinker Creek in 1796.⁵⁶ This survey did not result in a grant. Is it a coincidence that John Riddelsberger apparently sought land in the same county, and on the same short creek, where his father Christian had established a claim of some sort in 1739-40? Did Christian supply John with this information upon learning that his son had moved into the Shenandoah? Or did John hear about this land from his father before leaving South Carolina to Pennsylvania, eventually settling nearby in Botetourt County? We can but wonder about the exact circumstances, but this is hardly a coincidence.

Christian Theus and St. John Helvetic Reformed Church

Christian Riddlespurger was a founding elder in a German-speaking Reformed Church, built in 1751 on land donated for the purpose by William Baker, Christian’s next-door neighbor. It is thought that this congregation first met in the meeting house on the Congaree River (see Appendix Four). Named “St John’s,” this church was confessional—the First Helvetic Confession, the Walloone (or Belgic) Confession, along with the Augsburg Confession (Lutheran) were its charter documents—a clear indication that members of this church were not happy with the pietist leanings of many of the Swiss Reformed living in the area who had Waldensian roots.

The pastor of St. John’s Helvetic was Christian Theus, who had come to South Carolina from Chur (Switzerland) in 1735. There were nearly 800 German and Swiss Reformed Christians scattered throughout the area, and Theus was the only Reformed pastor in the entire region. Theus miraculously escaped death at the hands of the Weberites—a bizarre sect meeting in the Carolina woods who threatened to kill Theus when he inadvertently came across one their meetings and then dared to lecture them on their theological errors. Theus also allowed the slaves of church members to attend worship services and sit in the galleries of St. John’s, a rather remarkable thing at that

⁵⁴ F. B. Kegley, *Kegley’s Virginia Frontier: The Beginning of the Southwest. The Roanoke of Colonial Days 1740-1783*, Reprint ed. (NP: Heritage Books, 2012), 93.

⁵⁵ *Augusta County Deed Book* 14:275.— 9th August, 1767. Archibald Graham and Margaret, of Pittsylvania County, to Israel Christian, £200, 148 acres, hill near the Buffalo Creek. Teste: Edward Carvin. Page 280— 8th August, 1767. Same to same [i.e., Graham to Christian], £150, 280 acres on a branch of Buffalo Creek; corner Christian Rutlishberger.

⁵⁶ Kegley, *Kegley’s Virginia Frontier*, 549.

time.⁵⁷ Theus was an ardent supporter of the Revolution, contributing supplies to the Patriots, while his sons fought in the militia. The English took revenge on Theus by burning St. John's to the ground in 1781. St. John's and Christian Theus may well be the figures of history underlying the fictional minister and church-burning scene in Mel Gibson's movie *The Patriot*.

Theus' reputation varies widely. According to Peter N. Moore:

In 1749 Bolzius (the neighboring Lutheran minister) reported that the people of the Congarees lived "swinishly, filthily, and in a disorderly fashion, and that their Reformed minister" was "said to be a very bad man." There was "great discord" among the settlers, ostensibly over the religious differences between Lutheran and Reformed. A year later Bolzius compared the Congarees to the trading center at Augusta, where "life goes on . . . in a godless way, and it is more scandalous than the heathen." In such "gathering places of evil" they "live together in a brutish way and respect their Reformed minister little."⁵⁸

Sadly, Theus' tombstone read that he "labored through a long life as a faithful servant in his Master's vineyard, and the reward which he received from many for his labor was ingratitude."⁵⁹

But Theus may have been given a bum rap. Not only did he remain a pastor in this area for over 50 years—something an unpopular minister could never accomplish—the critical words come from Boltzius, who never met Theus and who hated all things Reformed. Furthermore, American-Lutheran patriarch Henry Melchior Muhlenberg was extremely complimentary about Theus—he had met Theus personally—using him as a source in his own criticism of the Weberites.⁶⁰

After Christian Riddlespurger began selling his land in Amelia Township and buying land near Four Hole Swamp in 1760, Christian began attending St. John's Lutheran Church in Charleston, where his youngest son, David was baptized in July of 1779.⁶¹ The pastor was John Nicholas Martin, and many of the Ulderick family (Christian's new in-laws) worshiped there. According to Harriet Imrey,

St. John's Lutheran (opened in downtown Charleston in 1764) was probably his most-convenient option (for Christian). Its membership included the Reformed community—and even some Roman Catholics. There could have been an in-law influence as well: all 3 witnesses to the John Ullerick will were men who were leaders of St. John's Lutheran, including vestryman Martin Müller/Miller and churchwarden John Gotsman. It's safe to assume that this was Elizabeth (Riddlespurger)'s home church! Its minister during the war was John Nicholas Martin, who had a rough time of it. He was a strong Whig. When the local (Whig) militia was preparing to defend Charleston, they found it necessary to burn down his house just

⁵⁷ Sandra E. Johnson, *Standing on Holy Ground: A Triumph Over Hate Crime in the Deep South* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002), 61-62.

⁵⁸ Peter N. Moore, "Religious Radicalism in the Colonial Southern Backcountry" A paper given at the Georgia Workshop in Early American History and Culture (August 27, 2004), 9-10.

⁵⁹ Cited in Moore, "Religious Radicalism," 9-10.

⁶⁰ Correspondence with Harriet Imrey, August 2, 2005.

⁶¹ Baptismal records from St. John Lutheran Church in Charleston, SC, indicate that David was born in April of 1779, and baptized on July 7, 1779. The parents are listed as Christian and Elizabeth "Rodlesperger."

outside of town, in order to provide a better field-of-fire. Then, during the British occupation, Martin declined to offer prayers “for the health of His Majesty.” So he got replaced by more-flexible minister Frederick Daser. At which time, the British troops burned down his new house.⁶²

It is clear that Christian Riddlespurger preferred confessional Reformed or even Lutheran worship to that conducted in German to pietist Reformed churches, such as the Reformed church which was flourishing in the Indian Fields area of St. George Parish by the 1780's, and which later became Methodist.⁶³

Christian and the Revolutionary War

We do not know whether Christian’s political sentiments fell in with the Patriots (his second wife’s family, the Uldricks, apparently were Whigs), or if he was a loyalist, as were many of the Irish and German-Swiss inhabitants of the Orangeburgh area. Christian’s oldest son, John, was in Pennsylvania throughout the Revolutionary War. John served as 2nd Lt in a Pennsylvania militia unit which never saw combat and may have never mustered. Christian’s second son Abraham (John’s younger brother) was an avowed loyalist, serving in a loyalist militia. Such loyalties became matters of great importance when the British under generals Henry Clinton and the Marquess Cornwallis occupied Charleston in March of 1780, soundly defeated the Continentals under General Benjamin Lincoln (who surrendered). The victorious British then sent light infantry units and dragoons into the Carolina interior as far as Monck’s Corner (about thirty miles to the north of Charleston) to harass any Patriot militia and sympathizers who might be foolish enough to resist. Such aggressive actions by the British army in establishing a southern theater of war would have pulled the rug out from under any fence-sitters in the low country of South Carolina and at the very least alarmed the citizens living outside Charleston—including the Riddlespurgers. War was at hand. It was time to choose sides.

After the Battle of Guilford Court House in North Carolina on March 15, 1781, and the subsequent move of Cornwallis’ weary army into North Carolina, famed Continental General Nathaniel B. Greene and his army gave up the chase of Cornwallis (who would soon be defeated by Washington at Yorktown) and turned south, with the goal of driving the remaining British forces in South Carolina out of the countryside and back into Charleston where Greene could lay siege to the remaining British forces. Moving into the “High Hills” above the Santee River, Greene gave his men six weeks rest before engaging the British at the Battle of Eutaw Springs (September 8, 1781). This battle took place about 15 miles to the northeast from Christian’s land and plantation near what is now Rosinville, South Carolina, at the intersection of state highways 15 (the old Indian Field Trail) and 178 (the Orangeburgh-Charleston Road). Unreinforced and badly in need of refit, the remaining British forces slowly withdrew towards Charleston, where General Greene was able to pin them down as planned until the British

⁶² Correspondence with Harriet Imrey, August 3, 2005.

⁶³ Erskine Clarke, Our Southern Zion: A History of Calvinism in the South Carolina Low Country, 1690-1990 (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1996), 566.

withdrawal from Charleston on December 14, 1782.

The southward movement of General Greene's army brought him down a horse trail near Eutaw Springs (now state highway 15 and part of the Indian Field Trail) to the Orangeburgh-Charleston Road where Greene's forces camped at "Riddlespurger's" on December 3, 1781. Greene himself was not present, taking a "flying party" of 400 dragoons (Calvary and horse-mounted infantry) past Riddlespurger's Inn down the Charleston road to drive the British out of Fort Dorchester—which they did. Colonel Otho Williams and the main body of Greene's continentals (about 800 men) and militia (perhaps as many as a thousand, with camp followers, wagons, etc.) camped at Christian's Inn.⁶⁴ This is a good indication that Christian was either sympathetic to the Patriot cause (or else convinced Greene's men he was) because Williams ordered the Continental army not to "burn rails"—use Christian's fences for firewood. While camped at Christian's Inn, the Continental army consumed six head of cattle or 2100 pounds of beef for which Christian was paid 26 pounds and 19 shillings.⁶⁵ This is equivalent to the amount of beef Greene's army consumed each day. A receipt with Christian's distinctive "CR" mark indicates that Christian was also paid 3 pounds, 3 shillings, and 3 pence, for feeding State Troops "one grown hog and three bushels of potatoes."⁶⁶ Because an army travels on its stomach, whether a loyalist or a patriot, by feeding Greene's men and allowing them use of his land, Christian contributed to the Patriot cause.

The Debate Over Christian's Children

Riddlespurger family researchers are divided about the relationship between Christian's two wives and his children. Coleen Swantner mistakenly believes that Christian Jr., (born between 1755-60) and Abraham (born between 1755-60) are Christian's two sons by Ann Struck, and that Thomas (born about 1778), David (born after 1778), John (whom she speculates was born between 1770-90), and Ann (born abt. 1777), are Christian's children by Elizabeth Uldrick, who was probably twenty years or more younger than her husband. Other Riddlespurger researchers, including me, are convinced that John and Abraham are Christian's sons by Ann Struck, with the others, Christian, Thomas, David and Ann being children of Christian and Elizabeth.⁶⁷

Part of the problem is that Riddlesberger family researchers and their Riddlespurger counterparts have not compared notes, so to speak. Pooling our collective information sheds great light on the above question. After doing so, I am convinced that the latter viewpoint is the correct one, since what we know about John Riddelsperger

⁶⁴ Letterhead dated Dec. 3rd, Riddlespurger's from Col. O. Williams to General Nathaniel B. Greene, graciously supplied to me by Ronald McCall.

⁶⁵ Acct. # 8, supplied to me by Ronald McCall

⁶⁶ Acct. # 313, supplied to me by Ronald McCall

⁶⁷ Correspondence with Mrs. Marie Kline of Pembroke Pines, FL, of August 3, 1998, and Ethel V. Spurger Sheehan, of Houston, TX, of October 19, 1998.

of South Carolina-Pennsylvania-Virginia points to his birth about 1743-44, after Christian married Ann Struck and was given his first one hundred acres. One key document in this discussion is Christian Riddlespurger's will of 1790, to which we now turn.

Christian Riddlespurger's Last Will and Testament

WILL OF CHRISTIAN RIDDLESURGER
South Carolina Will Book B, Pages 472-476

In the name of God amen. I Christian Riddlespurger, of Charleston District, in the State of South Carolina, Innkeeper, do make this my last Will and Testament, in Manner and Form following, that is to say. I give and bequeath to my wife **Elizabeth Riddlespurger**, the use, occupation, and enjoyment of my house and the plantation whereon I at present dwell, situate on the public road leading to Orangeburgh and consisting of three tracts or parcels of land, viz; one hundred acres formerly laid out for Samuel Parsons, and which I purchased of Thomas Pendervis, fifty acres which I purchased of John Ulderick and twenty acres with the old settlement on which I formerly lived, and which were surveyed for and originally granted to me, to hold and enjoy the same plantation and premisses so long as she shall remain my widow and no longer. I give and devise unto the same Elizabeth for and during the term of her natural life, the work of and labour and service of the four following Neg., to wit; Joe a man, Old Sarah and Rachel, women, and Ju'r, together with the use, produce and increase of all my cattle, horses, hogs, and sheep with the use and enjoyment of all my furniture and household stuff of every kind in order to enable her the said Elizabeth to maintain, clothe, school and educate my children. But it is my express wish and direction that if my said wife Elizabeth should marry again she shall on no pretense whatever carry or remove any of the slaves, stock or household goods (the use of which I have given her for life) out of the limits of this State, and that my executors hereinafter named do and take all lawful means to recover from the said Elizabeth any such property as she or any future husband may attempt to remove beyond the limits of this state, and it is my will that a removal or attempt to remove such Negroes, stock, or household stuff or any part of the same shall work a forfeiture of all the estate and interest by the present Will given or intended for the said Elizabeth in the premised which shall in such case immediately be put to the use and benefit of the persons for whom the same is intended after the death of the said Elizabeth by the present Will.

I Will and direct that within six months after my decease my executors hereinafter named of such of them as shall qualify, do sell at public vendue on a credit of six months after giving at least three weeks notice, my three Negro slaves Jack, Bob and Dinah and remit the amount of sales when received either in rice, indigo, or good bills of exchange as the(y) shall think best to some creditable house or merchant in Philadelphia for the use of my son **John Riddlespurger** of Cumberland County in the State of Pennsylvania, blacksmith to whom I give the amount of sales of the said Negroes Jack, Bob, and Dinah in full of all claims and demands he may have against my estate real or personal, proviso, save if my son John Riddlespurger should come to the State of South Carolina, it is my Will that my executors should pay him the sum of five pounds sterling towards the bearing of his expense.

I give and bequeath to my son **Abraham Riddlespurger** and to his heirs and assigns forever all that tract of land containing one hundred and thirty-five acres situate on the waters of Four Holes Swamp, also seventy acres to be taken from a tract of one hundred acres adjoining the last mentioned tract at that part whereon it bounds on the same, and to be held as the lines are already laid out and marked by me. I also give and bequeath to the said Abraham Riddlespurger, his executors, administrators, and assigns forever, three Negro slaves; to wit: James, Sarah and April with the future issue and increase of the said Sarah.

I give, devise and bequeath to my son **Christian Riddlespurger** after the decease of his mother the said Elizabeth and to his heirs and assigns forever all that plantation whereon I now live containing in the whole one hundred and seventy-five acres and herein and before particularly mentioned and also at the death of his said mother I give and bequeath to the said Christian Riddlespurger his executors, administrators, and assigns these Negro slaves to wit:

Joe, Rachel, Friendship, July, Billy, Phebe, with the increase and issue of the said two women slaves after the decease of his said mother and it is my will that until the death of the said Elizabeth my wife and my said son Christian shall have the work of the Negroes Old Sarah, Friendship and Hannah notwithstanding my having given two of the said slaves to any of my other children by this present Will and my Will further is that whatsoever children the above named Negro slave Rachel may have till the death of my said wife Elizabeth be equally divided between my two sons hereinafter named, (to wit): **David** and **Thomas**.

I give and devise to my daughter **Ann Riddlespurger** her executors and administrators on her arriving at the age of twenty-one years or day of marriage whichever shall first happen, a Negro boy named Sandy and a Negro girl named Mary. And my Will further is that my executors herein after named to purchase a Negro slave with whatsoever money may be in hand at the time of my decease and that the said slave so bought be given to my said daughter Ann on her marriage day or as soon after as may be convenient. And further my will is that at the decease of my said wife Elizabeth my said daughter Ann shall have of all my stock of horses, cattle, sheep, hogs, household furniture, one full third part to her, her heirs, and assigns forever.

I give devise and bequeath to my son **David Riddlespurger** on his arriving at the age of twenty-one or having issue lawfully begotten, one hundred acres of land on which his brother Christian now lives, also three Negro slaves, to wit: James, Hannah and a girl named Sarah to have and to hold the said plantation and Negroes aforesaid to him his heirs and assigns forever. My Will further is and I give and devise to my said daughter Ann one hundred twenty acres of land being part of a tract of land containing one hundred and fifty acres joining the tract I now live on and the south side of the great road granted in my own name, now thirty acres of said tract being the residue of the said tract to my son David of that part that lies next to the land already given to him in common and not as joint tenants to them the said Ann and David and to their heirs and assigns forever.

I give and bequeath and devise to my son **Thomas Riddlespurger**, on his arrival at age or having issue of his body lawfully begotten all my other lands not before mentioned or specified, either granted in my own name or purchased by me except one half of one hundred and eighteen acres granted in my own name on Bay Dam, which undivided half lying nearest to the plantation whereon I now live I give to my son Christian Riddlespurger for the support of timber for the land I now live on and to his heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns forever. And if any of my said children should die under age or unmarried or without lawful issue my will is expressly such that their share or dividend of my estate be equally divided share and share between my surviving children whoever the(y) may be of the afore named Abraham, Christian, David, Thomas, or Ann Riddlespurger or as many of them as may at any time in such case be survivor or survivors. I further will and direct that at the death of my said wife Elizabeth, the remaining two-thirds of my stock of horses, cattle, sheep, hogs, and household furniture or other stuff or crops after deducting the third part herein before given to my daughter Ann be equally divided amongst my children Abraham, Christian, David, and Thomas their survivors or survivor share and share alike to them their heirs and assigns forever. I hereby will and direct that all my lawful debts be paid together with my funeral charges out of such funds as my executors may collect for debts due me or money arising from my crop or otherwise from money in hand or as the(y) may think most proper at the time of my decease and I do by this my Will appoint my said wife Elizabeth guardian of such of my children as are minors. And I also do nominate constitute and appoint my two sons together with my friend John Bell, esquire of the Walnut Creek executors of this my last will and testament. And I do by this my Will and hereby revoke annul and make void all former and other wills by me made heretofore at any time declaring this to be my last will and testament written on part of two sheets of paper signed with my hand and sealed with my seal at Indian Fields this fifteenth day of September in the year of our Lord One thousand seven hundred and ninety.

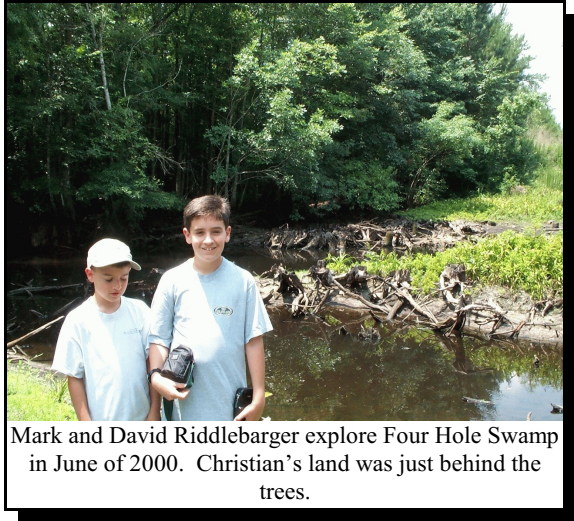
His mark—Christian CR Riddlespurger (LS)

Signed, sealed, published and declared by the afore named Christian Riddlespurger the testator as and for his last will and testament in the presence of us who at his request in his presence and in the presence of each other have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses thereto. Thomas Westbury—Jeremiah Russell—John Ulrich his mark

Proved before Charles Lining, Esquire O.C.T.D. December 1, 1790 at the same time qualified Abraham Riddlespurger and Christian Riddlespurger executors."

From the facts contained in Christian's will, Christian's son, John, a blacksmith, was thought to be living in Cumberland County, PA. Even though John Riddelsperger had already moved to an area near Fincastle in Botetourt County, VA by 1787, he did indeed live in Antrim Township in Cumberland County in what is now Washington Township in Franklin County as early as 1774, and it is known that John's son—John Riddlesberger II—as well as several of his grandsons, were also blacksmiths. It is also apparent that Christian did not expect John to return to South Carolina before the will was probated, therefore, Christian left John money, not land or personal property, and named two other adult sons, Christian II and Abraham as executors.⁶⁸ This seems to indicate that John and Abraham are of majority—therefore, likely Christian's sons by Ann Struck. According to the will, Christian II's mother is Elizabeth. Thomas, David, and Ann, are not yet of age, and are certainly children of Christian's second wife, Elizabeth Uldrick. There is a great deal of evidence by which to track John Riddelsperger's movements over the fifty years from 1766-1820, and either John Riddelsperger, the patriarch of our family line, is the son of Christian Riddlespurger, or else we have a "John Riddlespurger" and a "John Riddelsperger" who are not related, living at the same time in the same place—a circumstance which is highly unlikely. Given the fact that in the two only known

⁶⁸ As she states in her book, *The Riddlespurgers*, Coleen Swantner is of the opinion that while the John mentioned in the will is somehow connected to the John Riddlesberger who later is known to reside in Botetourt County, VA, he is one of Christian's youngest sons by Elizabeth Uldrick. She is aware of the presence of John Riddlesberger in Cumberland County in 1766-74. She writes: "There are many records for a John RITTLESBERGER in the right area of Pennsylvania which do not fit Christian's son, John. The Cumberland County John RITTLESBERGER was probably born CA 1743 as he was married and selling land in Pennsylvania in 1774." From this she concludes that John Riddlesberger might be connected to the Georgia Salzbürgers, perhaps Stephan or Ruprecht, who fled Ebenezer for Pennsylvania (see *The Riddlespurgers*, pp. 33-48). She bases her opinion that the John mentioned in Christian's will is too young to be the John Riddlesberger of Cumberland County upon several factors. The first is apparently derived from the fact that since John is not named as an executor to the will, he must be a minor when the will was written. This can easily be explained by the fact that Christian did not expect John to return to SC before his will was probated. One would not normally appoint an absentee heir as executor of a will. Ms. Swantner also mentions that a John Riddlespurger was married and living in Colleton County, according to the Census of 1810. This same John Riddlespurger was a private in the Carolina Militia during the War of 1812, and according to the Federal Census 1810, John was between 26 and 45 years of age. This means that this particular John was born sometime between 1765-1784, and from this Mrs. Swantner surmises that a young John might have been sent by his father to Pennsylvania as an apprentice of some sort, but this is highly unlikely. Christian's will describes John as a "blacksmith," not an apprentice. This certainly seems to indicate that John mentioned in the will was a mature adult at the time the will was written. In addition, John is treated in a separate section of the will, apart from Christian's instruction regarding his youngest sons by Elizabeth, Thomas and David. Another factor that must be considered is that if John was born after 1770, his father Christian, was approaching seventy when John was sired. This is not impossible, but given the fact that wife Elizabeth was in her late thirties at this time, the probability that this is the case decreases. The evidence points to the fact that the John mentioned in the will as born about 1743-44, and was working as a blacksmith in Cumberland County when he had last been in contact with his father. Christian does not expect to hear from him before his death. The John Riddlespurger of Colleton County is more than likely a son of Christian II, and therefore a grandson of Christian Riddlespurger.



Mark and David Riddlebarger explore Four Hole Swamp in June of 2000. Christian's land was just behind the trees.

exemplars of his signature, apparently, written in his own hand, John spelled his name **Riddelsperger**.⁶⁹ Therefore, the evidence is quite strong that John Riddelsperger is the oldest son of Christian.

*The Fate of the Riddlesperger Family*⁷⁰

Christian Riddlesperger's will was drafted on September 15, 1790 at Indian Field, St. George's Parish in the Charleston District. The will was probated on the first of December, just two and one half months later. Very likely, Christian had taken ill and drafted the will to prepare

for the inevitable. He probably died in November, in his late seventies. He had been born in Europe, crossed the Atlantic as a young man, lived for a time in Pennsylvania and then moved to South Carolina, where he amassed more than 1200 acres as well as fourteen slaves and much personal property. He was an Innkeeper as well as a plantation owner, was married two times, his second wife, Elizabeth, being much younger than himself. He left behind six children—five sons and a daughter. His descendants, the Riddlebargers, Riddlebergers, Riddlesbargers, Riddelspergers and Riddelspergers number well into the hundreds—one of them being me!

Our knowledge of the fate of Christian Riddlesperger's children varies greatly and is thoroughly surveyed in Swantner's volume, *The Riddelspergers*.⁷¹ **Christian II**, is mentioned in the 1793 will of Peter Tamplatt,⁷² and appears in the 1800 federal census in St. George in Colleton County. According to the *Russell Family History*, Christian II married Sarah Russell about 1825 in South Carolina. A Jeremiah Russell was a witness to Christian's will. Supposedly, Christian II was an "abusive husband . . . [who] decided to move to Germany and took [Sarah] with him. In some manner she was able to escape from him and made her way to Spain. While in Spain, she got in touch with her family, mainly her sister Edith, who was married to Peter Ray at this time. Peter Ray was kind

⁶⁹ Certified copy of marriage bonds for John's daughters, Frany and Elizabeth, from Botetourt County, VA, dated November 5, 1800; and November 9, 1811, respectively.

⁷⁰ Unless otherwise noted, the source for the following material is Coleen Swantner's book, *The Riddelspergers*, 46-50.

⁷¹ One of Christian's sons, possibly David, was the first postmaster at the Indian Field post office. The post office had opened by 1811, and according to court records, this particular Riddelsperger had died by January 11, 1812. The post office finally closed by 1814, only to be re-opened and closed several more times.

⁷² Caroline T. Moore, editor and compiler, *Abstracts of Wills of Charleston District South Carolina; And Other Wills Recorded in the District*, 303-304.

enough to send her the money to come home. As the story is told, she did arrive safely back in South Carolina.”⁷³ There is no documentation for this claim, other than Russell family legend. Several Riddlespurger family researchers have concluded that the **John Riddlespurger** of South Carolina who appears in the SC Census of 1810, is a son of Christian II.⁷⁴

Abraham Riddlespurger was born in 1750 and died in 1838, in Laurens, South Carolina. He was married at least twice. His first wife is unknown to us, though she was the mother of three of his children, one of whom, a son, **Samuel Riddlesperger** (1778-1850), married Nancy **Wiseman** in 1826 and appears in both the 1820 and 1830 Federal Censuses in Laurens County. The other children from this marriage are presumably: **Elizabeth Riddlesperger** (1785–1836) who, in 1806 married Captain John **Gooch** (1780–1840), and **Nancy Ann Riddlesperger** (1794–1852), who married Henry Grove **Gooch** (1781–1847). Abraham’s second wife was a widow named Malcy (or Malcie), who was the mother of his daughter, **Prudence Riddlesperger**. A plat map drawn up when the Parish districts were formed in 1800 shows Abraham owning an Inn (Christian’s) situated directly on the Orangeburgh Road near the boundary between St. George and St. James Parish.

Abraham was in a loyalist militia unit during the Revolution—serving in Colonel John Fisher’s Regiment, The Orangeburgh Militia, in 1781-83.⁷⁵ We can only imagine what he would have thought about brother John’s service in behalf of the Patriots in the Pennsylvania Militia. Abraham was subsequently imprisoned for some six weeks in Colleton County, SC., because of his service in Fisher’s Militia. He eventually moved to Laurens, and lies buried with wife Malcy, and daughter Prudence in the Bramblett Methodist Cemetery in Laurens County.⁷⁶

We do a bit about the fate of Christian’s “Inn.” In addition to the 1800 plat map, the Inn is also listed on the Robert Mills map of the area drawn up in 1825. Since Abraham had moved to Laurens County by 1820, “Riddlespurger’s” may have been owned or operated by Christian II, or one of Christian’s grandsons when Mills produced his map. Apparently, the presence of “Riddlespurger’s” made the local Methodists (Indian Fields became the site of a Methodist church and camp facility) quite uncomfortable. In Albert Shipp’s *The History of Methodism in South Carolina*, we read the following recollection, written in 1844.

I cannot say, forget past times, and the evil of them, when in my own state of South Carolina, where slaves were most numerous, there was little more charity for Methodist preachers than if they had been Mormons, and their access to negroes was looked upon as dangerous to the public peace. Bring not back upon us the evils of those days. I cannot forget how I felt, when thirty three years ago (which would be about 1811),

⁷³ [Russell Family History](#), Orangeburgh Genealogical Society Web-page.

⁷⁴ Correspondence with Marie Kline of Penbroke Pines, FL, September 9, 1998. Ethel Spurger Sheehan is of the opinion that this particular John is “indeed the son of Christian II, the son of CR [Christian Riddlespurger]. In 1791, after his father’s death in 1790, Christian Jr., signed his name as Christian, Sr., and with his mother [step-mother?], Elizabeth, Abraham, and John entered suit against admrs. of the estate of CR. I think that I can prove that this John is Christian II’s son.” Correspondence of November 18, 1998.

⁷⁵ Pay Abstract Number 149 (from Aug 6-Oct 5/Jul 21-Aug 5/Oct 24-Dec 25).

⁷⁶ Swantner, [The Riddlespurgers](#), 47.

Riddlespurger, who kept a shop and sold rum and calico on the Dorchester Road, some twelve miles from Charleston, asked us to preach at his house, and told us of hundreds of negroes in the area who had never heard preaching, who would come to hear. And although he was a rum seller—and as hateful as it seemed to be associated with one whose business was a nuisance to the neighborhood—the man of rum—to Riddlespurger's I went, and preached to the negroes at risk of the duck pond, where it was threatened to bale my zeal, till finding that preaching sold no more grog, or possibly being scared, the poor man (Riddlespurger) begged us to desist from coming to preach—when my venerable colleague on this floor (Mr. Dinwiddy) left the city in the afternoon to go a distance in another direction to meet an assembly of negroes late at night by the light of the moon on the side of a swamp, to preach and administer the sacraments in the wild woods as if it had been a thing the daylight might not look upon or Christian people countenance at their dwellings.⁷⁷

St. John's—founded by Christian, William Baker, and others, welcomed slaves into the church under the ministry of Rev. Theus. After Christian's death, the family attitude toward slaves and freedmen had hardened considerably. Shipp goes on to mention that some three hundred “negroes” found their way to the swamp, heard the preaching and celebrated the Lord's Supper.

Thomas, a planter, participated in the War of 1812, serving in Tucker's Regiment of the South Carolina Militia, which was sent to control Creek Indians along the Alabama River, arriving too late to participate in the Battle of Horseshoe Creek, in which Andrew Jackson decisively defeated the British and their Native American agents. Thomas' first wife was Katherine **Marquis**, who bore him four children, Charles, Erasmus (also known as "Ris"), Elizabeth and Catherine. He also had four more children by his second wife, Elizabeth **Quartermus**, Thomas, Mary, Eliza Ann and William H. The rather fascinating history of the Erasmus and Thomas Riddlespurger families is detailed in Swantner's volume.⁷⁸

Christian's youngest son, **David** Riddlespurger, may have been the most successful. Born about 1778, David was an attorney, who on June 9, 1809, was appointed Justice of the Quorum for the Colleton District of South Carolina. He appears in the Federal Census of 1810 with six males and one female under 45 living in the home. Sadly, David also held 15 slaves. Nothing is known of his wife, but one son was named James H. David died in his mid-thirties on January 10, 1812.⁷⁹ The “John” Riddlespurger mentioned above, who is believed to be the son of Christian Riddlespurger II, lived next door to David at the time of the 1810 census, and served as a private in Harley's militia unit in the War of 1812.

Christian's daughter, **Ann**, had married William **Harley** by 1795. Harley was a widower, and member of the South Carolina House of Representatives. Together, they had one son, James S. Harley. William Harley died by 1820, since Ann is listed as a head of household in the 1820 Census for SC. In 1821 she married William G. Finley,

⁷⁷ Albert Shipp, The History of Methodism in South Carolina (Nashville: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1884), 471.

⁷⁸ Swantner, The Riddlespurgers, 47

⁷⁹ Brent H. Holcomb, Marriage and Death Notices from the Charleston Times, 1800-1821 (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1979), 257.

but he, too, had died by 1833. She died, apparently, before the 1840 Census was taken. According to Coleen Swantner, “Present day Harleyville in Dorchester County, South Carolina, was the site of Stut’s and Harley’s Tavern and Post Office, where Ann and her family lived in 1820.”⁸⁰



Site of Christian’s plantation, near Rosinville at the intersection of SC state highways 26 and 15.

Items for Future Research:

- * Locate Christian’s place of burial (Bay Dam)
- * Discover from which branch of the Rötlisperger family Christian comes, and determine where he lived before arriving at the dock in Rotterdam 1733

⁸⁰ Swantner, The Riddlespurgers, 48.

Chapter Two

John Riddelsperger—Patriarch of the Riddlebarger, Riddlesberger and Riddleberger Families

We do not know when or where, exactly, **John Riddelsperger** was born. South Carolina or Pennsylvania? But we do know that he had moved to Elizabeth Township in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania by 1766,¹ and then to Warwick Township in 1769, when he appears on the Lancaster County Personal property tax list.² We also know that according to his father's will, John was the oldest son of Christian Riddlespurger and that he was living in Cumberland County when the will was drafted. While it is possible that John may have born in Pennsylvania as early as 1733-1736 (shortly after Christian immigrated there from Europe) the evidence points to the fact that John was born *after* Christian received a one-hundred acre land grant in Saxe-Gotha in 1741/42, indicating there was one additional person under Christian's care—likely a new wife, Ann Struck. Land grants in South Carolina included fifty acres per family member. We also know that the last year John paid taxes to the Commonwealth of Virginia was in 1827,³ the probable year of his death.

Determining the date and place of John's birth is greatly complicated by an additional factor. South Carolina land records indicate that a certain "John Rhetelsperger/Riddles Sparger" owned land in South Carolina as early as December of 1752.⁴ The date of this document (1752) and the fact that a John Rhetelsperger (Riddle

¹ Kenneth D. McCrea, Pennsylvania Land Applications, Volume 1: East Side Applications, 1765-1769 (Strasborg PA: Pennsylvania Chapter Palatines to America, 2002), record # es-1925.

² Arthur Seder, Four Families: Early Settlers of Western Virginia (self-published, 2003), 16.

³ According to the International Genealogical Index of North America, a "John Riddlesperger" was born in 1736 in Colleton County, SC. Most of the records which I have examined from this file are either in error, or show no supporting documentation. In several instances I suspect that the researcher has confused Christian Riddlespurger with one of the Christian Riedelspergers of Ebenezer.

⁴ The following records for JOHN RIDDLESPERGER/RIDDLESBERGER in SC from 1753 and 1754 were given me by Ethel Spurger Sheehan and come from the SC Dept. of Archives and History, Alphabetical Index (also known as the COM). (1). Rhetelsperger, JOHN: Keller, Martin, Jr., land grant for 50 acres in Amelia Twp. (1 page) Date: 1754/01/02. Entry nbrs: 0002 007 002F 00086 00. (2). Rhetelsperger, JOHN: Keller, Martin, land grant for 350 acres in Amelia Twp. (1 page) Date: 1754/01/02, Entry nbrs: 0002 007 002F 00096 00. (3). SC Plat Bk 5, 503, South Carolina Pursuant to a Warrant to me directed by George Hunter Esqr., Sur. Gen. bearing date December 7 1752 I have admeasured and laid out unto Martin Keller Jun. a tract of land in the Amelia Township containing fifty acres situate lying and being in Berkeley County butting and bounding to the N. Eastward on Land of old Martin Keller and to the N. Westward on Land of **John Riddle Sparger**, ye other two sides on vacant land and hath such form and shape and marks as are represented in the above delineated platt thereof. Certified this 8 of June 1753. Per me Peter Faure, D.S. (4). SC Plat Bk. 5, 506. South Carolina. Pursuant to a Warrant to me directed by George Hunter Esqr. S. Gen, bearing date Dec 7 1752 I have admeasured and laid out to Michael Keller a tract of land on a creek called Mavericks in Amelia Township containing three hundred and fifty acres situate lying and being in Berkeley County butting and bounding to the N. Westward part on land laid out to John Koneith and part on vacant land and to

Sparger) may have owned land by that time, on its face would indicate that John was born much earlier than 1743, since only those who had reached majority could be given such fifty acre parcels by grant from the council. If this is our John Riddelsperger (see below), it means that he was born at least ten years earlier than most researchers previously thought—in 1734–40 not during the mid-1740's as implied by PA land records—and that John received this land as a grant when still a young man between the ages of 16-21.⁵

If this is the case, it raises all kinds of questions. For one thing, it may mean that John was well in his nineties when he died. It may also mean that John, and not Ann Struck, was the party living with Christian when he received the 100 acre land grant in 1742.⁶ We do know that Christian was at least seventy-five years of age when he died, and John's brother, Abraham, lived into his eighties. Although John Riddelsperger being born as early as 1734, living into his nineties, and having a different mother than Ann Struck is not beyond the realm of possibility, a date for John's birth about 1743 is far more likely, making John an octogenarian at his death.

How, then, do we explain the mention of John's name in these survey reports? There is the possibility that Christian had an as yet unknown sibling named John (although no records for such a person exist), or that Christian acquired this land in son John's name, either fraudulently, or on behalf of his son who was not yet sixteen—if John was born in 1743, he would have been nine at the time the land was surveyed. While this is a possibility, in order to receive such a grant in 1752, Christian, who was well-known in the area, would have to personally appear before the council and lie about something which everyone would know to be false (very unlikely), or else Christian managed to secure a grant which no one else is recorded to have received—land for a son under sixteen years of age. This too is highly unlikely.

