

## Ancestry of John W. Ruckle (1835-1892)

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This document is a set of notes created to pull together my research on the ancestry of my great-grandfather, the Civil War veteran John W. Ruckle, who died in Nebraska in 1892.

### *John Ruckle in Nebraska*



*William Ruckle, ca. 1865, Civil War  
soldier*

John Ruckle was the maternal grandfather of my father, Omer Kem Luther. Dad's mother, Ella Etta Ruckle, Ella's only sister Ida Ruckle, and her father John Ruckle all died in 1892, when Dad was only two. We have a large painted tintype of Ella, a small tintype of Ida, and a Civil War tintype of John (at the right), tall of which have been mounted in common frame and displayed in our home for many years.

My father, of course, did not really know his grandfather. John Ruckle brought Ella and Ida to Custer County, Nebraska, about 1888. They homesteaded west of Mason City, in Algernon Township.<sup>1</sup> The homestead claim was filed on 24 January 1888, the required payment of \$1.25 per acre was made on 27 July 1892, and the heirs of John Ruckle received full patent on the land on 8 January 1895. The homestead was about two miles from the homestead farm of Henry Luther, my father's grandfather.

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<sup>1</sup>The *Federal Land Records*, Volume 101, record that the homestead site was 160 acres located in "the North East Quarter, Section 34, Township 15, Range 18."

*Arthur Luther and Ella  
Etta Ruckle, Omer Kem  
Luther as child*



Nothing is known of the circumstances under which Ella met Henry's son Arthur, my Dad's father. The marriage certificate of Arthur and Ella is on file at the Custer County Courthouse. It says that Ella and Arthur were married on 9 June 1890. Arthur was 21 and Ella was only 14 years.<sup>2</sup> They are said to have "the written consent of her father." Ella's sister was also, I believe, married about the same time, but I have not been able to find the record of Ida's marriage. She married another Algernon local named Sigman. Ida was eight years older than Ella.<sup>3</sup>

Arthur and Ella had only two short years together. My dad, Omer, was born on November 12 of the first year of the marriage, suggesting that the wedding that summer might have been arranged with some haste. Omer was joined in 1892 by a brother, Earcy (spelling uncertain), but he lived only eight months (February 28 to October 12). Ella died on September 8. Her father John died earlier in the year, probably in the spring.<sup>4</sup> Ida is said to have died that year as well, so in a mere 6 months the entire family, except the baby Omer and the child of Ida, were carried off. The cause may have been typhoid fever, perhaps spread by contaminated well water. The picture at right shows the family in 1891.



*Ida Ruckle Sigman, sister  
of Ella Etta*

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<sup>3</sup> Sigman's first name is only known from an 1892 quit claim deed (next footnote). His family background is a mystery. And after Ida's death, Sigman disappears from the records. He and Ida's only son, Lawnie Sigman, joined the family of Samuel and Sarah J. Hoppock in Elkhorn, Nebraska—Lawnie is called their "son" on the 1900 census. Arthur and Omer Luther contacted him in the 1910-1920 period and bought out his share of John Ruckle's Custer County homestead land. Lawnie married Gladys Wasmer in 1920 and had a son named "Barrette." He moved to California soon after and died there in 1924. Gladys remarried to H.C. Grote and Lawnie's son Barrette adopted the surname "Grote." Barrette, who died in Pearland, Texas, in 1983, married a woman with children and her children became his—he does not seem to have had any physical child of his own. For documentation on this information, see Lawnie's WikiTree entry at <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Sigman-480>.

<sup>4</sup>There are a pair of quit claim deeds at the Custer County Court House which show Ida and Ella, the "sole and only heirs" of John Ruckle, deeding to each other half of the 160-acre homestead on July 28 of that summer.

## *The Ruckle Story and Chronology*

Where was John Ruckle before he came to Nebraska? The starting point for my search of John Ruckle's origins was a story told about my Dad. My father, the Luthers used to say when Dad was a child, was a Harriman and would never have to worry about making a living. The name Harriman was known to almost everyone in the 1890s. E.H. Harriman was responsible for assembling the Union Pacific Railroad out of a number of smaller lines and was one of the merchant princes who were part of the public imagination for the half century after 1880. Word spread in the family that Dad was related to E.H. through his deceased mother Ella, a Harriman. But the relationship existed only in the rumor. E.H. grew up on the East Coast and, although his name became associated with the American Midwest through his connections with the Union Pacific Railroad, he was a thorough-going Easterner. The railroad Harrimans came from the British Isles after the American Revolution and neither E.H. nor his family left the New Jersey area until this century. People in rural Nebraska had simply made the leap from the name to the family, just as today someone with the name Rockefeller might evoke a connection to the Rockefeller fortune.<sup>5</sup>

A story about John Ruckle told me by my Dad said that John Ruckle was the foreman on the Harriman farm in Kellerton, Iowa, and that he married the boss's daughter against the wishes of her father. When John's wife died, the Harrimans supposedly made it clear to John that he and the two girls, Ella Etta and Ida, were no longer welcome. John left Iowa and emigrated to Nebraska. He came in a wagon train with a number of other Ringgold County, Iowa, natives, to the unsettled lands of Custer County. Several of the more prominent families in Algernon, among them the Dadys<sup>6</sup> and the Kellers,<sup>7</sup> came in the same wagon train, so it is possible that the story passed along to Dad derived from one of these families.

So much for the stories. Is there any truth to them? I was able to use the Kellerton, Iowa, location, and the fact that Ruckle was a member of a Minnesota regiment in the Civil War (information on his gravestone) to find the Harriman and Ruckle families in a variety of documents. Here is what I have uncovered about John Ruckle's background, organized by date.

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<sup>5</sup>I was quite surprised to look at a picture of Averill, E. H.'s famous statesman son, in the last year of his life, and see in the face the mirror of my own father, but I assume that the resemblance was mere coincidence.

<sup>6</sup>Parry Dady was a witness for Arthur and Ella's marriage.

<sup>7</sup>Ella Etta's stepmother (who did not immigrate to Nebraska) was Lucinda Ellen Keller.

1835

John Ruckle's service papers show that he was born in Morgan, Virginia, about 1835. There is, to my knowledge, no such city in Virginia or West Virginia (at the time of John's birth they were, of course, the same state). There is a Morgantown, however, and there is also a Morgan County. At this point, I am certain that Morgantown, in Monongalia County, is what the service papers mean by Morgan.

1840

If John Ruckle is, as I think, the son of Daniel Ruckle, an Irish immigrant residing in Morgantown, West Virginia, then he would have been living with his father and mother around Morgantown at the time of the 1840 census. There is in fact a male child in Daniel Ruckle's household in the 1840 census who could correspond to the young John Ruckle.<sup>8</sup> Daniel's wife is Rebecca Jarrett (a section at the end of this summary discusses Rebecca's family and the evidence that she was Daniel's wife). Daniel and Rebecca moved to Rappahannock County, Virginia, in the early 1840s.<sup>9</sup> Daniel may have died in the 1840s, and Rebecca may have remarried.<sup>10</sup> Daniel and Rebecca appear to have had two other children: Thomas in 1841, and David in 1845.<sup>11</sup> I'll discuss David and Thomas in more detail in the next section.

1860

After he became an adult, John Ruckle moved to Minnesota. In the 1857 census, he is living on the farm of Faris and Melvina Farley on the east side of the Blue Earth River in Blue Earth County, Minnesota. He is listed as a 22-year old farmer. In the 1860 federal census he is on the same farm, this time recorded as a 25-year-old laborer living in Vernon Township of Blue Earth County. On both censuses, his place of birth is (wrongly, I suspect) listed as Pennsylvania.

