

## OUR FAMILY STORY

### Spring 2003

Hello everyone;

This is your cousin Rick Siler. Welcome to our **third** family newsletter. I do hope that you enjoyed the previous two letters sent to you in October and January. To reiterate from my previous correspondence, as the descendants of **Jerre' Moreland** and **Pearl Scruggs** we all share a common heritage. It is my aim to pass along to you and your families some of the chronicles that I am collecting on our ancestors. I hope that you will share it with your children so that they can also understand how firmly rooted we are into the history of our country. In this issue I have chosen to feature some information regarding our Scruggs and McVicker ancestors and their involvement in the great American Civil War.

### OUR FAMILY AND THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

A few weeks ago I had the pleasure of viewing the new motion picture entitled "Gods and Generals". It was an excellent story based upon the novel written by Jeff Sharra. Several of the scenes in the movie reminded me of our ancestor's and their involvement in the war. One part of the movie dealt with General Stonewall Jackson and how he became involved with a family of Fredericksburg, Virginia. He had a special relationship with the young daughter of this family but she tragically died of scarlet fever just after the Battle of Fredericksburg, in December 1862. I knew that our great grand Uncle Calvin Scott Scruggs had also succumbed to fever at Fredericksburg. A check of my records showed that he died on January 3, 1863, thus a connection of our family with the motion picture as well as a true moment in history. Not an exceptional moment in history, but a significant one never the less.

We are well aware of how our country was torn apart during those dark years between 1861 and 1865. Our family much like many others was represented on both sides of that terrible war. It is known that at least three of our great-great grandfathers participated along with several great grand uncles.

By 1861 the Scruggs family had very deep roots in the state of Virginia that went back over 200 years. On April 17, 1861 Virginia seceded from the Union and at the end of that same day at least three of the seven sons of Joseph and Francis Scruggs had made the decision to support their home state. As such James, Abram, and Samuel Scruggs left the family farm, located in Fluvanna County, and joined the Army of the Confederacy. They enlisted into the 19<sup>th</sup> Virginia Infantry Regiment, and were later involved in the First Battle of Bull Run (Manassas). Soon after Bull Run, James and Samuel transferred to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Virginia Cavalry where they served with two other brothers, Calvin, and William. Samuel was wounded several times and received medals for honor and bravery. The eldest of the seven was Joseph who served in the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Cavalry and lost a leg at the Battle of the Wilderness. The youngest of the sons to serve in the Army of the Confederacy was our great-great grandfather Albea Scruggs. Albea rode with the 5<sup>th</sup> Virginia Cavalry until the end of the war.

In 1861 the family of our great-great-great-grandfather James McVicker was living in Tippecanoe County, Indiana having moved there from his home state of Ohio some five years earlier. James was about 47 years old and was supporting a family consisting of eight children, as well as his wife Elizabeth who was pregnant with yet another child. One would assume that this was indeed quite a responsibility and that James was an unlikely candidate for any involvement in the War. Yet on December 20, 1863 he answered a call for volunteers when the 126<sup>th</sup> Indiana (11<sup>th</sup> Cavalry) Regiment of the Union Army was formed. Shortly thereafter he left his wife and nine children and went off to fight for his country. Unfortunately James died of dysentery in Larkinsville, Alabama on July 1, 1864, leaving Elizabeth a widow, and nine children without a father. Our great-great-grandfather John Robert McVicker was the eldest of Elizabeth's offspring and at the age 20 was now the "man of the house". Yet incredibly he followed in his father's footsteps and enlisted into the 150<sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry Regiment, of the Union Army, on February 3, 1865. Unlike his father John survived the remainder of the war and went on to have his own family of whom his eldest child Minnie is our great-grandmother.

Although the war finally came to an end in April 1865 much healing was required as our great nation sought to reform itself. It has taken many years for the "Yankees" of the North, and the "Rebels" of the South and their descendants to accept each other. It is said that our great-grandfathers Albea Scruggs and John McVicker could not stand to be in the same room together because of their differences that resulted from the American Civil War. Yet, early on in the process of our national healing our family took an important step in bringing both sides together when on September 22, 1897 our great-grandfather John Eldridge Scruggs, son of Confederate veteran Albea Scruggs, married Minnie V. McVicker, daughter and granddaughter of Union veterans, John R. and James McVicker. Attached is a photograph of John and Minnie taken on their wedding day.



#### **A QUOTE TO NOTE**

"Every man without passions has within him no principle of action, nor motive to act."

Claude Helvetius

Always open for suggestions as to what you might want to look for in future issues of  
“Our Family Story”.  
Best Wishes to all!!

*Frederick Siler*  
*889 Dante Court*  
*Mantua, NJ 08051*  
*Phone: 856.468.9394*  
*Email: silrem@comcast.net*