The log cabin sat in a clearing high on the mountain. It was surrounded by a small clearing and beyond that was the green forest. There was a spring house built over the spring whose cold mountain water oozed from the ground. A winding wagon road led up to the clearing and on to the Cane River Gap. It was in this cabin that the young couple began their married life.

He was the third from the last of the children of John Allen and Mary Jane Riddle Allen. His father named him Joseph Jennings Bryan after the great orator. They called him Jen. Their house was on eighty acres with the Cane River running through it. It was located near the town of Pensacola, Yancey County, North Carolina.

Her name was Mattie Lucinda. She was the oldest of seven children of Cura Ray Wheeler and Christopher Columbus Wheeler. She was named for Cura’s sister, Mattie Ray Hensley. Her home was on a small farm located in the village of Rockview near Barnardsville, Buncombe County, North Carolina.

They were married in the year 1916. That September Jen was
nineteen years old and Mattie Lou had just passed her seventeenth birthday. It was unlikely that they would ever meet, much less that they would marry.

He lived on one side of Mt. Mitchell and she lived on the other. However, there was a road. It was a dirt road and passable for wagons but used mostly by people on horseback. The beginning in Yancey County was at Pensacola. It wound up the mountain across Cane River Gap and followed many curves to North Fork and Barnardsville.

Jen owned a chestnut mare of which he was very proud. After his parents died their farm on Cane River was divided among their twelve children. Jen sold his part and bought a horse. Now the teenager who was fourteen at the time had no real home. He lived with one of his older sisters, choosing one who lived closest to his place of work. In this particular year he had a job working with a crew that was laying railroad ties for a new railroad bed.

One Saturday Jen heard that there was to be a Social at the Black Mountain Baptist Church in the village of Rockview which was over the mountain. Several of his friends joined him and they rode over the gap on that Saturday.

The activity at the church was in the form of a box supper. The younger girls of the community each brought supper packed in a decorated box. The boxes were sold to the highest bidder and the person who won had the privilege of eating supper with the girl who brought the box. The young men looked over the girls and the boxes and attempted to decide who brought which box. Some way Jen managed to get Mattie Lou’s box. He said later. "I Chose the prettiest box and the prettiest girl."

That was the beginning of their courtship. Jen rode over the mountain to attend the Black Mountain Church and to spend time with Mattie Lou. Some Sundays they met with other young people and took a picnic lunch to the Ogle Meadows.

One day she told him that she would be leaving soon to stay at boarding school where she would prepare for College and a teaching career. She did not want to leave at that time. He was fearful that he would lose her if she went away. So he said, "They won’t send you away if we get married." They began to plan a secret marriage.
They knew that marriage in the church would be observed by her parents who lived across the road. They talked with the preacher and their friends. It was decided that they would be married by James Marion Burleson after the evening service out in back of the church.

Jen had hired a buggy and after the ceremony that evening they drove to town and checked into a hotel. One night was all he could afford. They had no place to live and must get back to Pensacola to be near Jen’s work. Their temporary solution was to visit Jen’s family.

There was now a railroad connecting Pensacola to Burnsville and other cities. Other railroads were being built and Jen had a job helping to lay cross-ties for another road.

The immediate problem was to find a place to live. The lumbering business was booming and there was no house to rent. Jen remembered the old log cabin in the Wells. He had noticed it on the way over the mountain to Barnardsville. He learned that it was still owned by the Allen family and they could live there.

The cabin sat in a clearing in the woods up the mountain near Cane River Gap. It was a solid structure with fieldstone fireplace. The logs were chinked with a clay mixture. A kitchen was built into the back with wide planks and a storage cellar was underneath this. There was a glass window in the kitchen but the main room of the cabin had only shutters on the front openings beside the front door.

Mattie Lou set about making the place livable as soon as the moved in. Relatives gave them presents. There was a feather mattress for the bed that was built against the wall.

She had an iron skillet and a large iron kettle. At the store in Pensacola she bought material for spreads and curtains. They borrowed a wagon and brought her trunk from Rockview. In this they found the sheets she had planned for school stay and other useful items.

They rode double on Jen’s mare to Pensacola for their mail and food. The men sitting around the stove on Saturday watched the young couple pick up their mail. They noticed that they had a copy of a magazine along with a newspaper. One of the men asked: "What in the world do you
want with all that stuff?" Mattie Lou just smiled. She could read by lamplight, copy styles in the magazine and the newspaper later for patterns.

