

Black Rucker Line

Subj: Fw: Peter of Natchez Info
Date: Monday, April 5, 2004 4:57:16 PM
From: bloftin@indiannationinternet.net
To: bculey@AOL.com

This is what Frances had sent Kathryn or told her about, just read on.

----- Original Message -----

From: Frances Willess
To: bloftin@indiannationinternet.net
Sent: Monday, April 05, 2004 3:13 PM
Subject: Fw: Peter of Natchez Info

Dear Bennie,

It was good to hear from you. I have never made it to any of the Rucker reunions, but sure wanted to make the one in Natchez. I am sorry to hear the old houses there have gone out of the family, but am glad the old one is being cared for and preserved.

I would be interested in getting a copy of your book by e-mail. I try to collect all the family information I can.

I am passing along the e-mail I got from Edward Rucker, which shows his e-mail address. Ron Payne talked to him on the phone and said he lives in the Atlanta area. He said they had a nice visit, but neither of us ever heard from him again. He told me he would fax me a lot of information and I gave him my daughter's fax address, since I don't have one, but it never showed up. I never did find his original e-mail I received, but still have something over 4,000 e-mails I have not searched yet.

He has an awful lot of wrong information that I hope he corrects before he publishes his book. Ron and I both sent him documentation showing his errors.

Frances

Macruck@aol.com

To: willess@juno.com

Date: Thu, 4 Sep 2003 07:28:41 EDT

Subject: (no subject)

Message-ID: <1dc.1053242c.2c887be9@aol.com>

Dear Frances:

Thank you for your timely information the other day on Peter Rucker of Natchez fame.

I have been researching the African-American descendants of the Rucker family for over 20 years and have a book on the matter coming out in the Spring of 2004 dating from Africa in the early 1700s to the Rucker slaves in Orange County, Virginia and following their fates through inheritance, sales and migrations to Georgia, Tennessee, South Carolina, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas.

I am a descendant of the Peter Rucker line of Natchez (both Anglo and African) through the Johnathan Rucker, Sr. branch. Though I have all the data (wills, slave lists and records, plantation reports, marriages, inheritances, court battles, etc.) of all Peter Rucker's children after his demise apparently from yellow fever while functioning as an Indian Agent for the Spanish Government there, and data before he left Culpepper County, Virginia; I have a major hole in between insofar as his route traveled with his family (Sarah Cowerd Rucker and children: Colby Rucker, Jonathan Rucker, William Rucker, Catherine Rucker Turnbull, and Susannah Rucker Bisland) to Natchez or Mobile. Records indicate he was there for a short period before his death and not upon arrival (Spanish Records).

Do you have any knowledge of slaves deeded to him by his father, Thomas Rucker, prior to leaving Virginia since he was not given them in Thomas' will because he had already apparently been deeded adjoining land according to the will? (The will only seems to address the inheritance of the remaining minors or offsprings that had not been deeded property prior). Did any slaves accompany him to Natchez? Did he or Sara purchase any upon arrival or

shortly thereafter? I am aware of Jonathan Rucker's wife inheritance of slaves through her father Daniel Perry and that of subsequent generations with his sons Peter, William, Daniel and Jonathan, Jr.; and of the numerous slaves owned by John Bisland (Susannah) on many Louisiana and Mississippi plantations; and of those inherited by Catherine Rucker Turnbull and the various plantations, as well as those on William Rucker's plantation inherited by his wife Mary B. Rucker.

Can you help me connect this gap and fill this hole? Today we number over 3,000 descendants from just two of the slaves (Josh and Betsy Rucker) belonging to Jonathan Rucker, Sr and his son Peter Rucker alone.

Thank you,

Edward E. Rucker

From: Macruck@aol.com

To: willess@juno.com

Date: Fri, 5 Sep 2003 21:06:58 EDT

Subject: Peter of Natchez Info

Message-ID: <170.2371b382.2c8a8d32@aol.com>

Dear Frances:

Thanks for sharing your info. like you, I have at least several file cabinets on the Rucker family branches: Joseph Rucker of Ruckersville, Elbert County, Georgia (Georgia's first antebellum millionaire); and in particular the Mississippi/Louisiana Rucker branches.