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<sup>8</sup> The 1840 census entry for Daniel Ruckle shows 2 boys under 5, one boy 5-10, one man 40-50, two girls under 5, and a woman 30-40.

<sup>9</sup>Daniel's son David, who was born on 25 June 1845, claims that he (David) was born in Rappahannock County.

<sup>10</sup>A tradition in David's family says that David's father died and his mother remarried. Daniel Ruckle is not in the 1850 Morgantown census. Nor does any record of a Ruckle exist in the Rappahannock Co, Virginia, records. I also checked, without success, for a Rebecca on the 1850 Rappahannock census who might be Daniel Ruckle's remarried wife. Possibly she went back to her family in West Virginia.

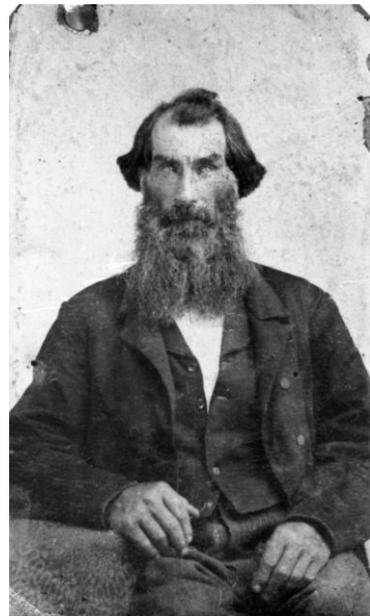
<sup>11</sup>David is the son of Daniel Ruckle, confirmed on David's death certificate. A story descending in David's family says that David had brothers William and Thomas.

In the 1860 census, in nearby Shelby Township, is the family of George Harriman (misspelled “Harryman”), his wife Eliza, and his three children, Arrina (Irena), age 10, Mary, age 3, and Julietta, age 1. Irena would marry John Ruckle seven years later. Harriman is a 30-year-old farmer from Pennsylvania with \$200 in personal property.<sup>12</sup> His wife Eliza, age 27, is also from Pennsylvania.<sup>13</sup> The census says that the oldest two daughters were born in Ohio and the youngest was born in Minnesota. In an Iowa publication,<sup>14</sup> Harriman tells about being born in Washington County, Pennsylvania, in 1828, and moving to Licking County, Ohio, while still a boy. In 1860 he moved to Whiteside County, Illinois and Clinton County, Iowa. In 1861, he came to Minnesota.

### 1865

Minnesota collected state census data at the five-year mark between the federal censuses. Not much information was recorded for the tallied families, however. George Harriman is still listed in Shelby, Blue Earth County in the 1865 state census. Living with him is his wife Eliza Jane and their children Irene, [Mary] Ella, Julietta, Benjamin S. and George. Irena would have been about 14. Two boys have been added to the family since 1860.

I can find no Ruckle listed in Shelby or Vernon Townships for 1865, probably because John was in the army at the time the census was taken—he signed up on 27 August 1864, in Mankato, and was mustered at Ft. Snelling on September 4 in the newly-formed 11th Minnesota Infantry Regiment. John enlisted for one year and is described as “5 foot 10 inches, dark complexion, blue eyes and dark hair.” He was 29 when he enlisted. The picture of him in his Civil War uniform at the top of this paper was probably taken that fall. He was mustered out on June 26, 1865. The Minnesota 11th was commanded by James Gilfillan and saw service in late 1864 in Tennessee. The regiment garrisoned posts and guarded railroads.<sup>15</sup>



*George Harriman*

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<sup>12</sup>His exact birthdate, according to his tombstone in Kellerton, Iowa, is 29 March 1821.

<sup>13</sup>Her maiden name (determined from her children's wedding certificates) was Eliza Jane Johns[t]on.

<sup>14</sup>*Prominent Persons of Ringgold County*. Published in 1880 by the *Ringgold Recorder*.

<sup>15</sup>William Watts Folwell, *A History of Minnesota* (St. Paul, Minnesota: Minnesota Historical Society), Vol II., p. 339.

1866

John Ruckle married the oldest child of George Harriman, Irena, on 17 May 1866 in Blue Earth County, Minnesota.<sup>16</sup>

1870

In 1870 John Ruckle was living in Blue Earth County according to the federal census of that year. He is 35, a farmer, and has real estate valued at \$3000 and personal property valued at \$120. He is married to I[rena], age 21, and they have a child Ida E., age 2. Irena is said to be from Ohio. If the census is correct, neither John nor Irena was able to read or write.

G[eorge] Harriman<sup>17</sup> is mistakenly listed as age 46 in the 1870 census and E[liza] J[ane] as 40. Eliza, we learn, was born in Ohio, not Pennsylvania as the previous census claimed. M[ary] E[lla] is 13, J[ulietta] is 11, Benjamin is 8, G[eorge] W. is 5, and M[argaret] Viola is 3.

There are land records in Blue Earth County which show a “Geo. Harriman and wife” in the act of buying and selling properties in the years 1865, 1870, 1871, 1874, and 1875.

1875

In the Minnesota census of 1875 George Harriman is not listed. The last land record I can find for him is dated 1875. He probably left for Iowa sometime in this year, despite his later claim to have come to Iowa in 1876. Harriman bought land in Iowa in December of 1875.

John Ruckle and his family, however, are still in Shelby Township, Blue Earth County, Minnesota, for the 1875 state census. John is 40, Irena is 26, and Ida is 7. John is said to have been born in Virginia, Irena in Ohio, just as in the federal census made five years earlier. This state census lists the birthplaces of the father and mother as well. John's father is from Ireland and Irena's is from Ohio (which conflicts with the report Irena's father George made 15 years earlier that he had been born in Pennsylvania. Irena was born in Ohio, and had lived there until she was 9, however, so she may have assumed that her father and mother had also been born there.) “John W. Ruckle and wife” appear on land transactions for the years 1872 and 1873. Ella was born while they were still in

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<sup>16</sup>Minnesota, County Marriages, 1853-1983, digital film/folder number 004540644\_007\_M9S4-V3J, FHL microfilm 1309275, Image number 123, record number 1447, page 107.

<sup>17</sup>The 1870 Federal census listings for this county used initials instead of full names.

Minnesota, so it is possible that Irena's pregnancy and the care of an infant kept them in Minnesota until 1876, even though the Harrimans had already left for Iowa.

The Luther family history lists Ella's birth date as "August 27, 1874." If this were the case, Ella should have shown up on the 1875 census. Her year of birth, therefore, was probably 1875 or 1876. She is listed as 16 years old when she was married on June 9, 1890. But she would only have been 14 years and 10 months if the 1875 date is correct.

### *1875/76*

In these years the Ruckles and Harrimans moved from Minnesota to Ringgold County, Iowa. Harriman bought a quarter section in Athens Township, about three miles west of Kellerton, at the intersection of the modern Iowa Route 2 and county road P64.<sup>18</sup> I have not found evidence that Ruckle bought any land before 1880, so he may have rented land initially, or he may have worked as a laborer for the Harrimans and lived on their farm, as family tradition claims.

### *1880*

In the federal census of 1880 John is listed in Athens Township as a 45-year old farmer and Irena as his 31-year old wife. John is called "John W. Ruckle." Ida is 12, and Ella is 4. If this census was taken before Ella's birthday in August, then the age of 4 is correct if her birthdate was 1875, lending further support to an August, 1875, birthday for Ella. Irena is said to have been born in Ohio, which is consistent with all other records mentioned above, and John is said to have been born in Virginia. In October of this year, Ruckle bought an 80-acre piece of land a quarter mile east of Harriman's land.