The winter was cold, but the young people filled the fireplace with wood and with the help of family they managed to get through until Spring.

Springtime in the mountains was beautiful. Mattie Lou picked strawberries and made jam. They planted a garden and later dried green beans and ground corn for meal. They dried apples on a sheet, found honey in a tree, and killed a hog when the weather turned cool. Relatives came to visit, shared their knowledge and helped with the work.

That November the first baby came. A bolt of flannel cloth has provided the clothing and again family came to help. When the time came Doctor McCurry rode his horse up the mountain to attend the mother. When he was ready to leave, Jen asked how much he owed. The doctor said, "When you get down to town come by and give me $5.00."

That winter there was unusually cold and snowy. Keeping the cabin warm was more of a problem. The snow blew in around the shuttered windows and through the cracks between the logs. One morning the snow was on the baby’s crib. Mattie Lou, the mild mannered quiet one made a loud and final announcement, "We are not staying here another Winter." And they did not.

Once again the log cabin was abandoned. As the years went by the forest surrounding it began to move slowly into the clearing. It has now covered what was left of the little homestead and returned it back to the forest floor.

Editorial Comment: Velma Allen Crump is a recent addition to the Pensacola Historical Society. The above article is just one of several she has written for publication in our Pensacola, North Carolina History book.

She is the daughter of Joseph "Jen" Jennings Bryan Allen (1897 - 1988) and Mattie Lou Wheeler (1899 - 1972) and the grand daughter of John Allen (1852 - 1916) and Mary Jane Riddle (1859 - 1905). Mary Jane Riddle is the daughter of John Riddle, son of Benjamin Tyre Riddle. Velma is also the author of The Mountain Years 1917-1929 Memoirs of Velma Moleta Allen, published in 1996 by Academy Publishers, Morganton, North Carolina.

Samuel Riddle Civil War Record

Richard Riddle

I would like to thank W.B. "Dick" Watts for providing me with copies of information from the North Carolina Troops: 1861-1865 and his help in researching the Riddles involved in the War Between the
States. I would also like to thank Stuart Wilson for his research and Samuel Riddle’s records from the National Archives. Information from the North Carolina Civil War Home Page (http://members.aol.com/jweaver303/nc/nccwhp.htm), edited and operated by Jeff Weaver, has been extensively used in the narration's relating to certain people and events in this article.

As we approach the year 2,000 it is very difficult to understand the reasons and circumstances that would cause fathers, sons, brothers, uncles, nephews and neighbors to take up arms against one another in a war that after 135 years is still being debated. It is also hard to conceive a time before automobiles, airplanes, space travel, television, miracle drugs, microsurgery and in-door plumbing.

If we are to appreciate the conditions that existed during the Second American Civil War we must. Not since the First American Civil War, the Revolution of 1775-1783, had the people of this continent been so divided.

Samuel Riddle was born September 25, 1838. He was the son of Benjamin Tyre Riddle and Rachel Austin. Benjamin was born March 13, 1800 in Stokes County, North Carolina. In 1805, he moved with his father John W. Riddle, Sr. to Yancey (then Buncombe) County, North Carolina. Samuel’s mother Rachel was the daughter of Robert Austin and Margaret Allen.

Benjamin and his wife lived in Pensacola, North Carolina and had fourteen children, six boys and seven girls and one of unknown sex. Samuel and three of his brothers would serve the South during the Civil War. Samuel was the first of Benjamin’s sons to enlist. He volunteered along with several other men from Yancey County shortly after the war commenced. His unit would be Company B, 29th Regiment N.C. Infantry.

29th Regiment N.C. Infantry

The following information about the 29th Regiment N.C. Infantry is abstracted from North Carolina Troops: 1861-1865, compiled by the North Carolina Department of Archives.

A Company of men was raised in Yancey County, North Carolina during the spring of 1861. The date July 3, 1861 is shown as the date of record for the enlistment of most members, which would become Company B of the 29th Regiment commanded by Captain William B. Creasman.

Samuel Riddle, age 22, along with Andrew Jackson Riddle, age 31, and James H. Riddle, age 29 are recorded as enlisting that day. On September 11, 1861, Robert B. Vance, brother of Zebulon Vance, Governor of North Carolina, was elected Colonel and assumed command of the 29th.

