

Chapter Three

Long-Lost Cousins:

The Riddlesbergers of Franklin County, Pennsylvania

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

Reliable family tradition recounts that John Riddlesberger II "returned to PA after having resided a number of years in Botetourt County."¹ He married wife, ELIZABETH SECRIST [born July 26, 1771], who was from a prominent German Baptist family in Franklin County, while, apparently, he still resided in Botetourt.² Records indicate that all five of their children were born in Virginia. Like his own father, "John was an iron worker, wagon-maker and farmer; a blacksmith by trade both in Virginia and in PA," and for much of his life "resided on a small farm about two miles north of Waynesboro [PA] which he purchased from his father-in-law, Solomon Secrist, along the north branch of Antietam Creek."³ The circumstances of John's return to Franklin County shortly after the 1820 Federal Census—in which John and his family are still residing in Botetourt County next-door to younger brother Samuel—are unknown, though John's younger brother Jacob had already relocated



John Riddlesberger's tombstone in the Snow Hill Dunkard Cemetery near Quincy, PA.

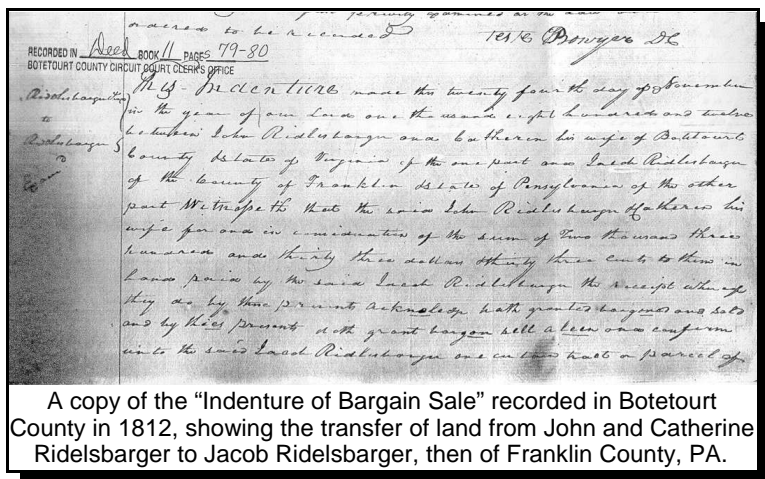
¹ Henry Riddlesberger's "Notes," p. 11.

² No marriage records have been found for John and Elizabeth in either Botetourt or Franklin Counties.

³ Henry Riddlesberger's "Notes," p. 11.

to Franklin County by 1812, when his parents sold him 141 acres of their Virginia land.⁴ Like his older brother, John, Jacob Riddlesbarger also married into a prominent German Baptist family, the FOREMANS [FUHRMAN], who, as we will see, provided the Riddlesberger family with three wives and one husband, Jonathan, who married two of John Riddlesberger's II daughters!

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



A copy of the "Indenture of Bargain Sale" recorded in Botetourt County in 1812, showing the transfer of land from John and Catherine Ridelsbarger to Jacob Ridelsbarger, then of Franklin County, PA.

We know from various sources that the German Baptists frequently moved from the Botetourt area to Waynesboro/Antietam and back again.⁵ We can but wonder if there were religious differences between the three brothers, John and Jacob, and their brother Samuel—who married an English woman in a Presbyterian

ceremony—which prompted the separation, which became final at some point following their father's death about 1828. Indeed, there was no knowledge of the Virginia connection in our family memory. Perhaps it was the question of slavery which led to a parting of the ways in the family, although the Riddelspergers owned but one slave until 1805, and none are shown in the subsequent tax records.⁶ The Brethren were militantly opposed to the holding of slaves, and

⁴ Botetourt County, Deed Book 11, pp. 79-80 (certified copy). John and Catherine "Ridelsbarger," sold 141 acres of their land to Jacob Ridelsbarger, then of Franklin County, on November 24, 1812 for the amount of \$2,333.00. A "Deed of Bargain Sale" probably meant "seller financed" in lieu of a bank-held mortgage. Jacob and his wife Josephine in turn sold this land in 1822.

⁵ Donald F. Durnbaugh, The Brethren Encyclopedia (Ambler, PA: Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc., 1980), II.827-831.