We also find George Harriman in the same Township. He is 51 and a farmer. He still has living at home with him his son George (now 16) and the daughter Maggie [Margaret], who is 13. The elder George says now that he was born in Ohio, but that his parents, both father and mother, were born in Pennsylvania. His wife is now listed as Ellen, age 31, born in Indiana, and her parents were born in Kentucky. Harriman married Lucinda Ellen Keller after his first wife died. There is no way at present of placing the end of the first marriage with any exactness. All we know is that it was later than 1870, but before 1880.

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<sup>18</sup>Section 6, Township 68N, Range 28W.

1881/2

In 1881 George Harriman sold the property in Section 6 of Athens Township and bought land a mile to the southeast, in Section 9, in 1882. This land was later sold to his children and remained in the family until 1910.

1885

The state census in Iowa in 1885 enumerates both the Harrimans and Ruckles. They are living on farms on range 28, township 69, in sections 5 and 17.<sup>19</sup> This census preserves informal names. It calls John's wife Rena. Ida, now 17, is said to be housekeeping. George Harriman's family consists of himself, now age 56, born in Pennsylvania, Lindi E[llen]., age 33 (why not 36?), born in Indiana, Ben Harriman, age 23, George W., age 20, and Magey ("Maggie," or Margaret), age 18. They are all listed as farming or keeping house.

1886

In this year, Ruckle's land was bought by a local lawyer who specialized in buying land for taxes at sheriffs' sales. I would assume that Ruckle had been forced to give up his land for debts. By the end of the next year, Ruckle had brought his two girls, without their mother, to Nebraska, so Irena must have died in the 1885-1887 period. She died, therefore, about age 37 or 38.

This brings us to where we began, with John W. Ruckle's move to Custer County, accompanied by his daughters Ella Etta and Ida, and to the deaths of all three in 1892. Are the stories I have heard about the experience of Ruckle in Iowa confirmed by the records? George Harriman and his son-in-law John Ruckle, we have seen, lived in the same county in Minnesota from 1860 to 1865, before they were related by marriage. From 1865 to at least 1875, while John was married to George's daughter Irena, they continued to reside in Minnesota, presumably as neighbors. About 1876, both families moved to Iowa, though perhaps not at as a



*Believed to be a picture of Irena  
Ruckle Harriman*

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<sup>19</sup>I have no record of George Harriman owning a part of this section. His farm bordered this section on the north. It could be he was renting a house in a section neighboring his farm.

group. Ruckle may have farmed with Harriman from 1875-79 and begun working land of his own in 1880. Irena's death about 1886 severed the principal connection that Ruckle had with Harriman and his family. The twenty-plus year relationship between John Ruckle and George Harriman ended when Ruckle and his two daughters moved to Custer County, Nebraska, about 1887. The picture we get from the data is consistent with the story told within the family about the soured relationship between Ruckle and his father-in-law.

Further information on the Harrimans, including many pictures of the family, can be found in my summary "George Harriman: Ancestry and Descendants."

### *John W. Ruckle's Siblings*

When I began my research on John W. Ruckle, I was not aware of either his parents or his siblings. In this and the next two sections, I summarize what I have discovered about his siblings, his father, and his mother.



*Possibly John Ruckle's brother, David (left), along with John (?).*

The stories of the siblings also intertwine with the story of the Harrimans in Iowa. On 1 March 1881, a David L.[Louis] Ruckle, age 32, son of a Daniel Ruckle, was married to George's daughter Mary Ellen in Kellerton.<sup>20</sup> While no document exists that states what David's relationship was to John W. Ruckle is, the indirect evidence that David was John W. Ruckle's brother is very strong.<sup>21</sup>

, Colorado, lists Daniel Ruckle as his father and mentions Iowa, Register of Marriages, entry 1140, David is listed as Daniel Ruckle and Rebecca Gerrit (first marriages for both George Harriman and Eliza Johnston (her first marriage)).

“In favor of this hypothesis are these facts: (1) John and David married Harriman sisters, (2) David's father Daniel's entry in the 1840 census shows that Daniel, David's father, had a son born in the 1831-35 period. The fact that Daniel married in November of 1833 narrows the birth of David's first son to 1834-35, which is right on the mark for John W. (born circa 1835). (3) Both David and John W. were either born, or in their childhood lived, in Morgantown, West Virginia. This is on David's death certificate and on John's Civil War papers. On David's pension documents, however, he gives his birthplace as Rappahannock County, Virginia. (4) Both David (on the 1900 census) and John W. (on the 1875 Minnesota census) say that their father was born in Ireland and their mother in Virginia. (5) A faded tintype has descended in David Louis's family which, to judge from the style of clothing and the type of photograph, was taken before 1880. The picture shows a young man, perhaps in his teens and another man in his late 20s or early 30s. The image of the older man bears a strong resemblance to the 1865 Civil War picture of John W. Ruckle. The younger man would be the right age to be his brother David. (6) John's middle initial is "W," and a tradition in David's family says that David had a brother William. (7) Two descendants of David,

David was born in Rappahannock County, Virginia, on 25 June 1845.<sup>22</sup> Possibly his father, Daniel Ruckle, had moved the eighty miles from Morgantown to Rappahannock County in the early 1840s to live on a large plantation given to his painter cousin Thomas Cole Ruckle.<sup>23</sup> Daniel died and David's mother Rebecca remarried. David couldn't get along with his stepfather, so when David was 13 (ca. 1858) he left home and went west,



*David Ruckle and his wife Mary Ellen Harriman and their children Edith and Fred.*

living in Texas and Oklahoma and ending up in Anderson County, Kansas (Garrett) in 1861, where he enlisted in the army. According to his Civil War pension papers, David served in the Civil War in the Cavalry, Company G, 7th Regiment, Kansas Volunteers from 1861 to 1863. This regiment, known as "Jennison's Jawhawkers," were famous for their harassment of pro-slavery settlers in Kansas and Missouri. After the war David returned to Garrett, Kansas. He left there about 1880.<sup>24</sup> The picture on the previous page may show David and his brother John, possibly taken on a visit to his brother John before the Civil War, when David was about 20.

After leaving Garrett, Kansas, David apparently moved to Union County, Iowa, just north of Ringgold County, perhaps to be close to his brother John.<sup>25</sup> He married Mary Ellen Harriman, his brother John's sister-in-law, in Ringgold County. David and Mary Ellen remained in Iowa about five more years and their son Fred was born there in 1882. A daughter Edith was born in 1885 in Illinois. A son Clyde Arthur was born in

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Mary Moffat and V.G. (managed by Loren Gustafson), have done autosomal DNA tests on Ancestry and show a strong overlap (>50 cM) with me.

<sup>22</sup>Reported on his 1908 Declaration for Pension.

<sup>23</sup>Speculated by David's son Clyde Arthur Ruckle on deposition made to Walter Ruckel on 7 August 1971.

<sup>24</sup>David is on the 1870 Federal Census for Anderson County, Kansas, Garrett, as a 25-year old "day laborer." On his pension papers David says he was in Garrett for "about 15 years."

<sup>25</sup>Union County is mentioned on David's marriage certificate.

1896 in Kansas.<sup>26</sup> David and Mary Ellen eventually moved to Marshall County, Kansas (the town of Beattie) about 1885, where they lived for nearly fifteen years.<sup>27</sup> In the middle of the first decade of the 1900s, they moved to Weld County, Colorado, where David retired and started receiving a military pension. David died 25 September 1918 in Greeley, Colorado. The photo of David and his family was probably taken in Marshall County, Kansas, about 1900.