Robert Brank Vance

Robert Brank Vance was born in Buncombe County, April 28, 1828. He was elected clerk of the court of pleas and quarter sessions for his native county in 1848, and served eight years. He declined reelection and devoted himself to mercantile pursuits until the outbreak of war.
He then organized a company of soldiers, the Buncombe Life Guards, of which he was elected captain. On September 24, 1861 this company as well as several other mountain-county companies were formally organized as the 29th Regiment N.C. Infantry at Camp Patton in Asheville. Robert Vance was unanimously elected as its first colonel.

The 29th was ordered to Camp Vance near Sulfur Springs in Buncombe County where they began training. On October 28, they broke camp and moved to Raleigh and arrived on November 6 where they were issued arms, equipment and uniforms. The 29th was then ordered to Jonesboro, Tennessee where they arrived on November 30th.

**First Engagement**

On December 3rd, they engaged a large group of pro Union sympathizers near the bend of Chucky River at Parrottsville and Newport. The Unionists retired to the hills and offered little resistance. Colonel Vance established his regimental headquarters at Knoxville.

Nine other companies of the 29th were stationed on detached service on a line northeast from Chattanooga through Knoxville to Morristown. Company B and C were stationed in Chattanooga. There the regiment served mainly in garrison duty for the railroad. The companies remained on detached service until February 20, 1862 when the 29th was ordered to Cumberland Gap.

**Defense of Cumberland Gap**

In late March the regiment came under fire during a skirmish with a Federal force near Cumberland Gap. Around the first of April 1862, the 29th was assigned to General Carter L. Stevenson’s brigade when he assumed command of the defense of Cumberland Gap. On April 29 a second Federal attack under General George W. Morgan was repulsed. Morgan then moved his force through the gaps to the south and flanked the Confederate defenses.

This forced the Confederates to abandon their position and evacuate Cumberland Gap. On June 18, General Stevenson fell back to Bean’s Station, ten miles northwest of Morristown. The Confederate forces in East Tennessee were reorganized under the overall command of General E. Kirby Smith. In
early August 1862, General Smith in cooperation with General Braxton Bragg at Chattanooga, began to deploy his force of roughly 18,000 men against the Federal force at Cumberland Gap. On August 5th, Colonel Vance, Samuel Riddle and the rest of the 29th engaged a Federal force at Tazewell which resulted in the defeat of the Union Force.

Under Colonel Vance the 29th, along with several other units, was detached from the main force and sent to Baptist Gap, about 5 miles south of Cumberland Gap. General Smith discovered that the Federal garrison at Cumberland Gap was so strong an attack by the Confederate’s would be unsuccessful. On August 24th, General Smith moved his force of 9,000 men north to support General Bragg’s invasion of Kentucky and left General Stevenson’s 1st Division to contain the Federals at Cumberland Gap.

By September 17th, the 29th Regiment had rejoined the 1st Division and on that same day the Federals evacuated Cumberland Gap. On September 18th, Stevenson’s division occupied the former Federal positions. On the next day, Stevenson’s division marched to join Smith in Kentucky and on October 2nd was reunited with Smith’s forces at Frankfort. After Bragg’s defeat at Perryville on October 8th, Bragg and Smith withdrew their forces into Tennessee. Stevenson’s division encamped at Bean’s Station on October 25th and after a few days of rest, the 29th Regiment moved to Lenoir Station on the East Tennessee and Georgia Railroad 20 miles southwest of Knoxville.

**Samuel Riddle Transferred to the 58th**

While the 29th was at Lenoir Station, on November 7, 1862, Samuel Riddle transferred from Company B, 29th N.C. Infantry to Company C, 58th Regiment N.C. Infantry. The reason for Samuel’s transfer is unknown. His name appears on the Honor Roll for the 29th Regiment. We do know that he held Colonel Vance, the commander of the 29th in high regard as Samuel named one of his sons Robert Vance T. Riddle.