I have spent a great deal of time in Natchez (Adams County Courthouse) Mississippi pouring over the plantation records of Jonathan, Sr. and his sons Peter, William, Daniel and Jonathan, Jr. Jonathan, Sr. married Ann Perry, daughter of Daniel Perry. In Daniel Perry's will he gives Ann (daughter) a mulatto slave girl named Dianah (Ann's half sister he had fathered with a slave from Jamaica on his plantation). Dianah is listed amongst the slaves as property owned by Jonathan Rucker, Sr. after he and Ann are married, In the Spanish Natchez Court Records there is a legal case showing the same Dianah a few months before the marriage of Jonathan and Ann being forced to escape Daniel Perry's plantation by her mulatto husband named Jones who

resided as an indentured servant on a nearby plantation. It seems according to records that Jones wasn't too happy about Jonathan Rucker plans to take Dianah away after the marriage along with his new bride to his plantation in Cannonsburg (15 miles east of Natchez). Records indicate that Jones beat Dianah into an unconscious state because she refused to escape with him, and then fled alone. Ironically, it was Jonathan Rucker himself who tracked the runaway down with hounds and captured him. The subsequent trial gave him an additional decade in indentured servitude (at the time of the escape he only had another year to do then he would have been free). Other records indicate that Jones' attempt to kidnap his legal wife was also prompted by Jonathan Rucker's promise to wed Dianah to Tom, his most valued and trusted slave, plantation blacksmith, and believed to be Jonathan's half brother fathered by Peter Rucker and brought down with him from Culpepper County, Virginia (Tom's birth place is listed as there) with the rest of Jonathan's siblings. The marriage of Tom and Dianah happened shortly after that of Jonathan Rucker and Ann Perry on Jonathan Rucker's plantation.

I have read the Alston Family Bible's account of Catherine Rucker running away with her younger brother William and hiding out across the river because of her distain for her "step-mother" and apparently Peter Rucker's "second" wife which would suggest to me that contrary to popular belief Peter Rucker did not die upon entering Spanish Mississippi territory. There are several records that I have which suggest and verify as much. I have records that does show he was employed as an Indian agent for the Spanish government and was based and lived initially in Mobile for a short period upon his arrival in the Mississippi territory in the English settlement there. This is where I think I have enough data to put the "Sarah Cowherd vs Sarah Wisdom" debate to rest once and for all.

It is my contention that Peter Rucker's first wife that he left Virginia with was named Sarah Cowherd and died shortly upon their arrival in Mobile, and not he, from fever. Peter then, primarily because of the ages of his younger children (Catherine, William and Susannah) took on a second wife there in the Mississippi territory shortly thereafter named Sarah Wisdom, according to the Alston family bible...the wicked "step-mother" whom accordingly from the same source forced Catherine to "nurse" her youngest sibling.

Another coincidence that brings the "Cowherd" name into reality is the fact that Peter names his first two sons Colby and Jonathan. The records of the Cowherd family whose land bordered that of Peter's inherited land from his father Thomas in Culpepper County, Virginia shows a Colby Cowherd as the

Patriach and a father named Jonathan Cowherd also bordering his lands. The Cowherd family records states the following:

"Father James (Coward) COwherd Mother: Mary (Collidge) Alloway. The children listed for James and Elizabeth are those for which records have been found. Family tradition has it that there were at least two more children, Colby Cowherd, whose name repeats throughout family records as does Sarah Cowherd. Colby married Sarah Rucker, and Sarah Cowherd married Peter Rucker son of Thomas Rucker, immigrant from England in 1700. A Peter and sarah are recorded as selling this same property in question in 1775 and 1789 and are said to have moved to Mississippi."

Children:

Jonathan Travis Cowherd III + Sarah Frances Kirtley

Winifred Cowherd + William Twyman

James Cowherd III (James III was killed while serving as an Ensign in Col. Bouquet's Regiment in the French and Indian War (1756-1763). As he died single, and his father was deceased, his estate was inherited by his oldest brother Jonathan. Due to his service in the war his estate consisted of some 2000 acres of land on the North Fork of Elkhorn in Fayette County, (then Virginia but later in Kentucky).

Sarah Cowherd

Colby Cowherd

Ruben Travis Cowherd + Susannah Rucker

"pages 3,4, of Cowherd Geneology by Edythe Cowherd 11 and Elizabeth Lacy his wife (authentic record) "then according to "family tradition" they had a son, Colby, who married Sarah Rucker, and also a daughter, who married Peter rucker, son of Thomas rucker, immigrant to Va, in 1700. The last mention of couple, Peter and Sarah may have been the couple who sold land in Culpepper, Va, 1775 and were living in Mississippi in 1789. There is a history of the Rucker Family by Edythe Rucker Whitley."

(Note: It is possible that Sarah Cowherd could have died before leaving Virginia of fever, and he could have married Sarah Wisdom a few months prior to embarking for Mississippi. But I strongly believe this is the correct sequence of wives.)