The brother David, as we have seen above, was closely associated with John, the two of them marrying Harriman sisters. The family of the other Ruckle brother, Thomas, also married into the Harriman clan. Thomas, born ca. 1841, was between David and John W. in age. As a child he would have moved to Rappahannock County, Virginia, with his father and mother. He left his home in Rappahannock County while still in his teens and moved to Mills County, Iowa, where he appears on the 1860 Federal Census.<sup>28</sup>



*Mary Emma Ruckle and her four children, (l. To r.) Theodore, Jasper, James, Emma. Picture presumably taken in the 1890s in Caniston, SD.*

On the 29th of February, 1864, he enlisted in the 5<sup>th</sup> Iowa Cavalry, giving his name as “Thomas J. Ruckles.” On a nearby farm lived a Theodore Rockafellow, age 42, and his wife Almariah, age 34, who had come to Iowa from New Jersey a few years earlier. Theodore and Almariah had a large family.<sup>29</sup> Thomas Ruckle married one of the older Rockafellow children, Mary E.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup>The children’s birthplaces are reported on David’s entry in the 1900 Federal Census, Marshall County, Kansas, Beattie.

<sup>27</sup>Again, the length of time is mentioned in David’s pension papers.

<sup>28</sup>Thomas appears on the 1860 Federal Census for Iowa as a farm laborer on the farm of Henry Hamacker. Thomas reports that he was born in Virginia, but that could mean West Virginia (part of Virginia before the beginning of the Civil War).

<sup>29</sup>Their children on the 1860 census are Martha A, b. ca 1845, Mary E. b. ca 1847, Sara P, b. ca. 1848, W. M. V. D., b. ca. 1850, John H, b. ca. 1852, Maria C. b. ca 1855, Theodore, b. ca. 1857, and Harvey S., b. ca. 1860. By the time of the 1880 census, several other children had appeared: Aaron, b. ca. 1863, Laura, b. ca. 1865, Hiram, b. ca. 1867, Lemuel, b. ca 1869, Amos, b. ca. 1870, and Asa, b. ca. 1872.

<sup>30</sup>Thomas and Mary appear on the 1870 census in Mills County. Thomas is 29, Mary is 24, and they have one child, Theodore, age 1. Theodore’s granddaughter, Margaret Jane Munger, told me about her father being related to the Rockafellows. She mentions an uncle Hiram Rockafellow—they had a picture of him, since lost in a fire.

Thomas and Mary E. eventually had four children: Theodore, b. ca. 1869,<sup>31</sup> and James, b. 3 Jul 1870,<sup>32</sup> Jasper, b. ca 1874,<sup>33</sup> and Emma Marie (b. 3 Jan 1872).<sup>34</sup> Thomas seems to have died young—on the 1880 census his wife reports that she is a “widower.”<sup>35</sup> Theodore ended up in North Dakota.<sup>36</sup> He married Mary Etta Moon<sup>37</sup> and had one child, LeVernon (known as “Vernon,” b. 1911, d. 1999). James Henry Ruckle, Thomas’s second son, married Edith Ruckle, the daughter of David and Mary Ellen Harriman Ruckle.<sup>38</sup> I

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<sup>31</sup>On the 1920 and 1930 Federal Censuses for McHenry County, North Dakota, Theodore mistakenly indicates he was born ca. 1868. He says, correctly, that he was born in Iowa, but he reports incorrectly that his father was born in Minnesota. This makes me wonder if Thomas and Mary might have moved to Minnesota when Theodore was still young.

<sup>32</sup>James’s birth date from the California death index, reported by Karen Ruckle Opgenorth. The age of James is reported on the entry for James in the 1920 Federal census for Weld County, Colorado. James says on the 1910 census for Ringgold County, Iowa, Athens Twp, that he was born in Iowa, his father in Virginia and his mother in New Jersey. In 1920 he says that he was born in Iowa, his father in Ohio, his mother in Iowa! Both James and Theodore show considerable confusion about their father’s birth state, perhaps because Thomas died when they were still young. James died on 30 Jul 1955.

<sup>33</sup>Vernon (Theodore’s son) reports that his uncle Jasper remained a bachelor. His birth date is from the 1880 census. Arthur Clyde Ruckle, the last son of David and Mary Ellen, reports in his deposition to Walter Ruckel that he knew of cousins James and Jasper in Minot, North Dakota.

<sup>34</sup>Karen Ruckle Opgenorth reports that Emma Mae Ruckle was born 3 Jan 1872 in White Cloud, Iowa, and lived in Texas. She married Jesse Fremont Varns in Hanson, South Dakota about 1888 and had two sons, Harold E., and Fred L. Varnes. She then married Sanford I. McKee 5 Jun 1947. Penny Mixon, whose father was raised by Emma, reports that her name is Emma Marie rather than Emma Mae, and that she was born in 1870 (correspondence on Ancestry mail, 2023). Data on online genealogical sites indicate that Emma Marie and Jesse Varns had eight or nine children in the space of ten years.

<sup>35</sup> Through correspondence with Duane Edberg on Ancestry, a fourth cousin, I learned about Mary’s subsequent marriages. His great grandmother, Duane says, was “Emma Marie Ruckle Varns McKee. She married Jesse Freemont Varns in 1888. Jesse died in 1937. Marie then married Sanford Irvin McKee and for his job he moved to Weslaco, Hidalgo, Texas.”

<sup>36</sup>I gained helpful information about Theodore from a telephone conversation with his son Vernon Ruckle in the mid-1990s. I later talked on the phone with Elaine Arcand of Willaston, South Dakota, a daughter, and Margaret Jane Munger of Minnesota, another daughter. Vernon, in our phone conversation, did not know the name of Theodore’s father, but he did know that Theodore had brothers James and Jasper. Jasper was a bachelor. Theodore only saw James once as an adult. James wasn’t welcome at Theodore’s house, says Vernon, because James was a member of the Ku Klux Klan.

<sup>37</sup>Mary Etta Moon had been married before, to William Cargo, and had several children. She married Vernon after she divorced Cargo.

<sup>38</sup>In the Kellerton records there is a 1909 birth registration for a (unnamed) daughter of a James H. Ruckle of Kellerton that provides helpful information on James (such as his birthplace being Mills County, Iowa). The record also confirms that the mother’s maiden name was Edith E. Ruckle. According to Karen Ruckle Opgenorth, Edith died in California. The California death index reports her birth date as 28 Apr 1885 and her death date as 24 Apr 1969 (in Los Angeles).

don't know where James lived in his early adulthood, but James appeared in Ringgold County around 1908, when he was in his late 30s and it was there that he married first cousin Edith. They would eventually have seven daughters.<sup>39</sup> James and Edith lived in Weld County, Colorado, in the 1920s, presumably living near Edith's father (and James's uncle) David.<sup>40</sup> James and Edith died in California.<sup>41</sup>



*James Henry Ruckle and Edith Ruckle*

The 1840 census for Daniel Ruckle suggests that there were five children in Daniel's household at the time. Two might have been John William and Thomas (David was not born until after the census). This leaves one brother and two sisters. I don't know what became of these other children. However, I came across what might be one of the sisters when I did an Ancestry autosomal DNA test. These tests show that I am related at a third cousin level with several descendants of a Josephine Ruckle, and these descendants trace her lineage back to Daniel and Rebecca Ruckle. More work needs to be done on the documentation behind these tests and claims.