There is yet another possibility—John didn't own this land at all. The particular surveyor mentioned in these reports, Peter Faure, arrived in the Orangeburgh district about 1735 and was rebuked at least twelve times by the council during this time for various errors he made in surveying various parcels of land throughout the area. Mr. Faure not only insisted upon surveying land in oblong parcels, when the law called for square parcels, he was also cited and fined for being two years late in surveying a parcel of land which he himself owned! Add to this the fact that there is no mention of John Riddelsperger in any other known deed, tax bill, or record of sale for this land (when excellent records of such things were kept), there is every possibility that Mr. Faure made yet another error and

the S. westward part on land belonging to **John Riddlesperger** and part on vacant land and on ye other two sides on vacant land and hath such form and shape and marks as are represented in the above delineated platt thereof. Certified this 9th of May 1753. Per me Peter Faure D.Surveyor. Note: this spelling is used for Christian Riddlespurger also at times.

⁵ It is thought that to receive a land grant in SC during the period between 1750-1775, an individual must be over 21 years of age, unless a parent or a guardian petitioned the government for the grant in the minor child's name. According to the council journal, there are a number of instances in which males as young as fifteen were given one hundred acre land grants. Christian Retelsberger arrives in PA in 1733, probably unmarried, and since *if* John were over 21 years of age in 1752, he would had to have been born as early as 1731, it is much more likely that John received the land grant as a minor, and for which his father, Christian, made the petition in John's name. But no such grant petition exists.

⁶ A number of Pennsylvania state records list John's date of birth as in the 1750s.

didn't consult the plat map for the area when surveying this land.⁷ Had he done so, he would have immediately discovered that this land was never owned by Christian or "John" Riddlespurger. Therefore, given the above, it seems most likely that John Rhetelsperger (Riddle Sparger) never owned this land, and that he was indeed born in South Carolina after Christian and Ann received the 100 acre land grant in 1741/42. Mr. Faure was simply wrong either as to the name or the ownership of the parcel. He probably failed to consult the map and entered this information based upon faulty memory.

Unfortunately, we know little about John's wife Catherine,⁸ nor when and where they were married, whether in Pennsylvania or South Carolina. Some published sources suggest that Catherine's maiden name was Tamplett and that she was from a Huguenot family who arrived in South Carolina in the mid-eighteenth century who were known to be associated with the Riddlespurgers.⁹ LDS ancestral files, which have shown themselves to be notoriously inaccurate and incomplete in regards to our family history, list Catherine Tamplett as the wife of a "John Riddlespurger," of South Carolina. But the date as listed is quite vague—"before 1810." This particular John Riddlespurger is most likely the son of Christian Riddlespurger II, the grandson of Christian, and nephew of John, or else the date listed in the LDS file is incorrect (which is likely).

Barbara Knepper, a descendant of Wilhelm Knepper, has discovered that a "Catherine Redelberg" composed a hymn in German for a song book used in the Snow Hill Community, near Tomstown. This establishes a close tie to the German Baptists (more on William Knepper and this group in Chapter Four). The book is short, 16 pages, and is entitled *Ausland Geistlicher Lieder, Gestellt in der Gemeinde an Antitum* (Ephrate, 1782). Catherine Redelberg wrote the fourth hymn, and given the date of the volume, and the fact that Riddlesbergers were long associated with Snow Hill, likely indicates that this is John Riddelsperger's wife. In a letter from Peter Miller to Andrew and Barbara Snowberger in 1782, he writes,

I send you herewith 20 of your printed hymns, these you can divide among your four sisters which have part in them. There are yet thirty remaining here; these I will send with the brethren. As concerns your daughter the sister Anna, I remain for the present her debtor, until I shall have time to show further acts of duty. I request you to make known my remembrance to the sisters Fyock and Redelsberger. I also remember father Melcher's and both Horn's house.¹⁰

This confirms John's presence in the Snow Hill area and ties his wife to the Snow Hill community.

⁷ Correspondence with Harriet Imrey of July 18, 2002.

⁸ John's wife, Catherine is, to date, the only member of our immediate line I have not been able to identify. Several family researchers (from lines with whom our family intermarried) mistakenly identify her as a "Switzer," which was the maiden name of the wife of Lucian Riddlesbarger, who lived much later.

⁹ See Peter Tamplett's will, in: Caroline T. Moore, Abstracts of Wills of Charleston District South Carolina, 1783-1800, 303-304.

¹⁰ Found in the Pennsylvania German Society Newsletter, Volume II, "The Snow Hill Cloister" by Charles Treher, 37.

The obvious question which arises at this point is, “why did John leave South Carolina for Pennsylvania?” Perhaps we can read between the lines in his father’s will and wonder whether there was some kind of rift between father and son, motivating John to leave the area. Yet, John is listed first in Christian’s will (an indication that he is the oldest), and as we have noted in Chapter One, there is some evidence of on-going contact between Christian and John. We also know that John’s mother, Ann Struck, had died after 1759, because his father had remarried the much younger Elizabeth Uldrich. John’s half-brother Christian II may have been born and a new step-mother and siblings may have made family relations difficult. Such is mere speculation. John simply may have desired to make his own way in life and there were many opportunities to do so in Pennsylvania where his father lived previously.

Once he is in Pennsylvania, John Riddelsperger is relatively easy to track. He first surfaces in Lancaster County, PA, when on October 8 of 1766, a John **Redelsberger** made application to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for some 20 acres of land.¹¹ The next time John’s name is mentioned he is in Warwick Township in 1769, when he appears on the Lancaster County Personal property tax list. John’s name surfaces again on September 29, 1770, the occasion of the birth of his son, **John Riddlesberger II**.¹² The surname is spelled **Riddlesberger** in the church register, the most common spelling of the name while the family remained in Pennsylvania.

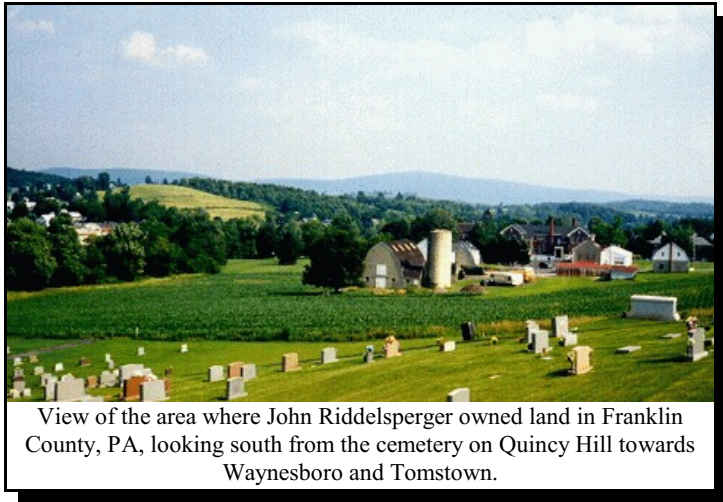


Several years later, John appears in the same location, this time on October 5, 1773, the occasion of the baptism of another son, **John Samuel** (who appears in most records as “Samuel”), in the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church of Manheim. John, his wife Catherine and son, John Samuel, appear in the baptismal register, Samuel being baptized by the noted pastor-politician Frederick Augustus Conrad Muhlenberg. According to his congressional biography, Muhlenberg was a Delegate and a Representative from Pennsylvania. He was born in Trappe, PA., January 1, 1750. His father was the noted Lutheran minister Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, whose journals remain in print unto this day.¹³ Frederick attended the University of Halle, where he studied theology. He was subsequently ordained by the *ministerium* of Pennsylvania as a minister of the Lutheran Church on October 25, 1770. He preached in Stouchsburg and Lebanon, PA., 1770-1774, and then in New York City 1774-1776. When the British

¹¹ McCrea, Pennsylvania Land Applications, Volume 1: East Side Applications, 1765-1769, record # es-1925. John’s land adjoined that of Jacob Nave, Henry Reyer, Daniel Clark and Matthias Albrecht.

¹² Birth Record from Lancaster County, PA, and supplied to me by Mr. Joe Mosher. John Riddlesberger II, is mentioned in Federal Census records for Botetourt County, Virginia, as “John Jr.”

¹³ Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, The Notebook of a Colonial Clergyman (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998).



View of the area where John Riddelsperger owned land in Franklin County, PA, looking south from the cemetery on Quincy Hill towards Waynesboro and Tomstown.

entered New York, Muhlenberg left and returned to Trappe, PA., and then later to New Hanover. He subsequently became a member of the Continental Congress in 1779-1780; then a member of the Pennsylvania State House of Representatives (1780-1783), and its speaker, (1780-1783; delegate to and president of the Pennsylvania State Constitutional Convention in 1787 called to ratify the Federal Constitution; elected to the First and to the two succeeding Congresses and elected as a Republican to the Fourth

Congress (March 4, 1789-March 3, 1797). He was Speaker of the House of Representatives for the First and Third Congresses and died in Lancaster, PA, June 4, 1801.

The fact that our family surname is spelled “**Ridelsperger**,” in the baptismal register is yet additional evidence linking John and Christian together as father and son.¹⁴ The Riddelspergers were sponsored by a Sebastian Wittmer, and his wife, Margareta. At the time, Manheim was an thriving farming community of mostly German speaking emigrants, only six miles to the northwest of the city of Lancaster, where his father Christian had been sponsor to a baptism at the First Reformed Church of Lancaster, some thirty-four years earlier. Ironically, we had driven by this same church during our 1998 Summer vacation, and noticed how beautiful it was, only to find out several weeks later that one of our forebears had actually witnessed a baptism here in the original log church some 250 years earlier!

By the following year, 1774, John Riddelsperger had moved to Antrim Township in Cumberland County where a number of the members of our immediate family resided for several generations.¹⁵ This particular portion of Cumberland County is now Franklin County which was formed in 1787. The portion of Antrim Township, where John located is now in Washington Township, which formed in 1779. The actual spot where John settled is near Tomstown, several miles northeast of the present day Borough of Waynesboro—named for famed Revolutionary War General Anthony Wayne—and near what is now the border between Washington Township and Quincy Township, which, in turn was formed from a portion of Washington Township in 1838.

¹⁴ Baptismal Record from Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, in Manheim, PA. John Samuel appears in all Federal Census records as “Samuel.” As we have seen, in the only two known instances where we have possess copies of signatures in John’s own hand, he spells his name “Reddelsperger,” or “Riddelsperger” (Botetourt County, VA, Marriage Bonds, dated March 5, 1800, and November 9, 1811, [certified copies].

¹⁵ Coleen Swantner, The Riddlespurgers: A Colonial Family of the South (Baltimore: Gateway Press, 1988), 33.

John Riddelsperger is listed in virtually all the records associated with his years near Waynesboro as “Jno Riddlesberger.” He purchased additional acreage adjoining the property of William Beddy [Beatty], John Potter, Samuel McCrea and Christian Flougher in 1779. The land was purchased from a twenty-year old Daniel Royer, then of Bedford County, PA., for an unspecified amount. The Royers were one of the more noted families of the Waynesboro area, and Daniel Royer’s father Samuel, was captain of the militia in which John Riddleberger served as a second lieutenant. Another deed, from “James Potter, Vice President” presumably of the Council of the Borough of Waynesboro, is dated Oct. 17, 1782. Again, there is no mention of acreage involved nor mention of the purchase price. A third deed has been found, a “warrant to Jacob Fyock, dated April 15, 1773, who sold to John Riddlesberger, Aug. 12, 1777. Situate in Antrim Twp., called ‘Fiascone’ [Fyerstone].”¹⁶ A sister “Fyock” is mentioned in the letter from Peter Miller cited earlier. Due to poor surveying and recording at the time, it is difficult to determine the exact location of these parcels, but they are thought to be relatively small sections of farmland, just to the north and east of Waynesboro, between what is now the villages of Quincy and Tomstown, in a low valley just over the hill from Waynesboro, and running parallel to what is known as the “Nunnery Road” near the Snow Hill Brethren Community.¹⁷

That John Riddlesberger did not own huge amounts of land is apparent from various Pennsylvania State land records in which his name appears. In Vol. XX, for the years 1778-79, John owned 60 acres, 2 horses and 2 cows.¹⁸ In the same volume, for the year 1782, John is listed as owning 100 acres, 2 horses and 6 cattle in the Washington Township area, then, in Cumberland County.¹⁹ This would seem to fit with the fact that Christian Riddlespurger’s will indicates that John was a blacksmith, not a farmer. This small farm, with but few horses and cows, would be typical of those who had a trade such as that of a blacksmith, and who owned just enough land to provide for the needs of their own families.

Unlike his loyalist younger brother Abraham, John Riddelsperger was clearly on the side of the patriots in the Revolutionary War. The historical record shows that John was a Second Lieutenant in the Pennsylvania Militia of Cumberland County, serving from 1777-1781 under Captain Samuel Royer in the Eighth Pennsylvania Battalion, Company 1, which was formed in Waynesboro. Samuel Royer (b. 1738-1823) is Daniel Royer’s father, hence John’s connection to Daniel, who sold John land, presumably when he moved to Bedford County. Jacob Foreman, whose niece Josephine would later marry John’s son, Jacob, also served in the same company as the First

¹⁶ Virginia Shannon Fendrick, American Revolutionary War Soldiers of Franklin County, Pennsylvania (Chambersburg, PA: Historical Works Committee of the Franklin County Daughters of the American Revolution, 1944), 226.

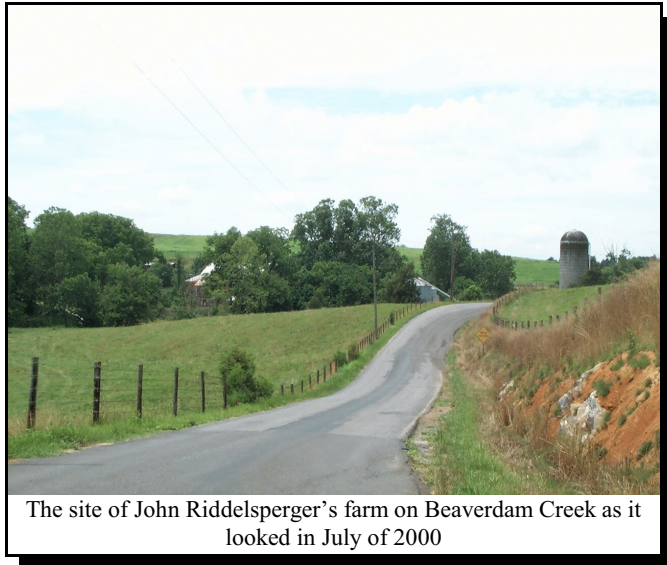
¹⁷ Information supplied by the Waynesboro Historical Society.

¹⁸ Pennsylvania Archives, Vol. XX, 246.

¹⁹ Pennsylvania Archives, Vol. XX, 668. Cf. Also, Pennsylvania Archives, 5th Series, Vol. 6, 89, 112, 524, 532, 541, 511.

Lieutenant.²⁰ Whether or not this unit saw combat in the Revolutionary War is presently unknown. Muster rolls were kept, but records of this particular militia unit were not, or have been lost. The *History of Franklin County* lists the roster of various units formed in Franklin County, including John's Eighth Battalion, but notes that records for this unit were lost or missing when the book was written in 1887. Royer family legend holds that Samuel Royer and his son Daniel, moved their entire herd of cattle from Waynesboro, across Southern Pennsylvania in the dead of

winter to provide Washington's army with food during their infamous stay at Valley Forge. The legend holds that Washington commended the Royers by inviting them to dine with him in his winter quarters.²¹ Samuel Royer was also instrumental in the formation of Franklin County, serving as a justice of the peace and county judge. Daniel was a member of the state legislature, and following his father, was also justice of the peace, verifying all the signatures on the petition to organize Waynesboro as a municipality.



The site of John Riddelsperger's farm on Beaverdam Creek as it looked in July of 2000

The Riddelspergers move to Virginia

John Riddelsperger, apparently, stayed in the Waynesboro area for thirteen years.²² In 1787, John and his family headed south down the Cumberland Valley into the lower Shenandoah traveling along the famed "Valley Road," or "Great Wagon Road,"²³ which took merchants, trappers and settlers heading southwest, just to the east of

²⁰ [History of Franklin County](#), p. 185. Cf., also, Fendrick, [American Revolutionary Soldiers of Franklin County, PA](#), 226.

²¹ [Royer Family History](#), "Antietam Ancestors" Web-page.

²² Though it is likely that John sold his land in PA upon moving to Virginia, the fact that two of his sons returned here seems to indicate that the family remained tied to the area.

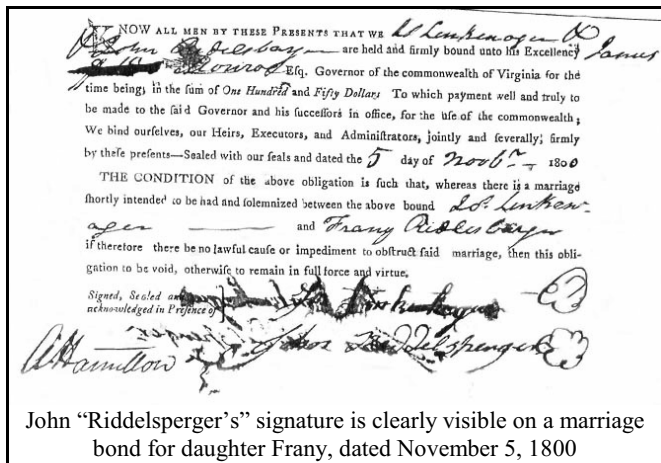
²³ Merle C. Rummel, "Brethren Migration," from the Brethren Rootsweb Project. According to Rummel, "the Great Wagon Road followed the Great Warrior's path down the valley of Virginia. From Waynesboro it came down the path, through Hagerstown MD to the Potomac. It crossed the Potomac at Watkins ferry, south of Hagerstown, and followed Opequon Creek past Fort Loudon and old Frederick Town (now Winchester VA). It crossed over to Strassburg on the north fork of the Shenandoah River. It stayed in the main valley, west of the Massanutten Mountain Ridge . . . west of the River, the Shenandoah. Towns grew up along it: Woodstock, New Market, and Harrisonburg VA. It went on, past Staunton and Lexington, on to the North River of the James. It went to the rare Natural Bridge, and James River City. It left the James going to Fincastle and on to Big Lick on the Stanton or Roanoke River (now Roanoke VA)." John settled near the spot where the road left the James River heading for Fincastle, on land his father Christian had once "marked."

the Appalachian Mountains through the low broad valley which runs in the shape of a huge crescent from Harrisburg, PA to Lexington, VA.

According to court documents found in Botetourt County, VA, John Riddelsperger initially purchased 400 acres of land from Abraham and Moses McConnell on June 12, 1787²⁴ and later on November 15, 1794 purchased an additional 160 acres from Conrad Wall.²⁵ According to the various deeds, John's land was situated, "on the waters of Beaverdam Creek, a branch of Looney's Creek, a branch of the James River."²⁶ This land is located on

what is now Beaverdam Creek Road, just over three miles to the west from the present town of Buchanan, near the junction of the Interstate 81 and State Route 11.

1787 is also the year that a number of German Baptist Brethren families left the Waynesboro area, also traveling down the Cumberland Gap into Botetourt County. It is not known if John Riddelsperger ever officially affiliated with the *Taufers*—his wife certainly was—and as we will see, two of John's sons, John Jr., and Jacob, both married daughters of



prominent Dunkard families (The Secrists and the Foremans), and were active in that church as was their mother. Both sons eventually moved back to the Waynesboro area which remained for some time a center of German Baptist missionary activity.

In the 1787 census for the Commonwealth of Virginia, John and son John Jr. both appear, with John Sr. listing two horses and two cows as taxable property. The census is not clear as to whether the male shown residing in the home between 16-21 years of age is John Jr., who is listed separately, or an as yet unknown son. Samuel would not turn sixteen until 1789. John owned 2 horses and 2 cows. As reported in the 1788-1827 Botetourt County taxable (titheable) lists, John appears each year, owning between 1-4 horses and no more than one male slave. The last year he is assessed Botetourt county taxes is 1827. It bears mention that the practice of slaveholding cost the Riddlebarger family dearly. According to a news item which appeared in the *Staunton Eagle* Newspaper, dated August 4, 1808, a certain "Mr. Riddlesberger—died in Botetourt County, killed with the stroke of a pitchfork by one

²⁴ Botetourt County, Deed Book 3, 466-468 (certified copy). The purchase price was 250 Pounds.

²⁵ Botetourt County, Deed Book 5, 227-228 (certified copy). The purchase price was 240 Pounds.

²⁶ See corrected deed in, Botetourt County, Deed Book 4, 305-307, dated September 13, 1791 (certified copy).

of his own Negroes.” The identity of this poor fellow cannot be determined from such scant information, but perhaps he was an as yet unknown fourth son of John.²⁷

There are still a number of mysteries surrounding John Riddelsperger which will give future researchers something to do. The first of these mysteries is the exact number of his children and the dates of their respective births. We know that John and Catherine had at least three sons, **John Riddlesberger II**, John **Samuel** and **Jacob**, our immediate ancestor. In addition, it is also possible that **David Riddlesbarger**, often listed in various family histories as the oldest son of Samuel Riddlesbarger and hence, a grandson of John, might also be a fourth and youngest son. The same holds true for **Joel Riddlesbarger**, a presumed son of Samuel. His date is variously listed as 1804 (Paul Riddleberger’s family history), or 1790, according to the 1850 census for Virginia. If Joel was born in 1790, then possibly he is a son of John and Catherine. The evidence whether David and Joel are children of John and Catherine remains inconclusive. I have placed them in the family tree as children of Samuel and Sarah.

The Riddlesbergers also had at least four daughters: **Catherine**, who married neighbor John **McConnell** on January 2, 1799; **Francis**, (Frany or “Fannie”) who married another neighbor, Joseph **Linkenhoker**, the next year, on November 05, 1800; **Nancy** (about whom nothing is known); and **Elizabeth**, who married Jacob **Wyand** on November 9, 1811.²⁸ An extensive Linkenhoker family tree documents the descendants of Francis and Joseph, although nothing is known of the fate of John and Catherine’s other daughters.

Court records can also give us important clues about our ancestor’s life and times. According to Botetourt County court records, on August 13, 1799, John Riddlesberger was fined for not appearing as a juryman.²⁹ Like his fifth great-grandson—yours truly—John Riddelsperger was not particularly fond of jury duty. I took great pleasure in the discovery of this fact, since my own propensity for ducking jury duty is becoming a family legend. I just hope that I am not fined! In addition, we see the family’s willingness to help others in difficult circumstances. On June 8, 1790, John Newgent, son of Richard Newgent who died suddenly, was bound to John Riddelsperger by the court.³⁰ It is not known how long he remained with the family, although he is not listed in the census for 1800.

In addition to court records, there are a number of other extant documents which shed light on John’s years in Virginia. According to a published history of the Flory family, John sued David Flora and his business partner Samuel Noftzinger for fifteen pounds, eight shillings, on December 9, 1800, for a debt they owed him. A local newspaper, *The Herald of the Valley*, which was published from 1820-1823, posted the names of those who had mail waiting to be picked up from the Fincastle post office. John’s name appears in these notices a number of times (July 9,

²⁷ The Staunton Eagle, Library of Virginia Microfilm, 324, p.3, c. 1. Dated Thursday, August 4, 1808. This is probably not a son of John Riddlesberger II or Jacob as their families are well documented.

²⁸ Botetourt County, Marriage Bonds (certified copies).

²⁹ See, Summers, Annals of Southwest Virginia 1769-1800, 482, 440.

³⁰ Summers, Annals of Southwest Virginia 1769-1800, 440.

1821, January 8, 1822), as do sons John (April 8, 1822) and Samuel (April 9, 1821), as well as David (April 9, 1821) and Jessee Riddlesbarger, a son of Samuel (July 9, 1821).³¹ This indicates that the Riddlesbarger's P.O. Box was located in Fincastle, not Buchanan nor Springwood, both of which were closer to the Riddlesbarger home.

There is also an interesting recollection found in a published history of the Harshbarger Family of a certain "Granny Riddlesbarger," (who lived in Botetourt) who was summoned to help one of the ailing Harshbarger relatives some time in the early 1800's. According to one of the Harshbarger relatives, "while I was still nursing, mother took the white swelling in her hip and I had to be weaned. When it came to a head so that it had to be lanced, father sent for old Granny Riddlesbarger, a doctor woman, who came and lanced it." The Harshbargers were known to have lived on Mill Creek, a few miles from our family.³² I'm sure "Granny Riddlesbarger" was a nice old lady, but the thought of such primitive medical procedures makes me cringe.

The other mystery surrounding John Riddelsberger has to do with the date of his death and the location of his burial. He appears in the Federal Census for Botetourt Counties in 1810 and 1820. It is clear from these records that his wife Catherine is still living. But John continued to pay county taxes until 1827, so it is presumed that John and Catherine both had died before 1830 census when neither are mentioned, probably in 1828, the first year John does not pay taxes. They are buried somewhere in Botetourt County in any one of a number of small and long forgotten family cemeteries that can be found in the hill country between Buchanan and Fincastle. Unfortunately,

many of the tombstones in this region were made of a beautiful red sandstone, which have not withstood the years nor the weather. We may never know for sure when they died or where they are buried, one of the truly great frustrations of genealogical research. Even more unfortunate is the fact that after John and Catherine's death, it appears that John Riddelsberger II and Jacob, now residing in Franklin County, eventually lost contact with the descendants of their brother Samuel, the most prolific of the sons of John Riddelsperger. Perhaps it was our line's deep ties to the Brethren and their avowed rejection of the practice of slavery, which was the cause of our line



The Linkenhoker family cemetery adjacent to the site of the Riddlesbarger farm, where Francis and Joseph Linkenhoker lie buried.

³¹ The *Herald of the Valley* was a short-lived publication. In addition to publishing rather sparse information about local events, the Herald concentrated on major news events gleaned from other newspapers, as well as popular literary pieces. During the publication run from 1820-1823, there was extensive coverage of Napoleon's death, a brief death notice for Daniel Boone, and two articles indicating that a "sea serpent" had been seen off the east coast of the United States. Ads for sales of Negroes were also prominent.

³² William L. Anderson, [History of the Harshbargers](#), published about 1900, and available on-line.

losing contact with our Virginia cousins. It may simply have been a matter of distance in an age lacking mass communication. Whatever the reason, it will undoubtedly remain a mystery.

Future Research:

- * Discover the identity of John's wife, Catherine
- * Discover the date and location of John's birth
- * Discover the date of their death and the location of John and Catherine's burial
- * Determine exactly, how many sons were born to John and Catherine. Are David and Joel sons of John and Catherine? Or, are they children of Samuel—making them John's grandchildren?

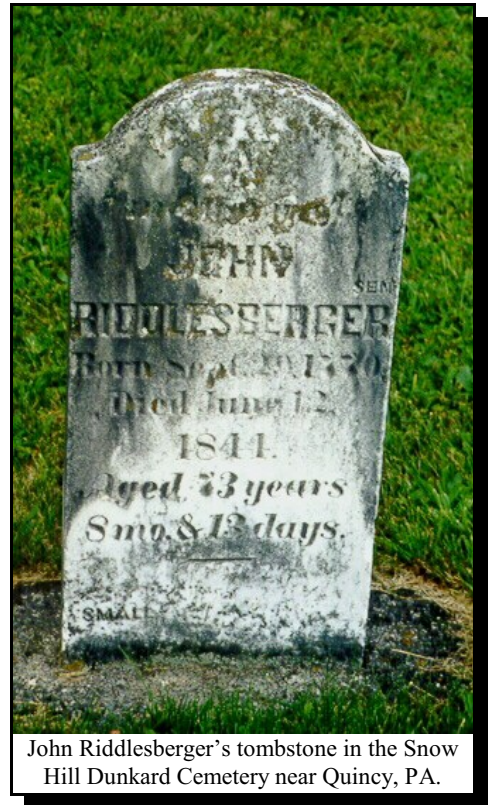
Chapter Three

Long-Lost Cousins:

The Riddlesbergers of Franklin County, Pennsylvania

John and Catherine Riddelsperger’s oldest son was **John Riddelsberger II**, although he is occasionally listed in various census and legal records as John “Junior.” Born on September 29, 1770 in Manheim, Pennsylvania, the John Riddelsberger II family is the best documented of the three known sons of John and Catherine Riddelsperger, and sadly, the only one from whom we have both dates of death and place of burial.

Reliable family tradition recounts that John Riddelsberger II “returned to PA after having resided a number of years in Botetourt County.”³³ He married wife, **Elizabeth Secrist** (born July 26, 1771), who was from a prominent German Baptist family in Franklin County, while, apparently, he still resided in Botetourt.³⁴ Records indicate that all five of their children were born in Virginia. Like his own father, “John was an iron worker, wagon-maker and farmer; a blacksmith by trade both in Virginia and in PA,” and for much of his life “resided on a small farm about two miles north of Waynesboro, PA, which he purchased from his father-in-law, Solomon Secrist, along the north branch of Antietam Creek.”³⁵ The circumstances of John’s return to Franklin County shortly after the 1820 Federal Census—in which John and his family are still residing in Botetourt County next-door to younger brother Samuel—are unknown to us, though John’s younger brother Jacob had already relocated to Franklin County



John Riddelsberger’s tombstone in the Snow Hill Dunkard Cemetery near Quincy, PA.

³³ Henry Riddelsberger’s “Notes,” 11.

³⁴ No marriage records have been found for John and Elizabeth in either Botetourt or Franklin Counties.

³⁵ Henry Riddelsberger’s “Notes,” 11.

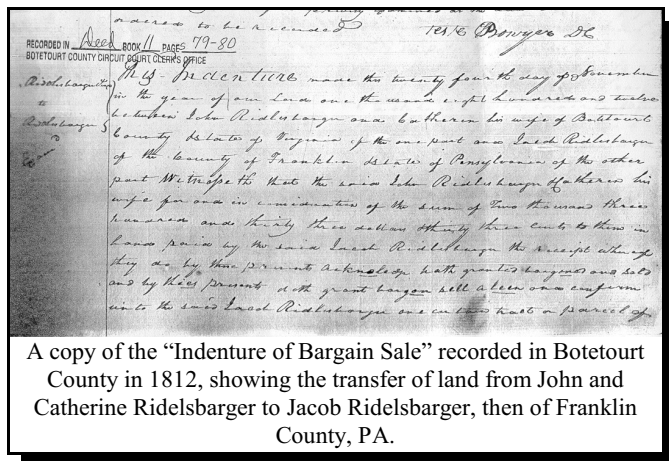
by 1812, when his parents sold him 141 acres of their Virginia land.³⁶ Like his older brother, John, Jacob Riddlesberger also married into a prominent German Baptist family, the **FOREMANS** [FUHRMAN], who, as we will see, provided the Riddlesberger family with three wives and a husband, Jonathan Foreman.

Given their respective spouses and the pattern of family migrations, the evidence seems to show that both John and Jacob, their wives and families were committed to the German Baptist Church, a theme to which we will turn in the next chapter. It is very likely that the Riddlesbergers of Pennsylvania (the descendants of John Riddlesberger II), and our line of Riddlebergers (who come through the line of Jacob) eventually lost contact with the more numerous descendants of Samuel Riddlesberger I, after Jacob and John moved back to Franklin County, to the same area where their father owned land before moving south to Virginia.

We know from various sources that the German Baptists frequently moved from the Botetourt area to Waynesboro/Antietam and back again.³⁷ We can but wonder if there were religious differences between the three brothers, John and Jacob, and their brother Samuel—who married an English woman in a Presbyterian ceremony—which prompted the separation, which became final at some point following their father’s death about

1828. Sadly, there was no knowledge of the Virginia connection in our family memory.

Perhaps it was the question of slavery which led to a parting of the ways in the family, although the Riddelspergers owned but one slave until 1805, and none are shown in the subsequent tax records.³⁸ The Brethren were militantly opposed to the holding of slaves, and forbade church members from owning them.³⁹ But the reason that John Riddlesberger II moved back to Franklin County may be as simple as the fact that Elizabeth’s father, Solomon Secríst, sold them his



land. The Secrísts were well-established in the Waynesboro area. According to the will of Solomon Secrísts,

³⁶ Botetourt County, Deed Book 11, 79-80 (certified copy). John and Catherine “Ridelsbarger,” sold 141 acres of their land to Jacob Ridelsbarger, then of Franklin County, on November 24, 1812 for the amount of \$2,333.00. A “Deed of Bargain Sale” probably meant “seller financed” in lieu of a bank-held mortgage. Jacob and his wife Josephine in turn sold this land in 1822.

³⁷ Donald F. Durnbaugh, The Brethren Encyclopedia (Ambler, PA: Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc., 1980), II.827-831.

³⁸ Personal tax lists from Botetourt County, 1788-1830.

³⁹ Donald F. Durnbaugh, ed., The Church of the Brethren Past and Present (Elgin: The Brethren Press, n.d.), 21.

probated December 3, 1834, John and Elizabeth received \$2200.00, when her father died and his estate was divided.⁴⁰

John and Elizabeth Riddleberger had at least five children, one son and four daughters. Their oldest daughter, **Elizabeth**, was born on July 8, 1805 in Botetourt County, VA. She married Jonathan **FOREMAN**, the son of Daniel Foreman and Sulimet (Sally) Horn, daughter of John Horn, who was an important figure in the early development of the German Baptist Church. Elizabeth died on May 29, 1839, near the modern village of Quincy, in Franklin County. In fact, Jonathan Foreman's younger sister, Josephine, would later marry John Riddlesberger II's younger brother, Jacob!

Jonathan and Elizabeth Foreman had six known children: **Daniel**, born October 11, 1832, died on March 9, 1882, and married Martha **Gsell**; **Samuel**, born on July 8, 1829, and died June 10, 1899, and who married Elizabeth **Friedly**, and then after her death, married Mary Ann **Stamey**; **Mary** (Polly), who was born on September 29, 1827, and died on September 24, 1897. She married Michael **Pfoutz**; **Catherine**, who married Abraham **Stamey** (the brother or uncle of Mary Ann Stamey, mentioned above); **Sarah**, who married John **Huber**; and **Elizabeth**, who was born on April 1, 1835, died on October 9, 1882, and married Jacob **Gsell**, brother of Martha Gsell. The various families into which the children of Jonathan Foreman and Elizabeth Riddlesberger married were prominent Franklin County families, and most have Brethren connections.

The Riddlesberger's second daughter was **Susanna**, born about 1796, near Fincastle. She married Abraham **Fox**, and died on June 1, 1866, in Franklin County. It is not known if she had any children. Their third daughter, **Nancy**, was born on December 21, 1798, also near Fincastle. She died on February 8, 1835, in Franklin County at the young age of thirty-seven. Nancy Riddlesberger married another Franklin County boy with Brethren connections, Jonathan **MENTZER**, on November 7, 1815 in Franklin County. Together they had a number of children: **Polly**, who was born about 1827, and married John **Ankerbrandt**; **David**, who was born July 23, 1830, married Susanna **Baer**, before moving to nearby Greencastle, where he died on February 15, 1908; **John**, who was born about 1832, married Leah **Gipe**, and died September 5, 1900; **Jacob**, who was born on August 27, 1818, in Blue Rock, Quincy Township, married Susan **Bonebrake** and died on June 1, 1895; **Joseph**, born March 4, 1823, married Eve **Monn** and died in September of 1862, perhaps a victim of the diphtheria outbreak which so badly decimated Franklin County that fall; **Elizabeth**, who was born on September 28, 1823, married Henry **Middour**, and died on June 5, 1905; and **Susannah**, who was born about 1833, and married Christopher **Pentz**.

John and Elizabeth Riddlesberger's fourth child was a son, **the Rev. John Riddlesberger III**, who, in many regards, followed in his father's footsteps. John was born on March 4, 1813, and died on November 23, 1887. He is buried near his parents, his wife, Elizabeth **HARTMAN**, and eight of their children, five of whom died tragically

⁴⁰ The will appears on the Franklin County, PA genweb page, and was posted by Michael Caldwell.

over a two-week period during the 1862 diphtheria epidemic.⁴¹ According to reliable family tradition, John Riddlesberger III, “bought the farm (owned by his father) . . . and continued to reside there farming and preaching.”⁴² He and wife **Elizabeth Hartman**, were members of the Seventh-Day Baptist Church—the famous “Snow Hill” off-shoot of the German Baptist Church—which flourished in the area during the early 1800’s, having been founded by Conrad Biessel and then headed by the eccentric Brethren elder, George Martin.⁴³ John Riddlesberger III was elected to preach here in 1845, and according to his grandson, Henry Riddlesberger, John “served this church until he died at 74 years in 1887.”⁴⁴ Of the ten children born to the family, only two, Lydia and Isaac, survived to adulthood.

John Riddlesberger III is also mentioned in the *History of Franklin County*, as the fourth preacher to serve at Snow Hill. The area around Snow Hill is described as a “thickly settled neighborhood,” and the church buildings were built on land originally owned by the Snowberger family, one of the first families to settle in the area.⁴⁵ *The Brethren Encyclopedia* mentions that John was an elder—the official title for a lay-preacher—in the Waynesboro Church, with an obituary appearing in the denominational publication of the Brethren, “The Gospel Messenger” in 1887.⁴⁶



The Rev. John Riddlesberger III, lies buried in the Snow Hill Cemetery near his wife, Elizabeth, his parents, and eight of his ten children. The epitaph on his gravestone simply reads: “Minister of the gospel.”

⁴¹ “Snow Hill,” or the “Nunnery Graveyard,” cemetery records provided by the Waynesboro Historical Society. See also, *Brethren Roots: Quarterly Journal Published by the Fellowship of Brethren Genealogists*, Vol. 30, Spring 1998, Number 1, 15-17.

⁴² Henry Riddlesberger’s “Notes,” 11.