**More on Robert Vance**

Before we continue the story of Samuel Riddle and his service with the 58th Regiment, a little more about Robert B. Vance:

At the Battle of Murfreesboro, December 31st, after the brigade commander General J. E. Rains was shot through the heart, Colonel Vance took command of the brigade, and as Major-General McCown
later reported, "bore himself gallantly." After Bragg had retreated to Shelbyville, Colonel Vance became ill with typhoid fever. While ailing, his regiment was ordered to Jackson, Mississippi and he was never again to command the 29th but he did receive his commission as brigadier-general in June 1863. During the fall of 1863 the section of North Carolina a new military district, titled the District of Carolina. Brigadier General Robert B. Vance, was assigned to command this district.

Early in January 1864, General Vance was ordered to assist General James Longstreet in east Tennessee. On January 12, he led a small command into Tennessee that included the 69th Regiment, the 7th Regiment N.C. Cavalry, Lieutenant Colonel J. L. Henry’s 14th Battalion N.C. Cavalry, part of Thomas’ Legion, in addition to McRae’s Battalion.

At Gatlinburg the battalion was divided and a section proceeded to Sevierville under General Vance while the remainder stayed at Gatlinburg with a portion of Colonel W. H. Thomas’ Legion. On January 13 General Vance captured a Federal wagon train and retired to Schulta’ Mill.

He sent orders for Colonel Henry to move up and meet him and for Colonel Thomas to retire. Colonel Henry decided to withdraw with Colonel Thomas an not move to meet General Vance. At Cosby Creek, Tennessee, on January 14, 1864, General Vance was surprised and captured along with several men under his command including William P. Riddle, the younger brother of Samuel Riddle. William Riddle was confined at Louisville, Kentucky, then was transferred to Rock Island, Illinois until his release on June 20, 1865 after taking the Oath of Allegiance.

With his capture at Cosby Creek the military career of Brigadier General Robert B. Vance ended. He experienced prison camp life at Nashville, Louisville, Camp Chase and Fort Delaware. While at Fort Delaware, he was appointed to act with General Beale in buying clothing for Confederate prisoners of war which occupied his life until he was paroled March 14, 1865.

With the return of peace Vance entered politics and had a successful career in the United States Congress as representative of the Eighth district. First elected in 1872 he served continuously through 1882. He declined re-nomination in 1884, but took an active part in the Democratic campaign that year and in the following spring was appointed assistant commissioner of patents by President Cleveland. He also attained prominence in the Masonic order as grand-master for his state. He was also a delegate to the Methodist church general conferences and attended the ecumenical conference in London in 1881. In addition he was a lecturer and author.
Formation of the 58th Regiment, N.C. Infantry

In late 1861 John B. Palmer established a detachment of cavalry, infantry and artillery from the North Carolina Mountains near his Mitchell County home and began recruiting volunteers for this unit.

The 58th was mustered into the service of North Carolina July 24, 1862 and began active duty with Colonel John B. Palmer in command. It was comprised of companies from Mitchell, Yancey, McDowell, Ash, Caldwell, and Watauga Counties.

First Assignments for the 58th

In late July and early August 1862 the 58th N.C. Infantry left their mountain homes for their first posting at Johnson City, Tennessee (then Johnson’s Depot). At Johnson City the command drilled briefly before being deployed to various posts in upper east Tennessee. J.W. Dugger recorded the first camp near Johnson City was called Camp Stokes.

On August 26, 1862, the 58th was dispatched as reinforcements. They left Camp Stokes on the 27th and reached Camp Reynolds, near Cumberland Gap on the 30th. The regiment was assigned to General Stevenson’s division of E. Kirby Smith’s Army of East Tennessee. Smith was coordinating with Braxton Bragg for a full scale invasion of Kentucky and the untested 58th N.C. would soon get their chance.

The 58th moved to Cumberland Gap on September 16 and there remained until October 25, 1862. On that date the regiment marched 11 miles, 16 more in the snow on the 26th and finally camped in a nice grove. On the 27th, Palmer’s men marched 5 miles and pitched their tents at Big Creek Gap.

Samuel Riddle Joins the 58th

The 58th remained at Big Creek Gap from late October 1862 until late March 1863. It was during this period, 7 November, 1862 that Samuel Riddle transferred to the 58th from the 29th. On March 29, the 58th finally left Big Creek Gap, with instructions to proceed to Clinton, in Anderson County, Tennessee.