### ***John W. Ruckle's Father***

We have seen that John W. Ruckle's father was Daniel Ruckle, of Morgantown, West Virginia. It is very likely that Daniel Ruckle belongs to the extended Ruckle/Ruckel clan who descend from a German Palatine immigrant that came to Ireland in the early eighteenth century, many of whose descendants came to the United States in the late

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<sup>39</sup> James and Edith also appear on the 1910 Federal census for Ringgold Co, Iowa, Athens Twp, with daughters Mary G. (age 2) and Thelma B. (age 7 months, presumably the unnamed child from the 1909 birth record). They are on the 1920 Federal census for Weld County, Colorado, with daughters Grace M. (age 12, b. CO) and Thelma B (age 10, b. IA) and also Josphine E (4 and 5/12 years, b. IA) and Levona E (age 1, born ND).

I have corresponded with one of the descendants of James and Edith: Ken Ay of Lakewood, California (ayball1@aol.com). I learned from Ken that James's middle name was "Henry" and he and Edith had seven children, all daughters: LeVona, Thelma, Dorothy, Grace, Frances, Josephine and Edith. Interestingly, the descendant of James Ruckle reported to me that there was a family tradition that they were related to the rich Rockefellers. The descendants of Theodore Ruckle told me the same thing, independently. How strange that people in this family would make bogus connections with both the Harriman and Rockefeller dynasties.

<sup>40</sup> James is buried in the Maple Row Cemetery (no dates on the tombstone) in Ringgold Co, as are many of the Harrimans

<sup>41</sup> Their death entries, according to Karen Ruckle Ogenorth, are in the California Death Index.

eighteenth and early nineteenth century.<sup>42</sup> Daniel may be a son of the person known to Ruckle/Ruckel researchers as “David Ruckle of America.” David Sr (as I will call him) had, according to the Ruckle/Ruckel family tree,<sup>43</sup> two sons: Daniel and George. David Sr, his wife, and his two boys may be the family in Allegany County, Maryland, registered in the 1820 census.<sup>44</sup> If this 1820 David is the same as “David of America,” then it is possible to guess at an immigration period for him. Both of his boys, we know, were born in Ireland. Daniel was born in the 1794-99 period (extrapolating from the age ranges in the 1820 and 1840 census entries), and George was born in 1805 (according to his entry in the 1850 census). David Sr, then, must have immigrated after 1805. Until he can be found on the 1810 census, it must be presumed that the immigration date was after 1810, suggesting immigration in the 1810-1820 decade.

Besides Daniel and George, David Ruckle Sr's family included at least one daughter. She would have been out of the house at the time of the 1820 census. Her name was Elizabeth (1788-1872).<sup>45</sup> She married David Lowe, who appears on the marriage certificate of Elizabeth's brother, Daniel Ruckle (for marriage details, see next section). The children of David Lowe and Elizabeth Ruckle were:

Levi Morgan Lowe b. 12/20/1815 d. 7/8/1903  
Emily Lowe b. Dec. 21, 1819  
Elizabeth Lowe b. 1822  
Phillip Lowe b. 1824  
James Lowe b. 1826.

Several of the descendants of David and Elizabeth have had Ancestry autosomal DNA tests done (especially descendants of Emily Lowe, who married a man named “Bircher”),

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<sup>42</sup> I have received a large amount of Ruckle/Ruckel material from Walter Ruckel, 17 N. John Sims Pkwy, P. O. Box 187, Valparaiso, Florida 32580, on this clan. A 1973 lecture by Sean G. Ronan on the Palatine settlements in Ireland provides a helpful background (Can be found on the web. In 2017 it was located at <http://www.limerickcity.ie/media/Palat009.pdf>).

<sup>43</sup> The various versions of the Ruckle/Ruckel family tree (mostly pictured as a tree!) seem to be based on the work of Thomas Coke Ruckel in Maryland in the 1830s. People in various branches of the family would trace his original tree, complete with coat-of-arms, and extend the branchings related to their family.

<sup>44</sup> The family in the 1820 census is quite large. There are 8 males (2 are under 10, 1 is 10-15, 2 are 16-26, 2 are 26-44, 1 is over 45) and 4 females (2 are under 10, 1 is 26-44, 1 is over 45).

<sup>45</sup>Information on Elizabeth and her family are from Dianne Lemasters, PO Box 33, Jacksonburg, WV 26377, [dianne@ovnet.com](mailto:dianne@ovnet.com), who contacted me in 1998. Dianne writes: “David Lowe was born Feb 1784, died about 1820. His parents were Abraham Lowe and Elizabeth Morgan Lowe. I have been working on David Lowe's father Abraham, trying to trace him. I found a reference to him in ‘Abstracts of VA Warrants and Surveys, Fredrick Co., 1747-1780’ that places him in the right area of the Morgan land at the right time to be the one to have married Elizabeth Morgan. I found Abraham's will, which mentions his children. Elizabeth, if a sister to Daniel and George, would be an older sister, out of the house before the 1820 census.”

and the tests show that I am related to them at the correct 4<sup>th</sup>-cousin level. The DNA data also suggests that Elizabeth may have had another son, George Lowe (1812-1898).

By 1830 David Sr's son George (circa 1802-24 Nov 1862 or 1863) was living in Fayette County, Pennsylvania,<sup>46</sup> just north of the West Virginia-Pennsylvania line, in Henry Clay Township. He had married Nancy Ayres (13 Feb 1805-15 Jan 1899) on 15 August 1826. They had the following children:

Wesley Eugenius Ruckle, b. 26 Jun 1827 in Pennsylvania, m. Margaret DeFord on 3 Jun 1853, d. 19 Jul 1907, buried in Indianola, Butler County, Kansas

Elizabeth, b. 26 Jun 1829, m. Harris Whittaker in Apr 1852

Mary Ann Ruckle, b. 25 Dec 1831 in Pennsylvania, m. Harris Whittaker on 5 Feb 1851, d. 27 January 1852.

Benjamin Ruckle, b. 7 Mar 1834 in Pennsylvania, d. 28 Jun 1834

David Ruckle, b. 7 Mar 1834 in Pennsylvania, d. 28 Jun 1834

Emily Ruckle, b. 27 Feb 1835 in Pennsylvania, d. 10 Apr 1849

Belinda Ruckle, b. 21 Apr 1837 in Pennsylvania, m. Sylvanus M. Gutchess on 13 Jan 1856, d. 1 Jun 1870

Barbara Ruckle, b. 5 Mar 1840 in Illinois, m. William Tunis

Daniel Ruckle, b. 22 Dec 1842 in Illinois, m. Malissia Jane Jenkins on 5 Mar 1866, d. 15 Feb 1920

George Washington Ruckle, b. 30 June 1845 in Illinois, m. Lousia Jenkins on 9 Sep 1867

I don't know where Daniel was in 1830, but by 1833 he is in Monongalia County, West Virginia, to marry Rebecca E. Jarrett, and he is still in West Virginia for the 1840 census. George moved about 1840 to Woodford County, Illinois, and died there.

### ***John W. Ruckle's Mother***

Daniel Ruckle married Rebecca Jarrett, an orphan, in November, 1833, in Monongalia County, West Virginia. As far as I have been able to determine, the marriage bond is the only surviving record in Monongalia County—except for the 1840 census—that mentions the name of Ruckle. For Daniel to get the marriage license, a David Lowe bound himself as surety and John Wagner filed a note which said that Rebecca was 23 years old, and that he had raised her.

The fact that Rebecca Jarrett is listed as an orphan on the place in the bond where her parents should have been recorded makes it more difficult to determine her ancestry.