⁴³ The eccentric “Snow Hill” community near Waynesboro, was founded by a Sabbatarian faction among the Brethren, first led by Conrad Biessel, and then by George Adam Martin. “Snow Hill” was founded in the 1760’s on land donated by the Snowberger family. It was called “The Nunnery” by outsiders because of the emphasis upon communal living and celibacy. Given the fact that John Riddlesberger III fathered at least ten children, it is fairly certain that this was one doctrine of the Snow Hill community that he did not embrace! Cf., Durnbaugh, *The Brethren Encyclopedia*, III.1194-1195.

⁴⁴ Henry Riddlesberger’s “Notes,” 11.

⁴⁵ I. H. McAuley, *History of Franklin County, Pennsylvania: A Historical Sketch of Franklin County, PA* (Harrisburg: Patriot Publishing, 1878), 614.

⁴⁶ Durnbaugh, *The Brethren Encyclopedia*, III. 1748.

John and Elizabeth Riddlesberger III's surviving children were: **Lydia Ann Riddlesberger**, was born on April 3, 1838, in Quincy Township, married William **Geesman**, and died in 1893; and **Isaac Riddlesberger**, who was born April 5, 1844, and married Joanna **Benedict**, dying on August 15, 1917. Isaac's son, was **Henry Riddlesberger**, the first and foremost Riddlesberger family historian, and who was, as mentioned previously, in contact with my own grandfather, Glenn, in the 1930's. Henry was also in touch with a number of other family members from the Virginia and Ohio lines. Were it not for Henry Riddlesberger's research, much of our family history would remain uncovered and lost to subsequent generations. The Riddlesbergers of Waynesboro Pennsylvania are descendants of this line.

It is certainly fitting and proper to list John and Elizabeth's non-surviving children as well, lest their memory be lost to us: **Jacob**, born January 21, 1840, in Quincy Township, and died on January 16, 1850; **John Riddlesberger IV**, born on December 19, 1841, and died on July 12, 1845; **Abraham**, born June 12, 1846, and died October 13, 1848; **Daniel**, born March 1, 1848, and died in the diphtheria epidemic on September 16, 1862; **Joseph** (twin brother of Daniel), born March 1, 1848, and died five days before his brother on October 8, 1862; **Samuel**, was born on January 30, 1853, and was probably the first of John and Elizabeth's children to die in the epidemic on September 15, 1862; **Elizabeth**, born January 30, 1855, and died on September 18, 1862; and **David**, born on October 12, 1850, and died on September 19, 1862. All eight of the Riddlesberger children are buried next to each other in the "Snow Hill" cemetery in Quincy. Their headstones, lined up in a row, make a poignant sight and certainly stirs thoughts of how the parents endured such a horrible family tragedy. Surely, their faith was sorely tested.



The "Snow Hill" Dunkard Cemetery near Quincy, PA. John Riddlesberger, his wife Elizabeth, son John and many of their children lie buried here.

John and Elizabeth Riddlesberger II's fifth child was **Francis**, who was born about 1814, and then married her brother-in-law, Jonathan **MENTZER**, after the death of his wife and her older sister, Nancy, in 1835. She bore Jonathan two more children, Nancy and Sarah Ann (January 29, 1838), who married two brothers, Alexander and Cyrus **KNEPPER**, who were also cousins.

John Riddlesberger II's will is a matter of public record:

"John Riddlesberger of Washington Twp. Unto my beloved wife Elizabeth my real and personal estate. At her decrease, the land which I now possess, and my personal property to my son John Riddlesberger or his heirs. My son John Riddlesberger has built a house on my land in which he now resides. I appoint my son

John Riddlesberger Executor. Signed 20 July 1838. Witnesses John Price, John Flanagan. Proved 12 August 1844.⁴⁷

John Riddlesberger II died on June 12, 1844, and is buried in the “Snow Hill” cemetery, near his wife Elizabeth, who died May 31, 1857, their son Rev. John Riddlesberger III, his wife Elizabeth and at least eight of their grandchildren.

***John “Samuel” Riddlesberger I—Patriarch of the Virginia Riddlebargers and Riddlebergers
and the Ohio Riddlebargers***

John **Samuel Riddlesberger I**, the second son of John and Catherine Riddelsperger, was born in 1773, when the family was living in Manheim, Lancaster County, PA.⁴⁸ Although his given name is “John Samuel,” he is listed in all subsequent records and documents simply as “Samuel,” which is how I identify him. His surname is most often spelled “Riddlesbarger.” Unfortunately, there are still many gaps and several discrepancies in the evidence documenting his life and that of some of his children.⁴⁹ The exact date of his death, and the location of burial for him and his wife Sarah **COMPTON**, is presently unknown.

According to the Botetourt County Personal Property tax lists for the 1790-1830 period, Samuel Riddelsbarger owned several horses and other farm animals. He married Sarah Compton on September 1, 1794, in a ceremony performed by a Presbyterian minister, Rev. Edward Crawford.⁵⁰ Samuel is listed in the 1810 Federal Census for Botetourt County as having six sons and one daughter, and was living next door to his brother, John Riddlesberger II, at the time the census was taken. These six sons are presumed to be William Jacob, Samuel II, Jesse, James, Joel and Madison. Samuel’s daughter is Sarah. David is also presumed to be a son of Samuel, but the evidence for this is purely circumstantial. There are also a number of Riddlebarger males who appear in various Botetourt County tax records in the 1820's and whose relationship to Samuel Riddlesbarger is still unknown. These include **Robert, Isaac, Joseph, and Elias**. Since the Riddlebargers used their middle names, these men may be other known family members.

That same year (1810), a Samuel Riddlesbarger also appears in the Federal Census in Wythe County, Virginia, 75 miles or so to the southwest of Botetourt County. This raises the question as to whether or not there are two “Samuel Riddlebargers.” Given the fact that a number of our kin were known to be gunsmiths and stage-

⁴⁷ Franklin County, PA, Willbook E, 67.

⁴⁸ Baptismal records from Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Manheim, PA.

⁴⁹ For example, Henry Riddlesberger’s “Notes,” and the Riddleberger family genealogy, prepared by Mr. Paul Riddleberger of Islamorande, FL, do at times contain conflicting data.

⁵⁰ Botetourt County VA., Marriage Bond, September 1, 1794 [certified copy].

drivers, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that the Riddlesbargers traveled the Shenandoah-Cumberland valleys between Franklin County, PA., in the North and Wythe County to the South on a regular basis. One of Samuel's sons, Jesse, was born in Maryland, but married a woman in Wythe County, indicating that our family very likely traveled the length of the "great valley."

Samuel Riddlesbarger appears again in the 1830 census in Wythe County as well as appearing in the same census for Botetourt County, where he is described as being between 50-60 years of age, with a wife (Sarah) and two females between 15-20 years of age living in the home.



David Riddlesbarger's headstone in the Reitenour Cemetery near Deerfield, Indiana

The oldest of Samuel and Sarah's children is presumed to be **David Riddlesbarger**, who was born in 1794—raising the possibility that his parents were married with a shotgun present and a baby on the way.⁵¹ It is also possible that David is the youngest son of John and Catherine. His departure from Botetourt County a year or so after John's death points in this direction. We are not sure of the exact relationship. It is known, however, that David served in the Virginia militia during the War of 1812,⁵² and that he married **Anna Linkenhoker**, the daughter of one of the Riddlesbarger's next-door neighbors, on December 17, 1816.⁵³ An unconfirmed family tradition holds that Jesse Riddlesbarger left Virginia together with one of his

brothers—possibly David, who left Virginia about this time as did Jesse—and that they headed west through Kentucky, only to eventually separate and go their own way, David to Ohio and then Indiana, and Jesse to Missouri.⁵⁴ Another brother, James, also left Virginia about this time and settled in Green County, KY. Perhaps it was James, not David, who traveled west with Jesse.

⁵¹ David died on January 29, 1876, at the age of 81. This means he was born some time before January 29, 1795, indicating that if his mother was Sarah, who married his father, Samuel on September 1, 1794, she was pregnant with David when she and Samuel married. It is interesting to note that Samuel's marriage bond was not posted by his father, John, but by himself and his older brother, John Riddlesberger II (John Jr. on the bond). Given the importance of children to the well-being of a family during this period of history, it was not uncommon for betrothed couples to live together as man and wife to see if children could be produced. The couple was not officially married until pregnancy occurred.

⁵² Ebenezer Tucker, History of Randolph County, Indiana, reprint ed., (Winchester: Randolph County Genealogy Society, n.d.), 240. David is listed under the heading, "soldiers and wives who had pensions." The text simply reads, "David Riddlebarger, Virginia Militia, 1812, dead." According to records found in the National Archives, David was a private in the 4th Regiment of Boyd's Virginia Militia from April 18 through August 2, 1814, and the 5th Regiment of McDowell's group—(War of 1812 Muster Rolls). According to the book, A Guide to Virginia Military Units in the War of 1812, by Stuart Butler (Athens, GA: Iberian Publishing Company, 198), 54-55, James McDowell's group was known as the "Flying Camp," and saw action in the Maryland campaign when the British burned the White House. David is also listed in Patrick Wardell's book, War of 1812, Bounty Land and Pension Applicants, as a pensioner.

⁵³ Botetourt County, VA., Marriage Bond, December 17, 1816, [certified copy]. David posted the bond himself, and signed it in his own hand.

⁵⁴ Henry Riddlesberger's "Notes," 12, based on Glenn Riddlebarger's interview of Jesse Riddlesbarger's grandchildren in 1938. This brother may be James, and not David.

In any case, David Riddlebarger appears in the Botetourt County Census for 1820. His name also appears in the October 9, 1820 edition of the *Herald of the Valley* newspaper (Vol 1. No. xiv), in a list for mail which had been received by the Fincastle Post Office, but not yet picked up by the recipient. He pays taxes in Botetourt County from 1816-1829. He next surfaces in Dayton township, Montgomery County, Ohio, in the 1830 Federal Census, though shortly thereafter, the family moved across the state line to Deerfield, Indiana, in Randolph County. The census indicates that David was between thirty and forty, with three sons, ten and under, and one daughter under five years of age. His youngest son was named **Jesse** (b. 1825 in Botetourt), possibly confirming a close relationship to his younger brother or nephew of the same name. According to Tucker's *History of Randolph County*, Jesse Riddlebarger was a . . .

farmer and stock-raiser, P. O. Box Deerfield, is a native of Botetourt County, VA and was born on October 2, 1825. He is a son of David and Ann Riddlebarger, who removed with their family to near Dayton, Ohio, in 1829, and to this county in 1830. Mr. Riddlebarger was raised on a farm, and attended school in a log cabin with a greased paper window, clapboard roof, puncheon floor, and split slab seats. In those early days they went to Richmond to mill, a distance of over thirty miles. Mr. Riddlebarger has many times crushed a hominy block. He was married September 28, 1852 to Miss Lucinda Barnhart . . . They have nine children, eight living—Josephine, Ella, Thomas, Claud, Mark, Oscar and Hattie. Mr. Riddlebarger owns 240 acres, and resides on section 18 (this is in Ward Twp.).⁵⁵

Other known sons are **David** (b. 1822) and **Lewis** (b. 1820). Two daughters appear in state marriage records for Randolph County. **Ann Riddlebarger** (b. 1821) married William **LEWIS** in November of 1850, **Eleanor Riddlebarger** (b. 1824) married John **REITENOUR** in January of 1849, and Harriet, who as born in 1828.⁵⁶ David Riddlebarger died on January 29, 1876, at age 81, and is buried in Ritenour's [Reitener] Cemetery, to the west of Deerfield.⁵⁷ Probate records from May 2, 1876, indicate that his estate was valued at \$4,488.33 at the time of his death.⁵⁸ The following news piece, appeared in the *Special Telegram to the Inter-Ocean*, Feb., 3 1876 was entitled, "A Miser and His Gold," and gives some of the circumstances of David's death.

Death of David Riddlebarger, of Ridgeville, Ind.

Ridgeville, Ind., Feb 3. — An old resident, David Riddlebarger, who has lived in this place almost a recluse for thirty-seven years near this place, was found almost frozen to death this morning. He never spoke, but died shortly afterward. The old man was thought to have quite a large amount of money secreted about the house, barn and search is being made. Thus far \$3,000 in gold and old Ohio state currency have been

⁵⁵ Tucker, History of Randolph County, Indiana, 422.

⁵⁶ Indiana State Library, searchable data base, "Indiana Marriages Through 1850." See also, Tucker, History of Randolph County, Indiana, 422.

⁵⁷ Tucker, History of Randolph County, Indiana, 129.

⁵⁸ Tucker, History of Randolph County, Indiana, 78.

found, and the search is still going on. For many years the old man would receive nothing but gold payments for anything due him. He lived entirely alone.

Another of Samuel and Sarah's sons is believed to be **William Jacob Riddlebarger**, who, according to census records was born in Virginia in 1795 and died in February 1867, in Scioto County, Ohio. William Jacob (so named in Henry Riddlesberger's notes), who is listed simply as "Jacob," in all known official records, is the patriarch of what is possibly the largest group of Riddlebargers—those who hail from Scioto County, Ohio. The exact relationship between William Jacob and Samuel Riddlesberger I has not yet been proven. In light of the fact that all of the sons of John Riddlesberger II and his youngest brother Jacob are all believed to be accounted for, and given the fact that the family tradition which makes this connection is supported by what slight evidence we do have, a number of family researchers have concluded that William Jacob is indeed a son of Samuel Riddlesberger I. From census records, we know that Samuel had at least six sons, and we know that Jacob was born in Virginia in 1795. This would mean that he is a year younger than David, who is his brother or uncle. Therefore, the case for Jacob being the son of Samuel Riddlesberger I is, at this point, strictly circumstantial. Additional research so as to further establish this relationship to a greater certitude is a high priority for future Riddlebarger family historians.

Family tradition holds that William Jacob resided at Irongate, Virginia, about 35 miles up what is now highway 220 near Clifton Forge, that he married there, and had several children. The same tradition holds that he and his wife separated, and he then moved to Maryland, where he met and married his second wife, **Mary Penner**.⁵⁹ We do know Jacob was an iron-worker/blacksmith like his grandfather, John Riddelsperger. According to J. W. McKnight, the author of *The Pioneer History of Northwestern Pennsylvania* (1905), Jacob Riddleberger arrived in Brookville in Jefferson County, PA in 1822-23, the first blacksmith to do so.⁶⁰ But Jacob and his second wife, apparently, continued their trek west, moving next to Armstrong County, PA, and then to nearby Butler County (about 100 miles from Pittsburgh), where they settled for a time.⁶¹ The same family tradition holds that Jacob subsequently made his way down the Ohio River by boat to Hanging Rock, Ohio about 1839-40. He later moved to South Webster, Ohio, where he established a farm.⁶²

⁵⁹ Henry Riddlesberger's "Notes," 10b. Henry was given this information by Jacob's great-grandson, Ora A. Riddlebarger. It is certainly possible that these children, if sons, may explain the appearance of Riddlesbargers in Clifton Forge in Allegheny County by the early 1820's.

⁶⁰ J. W. McKnight, *The Pioneer History of Northwestern Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1905), chapter XXXI.

⁶¹ Correspondence with Mr. Joe Mosher dated October 12, 1997. Henry Riddlesberger's notes place Jacob in "Beaver or Bradford" county, but this is in error. A Jacob "Riddleberger" appears in the 1840 Federal Census in Armstrong County, PA.

⁶² Henry Riddlesberger's "Notes," 10.

Jacob and Mary Penner's known children are **George Washington Riddlebarger**, who was born in Butler County PA, married Isabella **Richardson** on March 17, 1852, in Scioto County, Ohio; **William Alexander Riddlebarger**, born on October 18, 1836, in Armstrong County, PA, and married Elvira **Partridge** on December 22, 1857.⁶³ He died in 1923 in Scioto County, Ohio; **Andrew Jackson Riddlebarger**, born on July 3, 1841 in Armstrong County, PA., and married Margaret **Borden** on July 6, 1862, in Scioto County and died on April 8, 1914; **David R. Riddlebarger**, was born on February 28, 1838 in Butler County, PA., and died on July 6, 1903, in Scioto County. He married Elizabeth **Walk** on December 6, 1865. Another son, **John M.**, was born on March 11, 1832 in Butler County, PA, but died on June 12, 1850, at the young age of eighteen.

The descendants of Jacob are quite numerous. There are many cousins from this line still residing throughout the Southern Ohio area. They hold an annual Riddlebarger family reunion, and have done so for over eighty years. According to Henry Riddlebarger's "Notes," early-on, the reunion included members of the Virginia Riddlebargers as well, though for the last thirty years or so, it has been limited to members of the Ohio clan, the two family lines drifting apart. This fact also seems to support an historical connection between Jacob and Samuel, even if the exact nature of this connection has been lost through the generations.

Another son of Samuel and Sarah Riddlebarger I is **Samuel Riddlebarger II**. At this point there is a great discrepancy among family researchers about the identity of Samuel II's children and reliable sources are sorely lacking. Henry Riddlebarger's otherwise reliable "Notes," and Paul Riddlebarger's family history reach markedly conflicting conclusions from the same data, and clearly much more research needs to be done, especially with this line. Paul Riddlebarger lists seven children from Samuel Riddlebarger II and his first wife, Elizabeth **HART**, while Henry Riddlebarger lists many more children by two different spouses.⁶⁴

What is known for sure is that according to the 1850 Federal Census, Samuel (50 yrs.) and his second wife Nancy (29 yrs.), were living in Botetourt County along with several of Samuel's adult children from his previous marriage to Elizabeth Hart. All were residing on the family farm. Mentioned in the census are: **James**, 24, a mill worker; **Damaris**, 20, **Samuel** 19, a farmer; **Diuguid**, 16, a farmer, **Frederick**, 13, **Elizabeth**, 10; and **John** [under one year].⁶⁵ Virginia is listed as place of birth for all. In the 1860 Census for Botetourt County, Samuel is listed as a farmer with real property worth about \$4000.00 and only Frederick (21) and Fannie (18) still reside in the home.⁶⁶

⁶³ A William "Ridelsberger" served in the 4th Ohio Infantry during the Civil War.

⁶⁴ Paul Riddlebarger's sources are the 1850 census and various VA birth records. Henry Riddlebarger's "Notes" are full of chronological problems in this line and it appears to me that if Henry was not sure how a particular person fit in the family, he simply assigned them to Samuel Riddlebarger II. Though much more research remains to be done on this line, it appears to me that Paul Riddlebarger's work is more reliable in regards to this line.

⁶⁵ Botetourt County, VA: Western District, No. 8, reel # m432-936, page 101a

⁶⁶ It is not known why the ages of Frederick and Elizabeth (presumably the same young lady as "Fannie") do not correspond.

But in the census for 1870, Samuel was now living in Fincastle Twp, with a Daggers Springs, P.O. Box. He is listed as a farmer with real property of \$1000.00, and the following children are mentioned (**Addison** 21, a farmer), **Lucian** (19, a farmer), **Evans** (17, a farmer) and **Rebecca** (15, working at home).

According to deeds found by Mr. Arthur Seder in the Botetourt County Courthouse, in 1841 Samuel purchased 241 acres “on both sides of Patterson's Creek,” a branch of Craig's Creek, a branch of the James River. Craig's Creek joins the James at the town of Eagle Rock, and Patterson's Creek joins Craig's Creek not far west of Eagle Rock. This likely means the original land owned by his father and grandfather on Beaverdam Creek had been sold prior to that time. In 1859, Samuel and his second wife Nancy, conveyed 13 ½ acres on Patterson's Creek known as the “Sawmill Place,” “where Samuel now resides” to his son James. The deed further recited that James can erect dams and rases (race mills) up the head of the island to bottom lands owned by Samuel.”⁶⁷

What is known of Samuel's children by wife Elizabeth Hart, whom he married on January 7, 1823, varies greatly: **James Riddlesbarger**, a carpenter/mill-worker, who is listed in both the 1850 and 60 Federal Census for Botetourt County, VA, as well as in the 1870 Census as living in Fincastle Township; **Martin Riddlesbarger**, who was born in 1829 in Botetourt⁶⁸ and by the 1870 census had moved to Allegheny County; **Charleston Riddlesbarger**, who was born in 1832 and served as a private in “K” company of the 57th infantry; **Duguid Riddlesbarger**, who was born in 1833. His name is variously spelled, but appears as “Duguid Riddlesbarger” in the 1860 Federal Census for Botetourt County. He also served in the 60th Virginia Infantry during the Civil War, was charged with the murder of another soldier but was acquitted on the grounds of “self-defense”; **Frederick Riddlesbarger**, who was born in 1839, and also served with his brothers in the 60th Virginia infantry; but died of typhoid fever in Richmond VA, in 1863⁶⁹ and **Elizabeth Riddlesbarger**, who was born in 1840. Another son, **Samuel Riddlesbarger III**, also fought in the Civil War with the 60th Virginia Infantry, known as the “James River Rifles.”⁷⁰ According to the book, *Austin's Related Families of Botetourt County, VA*, a “Sam Riddlebarger,” (born 1831) was a descendent of Samuel Riddlebarger and Sarah Compton, and married Betsy **KELLY** and died in 1910.⁷¹

⁶⁷ “Ancestors of Samuel Riddlesbarger, Jr.” prepared by Mr. Arthur Seder.

⁶⁸ Martin “Riddlesburger” is the only one of the family to appear in the 1850 census index for Botetourt County. He was 21 at the time. His occupation is listed as a carpenter. Martin was a private in company “C” of the 20th battalion of the Virginia Heavy Artillery.

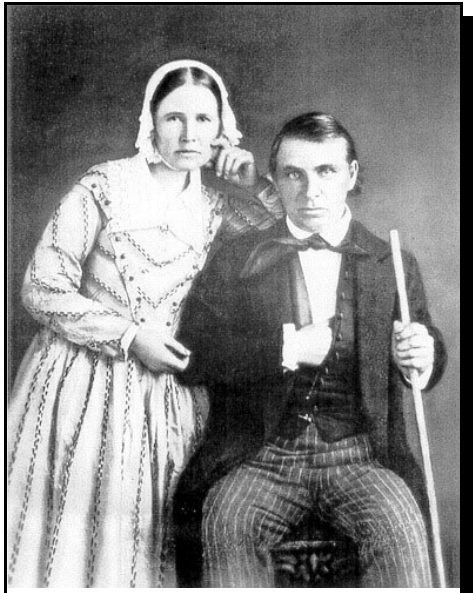
⁶⁹ According to the “Germanic Surnames in Grey,” webpage, there were five “Riddlebargers” and three “Riddlebergers” in the confederate army.

⁷⁰ One other Riddlesbarger who appears on the roster for the “Allegheny Rifles” during the Civil War is Elias Riddlesbarger, about whom we have a great deal of conflicting information. Irongate, Virginia, is in Allegheny County, where the Allegheny Rifles were formed, which makes me wonder if Elias is possibly one of William Jacob's sons by his first marriage. Both Henry Riddlesbarger and Paul list him as a son of Samuel Riddlesbarger II, but given the fact that the dates they give conflict so greatly—there may also be a father Elias and a son of the same name—I remain unconvinced.

⁷¹ Henry Riddlesberger's “Notes,” un-numbered summary page.

In addition, Samuel Riddlesbarger II had at least four sons with his second wife, Nancy **BARGER**;⁷² **John, Addison, Evans, and Lucian** Riddlesbarger.⁷³

Jesse Riddlesbarger (1800-1883)–The Richest Man in Kansas City, Who Also Lost It All Twice!



The oldest known Riddlesbarger family photo is of Jesse and wife Mary, believed to be taken about 1840. It was restored from an old daguerreotype and provided to me by Jesse's great-granddaughter, Patricia Riddlesbarger Nevius

The fourth son of **Samuel Riddlesbarger I** may well be the most interesting of all. **Jesse L Riddlesbarger** was a successful banker, merchant, land-owner, slave holder, and outspoken defender of the Confederacy, who accumulated a huge fortune, only to lose it all virtually overnight through an official edict of a Union general, Thomas Ewing. One writer describes his time in Kansas City as follows:

No more was there a colorful addition of character on Pearl Hill than that of Jesse Riddlesbarger (1820-1883). A staunch Southern sympathizer, Jesse moved with his first wife to the Kansas City area around 1850 when he had invested in the Mechanics Bank in Kansas City and St. Louis. His first wife died in 1852 as he was constructing the bank at the northwest corner of 2nd and Main. In 1853, Jesse married Susan Norton, one of the "belles of the Hill." Her father's home was about midway between Walnut and Grand. She was sixteen. . . he was 53. She was younger than his children.⁷⁴

Jesse Riddlesbarger was born on March 17, 1800, in Maryland, and died in May of 1883, in Fayette, Howard County, Missouri.⁷⁵ Jesse was married twice and fathered fourteen known

⁷² The Barger family (not to be confused with the *Riddlebargers*), were a family of German Lutherans, who came through Holland to Pennsylvania before settling throughout the Shenandoah, in Rockbridge and Botetourt counties. There were several marriages between the Riddlebargers and the Barger family. See, Rockbridge County, Virginia, Heritage Book, 1778-1997 (Rockbridge Genealogy Society, 1997), 154-155.

⁷³ LDS ancestral files also list a son, Lucian, as coming from this marriage. Henry Riddlesberger lists Lucian as a son of Samuel Riddlesbarger II and Elizabeth Hart.

⁷⁴ <https://newsantafetrailer.blogspot.com/2018/02/the-pioneer-neighborhood-kansas-city.html>

⁷⁵ According to the 1850 Census for Howard County, MO., Jesse was born in Maryland in 1800, though family records place the location of Jesse's birth in Virginia. This is a bit of an enigma, since all of Samuel's other children appear to have been born in Virginia. Washington County, Maryland, however, lies between Franklin County, PA, and Virginia, and the Maryland-Pennsylvania border is just a few miles south of Waynesboro, in an area where the border between the two states was disputed for some time. It is certainly possible that the Riddlebargers traveled between Franklin, Botetourt, and Wythe Counties, a point which is reinforced by the fact that Jacob Riddlesberger is residing in Franklin County in 1810, Samuel has residences in both Botetourt and Wythe counties, and given the fact that a number of the family are described as "smiths" and

children. His first wife was Mary **Sproul**, who, it is believed, was born in Botetourt County on July 7, 1808. Mary and Jesse were married on April 27, 1827, in Wythe County, VA., and, according to family sources and census information, were the parents of at least nine children: **Madison Maitland Riddlesbarger**, born January 28, 1830;⁷⁶ **Mary Ann Riddlesbarger**, born in 1832, married William **Barkley**; **James H. Riddlesbarger**, who was born on April 9, 1834, married Francis **Hunter** and shortened his name to “Riddle”; **Heazlett Riddlesbarger**, born in 1836; **Robert Riddlesbarger**, was born on June 14, 1839; along with his twin sister **Sara Riddlesbarger**, about whom nothing more is known; **William Riddlesbarger**, born on December 18, 1841; **John Riddlesbarger**, born on October 4, 1843, and **Rufus Zacharias Taylor Riddlesbarger**, who was born on October 13, 1846, married Sara **Kolker** on June 29, 1884, and who died in Sioux City, Iowa, in 1923.⁷⁷ According to handwritten notes in Rufus. Z. T.’s Bible, his mother, Mary, died during childbirth of an as yet-unknown daughter, who died shortly thereafter.⁷⁸

There is a family tradition that five of Jesse’s sons, **Madison, Robert, William, and John** were killed during the Civil War. But there is no corroborating evidence any of them dying during this time, and several of Jesse’s sons are known to have survived the war. One of Jesse’s sons, **Madison Maitland** (“**Matt**” – b. Jan 28, 1830 in Botetourt County, and died in 1880 in Pueblo, CO), made his way to Pueblo, Colorado, where he had an influential role in early Colorado history as a legislator and newspaper editor. According to an obituary in the *Boon’s Lick Times* (Fayette, Mo.) dated October 19, 1844, **Hazelet (or Heazlet) Riddlesbarger** (some believe Hazelet to be a daughter, not a son), died on Tuesday October 15th in Fayette at sixteen years of age. Another of Jesse’s sons, **James** survived the war and moved to Sacramento, CA, where he reportedly shortened his name to “Riddle,” while **Rufus Z. T.** was sent west by his father, due to his failing eyesight to protect him from the hardships of war.

According to that same tradition, in the late 1820’s, Jesse headed west from Botetourt County into Kentucky with a brother, possibly David or James, and that at some point the two separated—David ended up in Montgomery County, Ohio—with Jesse heading much further West, finally settling in Fayette, Missouri, east of Kansas City. According to the *Herald of the Valley*, Jesse was still receiving mail in Fincastle in 1821. In the book, *History of Howard and Cooper Counties, Missouri* (180), Jesse is described as one of the first gunsmiths to take up residence

“stage-drivers,” who certainly traveled as part of their work. It is possible that John Riddelsperger or one of his sons still owned land in Franklin County, and that his sons, traveled back and forth quite routinely. This fact probably accounts for Jesse’s birth occurring in Maryland. The facts surrounding Jesse’s death appear in the *Howard County Advertiser*, May 24, 1883.

⁷⁶ In the 1850 Census for Howard County, MO, it is indicated that Madison was born in Virginia—the only one of Jesse’s children born there, the others are all born in Missouri—and that his occupation is that of “clerk.”

⁷⁷ Henry Riddlesberger’s “Notes,” 12. Rufus Zacharias Taylor Riddlesbarger is the father of Rufus Riddlesbarger who is mentioned in connection with the case “Riddlesbarger vs. Riddlesbarger.”

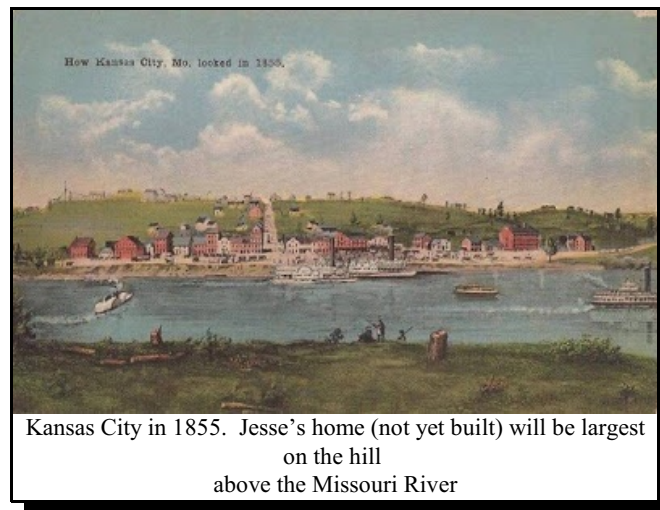
⁷⁸ Information supplied to me by Patricia Riddlesbarger Nevius, grand-daughter of Rufus Z. T. Riddlesbarger in correspondence of February 17, 2001.

in Fayette about the time the city was founded in the late 1820's. Gunsmithing, apparently, was the family trade, since at least two of Jesse's brothers were also gunsmiths (Madison and Joel).

But Jesse did not stick with the family vocation for long. According to his descendants, "Jesse built up quite a fortune, for those days, by equipping and outfitting caravans for the Santa Fe Trail."⁷⁹ This family tradition is, no doubt, related to the first of two articles appearing in the *Kansas City Star*, this one written about the early history of Kansas City, entitled "A Rambling Record" and which appeared in the *Kansas City Evening Star* on May 28, 1884. In the section dealing with the recollections of prominent early merchants in the city, we find the following bit of oral history:

Riddlebarger & Co. ran a large commission and shipping house on the levee in the days of the first administration and did about all the business on the line. Riddlebarger had a pathetic history. He accumulated considerable means, and when he married a young wife was supposed to be happily fixed for a man who has passed the median point in life. A series of unfortunate speculations, however, stripped him of every dollar, and completely disheartened he died at last friendless and alone in the county poorhouse in Fulton.

Jesse Riddlesbarger is listed in both the 1840 and 1850 Federal Census as residing in Howard County, Missouri, near Fayette. According to the census, the Riddlesbargers owned two females slaves, between 16 and 24 years of age. But the census for 1860 shows Jesse and an "R. C." Riddlesbarger, presumably his son, Robert, living in Jackson County, in Kansas City, Township. Family tradition recounts that Jesse relocated to Kansas City because of his thriving business some time early in the 1850s', his first wife, Mary, dying about this time. Jesse's name is listed in an 1859/60 directory for Kansas City, as director of Mechanic's Bank, and that he resided on the S. E. corner of Main and Second.



⁷⁹ Henry Riddlesberger's "Notes," 12. Henry gleaned this information from my own grandfather, Glenn, who indicates in correspondence with Henry, that he had interviewed Jesse's daughter-in-law, Sarah Riddlesbarger (wife of Rufus Zacharias Taylor Riddlesbarger), who was in Los Angeles, and who had given him this information during an extensive interview. This was confirmed in a letter from Ada Riddlesbarger, daughter of Rufus Z. T. [who went by "Taylor,"] to Sarah, which indicated that her own father "often remarked that his father [Jesse] said that his grandfather [John Riddelsperger] had moved from PA to VA. My father Jesse and brother [David or James?] came from Virginia to Kentucky in the early days. Later Jesse moved to Missouri. My father [Taylor] was born near Kansas City."

Family tradition also describes a series of tragic circumstances surrounding Jesse's second family. Jesse's second wife was Susan Lavinia **Norton**, the daughter of a noted Kansas City physician, whom he married on June 23, 1853, in Jackson County, Missouri.⁸⁰ She was sixteen and was considered one of the "belles of the Hill [Pearl Hill]." Jesse was a widower well into his fifties, when they married in a lavish ceremony, before moving into a mansion that he had built for his new bride on Pearl Street Hill, overlooking the Missouri River.⁸¹ Jesse and his teenage bride had four children, 3 daughters and a son: **Emma Riddlesbarger**, born December 12, 1854; **Jesse T. Riddlesbarger**, born January 1, 1856;⁸² **Fannie Riddlesbarger**, born may 5, 1859; and **Nettie Jeanette Riddlesbarger**, born on February 27, 1861. According to family tradition, when Jesse married Susan Norton, "his wife is supposed to have been very hateful of the children of the first wife. They scattered to the four winds and most of them lost track with each other."⁸³ The tragic circumstances of Jesse's marriage and mansion are recounted in the following newspaper from the Kansas City Star, Sunday, June 9, 1929.

"The Pioneer Neighborhood That Kansas City Erased: Pearl Street Hill"⁸⁴

Everybody has heard of "Order No. 11" and how it banished hundreds of the inhabitants of Western Missouri from their homes. Four days after "Order No. 11" was issued, August 25, 1863, by General Ewing, "Special Order No. 64" decreed that Jesse L. Riddlesbarger, Kansas City banker and large property holder, owner of many slaves and an ardent advocate of the Confederate cause, should leave his home and city. The order included his family. While "Order No. 11" gave fifteen days for removal, "Order No. 64" gave the family of J. L. Riddlesbarger only ten days. They were forbidden to visit any of the border counties without military consent. So began the story of a Civil War Evangeline.

Born years later in exile, a daughter, Frances Adkins Riddlesbarger, keeps the fires of memory bright. She passed through Kansas City the other day on her way from St. Louis to Los Angeles. A representative of *The Star* met her in Moberly, Mo., and between Moberly and Kansas City heard the story of the young wife of Jesse L. Riddlesbarger, 24 years old at the time she had to leave her beautiful home and her loving friends. Frances Adkins Riddlesbarger is now Mrs. Schafer of St. Louis, widow of Pierre G. Schafer. She is the only surviving member of the Riddlesbarger family. She is without relatives and not very well supplied with worldly goods. But she is a woman of breeding.

⁸⁰ International Genealogical Index, M515212.

⁸¹ The Kansas City Star, Sunday, June 9, 1929.

⁸² It is believed that Jesse T. Riddlesbarger is presently buried in Union Cemetery in Kansas City, MO. According to a published history of the cemetery, a number of people were buried here from small cemeteries in the outlying communities. It is believed that Jesse died while a small child and was possibly interred here at a later date. The date of internment is October 18, 1869 (block 15-or perhaps-14 according to a note in the records, lot 35).

⁸³ Henry Riddlesberger's "Notes," 12.

⁸⁴ <https://newsantafetrailer.blogspot.com/2018/02/the-pioneer-neighborhood-kansas-city.html>

A true daughter of the Old South, loyal to the traditions implanted by her mother, Mrs. Schafer remembers everything she heard as a child of the family's past grandeur, the luxuries of the old slave-owning days. Over and over again, the exiled mother told her children of the splendor of the old days. Moreover, the children heard of "valuable papers" in possession of their mother. These papers would, the mother said, restore old properties to their rightful owners. Now, Mrs. Schafer wonders what became of the papers and whether they would have been so valuable to the family as her mother supposed. She knows her father owned thirty-seven lots on Main street in addition to the old Riddlesbarger mansion. Does any of the property of which her father was dispossessed in 1863 belong to his only living descendant? That is the question she hopes to hear favorably answered. The records consulted in the offices of an abstract company say all the property was either transferred by deed to early purchasers or else it passed into other hands under the statute of limitations. But Mrs. Schafer believes she still has a moral, if not a legal, right to the property. She feels that it is hers.

The father dies in his banishment. So did the mother. Their youngest daughter, born when the father was old and the mother middle-ages, told their dramatic story as she sat in a Wabash train. At heart still an exile from the home and environment in which she never had lived, Frances Adkins Schafer seemed to feel all the old sorrows that had wrecked the lives of her parents. Many Kansas Citians still remember the Riddlesbarger mansion, built by the first banker of Kansas City for his young bride. A widower, 55 years old, Jesse L. Riddlesbarger had married young Susan Lavinia Norton, the only child of Dr. Joshua Norton, when Susan was only 16. At first they lived in the old Riddlesbarger residence on Delaware street with the grown-up sons and daughters of Mr. Riddlesbarger's first marriage. Then the banker built a grand mansion on exclusive Pearl Street hill. The Delaware Street residence remained the home of Mr. Riddlesbarger's eldest daughter, by that time married to William G. Barclay. A commanding site was chosen for the new home. It was built at the crest of Pearl Street hill, with a view of the steamboats as they came up the Missouri River.