Now Frances, when you take the above records of account along with that of the Alston Family Bible there seems to be a little more continuity in the premise that Peter and wife Sarah Cowhert along with sons Colby, Jonathan and William; and daughters Catherine and Susannah makes the trip, according to records I have, from Culpepper County, Virginia initially to Fort Pitt, NC where

they lived for a few years as Peter was commissioned and stationed there as a Colonel. (This no doubt explains the gap in years between his sell of property in Culpepper in arriving in the Mississippi territory and this is also the route traveled to reach his destination "The Wilderness Road"). Apparently, Colby, the eldest son falls in love and marries his wife here at Fort Pitt, North Carolina (as I recall without pulling my records to support this Colby's wife was the daughter of a Captain or General that he served under during this time.) Peter Rucker leaves Fort Pitt with his family a few years later minus Colby who is then married (and a few slaves inclusive of Tom) and heads to Mobile (part of the Mississippi territory). It is here where I believe Sarah Cowherd dies from fever or childbirth upon arrival and having recently given birth to Susanah (Remember in the Alston Family Bible the other Sarah is making Catherine nurse Susannah). Because Peter has such young children with the exception of Jonathan who is a teenager he takes another wife...Sarah Wisdom. Shortly thereafter, Peter is employed as an indian Agent according to Spanish Records and removes not far away to Natchez, the capital seat of the Spanish Government that controlled the Mississippi territory at the time. Records indicate that Colby is definitely not with them as this point but still in Fort Pitt, NC. You could put the Alston Family Bible records into play here again and say that a few years later upon arriving in Natchez from Mobile Peter meets the same fate as his first wife and dies of fever. (Note: The records always said Peter died of fever shortly upon arrival in Natchez, and not his arrival in the Mississippi teritory...see the difference?)

Seemingly Sarah Wisdom Rucker is alone at this point with only Jonathan, as head of household, and the other step children minus Catherine (records indicate that the ages in the house are Sarah, William, and Susannah. Remember, according to the Alston Bible Catherine has married Turnbull as a child bride at approximately 13 years of age and a few years has passed as such.)

Apparently all the step-children did well for themselves marrying into some of Natchez most powerful and wealthies families,i.e., Jonathan marries into the Perry family; Catherine marries Turnbull which becomes one of the wealties families across trhe river in Louisiana with numerous plantations and slaves; William becomes a lawyer and mariries Mary Bethany a relative of the wealthy Ellis clan; and Susannah marries the biggest catch of all...John Bisland, one of the wealthiest men in the Mississippi territory. Sarah Wisdom Rucker had to have benefited financially in some way from these arrangements especially the latter with John Bisland.

Anyway, as you have stated in your correspondence Sarah remarries to Mathias Friley and has a son Frederick from this union. Ironically, nothing is heard of Sarah from this point on in records until she resurfaces as Sarah Rucker Davis to file an ultimately rejected land claim as Peter Rucker's widow and representing his children: Colby, Jonathan, William, Catherine and Susannah. In what about the Davis surname? I'm trying to see if there is a connection to the Jefferson Davis family line also in Natchez during that time.

I do have court battle records of Rucker vs. Bisland for control of Peter Rucker's (Oldest son of Jonathan Rucker, Sr.) Estate by his siblings William, Daniel and Jonathan, Jr.. (Jonathan and Ann Perry did have several daughters but they all died before reaching adulthood. And apparently the same fever left all of Jonathan Sr.'s sons blind according to record except the oldest Peter (The main reason he left them with guardians...their cousins from the Bisland family). I also have the entire court records where the Anglo-Rucker descendants challenged the will of Jonathan Rucker, Jr. who left his entire estate and the Rucker Plantation to his two mulatto children he had father out of wedlock with a slave on his plantation named Charlott Brady (also a witness to his will). Needless to say, the will was overturned by distant cousins whom later split the properties amongst themselves. The mulatto son's name..."PETER COLBY RUCKER! (Named after his biological grandfather, and his great-uncle...Colby Rucker. There was apparently a communication still between Colby whom resided in Grainger Co., Tennessee hundreds of miles away and young Jonathan, Jr. growing up in Natchez. Or maybe it was the Colby as in Colby Cowherd his great-grandfather.

Though I have Thomas Rucker's will and inventory of slaves. I can't seem to find the original deed of land and slaves to Peter (son) Rucker some years prior to making his will and death. That's the ultimate connection for me. Can you help me fill this hole?

Thanks,
Edward Rucker

PS

Noted African Americans descendants of the Rucker Family from this Mississippi line are: Walter Peyton, former NFL Super Star; Medgar Evers, slain civil rights leader and NAACP head; Henry Rucker, Georgia's first and last Black State Commissioner of Revenue during Reconstruction; Richard Wright, author of "Native Son"; Dr. Jonathan Rucker, one of the first African-Americans to