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<sup>46</sup>I have received a large amount of information on George Ruckle and his family from one of his descendants, Gene Williams, 4720 East Taylor Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85008. The data on George Ruckle comes in part from a family Bible of Etta Jane Ruckle Brisen, of Wichita, Kansas, who died in 1978.

However, I can make a reasonable guess at who her parents were. I have examined the Jarrett records in Monongalia County and one Jarrett stands out as a prime candidate.

The Jarretts came to Monongalia County from Montgomery County, Maryland.<sup>47</sup> William Jarrett, the progenitor of most of the Monongalia Jarretts, first appears in the Maryland records in the 1770s. He married Eleanor Norris (1749-1810), daughter of Benjamin Norris (ca. 1715-1786) and Anne Ray. William Jarrett was a blacksmith.

William and Eleanor left Montgomery County in the mid to late 1790s and around 1800 the Jarretts start to appear in the Monongalia County, West Virginia, records. William lived near Ice's Ferry in Monongalia County.<sup>48</sup> On the 1810 census he is over 45. No wife is listed—Eleanor died just before the census. Her gravestone in Baker Cemetery, Morgantown, West Virginia, gives her dates as 19 October 1749 to 16 July 1810. The 1810 census says that a male is living with William who is in the 26-45 range. This may be his son John.

William moved to Kentucky after Eleanor died, perhaps about 1812. He died there in 1815. His 1814 will names his children:

Males:

Benjamin Jarrett  
William Jarrett  
John Jarrett  
Thomas Ray Jarrett  
Daniel Jarrett

Females:

Rebecca Allison<sup>49</sup>  
Susannah Jenkins<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>The work on uncovering the Maryland roots of the family was done by David C. Farner. See his "The Jones-Jarrett Family of Fayette County, Pennsylvania: The Ancestors and Descendants of Jonathan A. Jones (1845-1902) and Mary L. Jarrett (1847-1922)," 1991. Correspondence address: 3126 Thomas Drive, Lafayette, IN 47905. David has also been very helpful in finding Jarrett documents in Monongalia, West Virginia, and in Kentucky.

<sup>48</sup>Samuel T. Wiley, *History of Monongalia County, West Virginia* (Kingwood, West Virginia: Preston Publishing Company, 1883), in the entry for Absalom Morris Jarrett, a dentist, on pages 480-81, tells about the early Jarretts.

<sup>49</sup>This could be two daughters, Rebecca and Allison. The punctuation is not clear, and no Rebecca or Allison shows up on any other records. If it is one person, Allison could be the last name of her husband, or a middle name. She is (They are) the only daughter(s) not attested by any other records.

<sup>50</sup>She appears to have died by the time of her brother John's probate in 1827-28, since her heirs, not Susanna herself, are mentioned in the probate papers. The Jenkins heirs are represented by a Bartholemew Jenkins. It seems likely that Susanna may have married one of the male sons of Joshua Jenkins and Joshua's daughter Elizabeth (on whom more below) married into William Jarrett's family, making

Elinor Henthorn<sup>51</sup>  
Ann Hardin (or Harding)<sup>52</sup>

Only the daughter Ann was dead at the time the will was made in 1814. Since the search in this study is for the parents of Rebecca Jarrett, orphan, the female children of William Jarrett are ruled out—their children would not be named Jarrett. We will look at each of the sons of William Jarrett in turn to see which is the best candidate to be Rebecca E. Jarrett's natural father.<sup>53</sup>

*Daniel:* A 1786 will made by William Jarrett's father-in-law made bequests of slaves to his grandsons Benjamin Jarrett, William Jarrett, John Jarrett, and Thomas Ray Jarrett. For some reason, Daniel got no bequest. Perhaps he was already out of the household. The Montgomery County, Maryland, records know about a Daniel Jarrett who married Margaret Sprigg about 1795 and who moved to Lyon County (then Caldwell County), Kentucky, about 1800.<sup>54</sup> This could William's son. The 1800 census entry for Daniel suggests that he was born before 1775. The 1830 and 1840 Caldwell County, Kentucky, censuses say that Daniel was born in the 1760s.<sup>55</sup> Daniel purchased a thousand acres of land in Livingston County, Kentucky (he is listed as living in Jefferson County, Kentucky, on the land transaction) in 1806. He appears regularly in the land and court records of Livingston County and he became the executor for the estates of his brothers Thomas (in 1824) and John (in 1827-28), dying himself in 1845.<sup>56</sup> Daniel is not a good

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Bartholemew either Susanna's husband or one of her husband's brothers. Susanna's husband may have been Joshua Jenkins's son Thomas, the man who did the probate for Benjamin Jarrett in 1815.

<sup>51</sup>The 1827-28 estate papers of her brother John Jarrett, filed in Livingston County, Kentucky, suggest that her husband may have been John Henthorn. John Henthorn also appears on the estate sale papers for Benjamin Jarrett in 1815, so the marriage may have been before 1815.

<sup>52</sup>In the 1827-28 estate papers of her brother John Jarrett, Eleanor J. Harding is mentioned as a recipient of some of the estate of John and his brother Thomas. This Eleanor would presumably be the daughter of Ann, named, perhaps, after Ann's sister.

<sup>53</sup> Further documentation and information about William Jarrett can be found in David C. Farner's web summary. In 2017 this summary was located at <http://www.nevadapilgrims.net/gene/jarrbios.html>.

<sup>54</sup>I'm not in possession of the specific records showing the 1795 Maryland marriage. A few biographies available on Ancestry.com indicate that Daniel's wife might have been Margaret Perry, but I'm not aware of any source for this. In favor of the wife being Margaret Sprigg are the children's names—Ancestry family trees show Daniel and Margaret with a large family and one of the sons is named Frederick Sprigg Jarrett. Also, Daniel's son Thomas Ray Jarrett named one of his sons John Sprig Jarrett.

<sup>55</sup>The 1820 census entry for Daniel is in line with this age estimation. The 1810 census, though, shows an incompatible age bracket for both Daniel and his wife—either the census is in error, or the Daniel Jarrett is not the same Daniel Jarrett. Daniel's wife Margaret reports she was born about 1775 on the 1850 census, and this is consistent with the 1800, 1820, 1830, and 1840 censuses. Still at home with the widowed Margaret in 1850 are Daniel's daughters Debora (b. 1815), Julia (b. 1820), and Mary (b. 1822).

<sup>56</sup> Daniel's will is in Kentucky Probate Records, 1727-1990, film #004816147. It was written on 25 June

candidate for the orphan Rebecca's father, since he was still alive when she married in 1833 and since he appears to have lived in Kentucky rather than in West Virginia.

*Thomas Ray* shows up in the Kentucky records about 1810. He is over 26 on the 1810 Caldwell County, Kentucky, census, so he was born before 1785. He owned 250 acres of land on the Kentucky River with his brother John. Thomas died in Kentucky in 1824 and his brother Daniel was the executor of his estate. There is no record in the estate papers of any heirs, despite the fact that Thomas had extensive goods to be inventoried, including a number of slaves inherited from his father, so it seems likely that he died without issue and that all of his goods passed to his brother John. Again, the Kentucky death and the lack of documented children suggests that he was not the Jarrett who was Rebecca's father.