Jesse Riddlesbarger's home on Pearl Hill in Kansas City. The home was built in 1858 at a cost of \$3500.00. Later occupied by the Shannon family, the home was destroyed for a redevelopment project at some point before 1900

Mr. Riddlesbarger was a rich man. For those days, his wealth was considered extraordinary. It was said that a scheming stepmother brought about the marriage of young Susan Lavinia, the adored only daughter of Dr. Norton, to the wealthy widower who was more than three times her age, and with sons and daughters twice the years of the bride, who was married at 16. The new Pearl Street hill mansion had carved rosewood furniture in the drawing room, carved mahogany in the bedrooms. On its floors were a velvet carpet and the first Brussels carpets brought to Kansas City. It was the first home in Kansas City to have French paper on its walls. From the ceilings hung chandeliers holding coal oil lamps.

The Norton-Riddlesbarger wedding was a sumptuous affair. The wedding cake bore a wonderful castle made of icing, said to have been the handiwork of a slave in the household of the bride. There was a charivari that was talked about for generations afterward. In the mansion on Pearl street hill, the young bride reigned like a queen. Her husband was generous and proud of his wife - of her youth and beauty. Her complexion was dazzling, her cheeks crimson, her hair jet black. On state occasions she wore a wonderful shawl her husband had given her. It was the color of ashes of roses, heavily embroidered and with fringe eighteen inches deep. The hospitality dispenses was lavish. The great table in the dining room fairly groaned with the feasts spread upon it.

Among the slaves owned by Mr. Riddlesbarger was Hulda, a famous cook. It was Hulda who baked the home-cured hams. It was Hulda who made the toothsome pound cake, Hulda who fried the chickens, made the gingerbread and cookies and who saw that the Riddlesbarger cellar was stocked with preserves and pickles and home-made wines. "Mis' Sue" was only 22 when the Civil War began. Her husband treated her as if she were a child. He gave her everything she desired - beautiful dresses, a velvet mantle, a bonnet with the finest of French roses that wreathed her face as she wore it, a set of corals that set off her black hair, a set of agates.

Born to be a southern sympathizer and to think of slaves as necessities, "Mis' Sue" listened undisturbed to her husband's tirades against the "thieving northern army" and a government so heartless that it could rob its own. To him, slaves were property and he owned many. His wife begged him to be careful. She implored him to be moderate in his speech, even if he couldn't be moderate in his thoughts. She hoped fiercely herself that the South would win. She and Hulda cooked constantly for the southern troops. They filled great clothes baskets with baked chickens, boiled hams, home-made bread, gingerbread and cake.

Then came disaster - an order of banishment, issued by General Ewing. Too old to enter the Confederate army as a soldier, Jesse L. Riddlesbarger could only fight with his tongue and with the food he gave the Confederates. He was hot-headed, autocratic, and he believed implicitly in the merit of the southern cause. He spoke his mind everywhere. He felt such hatred and ire for the northern troops stationed in Kansas City that he seized every opportunity to criticize and even to taunt them. Personal enmities arose. It was said the banishment of Riddlesbarger was due to a single company of Federal soldiers, mostly Kansas City men. Between them and Riddlesbarger a feud had arisen and grown very bitter. But the order for banishment came as a profound surprise to Riddlesbarger. It came as almost a death blow to his young wife, who was only 24. It included her and her small children. The family had just eaten breakfast. The day was warm, for it was August, and even the breezes from the river could not cool the air. The young wife was standing on the veranda to get a breath of air. A soldier in Federal blue was coming toward the house. As he approached, he took from his pocket a long white envelope. "Mis' Sue's" heart sank.



GEN. THOMAS EWING, JR.

General Thomas Ewing, brother-in-law of William Tecumseh Sherman, issued a decree for Jesse Riddlesbarger to leave Kansas City within ten days, or face arrest.

Instinctively, she was aware that the end of her world had come - the end of her bright, beautiful, joyous world. "Mis' Sue" was watching her husband as he opened the envelope, read the brief order, and his face went white. Suddenly, it seemed to her, that he was an old man. He had been young for 55 when she married him eight years before. He had been rather a beau and a catch. The loss of their first child, a son, had saddened him, but the coming of two little girls brought back the joy of living. When he handed her the terse order that meant banishment from their home and city for him and his family, "Mis' Sue" knew that her husband's spirit was broken, as well as his heart. The order was dated "District of the Border, Kansas City, Mo., August 29, 1863." This is what was printed and written upon it:

Special Order No. 64 (Extract)

Jesse Riddlesbarger and family, residents of Kansas City, Mo., are ordered to remove from this district within ten days from the date hereof. They will not go to the Counties of Platte, Clay, Ray or Carroll, Missouri, to reside, nor return to this district during the rebellion, without previous express permission from competent military authority. By Order of Brigadier General Ewing P.B. Hunt, Major and Provost Marshal

Ten days! Were ever days so short? "Mis' Sue" and Hulda and the slaves, even the pickaninnies, helped, for there was so much to be done. The master had his business to attend to, while his wife, with the married daughters, Mrs. Barclay, directed the packing of such furniture and clothes as the family could take with them on the boat to St. Louis - for St. Louis was the destination decided upon. In those days rivers were the

chief highways, so it was by the river the family traveled. The heavy rosewood furniture was carefully wrapped in carpets and sacking. On the walls of the mansion were large engravings of Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson. These were packed, too - placed between feather beds. In the bedrooms were a number of fine suites. The large mahogany bed was wrapped for the journey, and the marble-topped dresser went with it. The piano was a Mason & Hamlin, a large square instrument. It was taken along.

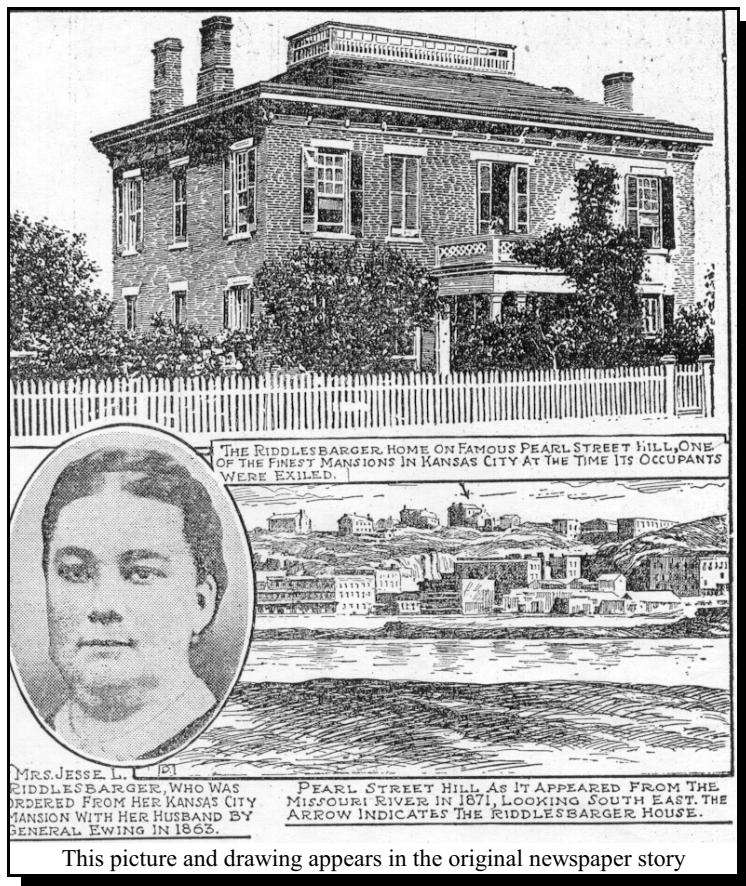
In St. Louis, Mr. Riddlesbarger opened a small grocery store, the family living in rooms above it. The limited quarters formed a marked contrast to the home they had left in Kansas City. Not content to make a meager living in his grocery store, the once-wealthy banker decided to try his fortune in Quincy, Ill., where friends advised him there were many opportunities. So the rosewood piano, the furniture, the seven feather beds, the embroidered shawls were packed again. When the family and all its belongings were aboard the boat, the children were happy at thought of the strange land for which they were bound.

The first day on the boat was a delight. Up to 2 o'clock the second day, all went well. There were music, dancing, card playing, good conversation. The sun shone and the children played on deck. Suddenly the alarm rang out, "The boat is sinking!" The craft had struck a sandbar and was going down. There were many boats on the Mississippi in those day and one came to the assistance of the disabled vessel. As the passengers were being taken off, it was discovered that one of the staterooms was locked. Mrs. Riddlesbarger was pounding on the door. The family of four had occupied two staterooms, a parent and child in each. Mr. Riddlesbarger did not awaken when the boat grounded. After much difficulty, he did awake and all were saved. But, while it seemed at first that no cargo could be saved from the wreck, it was found later that most of the furniture could be got out safely. While it had been badly damaged by being under water, it would sell for something.

But the family did not continue their journey to Quincy. They returned to St. Louis. Part of the furniture was sold at auction. During the auction, the report was circulated that the seven feather beds were infested with smallpox germs. It was, of course, entirely false and it nearly broke the heart of the immaculate housewife whose pride they had been. They were valuable beds and might have brought a good price had they not been defamed. As it was, they went to some boarding house for a song. The rosewood piano went under the hammer and so did a large and once beautiful wax doll. The auctioneer picked up the doll and held it high. "Here," he said in dramatic tones, "is a very unfortunate young lady who has lost her life in the Mississippi." Little Ella Lee and Nettie Stonewall wept, heart-broken.

Again the family sought a refuge and found it in three small rooms. There was born the youngest of their children. Frances Adkins, named after Mrs. Fannie Adkins of Kansas City. When the baby was born, a Negro boy, James, son of Hulda, of Pearl street cookery fame, was working the grocery store owned by the father. When he saw the two little girls returning from school, James ran to meet them with the news that a "little missy" had come to live with them. It was black James, too, who brought the news to St. Louis of the ruin wrought in the Riddlesbarger mansion in Kansas City by Union soldiers, who entered it as soon as it was vacated by the owners. Later it was sold to the Shannon family and became known as the Shannon house.

The Kansas City property owned by Mr. Riddlesbarger at the time of his banishment, he received so little that his one living descendant believes he did not take the trouble to dispose of all of it. Mrs. Schafer remembers how poorly the family lived after the father, too old to conduct a regular business, got a job at \$40 a month in the city hall in St. Louis. He was more than 70 years old when his youngest daughter was born. "He looked like Santa Claus," recalls his daughter. "He was greatly embittered by the military order that banished him from his home and friends just after he had built up his fortune. His holdings had been very large. He had owned a farm in Missouri - a plantation on which were many slaves. While he undoubtedly did sell the Pearl street mansion to the Shannon family and while he probably disposed of other properties similarly, I do not think he ever bothered to sell all his property in Kansas City. I believe that, if the truth were known, some of the lots he owned on Main street were never transferred by deed. How their present owners can hold valid titles to them, I do not know."



Mrs. Schafer says her father felt he was a ruined man when he was banished. Of the thirty-seven lots he owned on Main Street, she thinks he could not have sold all, else why was it that his wife used to tell her children that she had valuable papers? "Some day," she would say, "the papers I have will be very valuable to us." The father died. Of the three sons of Mrs. Riddlesbarger by his first marriage - Maitland, James and Taylor - only one kept in touch with the widow, then an invalid, and her young children. That was Taylor, who had gone to live by himself in the Black Hills. He sent money regularly to his stepmother and this saved her from actual want.

Another old Kansas City family lived near them in St. Louis. It was the family of James A. Gregory, intimate friends of Mrs. Riddlesbarger. Mrs. Gregory used to spend one afternoon a week with her friend. They would sew on quilts and little Frances Adkins would use the scraps for doll clothes.

While they gossiped of old times in Kansas City, the little girl listened with avid interest. Mrs. Schafer recalls the day the long pier glass with the gold frame fell from the wall and was broken into a thousand pieces. "Seven years more of bad luck," said my mother," related Mrs. Schafer. "And I guess we had it. I know that she had to sell the little gold brick she had worn so long, in order to keep her children from want."

Even in those days of comparatively small housekeeping resources, Mrs. Riddlesbarger dressed daintily. They made a home for her children, even when there was little of which to make it. Mrs. Schafer recalls that a new piano replaced the one brought from the Pearl street home. Once the widow of Jesse Riddlesbarger brought her children on a visit to Kansas City. She hoped at that time to settle near the old home. But the sight of the mansion on Pearl street, changed sadly by the passing of the years and by the war, so depressed her that she wanted to go back. After a month, during which she visited several old Kansas City friends, among them the Stone family at 1108 Armour Boulevard, the family of Dr. Ridge, the Troost and Gillis families, she returned with her children to St. Louis, where she did not long survive.

The sisters of Frances were married and she went to live with one of them at Carthage, Mo. There she grew to womanhood and there she was married to the son of a farmer of St. Charles, Mo., descended from an old St. Louis family. Their two children died in youth and Mr. Schafer suffered a nervous collapse and took his own life. Alone in the world, without a relative to her knowledge, Frances Adkins Schafer wonders if perchance she still owns an interest in some of the property her father held so lightly. Would an

investigation disclose the fact that deeds still exist bearing the name of Riddlesbarger? “My father never bothered with his Kansas City holdings after the banishment,” she says. “That I know. When there were so many, I feel certain some of the old Main street lots are rightfully mine.”⁸⁵

Jesse’s misfortunes did not come as a result of poor business acumen, nor irresponsible speculation, nor did he die in Fulton, as newspaper reports claimed, and as some of his descendants believed.⁸⁶ His misfortune came directly from the hand of one Thomas Ewing, Union General, in charge of the Federal forces in Kansas City, and who personally ordered Jesse and his family banned from the city and the neighboring counties.

It must be remembered that this harsh action on Ewing’s part, occurred in those days of great upheaval in August of 1863, after Quantrill’s Raiders crossed over from several border counties in Missouri into Kansas, where they brutally killed more than 150 pro-union men and boys in the town of Lawrence, Kansas, while destroying some \$1.5 million in property. In response to this brutal attack, Gen. Ewing issued his infamous “General Order Number 11,” as well as a lesser known edict, “Special Order No. 64.” Once the latter order was issued, Jesse’s fate was sealed. He lost everything, twice, as recounted in the *Kansas City Star* story based upon information from Jesse’s granddaughter, Francis Adkins Schafer.

Not only does the 1929 *Kansas City Star* account confirm the known facts of Jesse’s life and the oral history passed on to my grandfather by Jesse’s descendants, there is much additional evidence to confirm Jesse’s rise to prominence as well. Another Kansas City newspaper, *The Herald of Freedom*, refers to a “J. Riddlesbarger & Co.,” located in Kansas City, which was serving as the agent for the river packet (river boat), *Financier*.⁸⁷ According to records found in the Johnson County, KS, archives, on July 17, 1857, Jesse Riddlesbarger filed a monetary claim against G. M. B. Maughs, the disposition of which is not recorded. Johnson County is near Kansas City.⁸⁸ In the *History of Howard and Cooper Counties, Missouri*, Jesse is described as one of the first gunsmiths to take up residence in Fayette (180). One indication of Jesse’s possible material support for Quantrill is that “a brass howitzer, sent as a gift from the east to the free-state men, and lay in the warehouse of J. Riddlesbarger, a pro-slavery man.” Also found in Jesse Riddlesbarger’s warehouse were Sharps rifles.⁸⁹

According to the book *Financial Fraud and Guerrilla Violence in Missouri's Civil War, 1861-1865*, “other Kansas City bankers who shared his views (i.e., the pro-slavery activist Colonel Edward Cresap McCarty) were Jesse Riddlesbarger, president of the Mechanics’ Bank branch, and the Reverend Thomas Johnson, president of the Union

⁸⁵ “A Rambling Record,” in the *Kansas City Evening Star*, on May 28, 1884. From the Kansas state genweb project.

⁸⁶ Information provided to me by Patricia Riddlesbarger Nevius, February 14, 2001.

⁸⁷ *The Herald of Freedom*, Saturday, April 7, 1855. Reproduced on Kansas-L digest 1168, on the University of Kansas webpage.

⁸⁸ File number, 025 92-235-002.

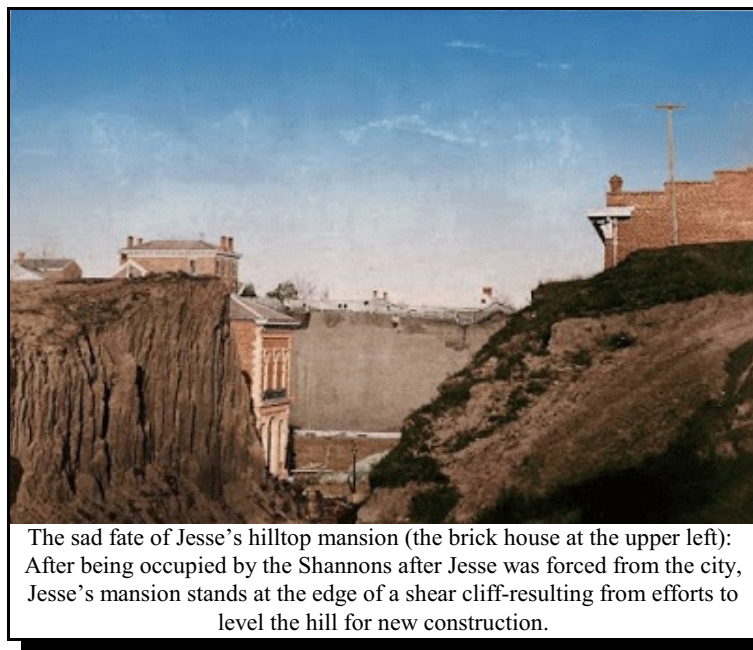
⁸⁹ *Kansas State Historical Society*, v. 2, 1920.

Bank branch. Riddlesbarger and Johnson co-owned a strongly pro-slavery newspaper, the *Kansas City Enterprise*, whose masthead motto was 'The World is Governed too Much!'"⁹⁰ According to a story in the *Harvard Business Review*, "On December 31, 1856, Pollard sold the parcel to Jess Riddlebarger for \$3,000. And just over a month later, as a flurry of real estate buying got underway, Riddlesbarger disposed of this same acreage for \$12,000. . . Many of the prominent early merchants such as Franklin Conant and Jesse Riddlesbarger were ruined by the war."⁹¹

Furthermore, the city Federal Census for 1870, shows a Jesse "Ridelsbarger," now nearly broke and seventy-years old, as a resident of St. Louis, Missouri. He would live some thirteen more years and die under tragic circumstances. In a notice found in the Howard County *Advertiser*, dated May 24, 1883, we read:

Riddlesbarger, Jesse died last Monday in Howard County poorhouse, 84 years of age. Buried in Fayette City Cemetery Township 50, Range 16, Section 11. Came to Fayette in 1830. For years carried on the business of a gunsmith, afterward went into mercantile business with John D. Perry and met with great success, then went to Kansas City where he again succeeded. His wife died and he moved to St. Louis where he became involved and broken up, came back to Fayette a few years ago. Lived with old friends the few months where he was cared for until his death. At one time he was one of the most prosperous merchants of Fayette.

All of this evidence, obtained from independent sources, certainly confirms much of the family tradition. A sad and tragic end to a remarkable life



The sad fate of Jesse's hilltop mansion (the brick house at the upper left): After being occupied by the Shannons after Jesse was forced from the city, Jesse's mansion stands at the edge of a shear cliff-resulting from efforts to level the hill for new construction.

⁹⁰ Mark W. Geiger, *Financial Fraud and Guerrilla Violence in Missouri's Civil War, 1861-1865* (Yale University Press, 2010).

⁹¹ *Harvard Business Review* (Vol 33, 1959), 171-173.

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An advertisement for birth control devices from Rufus Riddlebarger's Lanteen Laboratories in Chicago

Jesse's Riddlesbarger's Line – Rufus Riddlesbarger

Rufus Riddlesbarger (1893-1968) was a son of **Rufus Z. T.**, and grandson of Jesse. He is the shadiest of all our kin. Associated with social activist Margaret Sanger, Rufus manufactured birth control devices in the Chicago area during the 1930's. Rufus and his wife Fay, are mentioned in the landmark court case, *Riddlesbarger v. Riddlesbarger* of the Cook County Court of Appeals, November 6, 1944, which deals with a fraud Rufus perpetrated in the court in securing a divorce from Fay. Rufus owned the famous Arabian horse Antez (the grandfather of the famous TV horse *Mister Ed*), from 1935-1942, and the following news item appeared in an unknown and undated news clipping in Glenn Riddlebarger's genealogy papers: “R. Riddlesbarger, head of a scientific manufacturing concern in Chicago (Lanteen Laboratories), is the purchaser of twenty-two colts. He has arranged to have them shipped to an estate he has opened in southeastern Arizona, where he intends to engage in breeding experiments with horses.” Because of mounting legal troubles (including a charge of statutory rape), Rufus eventually fled the

US for Ethiopia—stopping in Iceland along the way. There he met and married the much younger Frida Olifsdottir, who gave birth to Rufus' youngest child, Patricia **Nevius** (b. 1954). Rufus died in 1968 in Ethiopia, and is buried near Mount Kilimanjaro. According to an entry in *Wikipedia*,

Rufus Riddlesbarger (born c. 1897) was an American entrepreneur who marketed a line of contraceptive diaphragms in the 1930s. Under the Lanteen Laboratories brand, Riddlesbarger operated a chain of clinics in Illinois, Wisconsin and Michigan, which were promoted through radio advertising.

Riddlesbarger is believed to have been an Army Air Corps pilot during World War I. He later worked for the U.S. Post Office, flying air mail starting in 1920, but was grounded in 1921 for failing to promptly report a forced landing, resulting in delay to the mail. Riddlesbarger invented a diaphragm that was successfully marketed through his firm, Lanteen Laboratories, using storefront clinics called “Medical Bureaus of Birth Control Information” and a variety of media, including radio, direct mailings to doctors, and in packages of sanitary napkins. One of Riddlesbarger's clinic operators, Adele Gordon, was, with her husband John, unsuccessfully prosecuted in 1935 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin for selling birth control devices. Lanteen Laboratories had been organized in 1928, with 90% of its stock owned by Riddlesbarger. Lanteen sold a comprehensive line of products, including contraceptive jellies, douches, tampons and suppositories.

The proceeds from Riddlesbarger's venture went to purchase a ranch in southern Arizona which he named Lanteen Ranch, now listed on the National Register of Historic Places as Kinjockity Ranch. Riddlesbarger commissioned Phoenix architect Edward C. Morgan to design the Pueblo Revival house and guest house, and the interior was decorated by designer and sculptor Raymond Phillips Sanderson. Riddlesbarger, through the Lanteen Arabian Foundation, bred Arabian horses at the ranch, most notably owning Antez, a

famous sire originally owned by Will Keith Kellogg. Antez sired Palominos while with Riddlesbarger. Bamboo Harvester, who played Mister Ed in the eponymous television show, was a grandson of Antez.

Although he intended to live at the ranch full-time, Riddlesbarger sold the ranch in 1946 and moved to Tucson. He had lost a substantial judgment in tax court over Lanteen's purchase of the ranch lands and subsequent payment of the ranch to him as a dividend. He was unsuccessfully prosecuted in 1948 for statutory rape for an alleged affair with a house servant, and left the United States shortly thereafter. A final divorce decree was granted in favor of his former wife Fay Riddlesbarger in 1948, following proceedings that began in 1931, and allegations of coercion, but further proceedings continued into 1952, reaching the Illinois Supreme Court. Rufus had two daughters with Fay. Legal proceedings in the 1950s indicate that Rufus settled in east Africa in what was then Tanganyika.

The oldest son of Jesse, **Matt Riddlebarger** seemingly appears out of nowhere in the Colorado Territory in 1862 as a pro-slavery newspaper editor and political "wannabe." According to the *Minutes* of the Second Legislative Assembly of Colorado (July 9th 1862), the legislature of the Colorado Territory successfully petitioned the U.S. congress for permission to elect a delegate from the territory to serve in Congress as a precursor to statehood, which was finally granted in 1876. Matt Riddlebarger was elected Arapaho County clerk in 1859 and was a co-owner of the *Canon City Times* and founder of the *Buckskin Joe Western Mountaineer* also served as secretary of the assembly seeking statehood. According to the Alumni record of Wesleyan University, Middleton CN, Madison Riddlesbarger left the university and was a non-graduating alum. The entry reads as follows: "Left College during sophomore year. 1854 A.B.; and 1857 A.M. Madison University. Resided in Fayette, MO. Edited a paper in Colorado. Died in Colorado. Married a lady of Hamilton, NY." The AIS Mortality Schedule indicates that (Madison) Matt died in Pueblo of alcoholism. His occupation is listed as an auditor. He appears in the 1870 Federal Census for Colorado, in Pueblo County. An entry for in the Historical Society of Colorado for Madison reads, "RIDDLESBERGER, Matthew (sic, deduced from "Matt" his nickname), a stockholder of Golden City in 1859. Riddlebarger also appears as stock or shareholder in the Golden City Association, same year (Golden City Association Shareholders' Book). Mat Riddlebarger was the first postmaster in Canon City, is referred to in one book as the "local agent for Taos Lightning,"⁹² which fits with his official cause of death—alcoholism.

The Fate of Samuel Riddlesbarger I's Other Sons

Another possible son of **Samuel I** and Sarah Riddlesbarger is **Joel Riddlesbarger**, who, according to several sources was born in Botetourt County about 1804, although the 1850 census indicates he was born in 1790. Little is known about him. According to Virginia marriage records, Joel married Emsa Ann Furry on July 26 1827 in Rockingham, Virginia. He appears in county tax records for 1830, as well as in the Federal Census of the same year for Botetourt County, VA., where he is listed a "gunsmith" with small children in the home. By 1837, Joel is

⁹² State Historical Society of Colorado, Colorado Historical Society - Colorado - 1981, 491.

residing in Salem, near Roanoke, VA.⁹³ He also appears in the 1850 census as a resident of Madison County, just to the east of the Shenandoah. His vocation is still identified as “gunsmith.” His age is given as 60 in the census, which raises questions about the birth date of 1804. If Joel was born as early as 1790, he cannot be the son of Samuel and Sarah—and would likely be a son of John and Catherine, making him Samuel’s uncle.” Nothing is known of his descendants, if any, or any of the details of his life.

Similar circumstances hold true for another likely son of Samuel Riddlesbarger, **James**. The volume *Annals of S. W. Virginia* lists a “James Riddlebarger, **jr.**”, and James Anderson, and Benjamin West, who were appointed as Overseers of the Road on June 12, 1798. I have not been able to determine whether this individual is the son of another “James” (and so further identified as a Jr.), or if the “jr.” is incorrect given the early date (1798). We do know that during the War of 1812, James Riddlesbarger served as a private in the 5th Regiment of McDowell’s Virginia Militia. He appears on the muster roll from September 3 to December 14, 1814. His total pay amounted to \$27.07. He is listed as a substitute for Michael Redinger. The only year he appears in Botetourt County tax records is in 1816.

It appears that James did not stay in Botetourt County for long. On December 10, 1822, James married Ann **MARSHALL** in Green County, Ky. It is believed that they had two sons, **John M.** and **Samuel A.**, both of whom moved to Nashville, TN. James “Riddlesbergen” is listed in the 1830 federal census, as a resident of Greenburgh Township in Green County. He received 30 acres in Green County, KY on February 2, 1832, possibly the result of his service to his country in the War of 1812. There is one male child, five and under, two male children 10 -5, one male 15-20, and one, presumably James, between 30-40. There is one female between 30-40, there is one male slave, 10-24, two under 10 yrs of age, two female slaves 10-24, and a total of twelve people in the household.⁹⁴ This fact may indicate that it was James who traveled west into Kentucky with brother Jesse, and not David.

According to the volume *Laws of Kentucky*, the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky passed an act which allowed the administrator of the James Riddlebarger (of Green County) estate to file a bill against the heirs of James Riddlebarger to pay the debts of the estate.⁹⁵ The bill required the sale of land and assets to pay off the said debt. The act is dated January 22, 1836, indicating that James Riddlebarger died before this time.⁹⁶ A Mr. Guthrie, from the committee of the Courts of Justice, reported a bill for the benefit of James Riddlesbarger’s heirs and representatives.⁹⁷ Unfortunately, James appears elsewhere in Kentucky Court records

⁹³ Robert Douthe Stoner, Seed Bed of the Republic, Early Botetourt, 229.

⁹⁴ Kentucky Land Grants, Vol. 1, Part 1, 701.

⁹⁵ Laws of Kentucky, 42-43.

⁹⁶ The volume *Select Cases Decided in the Court of Appeals of Kentucky – During the year 1834*, By James Dana, recounts the case of Craddock vs. Riddlesbarger (May 6, 1834), 205-213.

⁹⁷ From the Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, Thursday December 31, 1835.

because he was shot in the face. According to Green County KY Circuit Court Records, (Volume 19 by Barbara Wright, page 80), in an entry for “Stephen T. Logan, Attorney for the Commonwealth,” we read the following:

The Grand Jurors for the Commonwealth of Kentucky empaneled and sworn to enquire for the body of Green County on their oath represent that 27 Jul 1829 in Green County Court, Francis Martin, late of Green County, labourer, not having the fear of God before his eyes, but being moved and seduced by the instigation of the devil, wilfully, feloniously and of malice aforethought did make an assault and upon a certain James Riddlesbarger of Green County did then and there shoot and discharge in against and upon James Riddlesbarger a certain rifle gun charged and loaded with powder and one leaden bullet which Francis Martin held in his hands. Martin with the leaden bullet discharged by the force of the gunpowder out of the rifle gun did strike, penetrate and wound James Riddlesbarger hitting him with the leaden bullet and wounded him on the left side of the face, of the depth of one inch of the length of two inches and of the breadth of one inch of which would James Riddlesbarger for a long time did languish and languishing did live.

A **John Riddleberger** (thought to be the son of James) appears in the 1860 Federal Census for TN in Nashville Twp. (1-4 W. Nashville), and in the slave schedule (240). Given his indicated birthplace of KY, he is likely is a son of James and brother of Samuel. He and his wife, Martha A. also appear in the 1860 population schedule in Nashville Ward 2 (340). A **Samuel Riddleberger** appears in the 1860 Census for Davidson County, TN, in Nashville Twp (1-4 W) in both the population and slave schedules (242, 357). It is thought he is a son of James, because James is the only Riddlesbarger known to have lived and settled in KY with small children perhaps born there.⁹⁸

In the 1860 census, Sam Riddleberger is listed as the proprietor of an “eating house.” Census records tell us he was born in Kentucky.⁹⁹ His age is listed as 36, and he is residing with a number of other young men, Charles Jackson (14), Clairborn Meagher (12) who are dining room servers, Sam Nichol (30), a clerk, and William Douglas, who was born in Ireland and ran a boarding house. In the *Nashville Business Directory* (1860-61), Volume 5, lists Riddleberger, Samuel, eating saloon, corner Cherry and Deadrick St. Death Records for the State of Tennessee indicated that Sam died on January of 1877.¹⁰⁰ Samuel, apparently, was not only the proprietor of an “eating-house,” he consumed most of his potential profit. According to the *American Medical Weekly*, “Sam Riddleberger, a native of Kentucky, died at Nashville Saturday. He had weighed as high as 534 3/4 pounds, and at the time of his death weighed 473. His coffin was the largest ever constructed in Nashville.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ See the 1830 Green County, Census for James. R. S. Riddlesbarger.

⁹⁹ In the 1870 Census, we find the following: S S Riddleberger, Estimated Birth Year: 1824, Age in 1870: 46, Color (white, black, mulatto, chinese, Indian): White, Birthplace: Kentucky.

¹⁰⁰ Name: Sam Riddleburger, Death Date: 06 Jan 1877, Death Place: Nashville, Davidson, Tennessee, Age: 60, Birth Date: 1817, Birthplace: Ky., Occupation: Hotel Keeper, Race: White, Marital Status: Married (1303217 Reference Number: p 60 ln 16).

¹⁰¹ Edwin Samuel Gaillard, editor, *American Medical Weekly*, Volume 6.

Another son of Samuel and Sarah is **Madison Riddlesbarger**, born in 1809 in Botetourt County and died in 1880 in Edinburg, Virginia, in Shenandoah County. Madison Riddlesbarger was reportedly a gunsmith, stage driver, and later an innkeeper in the upper part of the Shenandoah Valley. Family tradition states that he came to the Edinburg area, “from over the mountain in Botetourt.”¹⁰² Reliable family tradition states that Madison Riddlesbarger’s father, Samuel, lived in Botetourt, and that the family had originally come to VA from PA.¹⁰³ By 1835, he was a private in a company of Grenadiers, made up of men from Edinburg and vicinity which was attached to the 13th regiment 2nd Battalion, Virginia Militia, which was under the command of Captain Philip Grandstaff.¹⁰⁴ He also appears in the 1840 Federal Census as a resident of Shenandoah County.

Madison’s connection to the Grandstaff family is interesting. According to a published history of Edinburg, Virginia, Madison “Riddleberger,” was a gunsmith, who worked for the Grandstaff family, who manufactured one of the most widely sought-after weapons during the War of 1812 and again during the Civil War, the famed “Grandstaff Rifle.” The “Grandstaff Rifle” was a well-made, had an ornate brass stock, and a distinctive octagonal barrel.¹⁰⁵

On December 15, 1830, Madison married Susan SHRYOCK, who was a native of Edinburg, VA. Madison was twenty-one, and though his bride was only sixteen, she already owned hundreds of acres of land in and around Edinburg.¹⁰⁶ Together, they had at least two least two sons, **Harrison Holt Riddleberger**—to whom we will turn shortly—and **William Ira Riddleberger**, who was born in 1847. They had at least three daughters: **Amelia Riddleberger**, born in 1835; **Louisa Riddleberger**, born in 1839; and **Sara Riddleberger**, also born in 1839. In addition, there was also another son who died in infancy in 1840.¹⁰⁷

United States Senator from Virginia, Harrison Holt Riddleberger

Certainly the most famous and successful member of the entire Riddleberger clan—serving as United States Senator from Virginia—Harrison Holt Riddleberger was born in the Shenandoah on October 4, 1844. Like many of the Virginia Riddlebergers, the name was spelled variously as “Riddleberger,” or “Riddlebarger” in census records and official documents. Son of Madison and Susan Shryock Riddleberger, H. H. Riddleberger married Emma V.

¹⁰² John W. Wyland, A History of Shenandoah County, Virginia, 2nd. ed., (Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1980), 635.

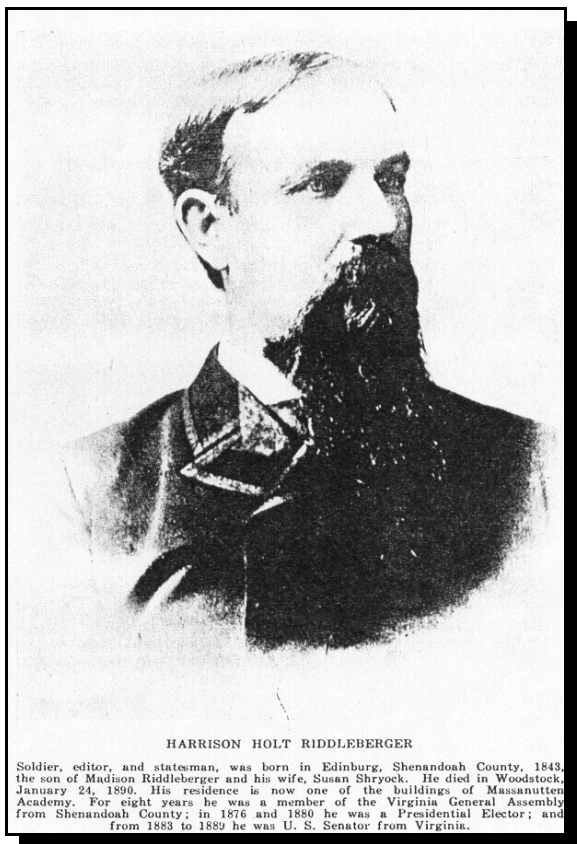
¹⁰³ Henry Riddlesberger’s “Notes,” 9.

¹⁰⁴ Wyland, A History of Shenandoah County, Virginia, 267.

¹⁰⁵ Mary Ann Davis and Jean Allen Davis, The History of Edinburg, Virginia, 20.

¹⁰⁶ Henry Riddlesberger’s “Notes,” 8.

¹⁰⁷ Henry Riddlesberger’s “Notes,” 8.



Belew and served the cause of the Confederacy, first as Lieutenant in "C" Company of the 10th Virginia Infantry, and later as Captain in the 18th Virginia Cavalry. Senator Riddleberger died in 1890 at the young age of 46, and is buried in the Cedarwood Cemetery in Edinburg, Virginia. He was affectionately known as "Senator Harry."