The regiment reached their new positions on the Clinch River on the 30th where they remained until May 6. From May 6 until May 30 they marched and counter-marched to Wartburg and Montgomery, Tennessee, to Wolf River and Monticello, Kentucky and back to Clinton. The Federals were exerting significant pressure on middle Tennessee and emergencies were cropping up in many areas. Southern commanders rushed troops from spot to spot to meet the possible contingencies.

The 58th N.C. reached Louden, Tennessee June 28 to meet an expected Federal push on Knoxville from the south. The Confederates had removed the garrison from Knoxville to Tullahoma, and the 58th was shifted south to replace the troops that had been removed. The 58th remained at Louden for two weeks. Palmer’s regiment trekked to Bell’s Bridge on July 11 and 12 where it remained until August 4. The 58th was ordered back to Big Creek Gap to relieve the infantry garrison there.
After spending approximately two weeks at Big Creek Gap, the 58th began their march to reach Bragg’s Army of Tennessee. On September 8, General Braxton Bragg ordered the retreat of his forces from Chattanooga after the city had been bombarded for more than three weeks and the Union Army of the Cumberland under the command of Major General William S. Rosecrans, was about to capture the city.

The 58th and Buckner’s forces reached Bragg’s Army of Tennessee on September 9 as reinforcements. Buckner’s men had burned the bridge across the Tennessee River at Louden as they had all bridges during their retreat to Chattanooga from Knoxville.

On September 13, Colonel John Herbert Kelly was given command of the brigade that included the 58th. This brigade would become known as Kelly’s Brigade. Colonel Kelly was in command only seven days when he led them into their first major battle, the Battle of Chickamauga.

Bragg was determined to reoccupy Chattanooga and decided to meet Rosecrans’ army, defeat them, and then move back into the city. On September 17, Bragg’s army headed north, intending to meet and beat the XXI Army Corps. The field of battle extended from Chickamauga Creek to Missionary Ridge. Bragg had moved his men to the line on the morning of September 18 to meet Rosecrans’ Federals.

Continued in Volume 5 Issue 2, June 1999
"The good doctor beloved by people of the town and country for whom he cared."

Dr. Joseph B. Riddle made history at Grace Hospital as one of its first physicians and graduate surgeons. In 1907, he and his family moved to Morganton from the mountains of Yancey County when he discovered the newly created Grace Hospital where he served devotedly for 40 years.

His dedication to his patients at Grace was legendary as the following story illustrates:

On a cold February night in 1917, Dr. Riddle was traveling a stretch of Burke’s treacherous roads to make a house call when he had a serious automobile accident. After lying beneath his wrecked automobile for two hours, Dr. Riddle, upon being discovered, insisted on being taken to his patient, a woman in childbirth. He was critically injured and after caring for his patient, was admitted to Grace Hospital where he lay in peril for many days. During this time, people from the town and country came to inquire of the beloved man.

Recently, a striking portrait of Dr. Riddle was placed in the Collett Critical Care Center waiting room. Fifty-one years after his death, we still remember and respect Dr. Riddle for kindness and devotion. He is a model of caring and compassion for Grace as we approach the 21st Century.

Editorial Note: The above article was published in the Grace Healthcare Foundation, Volume 2, Issue 1, August 1998. It was provided by Jane Kerr Mathews, granddaughter of Dr. J.B. Riddle and Lenora Jane Ray. Dr. Riddle was the son of Samuel Riddle (1838-1920) and Mary Naomi Rust (1843-1930). See the related article Samuel Riddle-Civil War Record.

Rachel Roland Allen
Richard Riddle

This dear lady is Rachel Roland (Rowland) wife of Adoniarm D. Allen III. She lived to be over 100 years, some say 102 and others claim 104. According to the 1900 National Census for Yancey County, she and Adniram (Adoniarm) were living with their son Ellis R. Allen. They told the census taker that
she was born in August 1823 and she was 85, had been
married for 52 years, had 9 children all living, and that her
father and mother were born in North Carolina.

Rachel’s husband Adoniarm III was part of the group that
located the body of Dr. Elisha Mitchell in June, 1857 on what
is now known as Mount Mitchell. On July 28, 1835, 22 years
earlier, Adoniarm III’s father Adoniarm II was one of the
guides that led Dr. Mitchell to the summit of Mount Mitchell,
the highest peak east of the Mississippi River. For more
information about Dr. Mitchell’s search see the Riddle
Newsletter, Volume 4, Issue 2, June 1998 - "Guide for Dr.
Elisha Mitchell".