The son *John* is closely associated with his brother Thomas. He does not appear on any census records, but he may be included on his father William's household in the 1810 census of Morgantown, West Virginia. The first land records in Kentucky that mention him are in 1814. John and Thomas seem to have owned land together. They are singled out on their father's 1814 will to inherit the household goods and most of the slaves, so it may be that the father William and his sons came to Kentucky together after 1810 and that the father provided the capital for a farming venture with his two sons. John died about 1827. His brother Daniel administered the estate. John, as noted above, may have taken over his brother Thomas's assets when Thomas died in 1824.<sup>57</sup> At John's death, there was a large dissolution of the estate. John appears in the estate papers not to have had any heirs of his own body, so a portion of his estate went to almost all of the brothers or sisters, or, if they were dead, to their heirs.<sup>58</sup>

The son *William N. Jarrett* is frequently mentioned in the county records of Monongalia County. He was an important figure in the early history of Morgantown, acting on various occasions as tavern keeper, banker, military captain, and justice of the

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1833 and was filed in 1845. It leaves everything to his wife Margaret. Children are mentioned, both adult and underaged, but no names are provided.

<sup>57</sup> There is one small mention of Thomas's estate at the time of his brother John's probate. A sister of the two is referred to as "a legatee of the estate of John and Thomas Jarrett."

<sup>58</sup> The exceptions to the list of relatives in John's estate papers are the sister Rebecca Allison (assuming she is one person and not two) and the brother William. Rebecca's absence is can be easily explained: she may have died before 1827 and left no heirs. William, though, was clearly alive in 1827. So why is he not mentioned? He was quite well off—perhaps he declined a portion of the estate in favor of his siblings. Alternately, William may have been omitted for personal reasons—he was, we note, the only one of the brothers (except Benjamin, who died young) not to have moved to Kentucky.

The lack of firm connection between William and his siblings in the Kentucky documents opens the possibility that this William N is not the William who is William and Eleanor's son. No single piece of data, no smoking gun, connections him to William Sr, Benjamin, Thomas, John, or Daniel. It is in the realm of possibility, then, that the real son William died early without heirs. However, the coincidences of family names, occupations, and location are quite strong.

peace. The most complete picture of him is in *The Monongalia Story*.<sup>59</sup> William N. Jarrett took over Hugh McNeely's tavern and married Polly (Edgell?<sup>60</sup>) McNeely, Hugh's widow, in 1805. In conjunction with the tavern he also ran a livery stable, a blacksmith shop, and a general store. A list of William's surviving children is given in an 1838 deed when the children sold a 400-acre parcel of land which they had inherited.<sup>61</sup> His children are

Caroline Jarrett (m. Edmund S. Graham)  
Nimrod E. Jarrett  
Amanda J. Jarrett (m. Jabez B. Larwell)  
Mary E. Jarrett (m. Archibald S. Todd)  
Daniel K. Jarrett  
William H. Jarrett

From the graves in the Presbyterian Cemetery in Monongalia it appears that there were two other children who died in their youth:

Leroy Jarrett (1809-14 August 1825)  
Ralph Jarrett (1812-19 December 1822)

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<sup>59</sup>Earl L. Core, *The Monogalia Story*, Volume II (Parsons, West Virginia: McClain Printing Company, 1976), pp. 371-73. For information on William N. Jarrett, Core quotes extensively from James Morton Callahan, *History of the Making of Morgantown* (1926), pp. 115-17.

<sup>60</sup>There is a William Jarrett who married Margaret Edgell before 1831 (Monongalia County Deed Book 13, p. 16, has a deed made by the heirs of James Edgell Sr of Tyler County, Virginia). Polly is a nickname for Margaret, so this may be the Polly, widow of Hugh McNeely, that William married.

<sup>61</sup>Monongalia County Deed Book 14, p. 538, and Book 16, p. 338.

William N. Jarrett and his wife and sons Daniel K. and William H. are also buried in the Presbyterian Cemetery. Their dates: William N. (15 June 1776-2 November 1829), Polly (1776-6 July 1849), Daniel K. (1814-7 October 1855) and William H. (1816-23 April 1854). Note that there is no daughter named Rebecca. Moreover, William N. and his wife did not die until after Rebecca's marriage, so Rebecca could hardly be an orphan child of William and Polly.

*Benjamin Jarrett*, one of the older sons of William Jarrett, is the best candidate for Rebecca's father. He was born about 1771. The first notice I have been able to find of Benjamin as an adult (apart from the mention of him in his father-in-law's 1786 will) is on a 1799 deed registered in Monongalia County. A deed from 1801 shows that he was already married to Elizabeth Jenkins, daughter of Joshua Jenkins.<sup>62</sup> On the 1810 census, Benjamin and his wife have three children under ten (two girls and a boy) and a boy who is ten or older. About 1815 Benjamin died, perhaps suddenly, for there was no will. The estate papers, however, still exist. The executor, say the papers, was Thomas Jenkins, Elizabeth Jenkins Jarrett's brother. In these papers the estate is valued at \$87 less than it cost Thomas to close it out, so Benjamin died with more debts than assets. Even worse, Benjamin may have died while his wife was still pregnant with their last child. In 1863, a Thomas N. Jarrett died from typhus<sup>63</sup> and his death records show that he was age 48 and the son of Benjamin and Elizabeth, so he must have been born about 1815.<sup>64</sup>

The picture emerges, then, of a widow, perhaps about 45 years old, with no assets, depending on the charity of her family and having a number of children under fifteen years old. Her children would certainly have been suitable subjects for being taken in by neighbors and relatives or for the social process of "binding out," whereby children of an age to work (five or older) were placed with families who raised them and who would give them room and board for what chores they were able to do. Some of the families that took in children saw it as an act of charity and treated the children as a modern family might treat adoptees.<sup>65</sup> Others did it simply for the work they could get out of a child or for payments offered by the state or county. If Rebecca Jarrett was one of the girls in Benjamin's family in the 1810 census and had been born just after the census, she

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<sup>62</sup>Monongalia County Deed Book 2, p. 410. His wife's family included the following brothers and sisters: Daugey (sp?) Jenkins, Joseph Jenkins, Mary Jenkins, Thomas Jenkins, Nancy Jenkins, Elizabeth Jenkins, Bartholomew Jenkins, and Eleanor Jenkins. The father had died before the deed was executed (13 August 1801).

<sup>63</sup>Monongalia County Death Register, Volume 1. He is probably the Thomas Jarrett who married Elizabeth Ruble in 1837, mentioned in the Monongalia County Marriage Records.

<sup>64</sup>This Thomas, by the way, married and had a sizeable family before he died. He married Elizabeth Ruble, daughter of Jacob and Ruth Ruble, on or after 25 September 1837. In the 1850 census, Thomas and Elizabeth have Jacob (born circa 1839), Mary (born circa 1841), Sarah R. (born circa 1843), Elizabeth (born circa 1845), Caroline (born circa 1848), and William (born 1849/50).

<sup>65</sup>Modern adoption, of course, did not come along until later. These children would not have been legal heirs unless so specified in a will.

would have been about four when her father died and thus a likely person to have been taken in during the late 1810s by the John Wagners. An Elizabeth Jarrett, who may be the widow of Benjamin, shows up on the 1830 census in Monongalia, age 60-70, and having only a boy, age 15 to 19, with her in the household. The boy is probably her son Thomas. Her other children in 1830 are either grown and out of the house or they were sent out to other families when they were young. It would make sense that Elizabeth would have kept Thomas, since he would still have been nursing at the time the other children were would have been sent from the home. And if this Elizabeth died soon after the census, her daughter might well describe herself as an "orphan" in 1833.