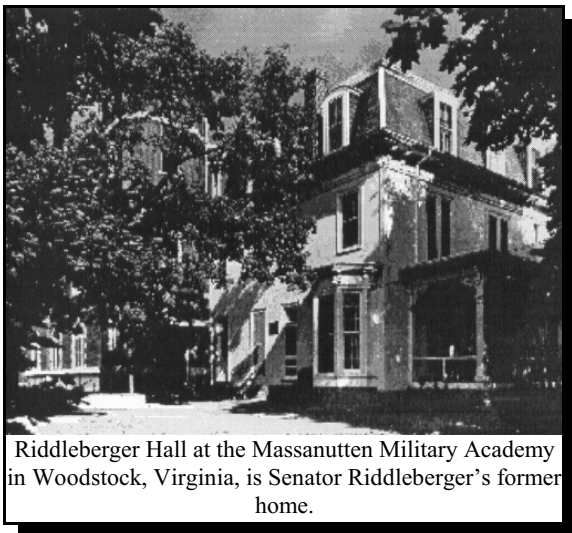
The following account of Senator Riddleberger's life was taken from John W. Wayland's *A History of the Shenandoah County, Virginia*, (554-556).

Harrison Holt Riddleberger, son of Madison and Susan (Shryock) Riddleberger, was born at Edinburg, VA., October 4, 1843.

After attending several private schools in the village, he went at the age of about fifteen to Harrisonburg, VA., to take employment as clerk in a general grocery store, where he was working at the outbreak of the war. When only seventeen years old, he joined and helped organize a company of cavalry in Harrisonburg, and was later made captain of this company, which participated in the first

battle of Manassas. A considerable part of his military activity consisted in doing scout duty in the Shenandoah Valley, from the hills and mountains which he reported the movements of the armies under Generals Banks and Sigel. His company was probably a part of the command of General Imboden.

Captain Riddleberger was twice captured, and while in prison at Camp Chase Columbus, Ohio, became interested in



the study of law, through a copy of Blackstone's Commentaries which in some way fell into his hands. After the surrender, he returned to the mercantile business in Harrisonburg, for a short while, and in the fall of 1867 married Emma Belew of Edinburg, daughter of Dr. Peter and Elizabeth (Samuels) Belew. After a brief mercantile experience at Edinburg, and teaching school, he became interested in the publication of newspapers there—*The Tenth Legion Banner*, and continued to read law at night or when he had leisure. He next associated himself with the publishers of the *Shenandoah Herald* at Woodstock, the county-seat, and having taken up the practice of the law there, he moved to Woodstock, and was elected commonwealth attorney of Shenandoah County, serving two terms. He ran for the state senate, he wrote and sponsored what later became known as the Riddleberger Bill, dealing with the settlement of the state debt as between Virginia and West Virginia, which was defeated in the legislature, but became the leading issue in the

formation of the readjuster movement in Virginia, on which this new part went before the people, and was successful at the polls.

When the readjuster party came into power, Capt. Riddleberger was elected to the United States Senate, taking his seat March 4, 1883, and serving until 1889. Among the notable incidents of his services there may be mentioned his vote for the Blair Educational Bill, the British Extradition Treaty, the first act leading up to the Interstate Commerce Commission, etc.

Senator Riddleberger died January 24, 1890, and is buried in his native town, Edinburg. His home at Woodstock is now incorporated in the Massanutten Military Academy.

The following additional items concerning Senator Riddleberger are compiled from the Congressional Directory 1886: "Served in the Virginia House of Delegates two terms and in the state senate one term; editor of three papers—*The Tenth Legion*, *The Shenandoah Democrat*, and the *Virginian*; member of the state committee of Conservative Party until 1875; Presidential Elector on the Democratic ticket in 1876 and on the Readjuster ticket in 1880; elected to the U. S. Senate in 1881 as Readjuster, succeeding John W. Johnson.

The following description of H. H. Riddleberger's term as senator is taken from Thomas W. Herringshaw's book, *Prominent Men and Women of the Day* (1888), and was written while Senator Riddleberger was still in office.

Mr. Riddleberger was born in Virginia, received a common school education, and had a home preceptor for two years. Serving three years in the confederate army, he held the rank of second and first lieutenant of infantry and captain of cavalry.

Mr. Riddleberger is a lawyer by profession, and served as attorney for the commonwealth for two years, also two terms in the house of delegates, and one term in the state senate.

Since 1870 he has edited three newspapers, *The Tenth Legion*, *The Shenandoah Democrat*, and the *Virginian*. Until 1875 he was a member of the state committee of the conservative party; in the year 1876 he was a presidential elector on the democratic ticket; and also an elector on the readjuster ticket in 1880.

By a combination of circumstances not unusual in political bodies, Riddleberger, the only member of the upper house not elected as a representative of either of the great parties, holds what is practically the balance of power, as the senate contains thirty-eight republicans, thirty-seven democrats, and one independent, the latter being Senator Riddleberger, whose position is naturally an interesting one, and a source of anxiety to both sides of the house.

Mr. Riddleberger in the first part of his term generally co-operated with the republicans, but later on showed a tendency to assist the democratic side. He is swayed by his own personal feelings in regard to public matters, and no one can tell how he will vote on any given proposition upon which he has not previously declared himself. With no party ties to bind him to support caucus resolutions, his individual prejudices or fancies may swing him to one side or the other. This feature of uncertainty in his character is a constant source of apprehension to both sides when political questions are involved. Riddleberger is not popular with the grave and reverend senators. Defeated by them for the position of sergeant-at-arms, his late ally, Mahone, then in control of the politics of Virginia, made his erratic lieutenant his colleague in the senate, and constructively the equal of the senators who had refused him the less exalted position of sergeant-at-arms. Under such conditions Riddleberger felt under no obligations to his

fellow-senators. He has been a terror to them for his utter disregard of the ponderous dignity of the senate. The rules of the body confine him within no pent-up Utica, and regardless of points of order he says and does what he feels inclined to when upon the floor. For nothing does he show such manifest contempt as he does for the sacredness of the secrets of executive sessions, which he has time and again announced as a humbug.

The readjuster senator's most recent exploits was in the tactics he used to defeat the ratification of the extradition treaty between this country and Great Britain. His opposition to it was based upon the assumption that it would give Great Britain the opportunity to extradite Irish suspects who had taken refuge in this country. There is no more sincere friend in the Irish cause in public life than Riddleberger, and he was determined to prevent, by all means in his power, whether regular or irregular, the proposed treaty. Day after day he moved to have it considered in open senate, a course which meant its certain defeat. Under the rules of the senate such a motion was out of order, but he defied the rules and insisted on a public discussion of the treaty. Finally, he gave his fellow senators to understand that if the treaty was ratified in secret session he would make public the names of those who favored it. They took the hint, and the consideration of the treaty was postponed. It is a curious incident that one senator, without a party or without political following or allies, could thus defeat, single-handed, a great international measure. His term expires in 1889.

***Further Exploits of Senator Harrison Holt
Riddleberger***

**From the *History of the German Element in Virginia,*
Volume 2, by Herrmann Schuricht, 192.**

A widespread distinction among the descendants of the German settlers in the Valley was gained by Harrison Holt Riddleberger. He was born October 2nd, 1844, at Edinburg, Shenandoah county. At the early age of seventeen years he entered the Confederate army and was promoted to a lieutenancy and later on to the rank of captain. After the return of peace he studies law and domiciled himself as lawyer at Woodstock. 1866 Riddleberger was elected State's Attorney and later on a member of the legislature for three successive terms. In 1875 he was made member of the "State Committee," in 1876 and 1880 a presidential elector and from 1883 to 1889 a "readjuster," a member of the U. S. Senate. Since 1870 he edited three Virginia newspapers. Riddleberger possessed great force as an orator and politician; he was a most violent opponent of General Mahone, the leader of the Republican party in Virginia, and made himself commendably known in the movement for settling the State-debts accumulated during the Civil War. The respective arrangements resolved upon by his suggestions to the Legislature of Virginia are known as the "Riddleberger Compromise." His prospects were certainly very bright, but his unfortunate passion for intoxicating drinks ruined his career and caused his early death on January 24, 1890.



Official U. S. Senate Photo of Senator "Harry" provided to me by archivist the of the U. S. Senate.

From *The Twentieth Century Biographical Dictionary of Notable Americans*, edited by Rossiter Johnson, John Howard Brown

Riddleberger, Harrison Holt, senator, was born in Edinburg, VA., Oct 4, 1844; son of Madison and Susan (Shryock) Riddleberger and grandson of Jacob and Amelia (Heiskel) Shryock. He studied under a private tutor, and in March 1862, raised a company for the Confederate army and entered service as 2d lieutenant of infantry. He took part in the Richmond, Maryland and Pennsylvania campaigns; was promoted to captain, and transferred to the cavalry; was captured, and held prisoner of war from July 1864. He returned to Edinburg in April, 1865, where he became editor of the Tenth Legion Banner. He married Nov. 29, 1866, Emma V., daughter of Peter and Elizabeth (Samuels) Below of Edinburg. He represented Shenandoah county in the Virginia legislature from 1871-1875. He was admitted to the bar in 1875, and settled in practice in Woodstock. He served as commonwealth's attorney for Shenandoah county 1876-1880; was a presidential elector on the Democratic ticket in 1876, and on the Readjuster ticket in 1880; a member of the Virginia senate, 1876-81, where he served as chairman of the committee on Federal relations. He became editor of the *Virginian*, a Republican newspaper, published in Woodstock in 1881, having previously edited the *Shenandoah Democrat*. He was elected to the United States senate in 1881, and served that body, 1883-1889, all of the time as chairman of the committee on manufactures, and as a member of the committee on naval affairs, on the District of Columbia and on education and labor. He labored actively for the rejection of the proposed extradition treaty with Great Britain, for which he received resolutions of thanks from Irish societies of the United States. He died in Woodstock, VA., Jan. 24., 1890.

From the book *Stonewall Jackson at Cedar Mountain*, (UNC Press, 1990), by Robert K. Krick (162-163).

Another of the Tenth Virginia's casualties, twenty-two year old Sergeant Lucius Cammack of Company C, fell under interesting circumstances. Cammack was one of the thousands of Civil War soldiers who had a clear and unshakable premonition that an impending battle would kill him. He had told his aunt of his certain death and repeated the story with conviction to his superior, Lieutenant Harrison Holt Riddleberger. (Riddleberger survived the war and became a United States Senator representing Virginia from 1883 to 1889). The lieutenant ridiculed Cammack's premonition and watched when the guns opened. Cammack behaved as if there was no danger at all. When the Tenth Virginia received orders to fall back, Cammack either did not hear them, or more probably ignored them. The sergeant "stood in his place firing a short rifle until he was shot in the right side and mortally wounded." As he fell, Cammack shouted a plea to his comrades that they not let the enemy get his body. Lieutenant Riddleberger, Captain John W. Melhorn, and two others, dashed virtually into the Federal Ranks to pull Cammack back to safety. He died twenty-seven hours later after suffering "most awfully." Sergeant Cammack seems to have been the victim of that surest of things, a self-fulfilling prophecy, which led him to expose his life excessively.

From his *Complete Prose Works*, Volume 11, By Matthew Arnold, 457-458.

255:9-13 Harrison Holt Riddleberger (1844-90), US Senator from Virginia, 1883-89, defended a man named J. W. Jones on a misdemeanor charge in the court of Shenandoah County in Woodstock on August 11, 1887. There was a good deal of squabbling in the courtroom, but the jury found Jones insane and discharged him. Next day Riddleberger plied Jones with drink, placed him in a wagon, and paid a lad \$2 to draw him about town with the placard: "Verdict: Bill Jones not guilty, but insane; jury insane, lawyers insane, court insane in the main." The judge ordered Riddleberger brought into court, fined him \$25 and sentenced him to five days in jail for contempt. At two o'clock on the first night of his imprisonment, he was freed by a mob of about a hundred of his friends. After three days of freedom he was returned to jail to serve out his sentence, chatting with acquaintances on the verandah of the jailhouse and wandering down the streets at will. "Friends of the Senator say he is not in a condition to know what he is doing." – from the *New York Times*, August 16, p.5, col. 6 and August 17, p.2, col. 5; see also August 13-14, and 18.

From the *Dallas Morning News*; Date: 08-21-1887, 16:

The Riddleberger Sensation

New York, Aug. 20 – A Woodstock, VA., special says: In the County Court yesterday a special grand jury consisting of nine men, with T. J. Adams as foreman, investigated Senator Riddleberger's jail delivery of last Saturday morning. After spending the entire day in secret session and examining seven witnesses the brought in indictments. One was against the following parties: John Ludwig, Milton Cooper, William Dinges, Joseph Holtsman and Charles Ruby of Edinburg, the former home of the Senator, and L. M. Hosbour of this place, charged with being leaders of the mob who rescued Riddleberger. The other indictment was made against Deputy Sheriff Hattel for a misdemeanor. Hattel, who was staying in the same room at the jail with Riddleberger when the mob came and demanded the keys and then pried the door off, offered no resistance, though armed. What will come of the case is not known, but the general opinion here is that no one will be convicted. Senator Riddleberger is much better and it is expected will return to jail the first of next week and serve his remaining three days.

The following appeared in the *New York Times* (October 16, 1881):

Riddleberger's Two Duels

Exchanging harmless shots with Wise –

An unfought duel with Mr. Beirne.

Richmond, Va., Oct. 15 – A hostile meeting took place this afternoon, at 4 o'clock, about 10 miles from Richmond Station, between Capt. H.H. Riddleberger and the Hon. G.D. Wise. Four rounds were fired without either being hurt. Mutual explanations and amicable adjustment followed.

In yesterday's first edition of the State there appeared an editorial, written by Richard f. Beirne, junior editor, in reference to the alleged confession of W. Leigh Wilson about the Blair letters, in the course of which Mr. Beirne denounced Capt. H.H. Riddleberger as being unworthy of belief. In the later edition of the same paper there appeared the card of the H. George D. Wise, telegraphed last night, also denouncing Capt. Riddleberger as a liar and a scoundrel. Since that time the public has been much excited, in anticipation of hostile meeting between the men named, and during today there has been much anxiety to hear news from them. At about 6 o'clock this evening Capt. Riddleberger and two friends were seen to alight from a carriage at the office of the Whig, and soon thereafter it became generally reported that he had had a meeting with both. From the best information now obtainable the following particulars are given:

Immediately upon the appearance of the paper containing Mr. Beirne's editorial Capt. Riddleberger sent that gentleman a challenge to mortal combat, and only a short time after the second edition, with Capt. Wise's card, made its appearance, the latter gentleman received a similar invitation from Capt. Riddleberger. All the men left the city last evening to avoid arrest, and all the arrangements were speedily made for the two affairs. Messrs. Beirne and Riddleberger, accompanied by their respective friends, met at 8 o'clock this morning, near Ashland, in Hanover County. But when everything was in readiness and the seconds proceeded to load the weapons it was found that, by an oversight of Mr. Beirne's friends, no caps had been provided for the pistols. The result was that hostilities were, for the time, suspended, as it was impossible to obtain the necessary ammunition within any short time. Capt. Riddleberger would wait no longer and left the ground in order to fulfill the engagement he had with Capt. Wise. The place chosen for the second meeting was near the Henry County turnpike, about 10 miles from Richmond. Both men were promptly on the ground at 4 o'clock this evening. In this case nothing had been left undone or unprovided, and in a few moments the principals were placed opposite each other at a distance of 10 paces, armed with regular

smooth-bore dueling pistols and prepared for deadly work. Upon the first fire Capt. Wise's weapon snapped, but he remained unhurt by his opponent's fire. This was followed by two other rounds, without either of the combatants being hurt. It is reported that Capt. Wise's hat was perforated by a ball, while Capt. Riddleberger's coat was pierced by a ball. At the end of the third round the friends of both stepped forward and declared the vindication had been ample, and that hostilities should cease. A mutual explanation was then made, and an amicable adjustment reached. Both gentlemen are reported to have behaved bravely, holding their positions without change during the whole time occupied by the three rounds. Capt. Wise was accompanied by Mr. Richard Dunlop as second and Dr. George B. Johnston as surgeon. Capt. Riddleberger's second was Capt. A. Rogers, and his surgeon Dr. J.A. Wheat. Col. A. W. Jones, of Georgia, was with the party as referee. All the persons concerned, except Capt. Riddleberger and Col. Jones, are of this city. Capt. Riddleberger had been previously announced to address a Readjuster meeting here tonight, and he reached the city in ample time and fulfilled his engagement.

Later information is to the effect that Mr. Beirne and his second, Mr. Ryan, of the State staff, having replaced the caps which had been lost, made an attempt to have another meeting with Capt. Riddleberger, but failed. They were arrested about 3 p.m. at a point three miles from the scene of the Wise-Riddleberger encounter, where they were awaiting its result. They were each placed under \$1,000 bonds to keep the peace. Capt. Wise was arrested after his fight with Riddleberger. The latter has not yet been arrested.

From the *New Haven Register*, page [2], vol. XLVI, iss. 298, December 19, 1888.

Poor Riddleberger!

Some of the Remarks Called out by His Recent Antics in the Senate

Mr. Riddleberger, of Virginia, is a fair example of the republican leaders of the south (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*).

Senator Blair and Senator Riddleberger are two awful examples of mental and physical intemperance (*Providence Journal*)

Senator Riddleberger's reorganization scheme should include a clause reorganizing Senator Riddleberger (*Philadelphia Times*)

Riddleberger is a fine specimen of a man to attack the dignity of the presiding officer of the senate. He is a barnacle on statesmanship, a disgrace to his party and a reflection upon the intelligence of his constituency (*Danbury Press*)

By the grace of the senate and his own inherent asininity Senator Riddleberger has once more made himself supremely ridiculous. He puts the senate to shame and the state of Virginia to blush. He is a maudlin, brawling, arrogant braggart—a tavern bully—no more or less — (*Philadelphia Record*)

Senator Riddleberger was too drunk yesterday to carry out his assault upon the presiding officer of the senate. But he gave Mr. Ingalls a piece of his disorganized mind and then withdrew his reorganizing resolution. Will it be necessary to attach an inebriate ward to the United States Senate — (*NY World*)

For the first time in many moons all the saloons were closed in Washington on Sunday, and it was proposed to put a stop to Sunday liquor selling there, no matter who suffers. This looks like a cunningly devised plot to drive Senator Riddleberger out of town and back to ole Virginy (*Boston Herald*)

Mr. Riddleberger himself, as a senator of the United States, comes to an end with the present session of congress. The relief will be great. While possessing some of the qualities that help make a courageous and useful legislator, this accident of readjuster politics is at least nine parts clear nuisance. On more than one previous occasion the

eccentricity of the Virginia statesman's conduct has been explained on the ground of his uncontrollable appetite for watermelons and his susceptibility to the dangerous influence of that exciting fruit; but watermelons are certainly out of season at the present time – (*New York Sun*)

Harrison Holt Riddleberger's Obituary in the *New York Times*, Jan 25, 1890

Harrison Holt Riddleberger

Ex-Senator Harrison Holt Riddleberger died yesterday morning at Winchester, VA., after an illness of several weeks. Senator Riddleberger was of German parentage. He was born at Edinburg, Shenandoah County, VA., Oct 4, 1844. His father, Madison Riddleberger, a gunsmith by trade, was for many years a stage driver on the great turnpike running through the Valley of Virginia from Winchester to Staunton. Young Riddleberger received a limited education, and while still a boy was put to work in a store in Harrisburg, and there he remained until he entered the Confederate service as Second Lieutenant in the Tenth Virginia Infantry. After a short service as Lieutenant he was promoted to Captain of a cavalry company and was assigned to duty in the twenty-third Virginia regiment. When General Lee surrendered, Capt. Riddleberger was a prisoner in Fort Delaware.

At the close of the war, Mr. Riddleberger returned to business pursuits but soon deserted them to become editor of a newspaper at Edinburg called the Tenth Legion Banner. He was soon afterward elected to represent Shenandoah in the Virginia House of Delegates. He was to become sole proprietor of the Banner, was reelected to the House of Delegates, and at the expiration of his second term became a candidate to the State Senate, but was defeated.

He then took up the study of law in the office of Henry C. Allen at Woodstock, and was twice elected Commonwealth Attorney. He then ran for the State Senate and was elected. He was twice a presidential elector—in 1876 on the Democratic and in 1880 on the Readjuster ticket. In 1881 he became editor of the Woodstock Virginian, having previously taken charge of the Shenandoah democrat.

In 1881, Mr. Riddleberger was elected to the United States Senate as a Readjuster and during his term of service had frequent contentions with his colleague, Gen. Mahone.

In the Senate, also he opposed the nomination of Mr. Hayard for Secretary of State on the ground that he was more of an Englishman in principle than an American, and that therefore the foreign policy of this country ought not be placed in his hands. Having previously, in the Senate, opposed a resolution offered by Mr. Hayard condemning the London dynamite outrage his later opposition strengthened his popularity among certain classes violently opposed to England and the English.

Harrison H. Riddleberger (1843–1890), *Entry from the Dictionary of Virginia Biography*

Harrison H. Riddleberger was a Confederate veteran from Shenandoah County who helped settle Virginia's controversial prewar debt crisis in the 1880s. After the American Civil War (1861–1865), he became a newspaper publisher and a politician. He served in the House of Delegates for two terms as a Conservative (1871–1875) before entering the Senate of Virginia in 1879 as a Readjuster. In 1882 the assembly passed the Riddleberger Act and two other bills that refinanced two-thirds of the public debt (West Virginia was allocated the remaining one-third) with new lower-interest bonds and helped convert a treasury deficit into a \$1.5 million surplus. Although subsequent legislation modified Riddleberger's law in detail, the act ended a decade of divisive politics about the public debt. Taking a seat in the U.S. Senate the next year, he caucused with the Republicans. While he was serving in Washington, the Readjusters splintered and Riddleberger later became a Democrat. Prone to depression and excessive drinking, he held a reputation as an eccentric and even engaged in two duels on the same day. He died in his home less than a year after his Senate term ended.

Early Years and the Civil War

Harrison Holt Riddleberger was born on October 4, 1843, in the town of Edinburg, in Shenandoah County, and was the son of Madison Riddleberger (originally Riddlesbarger), a stage driver and gunsmith, and Susan Shryock Riddleberger. After receiving his education in local academies and possibly with a tutor, Riddleberger began working in a store in Harrisonburg when he was about fifteen. During the Civil War he joined the 10th Virginia Infantry Regiment and became a second lieutenant on April 22, 1862. Riddleberger was wounded in the foot on October 22, 1862, and the following January was detailed as an enrolling officer in Shenandoah County. He was promoted to captain of Company G of the 23d Virginia Cavalry Regiment on November 21, 1863. Captured in May 1864, Riddleberger was sent to prisons in Wheeling, West Virginia, and Columbus, Ohio. He was transferred to Point Lookout, Maryland, and released on exchange in February 1865, but he was captured again a month later and sent to Fort Delaware, where he remained until the war ended. Riddleberger took the oath of allegiance to the United States and was released on June 15, 1865.

Riddleberger worked in a Harrisonburg store once again before returning to Edinburg, where he taught school, worked as a store clerk, and might have become a photographer. On November 29, 1866, he married Emma V. Belew, the daughter of a physician who was a member of the Senate of Virginia at the time. They had four sons and three daughters. Riddleberger was a founder of an Edinburg newspaper called the Tenth Legion Banner on April 1, 1870, and at the same time published the Shenandoah Democrat, which later moved from Edinburg to Woodstock. In April 1880 he became the editor of the newly established Virginian at Woodstock. As editor for about a year, he supported the Readjuster Party's platform in its columns. In 1884 Riddleberger and his wife acquired a controlling interest in the company that published another Woodstock paper, the Shenandoah Herald. He transformed it into a Republican organ while serving as its editor until his death. His widow continued to publish the Herald until 1894.

Political Career

In 1871 Riddleberger had won election as a Conservative to the House of Delegates representing Shenandoah County, the first of two consecutive two-year terms. He was a member of the Committees of Privileges and Elections, on Retrenchment and Economy, and on Printing, becoming chair of the Committee on Printing in his second term. Riddleberger introduced "An Act to Provide Artificial Limbs for Soldiers Maimed in War, and for other Purposes," which the governor approved on February 20, 1874. It provided an additional \$6,000 to a previously established fund that had been exhausted. The large public debt left over from before the war was one of the most important and controversial problems to arise while Riddleberger served in the House of Delegates. Before he became a member, the assembly had promised to pay the debt and accrued interest in full, but tax revenue was inadequate. In 1872 Riddleberger voted to override the governor's veto of a resolution to stop issuing bonds and to pay only what the state could afford. In March of that year the General Assembly passed a bill he had introduced to reduce the interest rate from 6 to 4 percent.

Riddleberger was a member of the state committee of the Virginia Conservative Party while in the assembly and a presidential elector on the Democratic ticket in 1876. In 1875 he was an unsuccessful candidate for the Senate of Virginia from the district of Page and Shenandoah counties. He had been studying law in the office of Henry Clay Allen and was admitted to the bar that year. He was elected commonwealth's attorney for Shenandoah County in 1877 and held office until he resigned in January 1883.

Riddleberger returned to the assembly as a member of the state senate in December 1879. He had joined the Readjuster Party, a coalition of white and black Republicans and Democrats who wanted to refinance the public debt at a lower interest rate to fund public schools and other services. Riddleberger was one of the party's presidential electors in 1880, pledged to vote for the Democratic Party's nominee. He served on the Committees on Courts of Justice, on Finance, and on Federal Relations, which he chaired. In 1881 and 1882 he sat on the Committee on Roads and Internal Navigation and was chair of the Committee on Finance and Banks.

On February 9, 1880, Riddleberger introduced a compromise bill to refinance the state debt. It would have funded three-fifths of the total debt (West Virginia's allotted portion was two-fifths) at 3 percent interest and included a controversial provision that sharply reduced the ability of bondholders to pay state taxes with the bonds' coupons. The bill passed both houses of the assembly, but the governor vetoed the measure. The following year when the Readjusters ran their first slate of candidates for statewide office, Riddleberger received some endorsements for governor but not the party's nomination. He campaigned for the party's nominees and a conflict resulting from the publication of letters damaging to the Readjuster cause led Riddleberger to challenge the editor of the Richmond State and congressman George Douglas Wise to duels. Riddleberger met both men on October 15, 1881. A lack of pistol caps at the first duel meant that no shots were fired, and three rounds of shots at the second duel resulted in no injuries. After giving a speech to Readjusters in Richmond that evening, Riddleberger was arrested and later released on a \$1,000 bond and a promise not to participate in duels for a year.

Early in 1882, after Readjuster William E. Cameron won election as governor, Riddleberger introduced and the assembly passed three bills to settle the debt question. One required that state taxes be paid only in currency, gold, or silver; one permitted courts to determine whether bond coupons presented for payment were genuine; and one, which became known as the Riddleberger Act, refinanced two-thirds of the public debt with new bonds at 3 percent interest. Cameron signed the laws, which, together with other tax reforms adopted that year, converted a treasury deficit into a \$1.5 million surplus. Although subsequent legislation modified Riddleberger's law in detail, the act ended a decade of divisive politics about the public debt.

In March 1881 Readjuster leader William Mahone had become a member of the U.S. Senate and caucused with the Republican majority. He unsuccessfully nominated Riddleberger for the Senate's sergeant-at-arms. On December 21, 1881, the General Assembly elected Riddleberger to the six-year term in the Senate that began on March 4, 1883. During the session, the assembly considered a bill to remove the penalties for dueling from several people, one of whom was Riddleberger. Despite his request to have his name withdrawn from the bill, his name was kept and the bill passed. The assembly also passed an antidueling bill that session requiring all officeholders thereafter to take an oath that they had not engaged in a duel after May 1, 1882.



US Senator Harrison Holt Riddleberger's Headstone

Riddleberger took his seat in the U.S. Senate on December 3, 1883, the first day of the Forty-Eighth Congressional session. With Mahone, he caucused with the Republican Party majority. During Riddleberger's six-year term, he was a member of the Committee on the District of Columbia and chair of the Committee on Manufactures. He also served on the Committee on Railroads in the Forty-Eighth and Forty-Ninth Congresses, on the Committee on Naval Affairs in the Forty-Ninth and Fiftieth Congresses, and on the Committee on Education and Labor in the Fiftieth Congress. Riddleberger introduced a number of resolutions and bills during his single term, including legislation for

a free bridge across the Potomac River near Georgetown, for a lighthouse at Tangier Island, and to extend the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad to Fort Monroe.

Riddleberger gained a reputation for eccentricity. He was the only senator in March 1885 to oppose confirmation of Delaware Democratic senator Thomas F. Bayard as secretary of state. Bayard had recently introduced a resolution to condemn an Irish separatist attack in London, and Riddleberger was the sole senator to vote against it, stating that it would make it appear that the United States endorsed British policy in Ireland. When Bayard's nomination for secretary of state came up, Riddleberger objected on the grounds that he believed Bayard's principles were too English and that he could not be trusted with foreign policy.

After Mahone's term as senator concluded on March 3, 1887, Riddleberger denounced the former leader of the Readjusters as arrogant and stubborn, and blamed him for the Republican Party's loss of several Virginia congressional seats and the state's electoral votes in 1884. Riddleberger continued to caucus with the Senate's Republicans, giving them a bare majority and control of committee assignments and chairmanships, but by the time his own term concluded on March 4, 1889, he had returned to the Democratic Party.

His personal conduct often attracted attention. In 1887 when one of his clients was declared insane in the Shenandoah County Court, Riddleberger objected so strenuously that the judge had him arrested and jailed for contempt of court. Friends freed him during the night, but he returned to jail on his own. He was prone to depression, suffered from hemorrhoids, and often drank excessively, which was well known. Riddleberger died at his home in Woodstock on January 24, 1890, and was buried in Cedarwood Cemetery in Edinburg.

Time Line of Harrison Holt's Career

October 4, 1843 - Harrison H. Riddleberger is born in Edinburg.

April 22, 1862 - Harrison H. Riddleberger becomes second lieutenant in the 10th Virginia Infantry Regiment.

October 22, 1862 - Harrison H. Riddleberger is wounded in the foot fighting as part of the 10th Virginia Infantry Regiment.

November 21, 1863 - Harrison H. Riddleberger is promoted to captain of Company G of the 23rd Virginia Cavalry Regiment.

May 1864 - Harrison H. Riddleberger is captured by Union forces and sent to prisons in West Virginia, Maryland, and Ohio.

March 1865 - Harrison H. Riddleberger is captured a second time and sent to a Union prison at Fort Delaware until the Civil War's end.

November 29, 1866 - Harrison H. Riddleberger and Emma V. Belew, the daughter of a physician and Virginia state senator, marry.

April 1, 1870 - Harrison H. Riddleberger founds the Edinburg newspaper the Tenth Legion Banner.

1871 - Harrison H. Riddleberger wins election to the House of Delegates as a Conservative from Shenandoah County.

1875 - Harrison H. Riddleberger unsuccessfully runs for the Senate of Virginia.

1875 - Harrison H. Riddleberger is admitted to the bar.

1877–January 1883 - Harrison H. Riddleberger serves as the commonwealth's attorney for Shenandoah County.

December 1879 - Harrison H. Riddleberger, a former delegate, begins his first term in the Senate of Virginia.

February 9, 1880 - Harrison H. Riddleberger introduces a compromise bill to the General Assembly to refinance the state debt, which the governor vetoes.

April 1880 - Harrison H. Riddleberger becomes editor of the newly established *Virginian* at Woodstock.

October 15, 1881 - Harrison H. Riddleberger duels an editor and a congressman over the reputation of the Readjuster Party. No one is injured. He is jailed and later released on bond.

December 21, 1881 - The General Assembly elects Harrison H. Riddleberger to the six-year term in the U.S. Senate that begins on March 4, 1883.

Early 1882 - Harrison H. Riddleberger introduces three bills in the General Assembly that settle the state debt crisis.

February 14, 1882 - The governor signs the Riddleberger Act, named after Harrison H. Riddleberger. It provides for fifty-year, 3-percent bonds on the debt, reduces the principal by about a third, and prohibits the payment of taxes with coupons.

1884–1894 - Harrison H. Riddleberger and his wife own and publish the *Shenandoah Herald*.

March 1885 - Harrison H. Riddleberger is the only U.S. senator to oppose confirmation of the secretary of state, citing questionable concerns.

March 1887 - Harrison H. Riddleberger denounces William Mahone for Republican congressional losses.

March 4, 1889 - Elected as a Republican, Harrison H. Riddleberger ends his Senate term as a Democrat.

January 24, 1890 - Harrison H. Riddleberger dies in his home after suffering several health problems.

Further Reading

Maddex, Jack P. Jr. *The Virginia Conservatives, 1867–1879: A Study in Reconstruction Politics*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970.

Moger, Allen W. *Virginia: Bourbonism to Byrd, 1870–1925*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1968.

Moore, James Tice. *Two Paths to the New South: The Virginia Debt Controversy, 1870–1883*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1974.

The last known child of Samuel and Sarah Riddlesbarger I was a daughter, **Sarah Ann Riddlesbarger**, who was born in Botetourt in 1808, and who appears in the 1830 Census as the head of a household. She married Louis Franklin in 1834. Nothing more is heard of her.

Neither Samuel nor Sarah Riddlesbarger appear in the 1860 Census for Botetourt County. It is believed that Samuel Riddlesbarger I died about 1854, but at the present time, we do not know where Samuel or Sarah are buried. Since it is very likely that they lived on at least part of the original 560 acres purchased by his father, John Riddelsperger in 1787, they probably lie buried in a family plot on the Riddlesbarger farm near John and Catherine, still as yet, unknown to us.

Future Research:

- * Is William Jacob, Samuel's oldest son
- * How are Robert, Isaac, Joseph, and Elias connected to Samuel?
- * Are there two James Riddlesbargers?
- * Where is Samuel Riddlesbarger buried?



Family historians Kim, Dave and Mark visit Franklin County, PA in the Summer of 1998

Chapter Four

Jacob and Josephine Riddlesberger—the German Baptist Connection

We now turn our attention to Jacob Riddlesberger, a third son of John and Catherine, and the immediate ancestor of my line. In order to understand the history of our family line as it descends from John Riddelsperger, it is necessary to know something about the “German Baptist Brethren.”

The “Dunkards” or “Dunkers” as they are derisively called by outsiders—or as they called themselves, the “*Taufers*”—are but one of those countless religious reform movements which spring up overnight and flourish rapidly because of a charismatic founder or a distinctive

theology, only to become so marginalized over time *because* of these distinctive beliefs that they simply fade away or are otherwise absorbed wholesale by later reforming impulses. At one time the German Baptist Brethren boasted of some 100,000 members in the United States, though the greatly mutated church body which still remains—the pacifist “*Church of the Brethren*”—has grown to about 140,000.

The German Baptist Brethren are an interesting lot and it appears that our family line’s commitment to the “Brethren Church” for several generations is an important factor in understanding much of our family history in America. Family pictures dating from the late 1800’s show the distinctive Brethren attire for men—a full beard, a modest black coat, shirt and pants, as well as that worn by Brethren ladies—the plain black dress and apron. Brethren attire was intended to be modest and functional, and was not specifically designed to avoid the supposed “worldliness” of modern contrivances such as buttons and zippers as seen in the clothing worn by the Amish. The choice of simple black clothing originally had more to do with non-conformity and a German disdain for all things British in those years immediately before the Revolutionary War, when bright colored clothing was almost always the exclusive domain of English merchants, whose merchandise became an unwelcome symbol of English suppression of the freedom of the colonies.¹

¹ Ronald J. Gordon, “The Acculturation of the Brethren in the Nineteenth Century,” 3; Martin G. Brumbaugh, A History of the Brethren (Mount Morris, IL: Brethren Publishing House, 1899), 546-548.

The German Baptist Brethren Church was founded by Alexander Mack in 1708.² Mack was a charismatic figure who hailed from Schwarzenau, in the Province of Wittgenstein in Hesse-Cassel, though the Brethren movement was made up of German-speaking peoples from throughout Germany and Switzerland. The origins of the Brethren church are certainly typical of such sects. In the words of Brethren historian Martin Brumbaugh,

Eight pious souls, after careful prayer and prolonged study, relying only on God and the Bible to guide them. . . walked . . . from the house of Alexander Mack to the river Eder . . . Here the pious eight, in the early morning, surrounded by many curious witnesses, knelt in prayer, and these eight, perhaps the first to receive triune immersion in the history of the Protestant Church, then organized a new congregation . . . Thus began the *Taufers* or German Baptist church as a separate organization.³

Though most of the charter members of the Brethren sect were born and bred Reformed or Lutheran, they had become convinced that the major Protestant groups of the day were in grievous doctrinal error. The German Baptists took exception to the both the Anabaptists whom they felt depreciated the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, as well as the historic Protestants (Lutheran and Reformed) whom the *Taufer* felt distorted the biblical teaching by practicing infant baptism and by placing too much confidence in man-made creeds and confessions of faith. Mack felt that the time had come to found a new church, a church based not in creeds, confessions, or the current pietistic distinctives, but a church founded solely upon the New Testament.⁴

Because of Mack's rather novel theological proclivities, it was not long before the German Baptist Brethren began to experience great persecution, even in Schwarzenau, where there was much liberty for similar Anabaptist groups. Even though a few small congregations had been established in the region, in addition to one in Switzerland, the Brethren soon came under tremendous persecution both from the state and from other religious groups, especially the Reformed and Lutherans who were now losing members to the rapidly growing sect. Learning of William Penn's colonial charter granting groups such as the Quakers religious freedom, a number of the original group of Brethren set sail from Rotterdam for the new world in 1719, under the leadership of elder Peter Becker. This was followed by a much larger group under the founder Mack himself, in 1729. As a result of this attempt to remove the persecuted church to the new world, few "Dunkers" remained in Germany and the sect was virtually transplanted *en toto* to Pennsylvania. Two of our ancestors through Josephine Foreman (Wilhelmus Knepper and his wife Veronica Bloem) were among the first followers of Alexander Mack. They were members of the Kreyfelt congregation in Germany, and are listed among the ship *Allen's* passenger manifest of these emigrants, who as Germans, willingly became subjects of the British Crown in exchange for the right to freely practice their faith. The *Allen* departed

² According to an article in the *Newsletter* of the Fellowship of Brethren Genealogists [Fall 1997], Vol. 29., No. 3, 41-48, sixteen Riddlesbergers are listed among the descendants of Alexander Mack. These come through the Secrist line and are the children and grandchildren of John Riddlesberger II and Elizabeth Secrist.