Adoniarm III’s mother was Lucinda "Lucy" Riddle, daughter
of John W. Riddle, Sr. Adoniarm III would join the Union
Army and serve in Company K, 3rd N.C. Mounted Infantry
during the Civil War. Rachel and Adoniarm’s son, John
married his second cousin Mary Jane Riddle on October 14,
1874. Mary Jane was the daughter of John Riddle, son of
Benjamin Tyre Riddle.

Velma Allen Crump, grand daughter of John and Mary Jane Riddle Allen provided the photograph of
Rachel. See Velma’s article Cabin In The Wells in this issue of the Riddle Newsletter.

Johnny Riddle and Nellie Cook

Richard Riddle

The marker below is located in the Deyton-Riddle Cemetery on Brush Creek in Yancey County, North
Carolina. It marks the grave of John "Johnny" W. Riddle, Jr. and Elander "Nellie" Cook who was of
Cherokee ancestry. Johnny is believed to be the first Riddle to settle in that part of Yancey County. His
father John W. Riddle, Sr. (1765-1844) was the first Riddle to settle in Buncombe County where he
bought land on the Cane River in 1805. Their son Nathan joined Company A, 58th Regiment N.C.
Infantry on September 4, 1862 and was described as 42 years old, 5 foot 6 inches in height, black eyes,
dark hair, and dark complexion. The reason that Nathan joined Company A was so he could be with his
son James Marion Riddle. James had joined the Mitchell Rangers, commanded by Col. John Palmer, on
June 10, 1862. He was 16 years old at that time and was made a drummer boy. The Mitchell Rangers
later become Company A of the 58th. See the article Samuel Riddle - Civil War Record for more information about the 58th.

Vivian Gortney Purdy who was born in Green Mountain, Yancey County, North Carolina and now lives in Ohio provided the above photograph. She is a third great-granddaughter of Johnny Riddle. Her parents were Holt Gortney and Pauline Johnson Gortney and her line back to Johnny and Nellie Cook Riddle is as follows:

Holt Gortney, Martha M. Letterman, Ellen Louise Riddle, Ansel Riddle, and John "Johnny" W. Riddle, Jr. Readers of the Riddle Newsletter will remember that we introduced Vivian’s first cousin Belinda Gortney Hudec in the December 1997 Riddle Newsletter. Belinda is the daughter of Park Gortney.

Vivian’s family moved to Ohio in 1941 when her father Holt followed her mother’s brother Paul Johnson and friend Orville Green to Ohio searching for work in 1941. He brought his carpenters tools but they were not needed as he went to work at the Timken Roller bearing plant. Holt’s brother Park soon followed and took a position at the same plant and then moved his family from North Carolina to be with him.

We welcome our newly discovered cousins and are happy to add them to the list of descendants of John W. Riddle, Sr. our forefather.

Riddle Reunion Reflections

Richard Riddle

The descendants of Benjamin Tyre Riddle held their Riddle Reunion in conjunction with the Pensacola Coming Home ’98 on June 27, 1998. Although not as many of our cousins attended as was hoped, those that did enjoyed themselves. After lunch at the Pensacola Coming Home affair, we reconvened at the Laurel Branch Baptist Church. It was hard work moving the folks to the church as they were having entirely to much fun at the Pensacola Coming Home. When we were settled in the church we introduced ourselves and I presented a brief history of the church, and the part that the Reverend Benjamin Britton Riddle played in it’s history.
In spite of the warnings from those who knew better, we embarked on our over-the-mountain adventure. About 3:00 P.M., a caravan of six cars left the church and took N.C. 197 south for about 4 miles to Murchison. Then turned right for one-quarter mile where the paved road ends and the gravel begins. For a good description of the over the mountain road read the article The Cabin In the Wells by Velma Allen Crump. The road has changed very little since 1916, but now, after 80 years the state selected this date to do repair work on it. I assume that this was the state’s intent as they left equipment and rubble in the road. I didn’t see anyone working but it was a Saturday and government employees do not work weekends. Anyway, we did make it to the top and back down the mountain and arrived at the old Lunel Riddle home that is now in ruins. The present owner did allow my Aunt Helen, her children and grandsons to salvage bricks from the old home’s fireplace.