Other daughters of Benjamin and Elizabeth may have been Mary, Deborah, and Eleanor.<sup>66</sup> Besides Thomas,<sup>67</sup> two other sons may have been Joshua and John H.<sup>68</sup> Putting this family together then, we come up with this tentative reconstruction of the family of Benjamin and Elizabeth Jenkins Jarrett:

- (1) Joshua Jarrett, born about 1800
- (2) Eleanor Jarrett, born 16 February 1801
- (3) John H. Jarrett, born 1801-1810
- (4) Deborah Jarrett, b. 1810
- (5) Rebecca Jarrett, born about 1809/11
- (6) Mary Jarrett, born circa 1811/1813
- (7) Thomas Jarrett, born circa 1814/1815

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<sup>66</sup>(1) On an 1830 Livingston County, Kentucky, deed there is a reference to Mary Jarrett, heir of Benjamin Jarrett, deceased. (2) Eleanor Jarrett, 16 Feb 1801 to 1 Sep 1887, married Jacob Demming on 27 Oct 1818. Their first child was named Benjamin Jarrett Deming. According to *Genealogy of the Descendants of John Deming of Weatherfield, Connecticut* by Judson Keith Deming (Dubuque, Iowa, 1904), Eleanor was the child of Benjamin and Elizabeth. On an Ancestry autosomal DNA test, the author, a descendant of Rebecca, has a significant match with a fifth-generation descendant of Eleanor and Jacob. (3) Deborah shows up with Joshua on John Jarrett's 1827 estate papers when the two of them receive a portion of the estate that was apportioned to the deceased brother Benjamin. On the 1830 census of Spencer County, Kentucky, Joshua Jarrett and his wife have an extra female in the household, aged 15-19. If Deborah had been born in the mid-1810s, she could show up as 19 on one census (1830, with Joshua) and just born on another census (1810, with her father Benjamin).

<sup>67</sup>Thomas went on to have quite a large family. The 1850 and 1860 censuses of Monongalia County show that he was married to an Elizabeth (b. ca 1816) and had children Jacob (b. ca 1839), Mary (b. ca. 1841), Sarah P. (b. ca. 1843), Elizabeth (b. ca. 1845), Caroline (b. ca 1848), and William (b. 1850).

<sup>68</sup>(1) In the 1827-28 estate papers of William's son John there is a mention of John H. (though the initial could be A. or N.) Jarrett as the son of "Big. Jarrett," perhaps an abbreviation of "Benjamin." (2) There is also mention of a Joshua who is an heir on the basis of his presumably deceased father. His father is not stated, but Joshua Jenkins was the name of Benjamin's wife's father and would be a logical name to occur in Benjamin's line. Lorna Mitchell, a descendant of Joshua who has worked on documents relating to Joshua Jarrett, reports that he had three marriages (the first in 1828) and several children (Benjamin, John Marion, and Susan Rebecca) and lived in Jefferson County and Henderson County, Kentucky. The names Benjamin and Rebecca suggest a connection to the Benjamin Jarrett family. Joshua later became infamous for his connection with the Cole/Younger outlaws.

The Wagners who raised Rebecca Jarrett may show up on the 1810-1830 Monongalia censuses. John Wagner appears to be called "Jacob Wagner."<sup>69</sup> On the 1810 census only he and his wife are both 25 or under. By 1820, there are 10 persons in their household, 6 boys and 3 girls! They can't all, however, be their natural children—two of the boys, for example, are over 16. It may be that some of these children are from Elizabeth Jenkins Jarrett's brood. One of them might be Rebecca. Since she would have to be under ten to be one of the children in John Wagner's household in the 1820 census, she must have been, if the census is exact, nine or less, placing her birth in 1811 or later.<sup>70</sup> On the Wagner's 1830 census entry there are two girls 16-20, the age range into which Rebecca would fall.

Besides the five children of William Jarrett just discussed, there are other Jarretts in the Monongalia area. *John* Jarrett is one of these extra Jarretts.<sup>71</sup> He was born in 1779, and married a Luranna Baker, daughter of George Baker and Elizabeth Norris,<sup>72</sup> about 1811. The Norrises were an old Maryland family and hailed from the same area of Maryland as the Jarretts (recall that the elder William's wife Eleanor was also a Norris). John's grandson claimed that John was born in Ohio and grew up in Kentucky.<sup>73</sup> John is in West Virginia for the 1820 and 1830 censuses. From John's 1840 will, we see that he had sons named William N., John and George, but the will also implies that there were minor children who were unnamed. The constructed list of children from Farner's genealogy of this family is:

William N. Jarrett, born 1812, married Sarah Morris  
John N. Jarrett, married Hester Ann Carney on 25 December 1841  
Andrew M. Jarrett  
Sarah Jarrett, b. ca. 1816

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<sup>69</sup>The 1830 census calls him "Jacob J. Wagner," so he may have been called both Jacob and John.

<sup>70</sup>This also suggests that she was not among the four children recorded in Benjamin and Elizabeth's family in the 1810 census, assuming the 1810 census was taken in the summer and that she turned ten in the fall of 1820 and 23 in the fall of 1833, the year of her marriage.

<sup>71</sup>He is the ancestor followed in David C. Farner's genealogy. In the genealogy he is described as the John who is the son of William and Eleanor Norris Jarrett. After extensive correspondence with David, I came to the conclusion that the son John, who lived in Livingston County, Kentucky, and died there in 1827, was the John who was the son of William and Eleanor. The Kentucky John, for example, lists in his estate slave with the same unusual names as the ones mentioned in William's 1814 will.

<sup>72</sup>Parent's names on Luranna's 1878 death certificate, Monongalia County Death Register, Volume 1.

<sup>73</sup>In the Cornelius M. Jarrett entry in the *Biographical and Historical Cyclopedia of Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania* (Gresham and Co., 1890), p. 250, Cornelius's grandfather was said to have been born in Ohio in 1780 and to have been taken by his parents to Kentucky when he was 10. When John was grown he moved to West Virginia.

George Baker Jarrett, married Virilinda McShane on 31 May 1838<sup>74</sup>  
Thomas Morris Jarrett, m. Ellen McShane in November 1846  
Henry D. Jarrett  
Elizabeth Jarrett, b. 1826, d. 1847  
Nancy Jarrett, b. ca. 1833, m. Isaac Gann  
Ellen Jarrett, b. ca. 1835, m. George Ridgeway

Many of the graves of this family are in the Zion Church Cemetery, one mile northeast of the Lake Lynn Bridge on State Highway 88 in Monongalia County. John's dates are 21 December 1779 to 4 June 1840. Luranna died 18 October 1878, age 86 years and 7 months. Since Rebecca Jarrett was born about 1811, it does not seem likely that she could be described as this couple's orphan— John and Luranna were clearly alive when Rebecca was married in 1833.

The name of *Justus Jarrett* should also be mentioned. He is known from only one record. In the 1810 census, a "Justice Jarret" shows up in Monongalia County with several male and female children, only one of whom is ten or older. He is between 26 and 45 years of age. No other document in Monongalia County mentions him. Though he might possibly be the father of Rebecca E. Jarrett, the lack of any other documentation makes this a pure guess. There are no records to show when Justus and his wife died. Family trees on Ancestry often insert Justus into William's family, but the documents (especially William's will) would seem to contradict this placement.

In summary, it seems almost certain that the orphan Rebecca E. Jarrett was part of the extended family of William Jarrett, who came from Montgomery County, Maryland, and who resided for many years in Monongalia County, West Virginia. Which Jarrett is her father is not certain, but Benjamin Norris Jarrett, one of the older sons of William Jarrett and Eleanor Norris, seems to be the most obvious father candidate and his wife Elizabeth Norris the most likely mother.

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<sup>74</sup>John and George's marriages are in the Monongalia Marriage Bonds books.