³ Brumbaugh, *A History of the Brethren*, 29.

⁴ Brumbaugh, *A History of the Brethren*, 5-6; 555-559.

Rotterdam in July of 1729, with 59 of the Brethren and their families and arrived in Philadelphia in September of 1729.⁵

Settling first at Germantown, Pennsylvania, and establishing a thriving church, the Dunkard sect grew rapidly and congregations were soon found throughout Eastern Pennsylvania. Other churches were established in



German Baptist (Dunkard) Church in the midst of the Antietam battlefield

Maryland (the most noted was the church at Antietam, founded in 1752, where the Dunkard church was located in the very center of the infamous Civil War battle that took place there in 1862) as well as throughout the Cumberland Valley by the late 1700's—an area that included what is now Franklin County, PA.⁶ Congregations were also established in Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Missouri, Indiana, and Illinois, throughout the first two decades of the nineteenth century, apparently attracting a large number of recent German immigrants into their fellowship, and even converting a few of English descent as well. The German Baptist Brethren followed a very distinct pattern of westward movement, following church planters

and evangelists into the Ohio River Valley and then on into the rapidly expanding territories of Missouri, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois.⁷ This was a journey that our own forebears undertook in the 1840's, either traveling along the Ohio River by boat, or else by wagon along the National Pike which had been established by Congress in 1806 at the behest of Thomas Jefferson. The Pike ran west from Cumberland, Maryland (which is just to the southeast of Franklin County), all the way to Vandalia, Illinois, which was then the state capitol.

But it is the Brethren theological distinctives, which, while responsible for rapid frontier growth, also sowed the seeds for the sect's eventual disappearance. The Brethren stress upon hard work and simple pious living were quite attractive to German-speaking first and second generation immigrants from Germany and Switzerland and who settled in rural farming communities, but did not fare as well in urban areas. The Brethren largely kept to themselves, practiced their distinctive “foot-washing” ritual as prelude to a semi-annual fellowship meal (the Brethren equivalent of the Lord's Supper), sang from a distinctive song-book used by no other groups, called only their own members to preach in local congregations, and practiced their distinctive “triple-immersion” baptism. They had little contact with other Evangelical groups early on, but as its German-speaking members began to americanize, the German Baptist Brethren Church Americanized along with them.

Nor were the Brethren ever able to shake off their biggest public relations problem. As committed pacifists, the Brethren were greatly stigmatized by their refusal to fight in the Revolutionary War, their actions were seen as

⁵ Brumbaugh, A History of the Brethren, 63.

⁶ Donald F. Durnbaugh, The Brethren Encyclopedia (Ambler, PA: Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc., 1980), III.1339-1340.

⁷ Durnbaugh, The Brethren Encyclopedia, II.827 ff.

unpatriotic. Even worse, they were German immigrants who were unpatriotic!⁸ We will look in vain for Riddlebarger war heroes from our immediate line in the Civil War, even though at least seven of our Virginia cousins served in the Confederate Army. David H. Riddelsbarger was 23 years old when the “war between the states” broke out, but he did not serve the Union cause, remaining on the family farm in Lee County, Illinois, even though two of his future brothers-in-law fought for the Union army—Peter and John Garrison, as did his future daughter-in-law’s father, Levi M. Hickey. Over the years the German Baptist Brethren, evolved from the Evangelical-Pietist-Anabaptist sect of rural German immigrants, into one of the four so-called historic “peace churches,” the Church of the Brethren, which, while retaining the foot-washing and pacificism has largely given up other *Taufers* and Evangelical distinctives.

The Kneppers and the Fuhrmans

There is no evidence that John Riddelsperger had any direct involvement with the Brethren, although his wife Catherine and at least two of his sons certainly did. As we have seen, John’s two oldest sons, John and Samuel, were baptized as Lutherans. As evidenced by his presence as a witness to a Reformed baptism in Lancaster in 1736, Jacob’s grandfather, Christian Riddlespurger, was a member of St. John’s Helvetic Reformed Church, and then attended St. John’s Lutheran in Charleston. Both of these churches were confessional and known for being somewhat anti-pietist (and therefore would have little sympathy for the burgeoning Brethren movement). John Riddlesberger II married into the Secrist family, who were prominent members of the German Baptist community (very pietist), and their son, The Rev. John Riddlesberger III, was a Brethren minister.

Our line’s long-standing connection to the German Baptist Brethren Church should be seen in relationship to the Foreman/Fuhrman family, specifically through **Josephine Foreman** (b. August 20, 1793, d. February 7, 1875), who married **Jacob Riddlesberger**, younger brother of John Riddlesberger II, in the second decade of the 19th century. Although, according to one source, Jacob and Josephine “did not confess Christ”⁹ (which may mean they were not members of the local German Baptist church) our family connection to the Dunkards is certainly solidified through Jacob Riddlesberger’s marriage to Josephine, one of the descendants of the Frederick **Fuhrman** (Foreman) family. Her roots on both maternal and paternal sides go all the way back to very origins of the Brethren Church.

Josephine Foreman Riddlesberger’s maternal grandfather, John **Horn**, was a close associate of a certain George Adam Martin, a noted Brethren dissenter and one of the so-called “Seventh-Day Baptists.”¹⁰ In 1762, the

⁸ Brumbaugh, *A History of the Brethren*, 414 ff.

⁹ Galen Brown Royer, *Thirty-Three Years of Missions in the Church of the Brethren* (1914), 382-383.

¹⁰ Brumbaugh, *A History of the Brethren*, 311.

two men, Horn and Martin, became followers of Conrad Biessel, began keeping the Sabbath and joined the Ephrata Society, a radical Brethren cloistered community. The Seventh-Day Baptist Society of Snow Hill was an institution modeled after the Ephrata Society and was founded about 1795. The Rev. John Riddlesberger III (1813-1887), nephew of Jacob Riddlesberger, served as preacher here later and also at “Price’s Church of the Brethren,” in Quincy Township.¹¹

Brethren historian, Martin Brumbaugh, mentions that other Brethren, including Frederick Fuhrman, Peter and Abraham **Knipper/Knepper** (the sons of Wilhelmus Knepper and grand-uncles of Josephine Foreman) were opposed to Martin’s excommunication, although, according to Brumbaugh, Frederick Fuhrman was eventually ordained as an elder in the Brethren Church by Peter Miller and “some of Frederick’s descendants embraced that religion, while others were leaders in the Church of the Brethren.”¹² There is no evidence that Fuhrman ever preached, however. But Horn and Martin married sisters, Catherine and Mary Knepper, who were also daughters of Wilhelmus Knepper. According to Brumbaugh, Horn actually participated in the first Brethren “foot-washing” ritual, while Frederick Fuhrman, Josephine’s grandfather, actually hosted the first Brethren “love feast” in his home. This discovery would have thrilled my grandmother (Dine) who thought that the Brethren foot-washing ceremony was one of the highlights of her Christian faith.

John Horn’s fate is presently unknown to us. A “John Horn,” is buried in the Knauertown Cemetery in French Creek, near Morgantown in Chester County, PA. Nearly all of those buried in the cemetery were Seventh-Day Baptists, as was Mr. Horn. According to the headstone, Horn died January 30, 1809, at the age of 72. A “Margaret Horn” and son John who died at age 19, are also buried here.¹³ If this “John Horn,” is the former husband of Catherine Knepper, he subsequently remarried and would have been about 25 when he joined the Ephrata society. Josephine Foreman’s maternal great-grandfather was Wilhelmus Knepper (Knipper), who was born in Germany in 1706 and as detailed above, is listed among male passengers onboard the *Allen*, which carried Alexander Mack and 59 German Baptists and their families to William Penn’s colony from Rotterdam. Wilhelmus Knepper was one of the first followers of Mack, and a member of the Kreyfelt Brethren congregation in Germany. Mr. Knepper was subsequently imprisoned in his late teens by German authorities for his religious beliefs and ended up spending nearly four years in prison before coming to America.¹⁴ Knepper is believed to have died about 1749, in Cumberland County, PA. His wife, Veronica Bloem (Bloom), listed with him as one of the original German Brethren, is also mentioned in a Pennsylvania State warrant for 100 acres of land dated August 2, 1765. Little if anything else is known of her.

¹¹ The History of Franklin County p. 614; Donald Durnbaugh, The Brethren Encyclopedia III.1194 ff.

¹² Antietam Ancestors ,Vol. VI, 1991, 20.

¹³ “PA Friends to Keithians to 7th Day Baptists” web-page.

¹⁴ Brumbaugh, A History of the Brethren, 63. See also Donald F. Durnbaugh, The Brethren Encyclopedia II.703.

Josephine Foreman's paternal grandfather, Frederick Foreman (Fuhrman), is known to have first purchased land in what is now Franklin County in September of 1760. As early as March 6, 1749, Frederick is mentioned as a neighbor of John Marley, whose farm was near present-day Waynesboro.¹⁵ At the time of his death (some time after 1798) Foreman owned 380 acres which, were still in the possession of his descendants for generations to come. Frederick and wife Nancy (about whom we also know very little) lie buried in the family graveyard on Foreman land.

Incidentally, the volume *American Revolutionary Soldiers of Franklin County* mentions that Frederick Foreman served under Captains William Findley and Samuel Royer in the Eighth PA. Regiment, from 1779-80-81.¹⁶ This was the same unit in which John Riddelsperger served as 2nd Lieutenant. This is quite interesting, given the German Baptist Brethren's avowed pacificism. Perhaps the Foremans—as German immigrants—hated the British Crown and good King George II more than they loved God!

Josephine's father is Daniel **Foreman** (b. Unknown, d. before 1838) who may be the 70-80 year old male listed in the 1830 Pennsylvania Census, living in the home of his son Jonathan Foreman. According to *American Revolutionary Soldiers of Franklin County*, Daniel also served as a private under Capt. Samuel Royer in the years 1779-1782 in the same unit in which his father served.¹⁷ Little is known about Daniel Foreman, though his older brother Frederick inherited his father's land and had many descendants.

Jacob and Josephine Riddlesberger

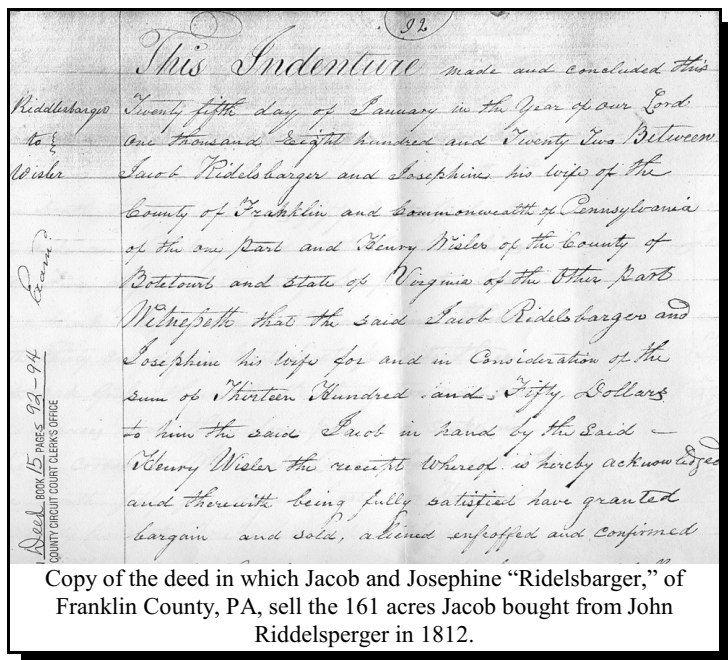
The Foreman family and the Riddlesbergers were frequently and thoroughly connected. Jonathan Foreman (Josephine's younger brother), married Elizabeth Riddlesberger, daughter of John and Elizabeth (Secrist) Riddlesberger, and a niece of her husband, Jacob. Two of Josephine's sons, Jacob and Samuel married Foreman cousins, Hannah and Mary Ann, both daughters of Abraham Foreman, son of David, and grandson of Frederick. This practice of marrying cousins might explain, in part, some of the odder family traits.

One of the great frustrations about genealogical research is coming across an ancestor who left very little information behind. At this point, little is known about **Jacob Riddlesberger**. He is identified in Henry Riddlesberger's "Notes" as the third son of John and Catherine Riddelsperger, as well as the husband of Josephine Foreman. There are only four places known to me where his name appears in any official document or historical record, and even one of these is a bit questionable.

¹⁵ Antietam Ancestors, Vol. VI, 19.

¹⁶ Virginia Shannon Fendrick, American Revolutionary War Soldiers of Franklin County, Pennsylvania (Chambersburg, PA: Historical Works Committee of the Franklin County Daughters of the American Revolution, 1944), 98.

¹⁷ Fendrick, American Revolutionary War Soldiers of Franklin County, Pennsylvania, 98.



The first and most questionable of these references to Jacob is found in the 1820 Federal Census for Franklin County. A Jacob "**Littlesbarger**" is listed in Washington Township. It is highly likely that this is a misspelling of "Riddelsbarger." According to the census, there are two males in the home under ten years of age (corresponding to the known ages Jacob's two oldest sons, **Daniel** and **Jacob**). There is one male between sixteen and twenty-six years of age (possibly Jacob, but perhaps a cousin), and another male between twenty-six and forty-five (probably Jacob). Both adult males are described as "engaged in agriculture." If latter male is our Jacob

Riddlesberger—and, given the way the surname is repeatedly misspelled in the various federal censuses for Franklin County, coupled with the fact that there is no known "LITTLESBARGER" family in the area—this would make the date of Jacob's birth some time between 1770 and 1794. Assuming that Jacob was born after the family moved to Botetourt County in 1787, this would put Jacob among the youngest of the children of John and Catherine Riddelsperger. In the 1880 Census, Jacob's son Daniel reported that Jacob's place of birth was Virginia. John Riddelsperger did not move to Botetourt until 1787. If this chronology is correct, this would also mean that John was in his early forties when he fathered Jacob—John's father Christian had four children while in his fifties—and that John's wife Catherine was quite younger than her husband. This would also mean that Jacob was at least seventeen years younger than his oldest brother, John Riddlesberger II (b. 1770), who likewise moved back to Franklin County, about 1822.

Rifley James	2	
Shank Jacob		
Cochran George	1	
Pralmer Andrew	4	
Byrd Mary	1	
Littlesbarger Jacob	2	2
Josephus Peter		
Sontagme Daniel	2	
Wetly Jacob June	2	
Winland Marven	1	
Good John		
Werner John		1

The Name Jacob "LITTLESBARGER" appears in the 1820 Federal Census for Franklin County, PA. This is very likely a misspelling of Riddlesbarger

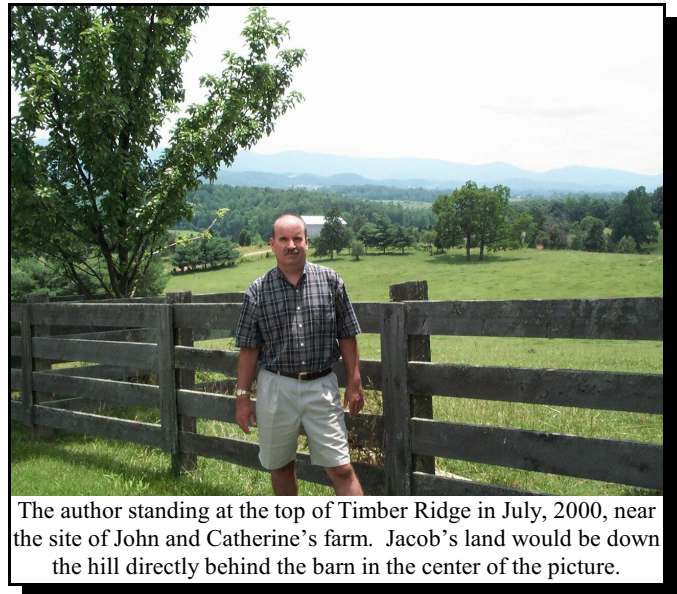
In 1820, Josephine was 27 years of age. Jacob and Josephine's firstborn son, **Daniel**, was not born until March of 1814. All of their children were born in PA. A second son, **Jacob**, was born in 1816. There are also three females under sixteen living in the home as well (believed to be **Mary**, **Susan** and perhaps **Sarah**), and one female

between the ages of sixteen and twenty-six. This female's age does not correspond exactly with Josephine's known age. She was 26 (or had just turned 27 at the time, depending upon the date the census was enumerated). This, too, is possibly an error, since all the other data in the census can be corroborated from other sources. A third son, **Samuel** was born in 1823, and does not appear in the 1820 census. This fact further bolsters my contention that this is Jacob Riddlesbarger (not "Littlesbarger"). If Jacob was born after 1787, this would make him a few years older than his wife.

Jacob appears in two other documents linking directly him to John and Catherine, both of

which seem to lend credence that he was their youngest son. According to land records found in the Botetourt County Court records, on November 24, 1812, Jacob Riddlesbarger, then of Franklin County, received 141 acres of land from John and Catherine, in a transaction called an "indenture of bargain sale."¹⁸ Such a sale probably indicates that the grantor, John Riddelsperger, agreed to take a lien against the property, because, presumably, Jacob did not have the full purchase price of \$2333.33, in cash. In other words, the sale was seller-financed, a common practice before modern banks and mortgages. The parcel was likely part of that originally purchased in 1787. Such a financing arrangement was common among family members, and it is hard to imagine John and Catherine holding such a note for a niece, nephew, or cousin.

A second deed also appears in Botetourt County records, when, in 1822, Jacob and wife Josephine, both living in Franklin County, sold this land, which Jacob bought ten years earlier, to a Mr. Henry Misler. Jacob did not make out too well in the deal, selling the land for only \$1350.00, an amount significantly less than the original purchase price. This particular deed is important to family historians for several reasons. For one thing, the deed places Jacob in Franklin County, PA, and indicates that Josephine, his wife, was privately interviewed by the sitting judge to ensure that she concurred with the sale, and that it was not done without her knowledge. To indicate this, she made her mark on the final document.¹⁹ This proves the marital connection between Jacob and Josephine.



The author standing at the top of Timber Ridge in July, 2000, near the site of John and Catherine's farm. Jacob's land would be down the hill directly behind the barn in the center of the picture.

¹⁸ Botetourt County, VA., Deed Book 11, dated November 24, 1812, 79-80 [certified copy].

¹⁹ Botetourt County, VA., Deed Book 15, dated January 25, 1822, 92-94 [certified copy]. A Foreman researcher, Julia Wells, found little trace of Jacob either, noting only that Josephine Foreman married an "unknown" Riddlesberger, who was a descendent of John Riddlesberger of Franklin County. See Mrs. Cecil Wells, "Frederick Foreman and His Descendants," Antietam Ancestors, Volume VI, 1991, 23.

But there are other reasons why this deed is of interest in tracing our families' roots back to John Riddelsperger. From the 1820 census record, it is clear that Jacob was living in Franklin County as a young man, probably in his mid-30's. Since many Franklin County documents were destroyed when Confederate raiders burned the county courthouse in Chambersburg, some records from this period may be lost to us altogether. Perhaps Jacob was living on land that his father still owned, and this may, in part, explain why our family had no memory of the Virginia connection. By 1822, Jacob had cut all ties to Virginia, by 1827 he was removed from his father by death, and then from his brother Samuel and his nephews by distance. If Jacob and John Jr. were both members of the German Baptist Church—which opposed slavery—and whose members moved frequently between Franklin County in PA and Botetourt County in VA, this would provide an explanation as to why Jacob and John Jr. did not stay in Virginia. In any case, now in Pennsylvania, our line eventually lost all connections with our Virginian cousins.

Jacob Riddlesberger's date of death place of burial are unknown to us, although there are a number of unmarked graves in the Snow Hill Cemetery, where John Riddlesberger II's family is buried. Eschewing the very thought of calling undue attention to oneself, it was a common Brethren practice to leave only the deceased's initials on the headstone, which was often carved from common fieldstone. These stones eventually melted away with the cold, rain and heat of summer.²⁰ Since Jacob is not listed in the 1830 Census for Franklin County (wife Josephine is listed as the head of the house) he likely died before that date. His youngest son, Samuel, was born in 1823, and is listed in the 1830 census. Assuming Jacob was born after 1787, and died in the late 1820's, he would have been in his late thirties, leaving behind a wife, and three sons, **Daniel, Jacob, and Samuel**, and three daughters, **Mary, Susan, and Sarah**. Such an early death of the head of the house, may explain why family tradition indicates that Jacob's children worked on the family farm, did not attend school full-time, and lived in poverty.

We know a bit more about Jacob's wife and children than we do about Jacob. **Josephine Foreman Riddelsberger's** name appears in several Pennsylvania State Records. On January 6, 1828, she released to her brother Jonathan, her share of the land belonging to their father, Daniel Foreman. According to a deed notation in the Chambersburg Courthouse, "Josephine Riddelsberger of Washington Township has received \$1509.66 from brother Jonathan Foreman in payment for father Daniel Foreman's land, purchased by Jonathan November 4, 1823."²¹ She is also listed in the work *American Revolutionary Soldiers*, under the entry for 2nd Lt. "John Riddelsberger," where mention is made that in 1830 both she and Jonathan Foreman, were heirs to the estate of Sally Foreman Horn—an estate which in turn had left to her by her father John Horn. This same volume mentions her son Jacob Riddelsberger, his wife Hannah, both of "Quincy" Township.²²

²⁰ Donald F. Durnbaugh, "Early History, The Church of the Brethren Past and Present (Elgin, IL: The Brethren Press, nd), 9.

²¹ Franklin County, PA., Deed Book 20, 47.

²² Fendrick, American Revolutionary War Soldiers of Franklin County, Pennsylvania, 226.

As mentioned above, Josephine, apparently, was widowed by 1830, as she is listed in that year's census as the head of a household. She would have been 37. Along with her two youngest sons and their wives, Jacob and Hannah, Samuel, and Mary, she moved to Franklin Grove, Illinois, in 1845. This was the same year that a number of Brethren families left Pennsylvania for Ogle and Lee counties in Illinois. She lived some thirty years as a widow in her new home, and is buried in the German Baptist Cemetery (the "Emmert" cemetery) near Franklin Grove. Born in 1792, She died on February 7, 1875, at age 82 years, six months and 18 days. Her gravestone contains an image of the "tree of life," an indication of her Christian faith.

It is believed that **Mary** Riddlesberger was born in 1820, and married a man whose last name was **Larue**, since she appears in the 1870 census for Franklin County, Ill. Mary was born in Pennsylvania, is listed as being 50 years of age and the head of the house, in which her mother Josephine was also living—she is age 77, was born in Pennsylvania, with no real property. This probably means that Mary had been widowed by this time. **Sarah Riddlesberger** is believed to have married John M. **Hinkle** on September 28, 1845 in Ogle County, Ill, which is adjacent to Lee County. She is believed to have been born before 1820, although marriage records for the State of Illinois, list her date of birth as 1825 in Pennsylvania. Sarah died in December of 1854 at about thirty years of age. Given the fact that she married Mr. Hinkle in 1845, she must have met and then married him shortly after her arrival in Illinois. Nothing, presently, is known of **Susan Riddlesberger**.



Josephine Foreman Riddlesberger's headstone in the Emmert Cemetery, near Franklin Grove, Ill. Her husband Jacob, had died many years before, leaving her a widow for nearly 45 years

Josephine's oldest son, and our immediate ancestor, Daniel, arrived in the Franklin Grove area in 1857, twelve years after his mother and brothers and sisters. It is to his story that we now turn.

Future Research:

* Where is Jacob buried, and when did he die?

Chapter Five

West to Illinois—Daniel Riddlesberger (1814-1888) and his brothers, Jacob and Samuel



Daniel and Susan Riddlesberger's headstones in the Emmert Cemetery in near Franklin Grove, Il.

Daniel Riddlesberger (also spelled “Riddelsbarger” in the 1860 Census) was born in Washington Township in Franklin County, Pennsylvania, on March 8, 1814. The oldest son of Jacob and Josephine Riddlesberger, Daniel was born during the presidency of James Madison while the nation still at war with England. He died in his seventy-fourth year on December 8, 1888, the same year Benjamin Harrison was elected to be the twenty-third president of the United States. Daniel lies buried in the Emmert (or “Dunkard”) Cemetery in China Township, near his former home in Franklin Grove in Lee County, Illinois.

According to census records and family notes, Daniel and his family arrived in Lee County from Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, some time in the late 1850's—his youngest daughter, Anna M. was born in Pennsylvania in 1856. The 1850 Federal Census for Quincy Township in Franklin County,¹ indicates that Daniel “Rettlesberger” worked as a laborer and that his children were all in school. Apparently, he left Pennsylvania with the goal of purchasing or homesteading his own farm. In the 1860 Census for Lee County, Illinois, his occupation is listed as

“farmer.”

Daniel Riddlesberger married **Susan Barncord** about 1835. There are no extant Franklin County marriage records from that period, and the German Baptist Brethren likewise did not keep such records of weddings or baptisms. Susan's father, **Jacob Barncord** (b. December 4, 1787, d. February 1, 1853), was likely the son of Peter Barncord of the Greencastle area of Antrim Township, the area just to the west of Waynesboro.² According to the book *American Revolutionary War Soldiers of Franklin County*, Susan's father, Jacob, and her uncle Peter, both

¹ Quincy Township was created from the northern part of Washington Township in 1838. John Riddelsperger's land was located near what is now the border of Washington and Quincy Township.

² Information supplied by the Waynesboro Historical Society in correspondence of August 2, 1998. The information is culled from various census, death, orphan's court, and other records.

served under Captain Walter McKinnie in the 8th PA Regiment from 1781-82.³ Nothing concrete is known of Susan's mother, although her father later married Catherine Brandt about 1830, after Susan's mother had died. Brandt was a German immigrant by way of Ireland. According to land records, census data and probated wills, the Barncords remained in the Greencastle-Waynesboro area for some time.⁴ The 1860, 1870, and 1880 censuses for Ashton township of Lee County, indicates that Susan Barncord was born in Pennsylvania, and her date of birth was March 16, 1816. She died two years after her husband on May 24, 1890 and is buried next to him in the Emmert Cemetery.⁵

Together with their seven children, (**David Henry, Sarah, Mary, Jacob, John W., Susan** and **Ann M.**) Daniel and Susuan Riddlesberger arrived in the China Township area of Lee County at some point between 1856 and 1860, apparently to be near three other local residents, Daniel's brothers **Jacob** and **Samuel** Riddlesberger, (spelled variously as "Riddlesberger" in the 1860 Census, or "Riddlesbarger" in cemetery records), and his mother **Josephine Foreman Riddlesberger**, who had arrived in Lee County about fifteen years earlier. Handwritten notes, found in the Franklin Grove library, indicate that Daniel and Susan moved to "our village (i.e., Franklin Grove) from Waynesboro, Pennsylvania."

In moving west when they did, the Riddlesbergers had no idea that they left Waynesboro just a few years before the citizens of the Cumberland Valley would watch the swaggering soldiers of Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia pass through the area as they headed north to Carlisle before turning south again on their way to a major defeat at the hands of the Federal army at Gettysburg early on July 1-3, of 1863. Throughout their foray into the state of Pennsylvania, Confederate soldiers helped themselves to produce, whiskey, wagons, horses, mules, and other farm animals owned by the local citizens, though at General Lee's instance, payed for them in Confederate dollars. Waynesboro miraculously escaped the brunt of Rebel activity, or so it seemed, until General Ewell's retreating column crossed South Mountain at Fairfield gap and then marched through the city before turning south on its way to Hagerstown where they re-crossed the Potomac. As the defeated and exhausted Confederate Army left the Cumberland, they took much of Waynesboro's livestock and produce with them.⁶ One of the members of the Royer family, who lived near-by, reportedly suffered a heart-attack and died due to stress brought about by the loss of all of his horses and most of his farm animals at the hands of the hungry and increasingly opportunistic Rebel army.⁷

³ Virginia Shannon Fendrick, American Revolutionary War Soldiers of Franklin County (Historical Works Committee, DAR, Franklin County, PA, n.d.), 301, 305-306.

⁴ Information supplied by the Waynesboro Historical Society in correspondence of August 2, 1998.

⁵ Burial Records for the Emmert Cemetery in Franklin Grove, were supplied by the Lee County, Illinois, Historical Society.

⁶ Information supplied by the Waynesboro Historical Society in correspondence of August 2, 1998.

⁷ Royer family Webpage.

Worthless Confederate money offered little consolation to those whose livelihood ended up as booty for an invading army.

Our knowledge about Daniel and Susan's children varies greatly. Based upon cemetery records, we do know their youngest daughter, **Susan Elizabeth**, died on April 1, 1869 at sixteen years of age and is buried near her parents. The youngest son, **John W.** married Lucy **Hilles** but then had his last name legally changed to "Franklin" at some time in the 1870's. He is regarded as a traitor and a rat! He and his wife had an unknown son and a daughter. In addition to David Henry, Daniel's other son, **Jacob Bixby ("Jake")**, later married Catherine **Bachman**, moved to Paola, Kansas., but made his way to Belleville, Kansas, by 1890 (where his older brother David H. resided). Jacob and his wife had three children, **Albert**, **Clarence** and **Ida**. Albert eventually stayed in Paola, Kansas (Miami County). Several of Albert's descendants now live in the Bartlesville, OK area. **Mary Catherine** married Chilian **Buck** in 1864 and had six children, Emery Allen, Hazel Fern, William, Dorsey Chronister, Ada Blanche, and Nona Ola. **Anna Riddelsbarger**, married Samuel **Sollenberger**, had two sons, Orville and Arlyn, and two daughters, Ila and Maude, and moved to Fairbury, Nebraska, across the Nebraska state line, from Belleville, Kansas.⁸ Interestingly enough, this is also where my father-in-law, M. D. "Doc" Nutter, was born. His mother's family were also Dunkards and would have, in all likelihood, attended church with the Sollenbergers. It is truly a small world!

There is a great deal of quality information about this period in our families' history confirming that Daniel, Jacob and Samuel are brothers. The 1830 Census for Franklin County, PA, shows Josephine Riddlesberger as the head of a household in Washington Township with three sons, one aged between 15-20, one between 10-15, and one between 5-10. This corresponds perfectly to the known ages of Daniel, Jacob and Samuel who would have been 16, 14 and 7 at the time. Further evidence comes from handwritten notes found in the Franklin Grove library which describe various members of the Riddlesberger families who moved there from PA. Daniel, Jacob, and Samuel and their families are all treated in sequence though there is no explicit mention of any relationship. There are many other indicators as well: the common membership in the German Baptist Church; the use of distinctive Christian names given their children such as "Daniel," "Jacob," "Susan" and the frequently re-occurring name "Emery"; and the fact that Daniel and Jacob were both residing in the same portion of Franklin County, PA before arriving in Lee County. The evidence, therefore, that the three are brothers is quite conclusive. The 1840 Pennsylvania Census shows a Daniel "Ritlesperger" between the ages of 20-29 along with his wife and two small children—corresponding to the ages of David Henry and oldest sister Sarah—as well as a "Jacob Ritlesperger" and his wife, residing in Quincy Township of Franklin County. Quincy and Washington Townships adjoin one another, and it is possible that these tracts of land straddle the dividing line between the townships. This was the case with Foreman land that David Foreman sold to his daughter and son-in-law, Jacob and Hannah Riddlesberger, who in turn sold it to Jonathan Foreman, Jacob's uncle and Hannah's cousin, and who in turn was married to Elizabeth Riddlesberger, a cousin of Jacob. It is a wonder we don't all have three eyes!

⁸ This information came from "family notes" found in Franklin Grove public library.

The Federal Census of 1860 for Lee County indicates that Josephine Riddlesberger was living with Jacob and his family. Josephine was 77 at the time of the census (having been born in Pennsylvania in 1793). She died five years later on February 7, 1875, at the age of 82. Like her three sons and many of her grandchildren, Josephine awaits the resurrection in the Emmert cemetery near Franklin Grove, Illinois. Her son, and my ancestor, Daniel, died on December 8, 1888, followed by his wife, Susan, just two years later. All their children had moved away by this time and no known Riddlesberger descendants remain in the Lee County area. Daniel's death was noted in the *Dixon Evening Telegraph* of January 23, 1889, but there was no obituary.

According to the *History of Lee County* as well as local cemetery records, **Jacob Riddlesberger** was born "of true German ancestors" in Franklin County, PA, on March 30, 1816 and died in Lee County on June 14, 1887.⁹ His wife, **Hannah Foreman** (May 14, 1817-January 22, 1901) was also born in Pennsylvania, and was the daughter of Abraham Foreman, a second cousin, also of German ancestry. They arrived in Lee County in 1845 (the year Florida and Texas became states) traveling to the area with a number of Brethren families in a covered wagon from near Hagerstown, Maryland, (Waynesboro, PA, is just about 12 miles northeast of Hagerstown) settling first in Oregon township and then finally settling on the north side of Franklin Grove.¹⁰ At the time, Franklin Grove was but a small hamlet, until the *Chicago and Northwestern Railroad* reached the area in 1854. The Franklin Grove area has been described as "one of the fairest portions of Illinois," and was a great place to establish a farm.

The creek which flows through it into the Rock River affords much picturesque scenery. Along its banks, in places, the sandstone walls reach a height of fifty feet. The beauty of this stream is unsurpassed, if equaled, by anything in northern Illinois, excepting only a little of the Illinois River. The different varieties of oak, hickory, walnut, elm, cherry, maple, and the soft woods except pines were found here in large trees by the settlers. Much of the large timber has been cut off, and some of the ground is now tilled, but the area of the grove by the growth of young trees has been increased. For several years after the pioneers came deer were seen in the grove; there were also a few wild cats. Prairie wolves and badgers were numerous. The bluffs along the creek contain much valuable building material.¹¹

Jacob and Hannah had four children: **Mary E. (Price)**, **Ann Catherine (Miller)**, **Susan M. (Brecunier)**, and **Daniel F.**—all of whom lived out most of their lives in the Franklin Grove/China Township area. Together with several local German families (the Emmerts and the Lahmans), Jacob and Samuel Riddlesberger and their wives hosted the first meetings of the German Baptist Brethren church in their home soon after their arrival in the area in 1845.¹² As a prominent early settler of China Township, the local history recounts that Jacob Riddlesberger was, reared a farmer. He had very limited means of procuring an education, though by close observation and extensive reading he has gained a fair business education on all subjects. Pertaining to practical business he

⁹ *History of Lee County*, (Chicago: H. H. Hill and Company, 1881), 860 ff. Note, there is no author listed for the volume.

¹⁰ *History of Lee County*, 592.

¹¹ *History of Lee County*, 592.

¹² *History of Lee County*, 592.

is one of our best posted men. In the fall of 1837 he was united in marriage to Miss Hannah Foreman After his marriage Mr. Riddelsbarger engaged in a mixed business of farming, butchering and saw-milling till 1845, when he came to Lee County, justly believing that on the broad, beautiful prairies of Illinois he would find ample room to bring into practice that early training which has characterized his principles through life. After his arrival here he at once bought a farm and engaged in farming and stock-raising, living on his first farm thirty years, and then fulfilled a long-cherished desire to see settled on the old home one of his children. He sold out to his son-in-law, Mr. J. L. Miller, and built for himself a residence on a little farm of eleven acres near Franklin Grove, and is now enjoying the blessings which result from a life of industry and conscientious living Mr. Riddelsbarger and family are members of the German Baptist church, an organization for which he has given liberally.¹³

According to the 1870 census for China Township, Jacob's son, **Daniel F.** (1845-1918) was a local printer, but for a time was an engineer in Chicago. Daniel F. married Miss Mary A. **Bailey** (1846-1926) and had two known children, a son and a daughter. They are both buried in the Franklin Grove cemetery. Their oldest son, **Elson B. Riddelsbarger**, also remained in the area, and according to the *Dixon Evening Telegraph* (October 28, 1930), though he was detained "against his will" for two years in the county slammer under the watchful eyes of Sheriff Ward Miller. Elson was arrested for refusing to report the details of his accounting of the estate of his late father, Daniel F., and disobeying a court-order to give full disclosure. He was not released until other relatives raised an amount equal to that which the court determined was due the estate. Elson's wife, the former Ida A **Maronde**, died at the age of 79, on January 3, 1947 in Como, in Whiteside County, Illinois—just to the west of Lee County. Ida was born near Chicago in 1867 and moved to the area as a child, and was married to Elson on September 2, 1888. They outlived two sons, Warren and Paul (who died of Tuberculosis at age 19) and were the last of the Riddelsbargers still residing in the area. Elson lived to age 87, also dying in Como, Illinois in November of 1954.