We then traveled to Asheville and the Grove Park Inn for dinner. Dinner at the Grove Park Inn was excellent and Rush Beeler and his wife Nancy joined the Lunel and Fanny Robinson Riddle descendants. The entire group enjoyed our Riddle Reunion. I will always treasure my fireplace brick and remember the good and some not so good times spent growing up over the mountain.

Luke Johnson Riddle

Richard Riddle

On October 14, 1997 in Atlanta, Georgia, Luke Johnson Riddle announced to his proud parents David J. and Kathryn Lozier Riddle that another fifth great-grandson of John W. Riddle, Sr. had arrived and was ready for his piece of the pie. His happy grandparents Clarence "Buck" David and Betty Jean McKnight Riddle informed me of the blessed event at the Pensacola Coming Home ‘98 celebration. I replied that I thought "Luke" was an excellent name as that was my father’s moniker and I had always been rather attached to the Luke’s of this world.

We welcome our new cousin Luke and pray that God will bless him and guide him through this rocky road of life.

Family Contacts

Richard Riddle

An additional family member who contacted me is Grace Howington. Her parents are Leonard Lee Lyda and Edith Allen, grandparents are Emmett Allen and Dulcie Ann Atkins, and her great-grandparents are John Allen and Mary Jane Riddle. Grace promised to send more information on her family when Santa Clause brings her a new computer.
At the Laurel Branch Baptist Church after the Pensacola Coming Home ‘98 celebration we were joined by William "Jay" Riddle’s wife Verda and two of Jay’s children, Louise Riddle Dodd and Shirley Ann Riddle. Accompanying them were Mary Riddle Austin, Tom Riddle, and Jean Riddle Bowling, the children of James Rollin Riddle. Tom’s son James Rollin Riddle II and his wife Mary Ann brought their son James Shawn Riddle to meet a few of his Riddle kin. Jay Riddle and Rollin were brothers and married sisters, Verda and Laura, daughters of Douglas Webb. Jay and Rollin I are sons of Blaine James Riddle and their grandfather is William "Will" Mitchell Riddle. Will is the son of James and Elisabeth Hensley Riddle. He was born in September 1857 three months after Dr. Mitchell was killed by toppling into the falls on Mt. Mitchell. I believe that my second great-grandfather James Riddle named his son Mitchell in honor of Dr. Mitchell. We were delighted to meet these Benjamin Tyre Riddle descendants.

I was also contacted by Phil Ray. Phil’s family line originated with Amos Lafayett Ray (1802-1884) and Mary "Polly" Riddle (1804-?). As related by Phil, Amos and Polly had a child born out of wedlock that was named Ervin W. Ray. He was born December 1825 and raised by Amos. Phil supports his account by providing a reference to the Buncombe County Court Bastardly Bond dated January 3, 1825. About four years later Amos married Martha Allen and they had twelve children. In approximately 1832, Mary "Polly" married Edmond McMahan and they had eleven children. Ervin W. Ray married Eliza Jane Silver and they had at least two children, Polly L. Ray and Marcus Melvin Ray. Polly Ray married Allison Riddle, son of Andrew Jackson Riddle. We have had several inquires from the descendants of Andrew Jackson Riddle. It is believed that Andrew Jackson may have been the son of Robert Riddle and the grandson of John W. Riddle, Sr.

Pensacola History Book

Richard Riddle

Development of the Pensacola, North Carolina History book is progressing but not as rapidly as expected. As mentioned elsewhere, Velma Allen Crump has provided several stories with some wonderful photographs.

Ben Wilson received permission to publish a story told by Joseph Percy Threadgill about the development of a community on Cattail Creek during the early 1920’s. Mr. Threadgill’s daughter, Helen Threadgill Baden composed the story about this period of her father’s life.

Kirby Ray Whitaker sent me information dealing with the Laurel Branch Baptist Church that she had published in her book, Volume II, Ray History. A good story can be written about this church and its place in the lives of the people of Pensacola.
Stuart Wilson located the Civil War records of Samuel Riddle at the National Archives. He is hard at work on the Civil War section of the book and he has been able to locate additional information connected with men from Yancey County who served in the War of 1812.

We are still searching for articles and photographs, so if you can assist us in these areas please contact me.