One of Jacob's daughters, **Mary E. Riddelsbarger**, was born in 1840 and married a **Mr. David M. Price**—"Price" (German, "Priesz") was a common and prominent name in German Baptist Brethren circles—and died on March 25, 1880, at the young age of 40 years, 5 months, 5 days. She is buried in the Emmert Cemetery near her parents. Mary's children, Lester, Beryl and Gertie are mentioned in Jacob Riddelsbarger's will. Her sister **Susan Maria**, was born near Hagerstown, in Maryland (which is right across the state line from Franklin County, PA), on May 25, 1843 and died in Franklin Grove many years later on May 14, 1929, at age 85. She too is buried in the Emmert Cemetery. On February 22, 1863 she married Peter L. **Brecunier** (born in Huntingdon County, PA on February 14, 1834), and together they had two sons, Quimby A. and Byron L. According to her obituary "she became a member of the Brethren Church in June 1864, and lived a consistent Christian life." Her husband Peter, was "one of the most successful farmers" in the area, eventually purchasing a farm of some 205 acres, one "of the model farms of Ashton township." The Brecuniers were also Brethren.

Ann Catherine Riddelsbarger, born in Franklin County, PA. on April 27, 1841, married a Mr. Jacob L. **Miller**, on December 18, 1860. According to the Lee County history, Jacob Miller was "among the few young men

¹³ *History of Lee County*, 860. Both Jacob "Riddelsberger" and his brother Samuel appear in an 1868 subscription list for the *Christian Family Companion*, a Brethren publication. See *Brethren Roots*, Vol. 31, Winter 1999, num. 4., 76.

who came to Lee County poor and without means many years ago, and have since by industry, hard work and close attention to business, became wealthy, prosperous and comfortably established in life. He is a son of Samuel and Mary (Lahman) Miller, and was born (as was his wife) in Franklin County, Pennsylvania, June 23, 1835.” Jacob Miller eventually bought out his father-in-law Jacob Riddelsbarger, and together he and his wife had four children, two of whom, Elmer E. and Orvil P., were still alive in 1881, when the history of Lee County was written. The Millers were likewise, members of the German Baptist Church. There are, apparently, Miller and Brecunier descendants still living in the Franklin Grove area.

One interesting anecdote involves the very grizzly murder in the fall of 1847, of a Mr. Moody Thompson and his friend Olig Gamerson, two local residents both found dead in their cabin with their heads split open by an axe. According to local accounts their money chest “was found broken open and rifled of its contents. Gold coin to the amount of \$60 or \$70 was found remaining in the chest. Wednesday evening Thompson had been to Mr. Riddelsbarger’s to get a bag of corn. He was not seen alive after this; but one feed for his hogs seemed to have been taken out of the bag of corn . . . Considerable effort was made to find the criminal or criminals, but the perpetrator of the crime has never been found, and a veil of mystery hangs over the horrible deed.”¹⁴ Jacob Riddelsbarger was the last to see them alive and this certainly must have been a horrific shock to him and to his family.

Samuel Riddlesberger was born July 1, 1823, also in Franklin County, Pennsylvania. His wife **Mary A. Foreman**, also a second cousin and sister of Jacob’s wife Hannah, was born in Pennsylvania on January 14, 1824. In 1854, he purchased some 40 acres of land from the State of Illinois for the whopping price of \$3.50 per acre, and lived next door to brother Jacob, according to the 1878 map of China Township. According to census and cemetery records Samuel and Mary were quite prolific. Some thirteen children were born to them, all in Illinois after they moved west from Pennsylvania in the 1840’s. These include; Joseph, William, John, Sarah, Hannah, Lydia and Emery. But Samuel and Mary also knew great sorrow as five of their children died quite young: **Marcus**—d. May 3, 1866 at 5 years of age; **Josephine**—d. September 10, 1846, 1 year old; **Ann E.**—d. January 25, 1849, 1 year old; **Mary G.**—d. June 5, 1851, 1 year old; and **Emma J.**—August 11, 1863, 6 years of age; all are buried in the Emmert cemetery near their parents.

Joseph S. (1848-1930), Samuel’s oldest son, married Miss Ellen E. **Cruey** (1856-1939) in December of 1873. It is also quite likely that during the Summer of 1870, Joseph worked as a farm-hand on the farm of **David Henry Riddelsbarger**, as the 1870 census for Marion Township, Marshalltown, Iowa, indicates that a “Joseph Riddelsbarger,” then 22 years of age, lived with David Henry’s family serving as a “farm laborer.” According to the “handwritten notes,” Joseph’s wife, Ellen, was a resident of Marshalltown, and the two apparently met while Joseph was working for his cousin, David Henry. Joseph and Ellen returned to Franklin Grove in 1906, and took in two young men (Andrew Naylor and Roy Plowman) who were “partially adopted.” Joseph lived to the ripe old age of 82! He and his wife are also buried near Joseph’s siblings in the Emmert cemetery.

¹⁴ History of Lee County, 581.

Marriage records indicate that Samuel's youngest son, **Emery N. Riddlesbarger** (born 1857) was wed to a Miss Mary I. **Powelson** (April 15, 1869-September 8, 1916). Mary died quite young (47) and is buried in the Franklin Grove cemetery. After his wife's death, Emery moved first to Reiback, Iowa, and then later to Washington. They had three children, sons Glen S. and Wilbur P. and daughter Netha. Another of Samuel's sons, John H. married Almira **Baldwin** and had three unknown sons and a daughter, Edna. He too moved to Iowa and died in 1922. Nothing is known of Samuel's son **William**. Three of Samuel and Mary's daughters, **Lydia** (Ella), **Hannah** and **Sarah** all married local men. Lydia, who lived to age 98, married Frederick **Trottnow**, and had two sons, Ivan and Kenneth. Hannah married O. E. **Orner** and had no children. Sarah married Lewis **Meyers** and had five children, an unknown son, Ralph, Charles, Verna, and Mary.

According to one of the published histories of the Brethren, we find the following entry for Samuel Riddlesberger:¹⁵

Member of General Mission Board, 1884-1894

To Jacob and Josephine (Foreman) Riddlesberger, residents of Waynesboro, Franklin County, Pennsylvania, was born on July 1, 1823, a son whom they called Samuel. He was the fourth child in a family of three sons and two daughters. Poverty marked the pathway of the parents, who were engaged in farming, and as soon as Samuel was old enough to become a bread winner, even in a small way, he was put out to work on the farm. Thus it was that he received but two months' training in the schoolroom, and grew up to manhood a hard-working man. In 1845 he came to Franklin Grove, Illinois, and engaged in farming. He was a successful business man and farmer, seeking "to do good unto all men" and enjoyed the accumulation of some property in his advanced years.

Though his parents did not confess Christ, they sought to instill proper ideals into the hearts of their children. Judging from Samuel's interest in church work in later years, he would have been one to attend Sunday-school, had there been one within reach when a young man. In 1849 he confessed Christ by uniting with the Church of the Brethren in the Rock River congregation, near Franklin Grove, Illinois, Joseph Emmert baptizing him. In 1869 he was called to the deacon's office, in which capacity he was a most faithful and active man. When the church took up Sunday-school work, he was a willing worker and a regular attendant as long as he was able to go.

Choosing Mary A. Foreman as a life companion, they were united in marriage on March 14, 1844. To them were born five sons and eight daughters, of whom seven are living and four have confessed Christ.

When the General Mission Board was organized, in 1884, he was elected a member and served ten years. Though lacking in education, he was a man of tact and ability that made him very valuable for the Board. On December 6, 1887, he was appointed a solicitor for endowment in Northern Illinois, and through subscription brought in upwards of \$50,000. In fact, he was the first solicitor that brought the Board good returns for his labors. His manner of approach begat confidence, and more than one member asked him, "Well, Brother Riddlesberger, how much do you think I ought to give?"

After an illness of about one year he peacefully passed away, and his body was laid to rest in the Emmert cemetery, near Franklin Grove, Illinois.

¹⁵ Galen Brown Royer, Thirty-Three Years of Missions in the Church of the Brethren, 1914), 382-383.

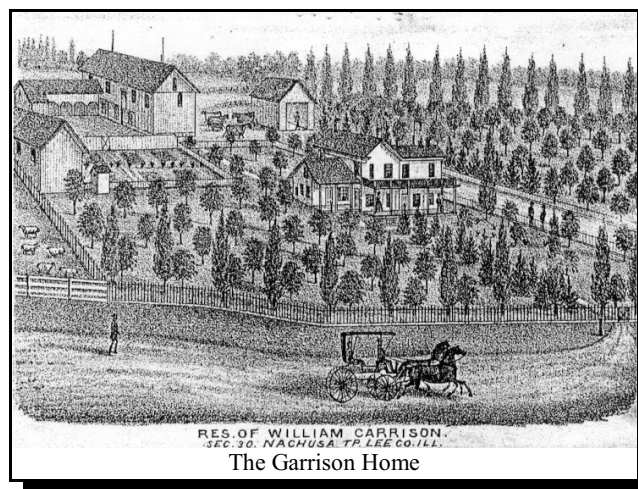
One interesting “tidbit” surfaced in the historical record at this point. According to Lee County marriage records, Samuel Riddlesbarger married a “**Susan L. Wolf**,” on December 16, 1897, nearly two years after his wife Mary’s death in 1896. What is interesting about this is that the 1870 census lists a certain “Susan Wolf” (twenty years younger than Samuel) as a resident in the Riddlesbarger home. When Samuel Riddlesbarger married Susan Wolf twenty-eight years later, he was 74 years old and his blushing young bride was 55! According to the local newspaper account (*The Evening Telegraph* of December 10, 1897) “a charivari party made the night hideous until the old gentleman gave up a few dollars as a treat.” Charivari parties were a form of playful hazing in which newlyweds were tormented by friends and family, and the whole thing sounds like great fun! Cemetery records and his obituary indicate that the “old gentleman” died just over a year later and I will resist the temptation to speculate about the manner and circumstances of his death! I can just hear my mother calling him “an old goat” rather than an “old gentleman”!

The Garrisons of Lee County

The most rewarding aspect of my research into our history was the discovery of family roots and long-lost cousins that I never knew we had. The discovery of our family’s connection to the Garrison family of Lee County was another most pleasant surprise. None of the living Riddlebargers that I spoke to even recall hearing the Garrison name in connection with the Riddlebargers, though the evidence shows that a hundred years ago, we were very closely connected—the Garrison’s bequeathed to the Riddlebargers their daughter and my great-great grandmother, **Elizabeth Elenor Garrison**. DNA testing has also confirmed the connection as I share small amounts of DNA with other Garrison descendants.

According to Harriet Garrison’s obituary, **William Garrison** and his wife **Amelia** were both born in Pennsylvania and arrived in Lee County in 1845, “having traveled overland by team, bringing with them their seven children the eldest being at the time ten years of age. Their route at times was through dense forests or over open uncultivated prairies. Mr. Garrison obtained a tract of land upon which not a furrow had been turned or an improvement made. With characteristic energy he began its development and converted it into productive fields from which he gathered good crops that enabled him to provide a comfortable living for his family” (*The Evening Telegraph*, Dixon Illinois, Friday, October 3, 1930).

William Garrison was born on July 22,



1813 in Luzerne County, PA. William was one of twelve children born to Matthias Garrison (b. October 30, 1777, d. December 4, 1855) and Susannah **Seely**, who was born on February 24, 1784 and died on September 14, 1828 at the young age of 44. Garrison descendants can trace their roots back through the Seely family back to England in the 1560's. **Amelia Oman Garrison**, was born near Lightstreet in Northumberland (now Columbia) County, PA on January 31st 1811, and she and William were married the day after Christmas in 1833. Amelia Oman is the daughter of Peter Oman and Susanna Hilborn. Her father was born on January 26, 1772, in Wawarsing (Ulster County) New York, was baptized in the Dutch Reformed Church of which he remained a life-long member. Peter moved to Kalamazoo, Michigan, after the death of his wife, who was born in Greensburg PA, and who died on New Years' Day 1840 in Columbia County, PA., having giving birth to twelve Oman children! Peter Oman's father, George (Jurrie) Oman[s], likely arrived in America from Germany sometime before 1770, and fought in the Revolutionary War with Militia regiments from Pennsylvania and possibly New York. Peter's mother, Maria Mack, hailed from Columbia County, PA. Nothing is known of her date of birth or her death.

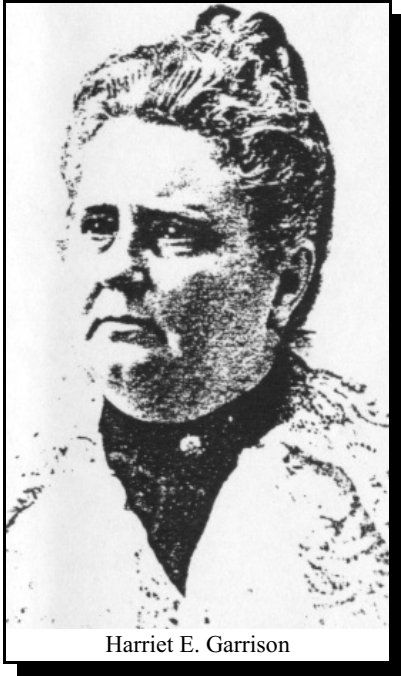
The Garrisons originally moved to prairie land in Ogle County (north of Dixon, Ill), which was later sold to William Garrison's older brother, Matthias. On this farm was a sawmill and chair factory, and Garrison descendants were boasting as late as the 1930's of still having furniture that was made there. Eventually, William Garrison purchased land from the federal government, on the Grand Detour-Nascua Road near Franklin Grove, establishing the family home where William lived until his death in 1883. He paid a whopping \$1.25 for each of the 80 acres. A line drawing of this striking home and grounds is found in the *History of Lee County*. Amelia died on December 27th, 1870, at the age of 59, likely of heart disease. According to her obituary she was . . .

the mother of fourteen children, she lived to see nine of them grown up to adult years—four sons and five daughters, and to see most of them settled in this life, and making preparation for the life to come. The other five died in infancy, and awaited her coming to the other shore—as a wife and mother she endeavored to discharge well the responsibilities of her station, and her memory is fondly cherished, and her loss deeply mourned by a large circle of relations. She was converted to God in early life and united with the Methodist Episcopal Church in which she continued a faithful, devoted member till removed as we totally trust to the church triumphant on high. Her last sickness was short and her sudden departure unexpected to many of the friends, but from the first attack of the disease she felt sure that her work was done. She gave all into the hands of Jesus, and patiently, we may say *gladly*, waited her final release" (*Dixon Telegraph and Herald*, Thursday, January 19, 1870).

She is buried in the Girton cemetery next to William, who died on April 3, 1883. William subsequently married Lucinda Shute on October 15, two years after Amelia's death, though little if anything is known of her.

Census records of 1850 from Ogle County mention the names of eight Garrison children, John (1835-1893), Peter (1837-1917), George L. (1839-1909), Hester A. (1840-1897), Hannah (1842-1902), **Elizabeth E.** (1843-1905), William II (1847-1899), and Harriet E (1848-1930). Garrison relatives identified another daughter, Martha, who was born in 1852, and who died in 1923, and who is not mentioned in the census. Several of them are of particular interest to us: Elizabeth, of course; John and Peter; who served in the 75th Regimental Infantry during the Civil War; and Harriet E, who is one of our most notable ancestors.

John Garrison was born on July 29, 1835 in Columbia County, PA. He married Mirandia Depuy and



Harriet E. Garrison

together they had ten children. She died in 1890, her husband died on July 7, 1893 of heat stroke. Along with his brother Peter, John served in the 75th Illinois Volunteer Infantry, which was composed entirely of Lee County boys, minus the Brethren pacifist David Henry Riddelsbarger! The 75th was organized in Dixon on September 2, 1862 and was in fierce combat just under a month later. The unit was first involved in the hot pursuit of Confederate General Braxton Bragg's army then escaping from Kentucky. Attached to what became known as the Army of the Cumberland, the 75th Illinois saw action in the battles of Perryville (under Union General Don Carlos Buell), Wilson's Creek, Stone's River, Chickamauga (under General Rosecrans), Lookout Mountain, Missionary Ridge, Kennesaw Mountain, the siege of Atlanta (under General Sherman), and then finally, in operations against John Bell Hood and Nathan Bedford Forrest immediately before the war's end (under George Thomas). The regiment suffered a total of 205 casualties (97 dead), one of them being **Peter**

Garrison, who was shot in the thigh when he and the members of company "G" engaged rebels units at close range during the battle of Perryville, in

Kentucky. According to unit records during the battle, some 75 of "G" company's 90 men were either killed or wounded during what was their very first engagement. According to veteran's records, John Garrison was hospitalized twice, once in Lebanon, Kentucky, shortly after the unit's first engagement in October of 1862, and again a second time in May of 1863, when his unit was in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. He was finally mustered out in of the army in December of 1863. Peter became quite ill while recovering from his wound and he was mustered out in April of 1863. Though he eventually recovered to live a long and healthy life, his obituary mentions that the bullet buried in his thigh surfaced in the skin above his knee many years later and was still giving him problems when he died.

After the war, Peter married Miss Sally Thomas (also of Pennsylvania) on Christmas day, 1867. In 1869, they purchased a farm in Reynolds Township (Lee County), moving later to Portland, Oregon, and then finally to Azusa, California. Peter and Sally had four sons (two of whom served in the US Army Air Corps during WW I) and two daughters (I do not know their names). Peter died of kidney failure on May 19, 1917, after a six-week deer hunting trip in the local mountains with his four sons. It is hard to imagine finding enough deer in our local mountains to occupy five hunters for six weeks, but then again, times have changed! Peter was a prominent member of the Azusa Methodist Church and is buried in Oakdale Cemetery in Covina, CA. This is the same cemetery where Albert and Paulina Riddlesbarger, and George and Cora Chamberlen are also buried. Ironically, Peter's sister, Dr.

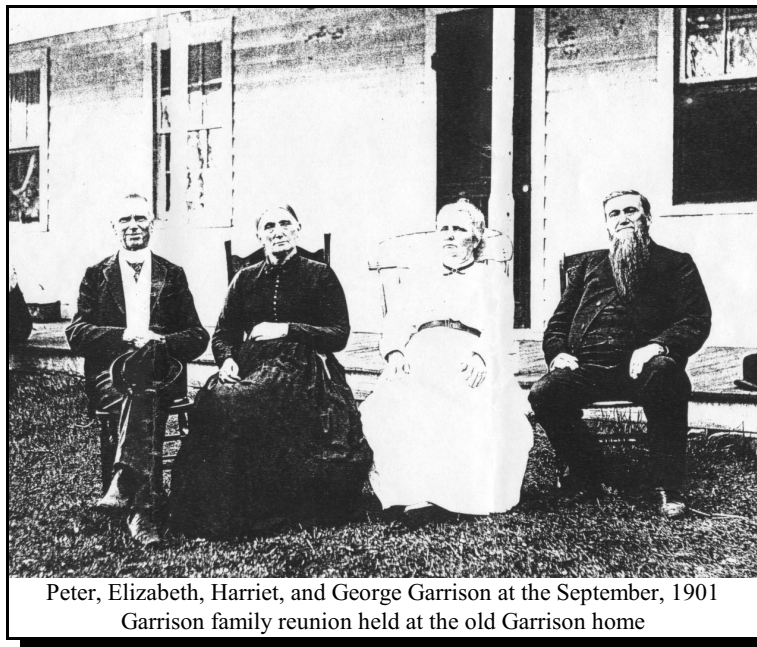
Harriet Garrison, was planning to come to California to celebrate his 80th birthday, when she received news of his death.

My great-great grandaunt, **Harriet E. Garrison** is certainly one of the most noteworthy members of our extended family. According to the second volume of the published history of Lee County (1914),

among the more successful physicians of Dixon is Dr. Harriet E. Garrison, who was born in Lee County on October 28, 1848 . . . Dr. Garrison was trained to the usual household duties but the parents were ambitious to give their children good educational opportunities and she was anxious to take advantage of such. Accordingly she supplemented her public-school course by study at Mount Morris, Illinois, (a Brethren college) and also in the Rock River Seminary. By this time she had determined to engage in the practice of medicine and pursued her studies at the Women's Medical College of Chicago, from which she graduated with the class of 1876. She also took a six month's hospital course and thus gained the broad knowledge and experience which only hospital service can bring.

On the 5th of October, 1876, Dr. Garrison came to Dixon and opened an office and has since engaged in practice here, although she went to new York city in 1890 and again in 1891 for post graduate work. In this and other ways she has continually broadened her knowledge and increased her skill. She traveled in Europe with a party of physicians in 1897. She was the only general practitioner among them and when Dr. Senn, a noted surgeon of Chicago, became ill she was called upon to attend him. Her trip was for the purpose of attending the International Medical Association at Moscow, Russia, and in 1900 Dr. Garrison again went abroad attending the International Medical Association at Paris. She has attended five different meetings of the American Medical Association and she is also a member of the Lee County and the Illinois State Medical Societies. She has largely specialized in the treatment of diseases of children and is a recognized authority on many points relative thereto. Articles which she has written have appeared in various leading medical journals of the county and many prominent men of the profession have borne testimony as to their merits. She has ever held to the highest professional standards and step by step has advanced to a conspicuous, prominent and honorable position in the ranks of the medical profession in Illinois (Frank B. Stevens, *History of Lee County*, Vol II, 302-306).

As her obituary notes, "she is the last member of a large family," and after her death at age 82 on October 3, 1930, she was buried in the Garrison family cemetery (Girton) east of Dixon.

**Future Research:**

* DNA tests confirm ties to the Barncord family, but who are Susan's mother and father?

Chapter Six

Belleville, Kansas, by way of Marshalltown, Iowa

The David Henry Riddelsbarger Family

David Henry (D.H.) Riddelsbarger¹⁶ was born in 1838, the same year as the birth of famed naturalist John Muir and the coronation of Queen Victoria. Dicken's *Oliver Twist* was a best seller in England and John James Audubon had finally completed his famous "The Birds of America." Like his father Daniel, David Henry was born near the boundary between Washington and Quincy Townships in Franklin County, PA. Moving west to Illinois with his family in the late 1850's, David was twenty-six years old when he and **Elizabeth Elenor Garrison** (b. August 6, 1843—d. September 2, 1905) were married on December 16, 1864 in Lee County, Illinois, just about the time that Sherman was completing his famed march from Atlanta to the sea during the Civil War. Long since forgotten to us is the story of how David and Elizabeth met and the circumstances of their courtship. They both lived in the same township, both families were church-goers and farmers, and were apparently successful and industrious. Very likely, they had much in common.



The David H. Riddelsbarger Family (Approximately 1890)

Sadly, there is not much information about David Henry or his family available. Much of what we do know about them, somewhat morosely, comes from a series of newspaper obituaries and death notifications appearing in the Brethren denominational magazine (*The Gospel Messenger*). Although there are several family pictures from this period, it is ironic that we actually know more about earlier generations of our family (Christian and John) than we do of more recent ancestors (Jacob, Daniel, and David Henry). Living in rural areas, engaged in labor and farming, these hard working, industrious folks did not speak freely or often of themselves. But the death notices in *The Gospel Messenger* do tell us of their loyalty to their church, and presumably to the Savior they confessed.

¹⁶ David signed his name "D. H. Riddelsbarger" in autograph book of his niece in December of 1888. The name on his tombstone is "Riddelsbarger."



This old and badly damaged daguerreotype is believed to be the oldest Riddlebarger family photo. The subject is thought to be David Henry as a young man making the date of original about 1850.

David Henry Riddlesbarger's name is not found on the roster of Lee County boys who served in the Civil War—as did his brother-in-law Peter Garrison. Since almost universally opposing slavery, many of the German Baptist Brethren refused to participate in combat because of the possibility of taking another's life. Many of the Brethren did not enlist when the call for more Union Soldiers went out, often risking fines, imprisonment, or ostracization from the community. In the 1860's, Lee County was a rural farming community with a significant number of *Taufer* living in the area. David Henry may have followed the practice of not registering or participating in the enrollment for the state-sponsored volunteer infantry units, such as the 75th Illinois, which mustered in the area. David may also have paid the \$200.00 commutation fee in lieu of service as many Brethren did. This was especially the case in states such as Illinois, which were more tolerant of the

Brethren than were states in the South impacted by troop movements and battles on their home soil such as Virginia. Virginians frequently persecuted the Brethren for not serving the cause of defending home and hearth against “northern aggression.” We simply do not know why David Henry did not serve in the Civil War.



David and Elizabeth while in Marshalltown, about 1870

According to the obituary of their second son, **Albert E. Riddlesbarger**, David and his family moved to Marshalltown, Iowa, shortly after Albert's birth on December 9, 1867. The 1870 federal census shows that David and Elizabeth had purchased a farm, valued at \$7500, in the Marion Township area of Marshalltown, Iowa. By the time of the Census, two children had been born to them, Albert (shown standing behind his mother in the 1890's family portrait on the previous page) and **Elmer Dayton** (standing behind his father). David's cousin, Joseph S. Riddlesbarger, also worked on the farm that summer as a laborer. There is an old and damaged, but unmarked daguerreotype among the family photos believed to be a childhood picture of David.

There is also one known picture from the Riddlesbarger's time in Marshalltown showing a youngish David and his wife, Elizabeth, seated in a photographer's studio in Marshalltown. David is wearing a baggy coat hanging loosely on his short and stocky frame, with Elizabeth's round face and neatly pulled-back hair clearly visible. Elizabeth is wearing the long black dress and apron, typical of the Brethren. The original photo (I have a xerox copy) is in the possession of a Garrison cousin, Mr. John Moore, of Dixon, Illinois, whose great-grandmother, Hester Ann Garrison was a sister of Elizabeth.



David, Elizabeth, and their son, William, are buried in Pleasant View Brethren Cemetery. David owned the land adjacent to the cemetery—to the left of the picture. His home and farm buildings were likely located there.

David and Elizabeth moved from Marshalltown Iowa, to Republic County, Kansas by 1883. There was a Brethren migration to this area about this time. The volume *A History of Republic County*, speaks of a German Baptist Brethren (Dunker) congregation established in Farmington to the east of Belleville in 1880, and that a second congregation was established southwest of Belleville in 1884. Once the second congregation was established and a pastor installed, “the membership was commendably increased and a commodious house of worship was built on the NW corner of section 20. This house was dedicated by Elder Jacob D. Trostle of Abilene Kansas on October 25, 1885, sixteen other ministers were

present.” Forty children were at the service as well. No doubt, the D.H. Riddlesbarger family was in attendance. David and Elizabeth remained members of this congregation until their deaths.¹⁷

According to an index of land plats in Republic County, Kansas, (for the year 1884), D. H. Riddlesbarger owned 470 acres; 150 acres in Belleville Township (section # 6), another 160 acres in Scandia Township (section # 26) and 160 acres in section 13 (also in Scandia Township). Belleville and Scandia townships are adjacent to each other. Scandia was originally settled by Swedish immigrants. Corn was the main crop grown in the area, though some farmers also planted barley. The 1884 plat map shows a large orchard on David’s land due east of the city of Scandia. There were also substantial numbers of dairy cows and hogs raised throughout these townships as well.

In the volume *A History of Republic County*, David Henry is mentioned in connection with his purchase of additional land from John West in Scandia township. The original owner of this land, Fred O’Connell, left the area to work on the Union Pacific Railroad in Colorado but was scalped and killed by Indians. This parcel first passed to John West, then to “D. H. Riddlesbarger” in December of 1891.¹⁸ This plot was nearly adjacent to land which David already owned, and is located diagonally across what is now Queen Road from the Pleasant View Brethren Cemetery where David, Elizabeth, and son William are buried.

Census records do not add much information. D. H. appears in the 1860 Federal Census in Lee County, IL (China Township) as a twenty-two year old living on the family farm. By 1870, he’s married to Elizabeth, and as mentioned above, is living in Marshalltown, Iowa, with two children (Elmer aged 4, and Albert aged 1). By 1900, the Riddlesbargers are in Scandia Township near Belleville, Kansas. David is 62, Elizabeth is 57, and an adopted

¹⁷ I. O. Savage, *A History of Republic County* (Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, 1999), 213-214.

¹⁸ Savage, *A History of Republic County*, 159.

daughter (Myrtle Myers) is living in the home. She is 12 and her fate is unknown. David's son-in-law (Lester Williams—married to daughter Susan) and his family are living next door.

David and Elizabeth had three sons (**Elmer Dayton**, **Albert Emery** and **William Curtis**) and a daughter (**Susan**). David and Elizabeth's oldest son, **Elmer Dayton**, a carpenter and merchant, was born on March 3, 1865, while the family still lived in Franklin Grove, Ill. He died in November of 1930 in Denver, Colorado after living for many years in Kansas. His is listed in the 1930 census as widowed, living in Denver, and working as a carpenter. His death was reported in the Brethren newspaper, *The Gospel Messenger*, on January 24, 1931.

Elmer Dayton Riddlesbarger, eldest son of Bro. David and Sister Elizabeth Riddlesbarger, born near Dixon Ill, died at his home in Denver, Colo., Nov. 25, 1930, aged 65 years, 2 months and 22 days. He came to manhood near Marshalltown, Iowa. In 1882, the family came to Republic County, Kans. In 1889 he married Meta Taylor who preceded him seven years ago. Surviving are two sons, one daughter, one brother, one sister. Service and burial in Fairmont Cemetery—Mrs. Lester Williams, North Manchester, Ind.

Meta L. Taylor is believed to be the young woman standing next to Elmer in the family portrait. Elmer and Meta had five children, two of whom died early in life. **Audrey** was born on June 23, 1890, in Kansas and died on October 3, 1963, in Los Angeles, CA. **Don** was born on April 17, 1908, in Kansas and died on August 28, 1977, in Alameda, CA. There is another son, **Arlie**, about whom little is known, as well as an unnamed infant who was born in March 17, 1894, in Kansas and died less than a month later on April 6, 1894. A fifth son, **Monte Earl**, was born in 1892 in Kansas, but died of measles on March 15, 1899 at seven years of age. According to his obituary in the *Scandia Journal*, of March 17, 1899;



Monte Earl, the seven year old son of Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Riddlesbarger, died Wednesday morning at three o'clock. The cause was a complication of disease, principally measles. The funeral was Thursday at ten o'clock. Monte was a bright little fellow who will be sorely missed by parents, relatives and play fellows. The sympathy of all goes out to the stricken father and mother. He is buried in the Poplar Grove Cemetery.

Elmer and Meta knew the tragedy of losing a child—pain their own parents experienced in the summer of 1896, when Elmer's little brother **William**, David and Elizabeth's youngest son, died from appendicitis. According to an obituary found in the Dixon (Lee County), Illinois newspaper, *The Evening Telegraph* dated August 21, 1896,¹⁹ the circumstances of William's death are recounted in some detail. Lee County, is where David and Elizabeth were married, and where William's aunt, Dr. Harriet Garrison, still resided.

Dr. Garrison has received the very sad news of the death at Belleville, Kan., after an operation for appendicitis, of a nephew, a handsome bright young man eighteen and a half years old, youngest son of her sister, Mrs. D. Riddlesbarger.

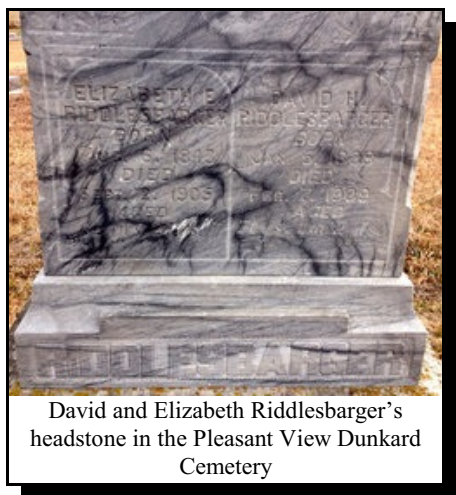
¹⁹ *The Evening Telegraph*, August 21, 1896 (page 1, Column 4).

On August 8 at four P.M. he left his father's farm on his bicycle to ride ten miles to visit relatives in Belleville. It was a very warm day and he became very much heated during the ride. Sunday morning he did not complain but went to church and in the afternoon for a walk, when he made the first complaint of not feeling well, but returned to the house to spend the remainder of the day in pleasant conversation with a lady cousin.

His parents felt no uneasiness when he did not return Monday, as expected, as he had business affairs in another town and they thought he had gone to look them up. Tuesday the father drove to his brother's at Belleville and found his boy sick and under the care of a physician who assured the father there was no cause for alarm, as there were no dangerous symptoms. Wednesday morning the physician diagnosed appendicitis and asked for a special surgeon for an operation. The surgeon was summoned from Topeka by telegram and arrived at 6 p.m. He gave an unfavorable opinion but proceeded to operate removing the appendix which contained a hard concretion. The boy died soon after the operation.

William's tragic and all-too young death was certainly a family tragedy, but was lost to all family memory until these death notices and obituaries were discovered. How quickly we forget.

David and Elizabeth's only daughter, **Susan**, was born December 8, 1872, while the family lived in Marshalltown, Iowa. Susan is standing behind her mother in the family portrait above. She married Lester **Williams** on August 25, 1897, and died December 12, 1942 in North Manchester, Indiana. There is an obituary excerpt for Susan found in Henry Riddlesberger's notes:



David and Elizabeth Riddlesberger's headstone in the Pleasant View Dunkard Cemetery

Susan Riddlebarger Williams, daughter of David Henry Riddlebarger and Elizabeth Garrison Riddlebarger, born at Marshalltown, Iowa, Dec. 8, 1872; Married Lester E. Williams August 25th 1897; had seven children, three of which grew to adulthood. Mrs. Alta Frantz, North Manchester, Ind., Theodore of Liberty Mills, Ill., and Dale of Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas. Died Dec. 11, 1942. Internment in Cemetery adjoining the West Manchester Church, at North Manchester, Ind.

After a lengthy illness, Susan's mother, Elizabeth Garrison Riddelsbarger died on September 2, 1905. Her obituary appeared in the local paper, *The Belleville Telescope* the following week. The text of the obituary is as follows:

Elizabeth E. Garrison was born in Pennsylvania in 1823 (note: she was actually born in 1843). From there she moved first to Illinois then to Iowa and later, about twenty years later to Republic County, Kansas, where her family resided and where her death occurred Saturday, Sept. 2, 1905, after months of intense suffering, at the age of sixty-two years and twenty seven days.

She was united in marriage in 1864 to D. H. Riddlebarger and he with two sons, Elmer and Albert, and one daughter Mrs. Lester Williams and a brother-in-law, J. B. Riddlebarger of this city, besides a host of friends to whom she had rendered herself, are left to mourn her death.

The deceased was a woman possessed with those sterling qualities which enabled her to wear a bright smile and even be thoughtful of others and patient even during her most constant suffering. She was always a

loving and devoted mother and an affectionate and worthy helpmate to a kind husband who will miss her more than words can express. In her early life, she was a member of the Methodist Church, but later in 1876 united with the Dunkard Church and has always lived a faithful and consistent Christian life. The funeral services were conducted from the family home Monday afternoon, Sept. 4, by the Rev. Ollie Daggett of Osborne, Kansas. Internment was made in the Dunkard cemetery. The bereft have the sympathy of the entire community in their sad bereavement.

According to her death certificate, Elizabeth Riddelsbarger died of a “tumor.” Another obituary is found in *The Gospel Messenger*, (Vol. 44 No. 1-52, 1905, 611).

RIDDLESBARGER, Elizabeth Eleanor, nee Garrison, born in Luzerne county, Pennsylvania, died Sept. 2, 1905, aged 62 years and 27 days. In 1845 she moved with her parents to Lee county, Illinois, where she was married to David H. Riddelsbarger. The next year they moved vs Marshall county, Iowa, and in 1882 to Republic county, Kansas, where she resided until her death. At the age of ten years she united with the M. E. church, and in 1866 with her husband united with the Brethren. She leaves a husband, two sons and one daughter. She was a constant sufferer for many years. An autopsy revealed that a fibroid tumor was the cause of death. She was confined to her bed for five and one-half months—Susie R. Williams.

David died four years later. His obituary also appeared in the *Belleville Telescope* of February 12, 1909.

David Henry Riddlebarger was born in Waynesboro, Franklin County, PA, on January 5th 1838, and died at the home of his son, E. D. Riddlebarger on South Commercial Street, Feb 7th, 1909, at the age of 71 years, 1 month and 2 days.

Funeral services were held at the Dunkard church Tuesday afternoon at two o'clock. The deceased leaves two sons and one daughter, E. I. Riddlebarger, J. B. Riddlebarger and Mrs. Susie Williams all of Republic County. Mr. Riddlebarger has long been a helpless and patient sufferer and while his death comes as a great grief it has long been expected. The sons and daughters have the sympathy of their many friends in their bereavement.

There are several errors in the text of the obituary. J. B. Riddlebarger is David Henry's brother (living in Belleville, KS), and his sons are Albert Emery and Elmer Dayton. The *Topeka Daily Capital* (February 13, 1909), also reported David's death: “D. H. Riddelsbarger, a resident of Republic County for the past thirty years and a wealthy land owner is dead, at the home of his son, E. D. Riddelsbarger, in Belleville where he has laid in a semi-conscious condition for over a year. His wife died about four years ago.” According to his death certificate, David died from tubercular meningitis, after being ill for over a year. As noted, David, his wife Elizabeth, and son William, are buried in the Pleasant View Dunkard/Brethren Cemetery, in Belleville Twp. According to a public notice in *The Belleville Telescope* dated February 26, 1911, David's estate was finally settled in the Republic County court. E. D. Riddelsbarger was the executor.

A hand written note from David was found in the scrapbook of his niece, Mary DePuy, dated December 22, 1898. It reads, “may your future life be pleasant, and your troubles be few, so you will find no hindrance to that mansion built for you.” The wishes he extended to his niece came true for David Henry on February 7, 1909.

Belleville, Kansas—Home to Three Generations of Riddelsbargers

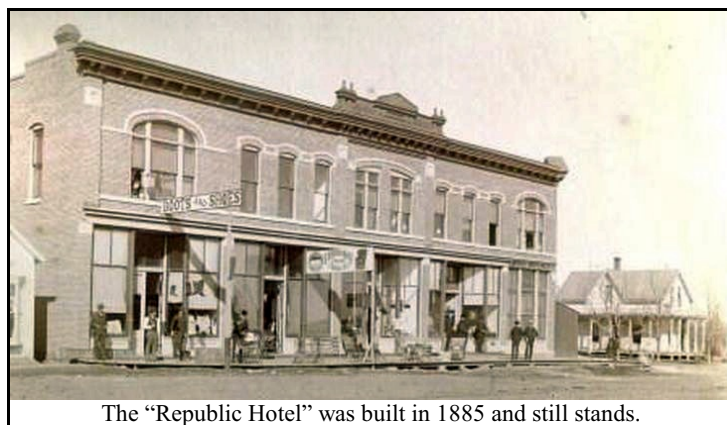


The Republic County Courthouse was built in Belleville in 1885, shortly after David H.'s arrival

When David Henry moved to Republic County from Marshalltown Iowa in 1883, he established a family tie to the Belleville-Scandia area which lasted some thirty-three years and spanned three generations until Albert Emery sold the last remaining property there owned by our immediate line in 1915. Belleville Twp was established in 1878 and Scandia by Swedish immigrants in the 1860's, but incorporated as a city the same year as Belleville. The small cities were served by the Missouri Pacific and Rock Island railroads—which explains how our kin freely traveled between Kansas and Idaho before automobiles and paved roads were commonplace.

Albert arrived in Republic County as a sixteen year old teenager, met and married his wife Paulina on December 25, 1892, and gave birth to six children—one of whom was my grandfather (Glenn A.), and three of whom lay buried in the Pleasant

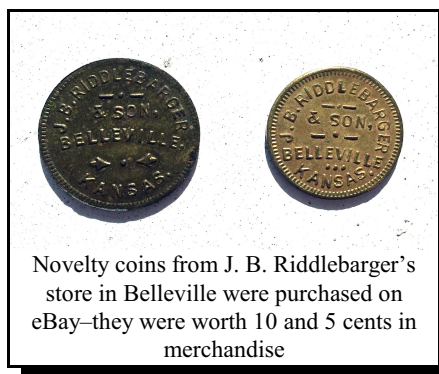
View Brethren Cemetery next to their grandparents, David and Elizabeth. Albert, stayed in the area until moving to Nampa, ID in 1902. But “Bert and Lina” returned to the family farm in Kansas on a number of occasions,



The “Republic Hotel” was built in 1885 and still stands.

presumably to see family (his brother Elmer and sister Susie) and help care for Elizabeth who had been ill for some time and died in 1905. David Henry was also in declining health by this time and eventually died in 1909 after being confined to a sickbed for a year. Glenn was born “near Belleville” in 1893 and attended high school there beginning in 1908 (from his freshman to his senior year) getting high marks in math (Algebra, Geometry I & 2), Latin (grammar, Caesar and Cicero), English,

science (botany, geography) History, and German. Quite an education for a rural high school!



Novelty coins from J. B. Riddlebarger's store in Belleville were purchased on eBay—they were worth 10 and 5 cents in merchandise

David Henry's brother, Jacob Bixby (Jake) and wife Catherine arrived Belleville, Kansas, in the late 1880's, shortly after David Henry. Originally settling in Paola, KS, where his oldest son remained (**Albert C.**), Jake established a grocery business in Belleville. His daughter (**Ida**) remained in Belleville until her death in 1935, and his youngest son **Clarence**, returned from Paola and was the town's jeweler from 1924 until his death in 1953. Clarence's wife, Martha Adella, (nee **Wade**) was one of the towns first switchboard operators beginning her job in 1902. Belleville was also home to J. B.'s nephew Elmer

(Albert's brother), who buried two of his children in the city's cemetery—not in the Brethren cemetery, a telling fact. Jacob Bixby's obituary reveals much about our family's history and ties to the area.

The Belleville Telescope, April 22, 1915

The death of J.B. Riddlebarger, one of the well know citizens of Belleville at Los Angeles, Monday night, April 19, following an operation on Sunday, was a shock to his many friends here.

A few weeks ago Mr. Riddlebarger left for the Pacific coast to look for a location and had decided upon Los Angeles for their future home. Two weeks ago Mr. Riddlebarger was taken suddenly ill caused by a stoppage of the blood vessels in one of his legs and Mrs. Riddlebarger was sent for, leaving at once with her son, Clarence. Later the daughter Miss Ida and another son Albert of Paola were sent for as gangrene had developed and physicians said amputation of the leg would be necessary. The operation was performed at a hospital in Los Angeles on Sunday, death resulting Monday evening.

Mr. Riddlebarger was 69 years old and had been a resident of this city for about 28 years, coming here from Paola. He was engaged in the grocery business for 22 years, selling his interest to his nephew Elmer Riddlebarger over a year ago.

He was a member of the Knights and Ladies, also the Sons and Daughters lodges and took an active part in all their affairs. Mr. Riddlebarger was a splendid citizen and leaves to his family the inheritance of a kindly, honest life well lived. Mrs. Riddlebarger and three children, Albert of Paola, C.E. and Miss Ida of this city survive. The body accompanied by the family will start from Los Angeles Friday and will probably arrive in Belleville on Monday. No funeral arrangements have been made.

Jacob, his wife and two of his children, Ida and Clarence, are buried in the Belleville City Cemetery.



Belleville, KS, in 1914, about the time our family moved away

Appendix One – List of Records for Christian Riddlespurger in South Carolina (1742-1790)²⁰

Christian Redelishberger–12 Jan 1772 250 [acres granted in Orangeburgh township], Twp Lot Ref: 0009 003 0020 00042 02. Source: Orangeburgh Land Records (South Carolina Archives), collected by Gene Jeffries: www.rootsweb.com/~scogsgs/land.htm

4 Feb 1759, L&R. Christian Rhettlesparger and wife Ann to Melchior Hoffman 100 acres bd: SE by Wm. Baker, NW by Richard Myrick. Plat 26 Jan 1741, grant 22 Feb 1743. [Charleston Deed E-3:273]. Hoffman Memorial, 25 Oct 1763. Source: Theresa Hicks, Saxe Gotha Neighbors. Columbia SC: Peppercorn Publications, Inc., 2000. Page 11, 39.

Christian Rehtelsperg: Plat for 100 acres 30 Dec 1742. Grant 22 Feb 1743. See Memorial of Milchier Hoffman. Source: Theresa M. Hicks, op. cit., page 33.

SC Council Meeting of Wednesday P.M. 2 August 1749: Pages 564-565: Read the Petition of Christian Rottlesperger Brother in Law to John Struck son and heir to John Struck deceased setting forth That the Petitioners Father in Law had a Warrant for 350 acres of Land and a Town Lot in SaxaGotha on the Bounty and the same being run his said Father in Law built & improved the same and his Family was now still in Possession of the said Land, the Plat for the said Land was returned into the Surveyor Generals Office and Certified by the Surveyor General the 8th Nov 1744 as by the Plat annexed to the Petitioner, But the Death of the said John Struck the said Father prevented any further Proceeding on the same, and his Son now about fifteen, Therefore the Petitioner prayed that the Grant might pass to the said John Struck the Eldest son, and as before Granted on the Bounty. Signed Christian Rottlesperger (CR), 28 July 1749. The Prayer thereof was Granted. Source: Brent H. Holcomb, Petitions for Land from the South Carolina Council Journals, Volume II: 1748-1752. Columbia SC: SCMAR, 1997.

John Struck and wife Ann to Henry Hartle 350 acres and Town Lot #51 granted to Struck 1 June 1750, bd: NW vacant and Hans Jacob Geiger, SE vacant and Henry Scone. 1 & 2 June 1762. [Charleston Deed ZZ:233] [This would be CR's brother-in-law.] Source: Theresa Hicks, op. cit., page 12.

Book —3, p. 118, 24 May 1751, Gift in Trust. William Baker, planter, of Saxegotha Township, Berkeley Co., for good & pious considerations, conveys to Christian Rhetetsperger, William Baker, John Plowman, & Jacob Schneider, elders of the German Congregation of the Dissenting Protestants at the Congarees, & their successors, half an a. within the limits of said Township, part of 350 a. between lands belonging to Christian Rhetetsperger & Herman Geiger; said half a. bounding N on Santee River; other sides on the 350 a.; with the Meeting House built thereon; for the sole use of said German Protestants of the Helvetii or Walloone Confession as well as of that of Augsburg in common. Livery & seizin made. Witnesses: Philip (his mark) Pool, Peter (German script) Rott. Before Stephen Crell, J.P., on 7 June 1751. Recorded 24 Dec. 1768 by Fenwicke Bull, Register.

Related transfer: Book —3, p. 120, 25 Oct. 1768, Gift in Trust. John Gallman, of Saxegotha Township, Berkeley Co., for good & pious considerations, to Jacob Theyler, George Keith, John Gallman, & John Morf, elders of the German Congregation of the Dissenting Protestants in Saxegotha Township, & their successors; 1 a. in said Township, part of 150 a. between Jacob Moach & John Morf; said a. bounding S. on John Morf (Murpf); other sides on said 150 a.; with the Meeting house thereon; for the sole use of said German Protestants of the Helvetie or Wallone Confession. Witnesses; Christian Theus, Q.D.S. [Swiss Reformed minister of the congregation since 1739], John Geiger, John (German script) Murpf. Before Fenwicke Bull, J.P. & P. Register. Recorded 26 Dec. 1768. [The

²⁰ Graciously supplied to me by Harriet Imrey.

new transfer omitted reference to the Augsburg Confession because the Sandy Run Lutheran Church was built in the region by 1765.] Source: Clara A. Langley, Vol. IV, page 56.

Book O-O, p. 629, 22 & 23 May 1754, L&R by Mortgage. Christian (his mark) Rethlesperger, planter, & Ann (her mark) his wife, to Abraham Dupont, planter, both of Berkeley Co., as security on bond of even date in penal sum of £1615:5:0 for payment of £807:12:6 currency, with interest, on 1 Feb. 1758; 4 adjoining tracts of 500 a., 100 a., 140 a., & 183 a., total 923 a., in Berkeley Co., also 100 a. within the limits of Saxagotha township, Berkeley Co., bounding SE on William Baker & vacant land; SW on vacant land; NW on Richard Mazyck [also Myrick, Myzick]; NE on Santee River; also 200 a. in Amelia Township, on SW side Santee River, bounding on all sides on vacant land. Witnesses: Ludwig Linder, William Young, Daniel Linder. Before James Michie, J.P. William Hopton, Register. Source: Langley, Vol. II, p. 333.

SC Council Meeting of Tuesday 7 May 1765: Pages 524-530: The following Petitions for Warrants of Survey, prolonging Warrants and to Certifie Platts were presented & Read viz. ...Christian Redlesporger350 [acres] on Edisto River ... Source: Brent H. Holcomb, Petitions for Land from the South Carolina Council Journals, Volume V: 1757-1765. Columbia SC: SCMAR, 1998.

Quit Rent Rolls (property tax lists) from Hicks and from Warren:

Christian Ricktelsperger. 1023 acres. 1760

Christian Ricktelsperger. 1023 acres. 1761

Christian Ricktelsperger. 1123 acres. Berkley. 1768

Christian Ricktelsperger. 923 acres. 1770

Christian Rickletlesperger. 1023 acres. 1773

Quit Rents, Book B:

Michael Hoffman100 Berkley From Christian Ricklsperger PM & now sold to John George Shleppay PM and paid by him. Source: Mary Bondurant Warren, Citizens and Immigrants—S.C. 1768. (2nd Ed.) Athens GA: Heritage Papers, 1994, pp. 267 and 277.

Book W-3, pp. 330-335, 4 & 5 Dec. 1770, L&R: (John) Abraham Glimph, tailor, of Granville & Catherine (her mark) his wife, to Christian Ridlesperger, planter, of St. George Parish, bounding NE on Ridlesperger; other sides on vacant land. Witnesses: Martin (his mark) Strohacker, planter; Conrad Bosinger, John Ulrick. Before John Adam Treutlen, J.P. Recorded 7 Nov. 1771 by Rowland Rugeley, Register. Source: Clara A. Langley. South Carolina Deed Abstracts 1719-1772, Vol. IV, 1767-1773, Books I-3-E-4. Greenville SC: Southern Historical Press, reprinted 2001. Page 201.

SC Council Meeting of Tuesday 7 January 1772: Pages 4-10: The following Petitions praying to have Warrants of Survey were presented and Read ...Christian Riddlesperger50 [acres] [NB: generally implies a new child]

SC Council Meeting of Tuesday 6 April 1773: Pages 150-162: The following petitions praying for warr'ts of Survey were presented and Read ...Christian Richtlesperger100 [acres] Source: Brent H. Holcomb, Petitions for Land from the South Carolina Council Journals, Volume VII: 1771-1774. Columbia SC: SCMAR, 1999.

Book G-4, 160-166: Lease & release. 1 & 2 July 1773, Christian Redlisperger of Berkley County, SC, planter, to Gasper Strobel of same, planter, for £20 SC money, 183 acres in Berkley County on four hole swamp; and also 100 acres in Berkley County adj. to said tract of 183 acres. Christian Redlisperger (LS), Elizabeth Redlisperger (+) (LS),

Wit: James Linsey, Saml. Parsons. Proved 26 Aug 1773 before Thos. Caton, J.P. in Charles Town District, by the oath of James Lindsay. Recorded 20 Sept 1773. Source: Holcomb, SC Deed Abstracts, 1773-1778, p. 26.

Book R-4, 365-372: Lease & release. 13 & 14 March 1775, Christian Riddlesparger of Parish of St. Georges, SC, planter, and Elizabeth his wife, to Thomas Young of Charles Town, Bricklayer, for £575 SC money, 250 acres a half part of tract of 500 acres granted to Abraham Dupont in St. Georges Parish adj. land of Thomas Young, also 140 acres adj. said 250 acres. (plat included, being a resurvey showing adj. land owners Gasper Strouble, Thomas Young, Abraham Dupont, Gideon Dupont, certified 28 Feb 1775) Christian Riddlesparger (CR) (LS), Elizabeth Riddlesparger (LS), Wit: John Frank, John Fullerton. Proved in Chas. Town District before William Rugeley, J.P., by the oath of John Fullerton. Recorded 18 July 1775. Source: Holcomb, SC Deed Abstracts 1773-1778, p. 164.

Book T-4, 197-201: Lease & release. 9 & 10 Jan 1776, Thomas Pendarvis of Parish of St. George, SC, planter, and Elizabeth his wife, to Christian Riddlespurger of same parish, planter and Tavern keeper, for £300 SC money, 100 acres in Berkley County on waters of Indian Field Swamp adj. land of William Blackman, Nicholas noes, granted to Samuel Parsons 4 Dec 1771 conveyed by Samuel Parsons and Anna his wife to Thomas Pendarvis, 2 & 3 Apr 1772. Thom's Pendarvis (LS), Elizabeth Pendarvis (X) (LS), Wit: Simon Irons, John Archbould, Thomas Pendarvis. Proved 25 July 1777 before John Fullerton, J.P., by the oath of Simon Irons. Recorded 20 Sept 1777. Source: Holcomb, SC Deed Abstracts 1773-1778, p. 182.

From Murtie June Clark, *Loyalists in the Southern Campaign of the Revolutionary War: ...duty on James Island, SC, 6 Aug.-5 Oct. 1782: Colonel John Fisher Adjutant Samuel McConnel Qtr-Mstr Jacob Hungerpeller ... Captain Hartwell Penticost Lt. Silas Canada Sgt. Henry Crosby Sgt. Kingston Hart Privates: ... Abraham Riddlesperger ...* Source: Theresa M. Hicks, op. cit., page 132.

References from Jesse Hogan Motes III & Margaret Peckham Motes (abstracters), *South Carolina Memorials: Abstracts of Land Titles, Volume I, 1774-1776*. Greenville SC: Southern Historical Press, 1996.

p. 5: William Nisbett, 28 July 1775: 220 acres in St. George Parish. Bounded SE on Christian Riddlesperger; SW on Gideon Dupont; NW and NE on Thomas Young...Survey certified 10 Feb 1775; granted 1 Mar 1775. Quit rent in 2 years. Richard Winn, DS. Delivered 29 July 1775 to the memorialist by Jacob Lindfors. [2-265:1]

pp. 24-5: Felix Brunner, 2 Sep 1775: 200 acres in Berkley County on S side of Four Holes. Bounded NE on vacant land and Christopher Riddlesperger; SW on Felix Long; NW on vacant land. Survey certified 8 Feb 1773; granted 21 Apr 1775. Quit rent in 2 years. Isaac Love, DS. [2-321:5]

p. 32: Thomas Young, 11 Sep 1775: 250 acres in Berkley County on Four Hole Swamp. Bounded SW on land of Gideon Dupont; SE on Christain Riddlesperger; other sides on said Young. Survey certified 9 Jan 1775; granted 4 May 175. Quit rent in 2 years. Mordicai McFarlan, DS. [2-341:6]

p. 79: William Day, 24 Nov 1775; 600 acres in Berkley County, St. George Parish, waters of Four Hole Creek. Bounded NW and SW on James Hailly, Samuel Cross and Christain Riddlesparger; other sides vacant. Survey certified 21 Jul 1775; granted 15 Sep 1775. Quit rent in 2 years. Thos. Clark, DS. Delivered 20 Nov 1775 to Peter Bremer. [2-469:4]

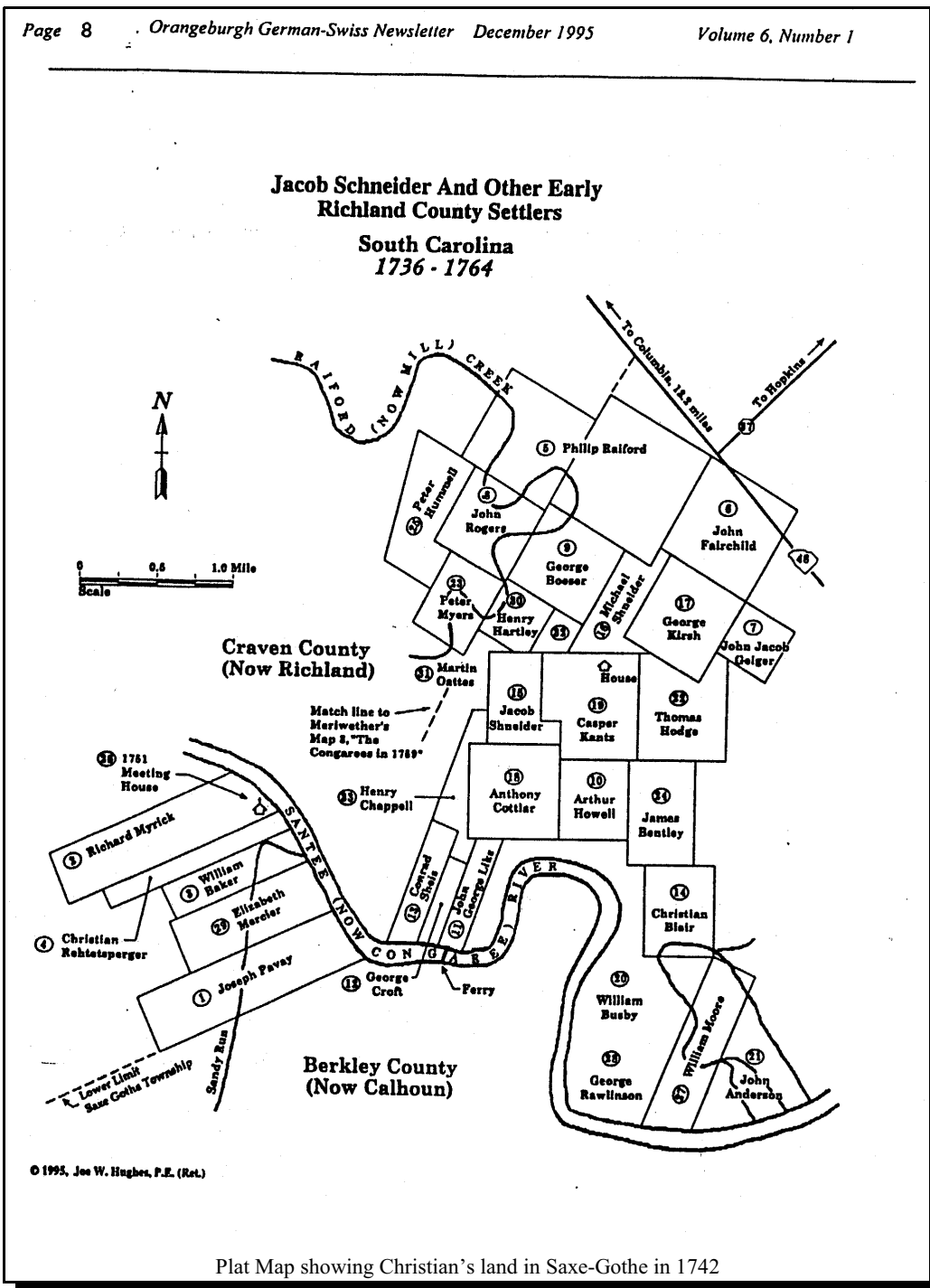
pp. 149-50: William Crawford, 4 Nov 1774; 100 acres in Charles Town District, SW of 4 Hole Swamp. Bounded SE on Felix Brown; SW on Christain Riddlespurger. Survey certified 1 May 1773; granted 7 Jun 1774. Quit rent in 2 years. Thos. Clark, DS. Delivered 12 Jan 1775 to Thomas Clark. [13-82:5]

p. 171: Christian Riddlesperger, 3 Dec 1774; 100 acres in Berkley County, S of 4 Hole Swamp. Bounded NE on Jno. Abrm. Glimp; NW on said Riddlesperger; S, NW and SE on Felix Brunner; other sides vacant. Survey certified 12 May 1773; granted 23 June 1774. Quit rent in 2 years. Lewis Linder, DS. Delivered 8 Dec 1774 to Christain Riddlesperger (CR). [13-134:6]

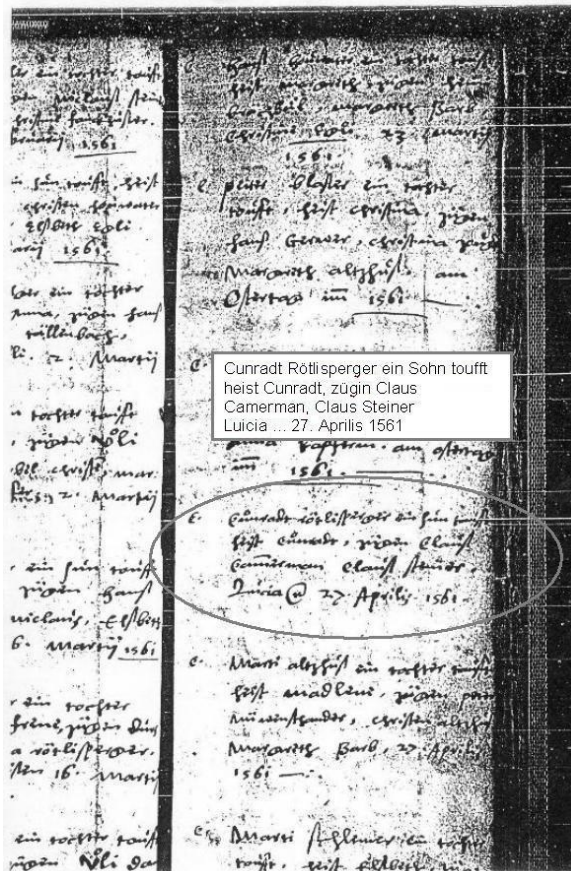
pp. 298-9: Thomas Young, 20 Apr 1775; 183 acres in Berkley County on Four Hole Swamp. Bounded SW and NE on land not laid out; NW on Abraham Dupont; SE on 100 acres hereafter mentioned. Originally granted 12 Aug 1737 by Gov. Thos. Broughton to Cornelius Dupree. Also, 100 acres, as above. Bounded NW on aforesaid 183 acres; other sides vacant at time of original grant. Originally granted to Gideon Dupont 13 July 1737 and conveyed by him to [--] Dupont, and by him conveyed to Christain Riddlesperger. Also, 150 acres, as above, on a branch of Four Hole Swamp. Bounded NE and NW on Christain Riddlesperger; other sides vacant. Originally granted to Jasper Strobel 23 Dec 1771. Which three tracts were conveyed by Jasper Strobel by L & R 26-27 Aug 1773 to Thos. Young. Also, 250 acres, as above, part of 500 acres originally granted 13 Jul 1737 to Abraham Dupont. Bounded SW on Cornelius Dupont, now property of Thos. Young; NW on land now property of Thos. Young; NE on other part of 500 acres. Also, 5 acres, part of 143 acres, originally granted to Gideon Dupont 12 Aug 1737, situated as above. Bounded SE on Christain Riddlesperger; NE on land now property of Thos. Young; which two tracts was conveyed by Christain Riddlesperger and Elizabeth, his wife, to Thomas Young, the memorialist, by L & R 13-14 Mar 1775. [13:450:4]

p. 344: Mary Ann Studenmyer, 29 Aug 1775; 100 acres, part of a 200 acre tract, in Berkley County in Amelia Township, on SW side of Santee River. Bounded by vacant land at time of original survey. Originally granted [--] day of 1749 to Leopard Clause, and conveyed by him 12 Oct [no year] to Christain Redlishburger, and conveyed by him by L & R 21 and 22 May 1766 to Martin Studenmyer, and said Martin Studenmyer, St. and Geo. Studenmyer, by L & R 21 and 22 Sep 1770 conveyed the moiety of the above 200 acre tract, on which the houses, outhouse and fences now stand, to Mary Ann Studenmyer, during her life, and after her decease to return to lawful heirs of said Martin Studenmyer. Martin Studenmyer. [14-17:3]

Appendix Two – Plat Map of Christian’s Land in Saxe Gotha (near Orangeburgh)



Appendix Three – Cunradt Rötlisperger's baptismal record, April 27, 1561, from the Reformed Church of Langnau.



Appendix Four – The Fate of the Meeting House of the “Dissenting Protestant Church”

Appendix Four – The Fate of the Meeting House of the “Dissenting Protestant Church”

1753 Meeting House, Sandy Run SC

In *The Expansion of South Carolina* (by Meriwether) mention is given to a little meeting house by the river which Hans Jacob Schneider helped establish (57). In 1751 however, William Baker gave half an acre on the Congaree a few hundred yards above the mouth of Sandy Run to the “Elders of the German Congregation of the Dissenting protestants at the Congarees... [with the Meeting house build on] for the sole...use of said German Protestants of the Helvetic or Walloone Confession as well as of that of Augsburg in Common. This little church meeting house is recorded in the *SC Deed Book M-3*, p. 118, 24 May 1751.

Gift in Trust.

William Baker, planter, of Saxegotha Township, Berkeley Co., for good & pious considerations, conveys to Christian Rhetetsperger, William Baker, John Plowman, & Jacob Schneider, elders of the German Congregation of the Dissenting Protestants at the Congarees, & their successors, half an acre within the limits of said Township, part of 350 a. between lands belonging to Christian Rhetetsperger & Herman Geiger; said half a. bounding N on Santee River; other sides on the 350 a.; with the Meeting House built thereon; for the sole use of said German Protestants of the Helvetii [Swiss Reformed] or Walloone [Dutch Reformed] Confession as well as of that of Augsburg [Lutheran] in common. Livery & seizing made. Witnesses: Philip (his mark) Pool, Peter (German script) Rott. Before Stephen Crell, J.P., on 7 June 1751. Recorded 24 Dec 1768 by Fenwicke Bull, Register.

One of the witnesses was Philip Pool, a wealthy mill owner. Jacob’s daughter Barbara would marry him in 1756 and they would have one son, William Poolb: Feb 27, 1759 in Lexington Co. SC.

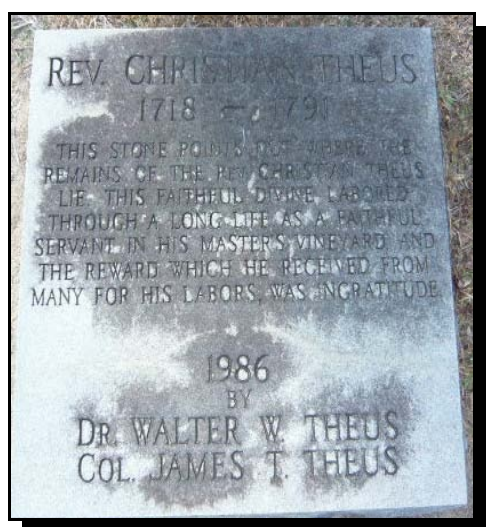
1751 Meeting House

The meeting house for members of the church, established in 1751 is shown on Joe Hughes map of *Jacob Schneider And Other Early Richland County Settlers*. This map was published in *OGS Newsletter*, Vol. 6, and No. 1. The property is 7 miles north west of St. Mathews, SC and is less than a mile from the river. Later, this area would be near Sandy Run and the future site of McCord’s Ferry. McCord’s Ferry was a crossroads and probably a busy place for years up to the time of the railroad. It is believed that the present Sandy Run Lutheran Church came from this early congregation.

History of Early Lutheran Churches

The Lutheran Synod's history states that the date of its founding "can only be speculation . . . While the actual date of its founding is lost in the passage of time, it goes back to the early settlers who came from Germany and Switzerland circa 1736-1768 is considered as the beginning . . . and the suggestion has already been made that Sandy Run was formed by former members of St. John's Congaree, Thesus' congregation." By 1751 there was a Meeting House (a church accommodating the Swiss and German and Dutch) located in the vicinity of Sandy Run on the west side of the Congaree River and possibly very near the Catawba Indian Path.²¹ The meeting house was well within the confines of an earlier Saxe Gotha Township. Calhoun County was created in 1908 from Lexington and Orangeburg Counties. Some of those on the list of petitioners appear to have been residing in what is present-day

Calhoun County; however, others appear to have been in the area around Granby. The church is said to have been served by Christian Thesus (ca. 1739) Lewis Hockheimer (ca 1774), Wallern, Daser, Franklow, Bernhardt, Rauch, Godfrey Dreher (ca. 1824-26).



The Lutheran Church

The early settlers along the Congaree River selected their lands and erected their dwellings very near the river banks, where they could obtain the richest lands, and enjoy all the advantages of water transportation, fishing, but where they, on the other hand severed much from the effects of the miasma arising from the river and its numerous swamps. Nevertheless, they clung to their original

settlements and homes until disease had made repeated inroads upon their robust constitutions and death had greatly diminished their original number.

Wherever they had located their houses and homes, there likewise did they erect their church, about three miles from the present situation of Salem Church, Sandy Run. The old graveyard, which was not far removed from the church is still pointed out under the appellation of "The Church Field" and it is stated that so swampy or spongy is the condition of the land, that many a coffin was lowered in its grave which had become half filled with water, so that the coffin became quite covered with that element; and all efforts to remedy the evil at that place were unavailing. Yet it did not occur to the members of the church until a long time afterwards, to remove the church and graveyard to a more elevated situation.

It is to be lamented that we know so little of Rev. Hochheimer's history; when he became pastor, how long he remained at Sandy Run, what the condition of the church was during the Revolution, who succeeded Rev. Hocheimer, when and where he died and was buried? All these are questions which it is feared will never be

²¹ See *Saxe Gotha Neighbors* by Theresa M. Hicks.

answered, and these answers, with other interesting facts connected with them may lie forever buried in the oblivion of the past.

Three Lutheran congregations composed at one time the Saluda charge; Zion's or Mount Zion, on Twelve-mile Creek, St. Peters, on Eighteen mile Creek and Bethel, on High Hill Creek. They are always spoken of in the old records of their church books as having formed one pastorate; but how far back this arrangement extended cannot now be ascertained. Salem Church, on Hollow Creek was added to this pastorate at a much later date, probably sometime before the beginning of the present century. In the year 1767 the Rev. John Nicholas Martin commenced to labor in the Fork of the Saluda and Broad Rivers and remained there until the close of the year 1774, when he was recalled to Charleston as temporary pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church. During the Revolutionary War, it is probable that these churches were vacant, as no Lutheran minister was residing then in that part of South Carolina, unless, perhaps, the Rev. Lewis Hocheimer of Sandy Run was still living, and occasionally visited them.

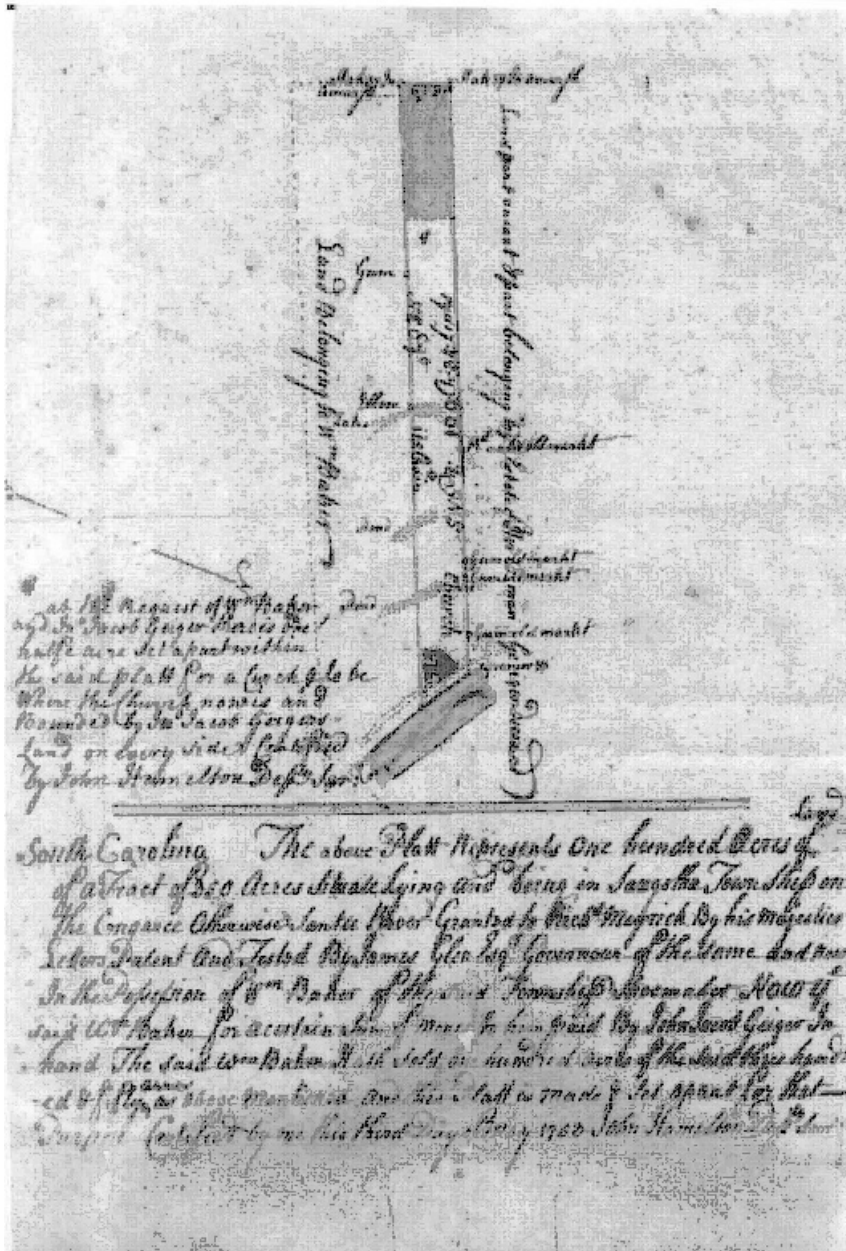
The Congaree River is deep and wide enough to provide passage to small boats and barges up from Charleston. Sandy Run is a creek that empties into the Congaree River a mile or so above the prominent horseshoe bend in the river at the lower limit of Saxa-Gotha township. Note the Catawba Indian Path apparently still existing, running in parallel on the west side of the Congaree river. It then appears to cross over to the west side of the river.

The Spigners lived near the Jumper family in the vicinity of the Salem (Sandy Run) Church. Samuel Jumper, Sr., owned the old "Red Store" tract located . . . near "Sandy Run, Waters of Congaree River and on the Charleston Road near the forks of the road leading to Orangeburgh." Samuel purchased the 83.5 acre parcel from shopkeeper John Henry Eiffert in 1811 (*Lex. Deed BK A, 474*).

The deed had an exception clause reserving for a church and burying ground. Samuel Jumper sold the land to Harman H. Geiger in 1819 (*Lex. Deed BK C, 800-801*). This may have been the location of the meeting house. The actual Plat map is shown below.

1753, May 3 - Plat representing 100 acres from a trust of 350 acres in Saxe Gotha Township on the Congaree otherwise Santee River granted Richard Meyrick and now in possession of William Baker of said Township shoemaker. Now ye said William Baker Hath for a certain sum of money to him by John Jacob Geyer said 100 acres of the said 350 acres above mentioned and this plat is made and set apart for that purpose Certified May 3, 1975, Signed John Hamleton Dep ty Sur. At request of Wm Baker and Jon Jacob Geyer there is 1/2/ acre set apart with.. set plat for a church to be where the church now is and bounded by John Jacob Geiger's land on every side. Certified by John Hamelton, DeptySur

William Baker Plat Map (showing the church on the river)



In the aerial photo below, notice the land as it appears today (seen next to the plat map). Note the Catawba Indian Path apparently still existing, running in parallel on the west side of the Congaree river. It then appears to cross over to the west side of the river.



Sandy Run Church Markers