⁶ Personal tax lists from Botetourt County, 1788-1830.

forbade church members from owning them.⁷ But the reason that John Riddlesberger II moved back to Franklin County may be as simple as the fact that Elizabeth's father, Solomon Secrist, sold them his land. The Secrists were well-established in the Waynesboro area. According to the will of Solomon Secrists, probated December 3, 1834, John and Elizabeth received \$2200.00, when her father died and his estate was divided.⁸

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

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

The Riddlesberger's second daughter was **Susanna**, born about 1796, near Fincastle. She married Abraham Fox, and died on June 1, 1866, in Franklin County. It is not known if she had any children. Their third daughter, **Nancy**, was born on December 21, 1798, also near Fincastle. She died on February 8, 1835, in Franklin County at the young age of thirty-seven. Nancy Riddlesberger married another Franklin County boy with Brethren connections, Jonathan MENTZER, on November 7, 1815 in Franklin County. Together they had a number of children: **Polly**, who was born about 1827, and married John Ankerbrandt; **David**, who was born July 23, 1830, married Susanna Baer, before moving to nearby Greencastle, where he died on February 15, 1908; **John**, who was born about 1832, married Leah Gipe, and died September 5, 1900; **Jacob**, who was born on August 27, 1818, in Blue Rock, Quincy Township, married Susan

⁷ Donald F. Durnbaugh, ed., The Church of the Brethren Past and Present (Elgin: The Brethren Press, n.d.), p. 21.

⁸ The will appears on the Franklin County, PA genweb page, and was posted by Michael Caldwell.

Bonebrake and died on June 1, 1895; **Joseph**, born March 4, 1823, married Eve Monn and died in September of 1862, perhaps a victim of the diphtheria outbreak which so badly decimated Franklin County that fall; **Elizabeth**, who was born on September 28, 1823, married Henry Middour, and died on June 5, 1905; and **Susannah**, who was born about 1833, and married Christopher Pentz.

John and Elizabeth Riddlesberger's fourth child was a son, **the Rev. John Riddlesberger III**, who, in many regards, followed in his father's footsteps. John was born on March 4, 1813, and died on November 23, 1887. He is buried near his parents, his wife, Elizabeth HARTMAN, and eight of their children, five of whom died tragically over a two-week period during the 1862 diphtheria epidemic.⁹

According to reliable family tradition, John Riddlesberger III, "bought the farm [owned by his father] . . . and continued to reside there farming and preaching."¹⁰ He and wife Elizabeth Hartman, were members of the Seventh-Day Baptist Church—the famous "Snow Hill" off-shoot of the German Baptist Church—which flourished in the area during the early

1800's, having been founded by Conrad Biessel and then headed by the eccentric Brethren elder, George Martin.¹¹ John Riddlesberger III was elected to preach here in 1845, and according to his grandson, Henry Riddlesberger, John "served this church until he died at 74 years in 1887."¹² Of the ten children born to the family, only two, Lydia and Isaac, survived to adulthood.



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

⁹ "Snow Hill," or the "Nunnery Graveyard," cemetery records provided by the Waynesboro Historical Society. See also, Brethren Roots: Quarterly Journal Published by the Fellowship of Brethren Genealogists, Vol. 30, Spring 1998, Number 1, pp. 15-17.

¹⁰ Henry Riddlesberger's "Notes," p. 11.

¹¹ The eccentric "Snow Hill" community near Waynesboro, was founded by a Sabbatarian faction among the Brethren, first led by Conrad Biessel, and then by George Adam Martin. "Snow Hill" was founded in the 1760's on land donated by the Snowberger family. It was called "The Nunnery" by outsiders because of the emphasis upon communal living and celibacy. Given the fact that John Riddlesberger III fathered at least ten children, it is fairly certain that this was one doctrine of the Snow Hill community that he did not embrace! Cf., Durnbaugh, The Brethren Encyclopedia, III.1194-1195.

¹² Henry Riddlesberger's "Notes," p. 11.

John Riddlesberger III is also mentioned in the History of Franklin County, as the fourth preacher to serve at Snow Hill. The area around Snow Hill is described as a “thickly settled neighborhood,” and the church buildings were built on land originally owned by the Snowberger family, one of the first families to settle in the area.¹³ The Brethren Encyclopedia mentions that John was an elder—the official title for a lay-preacher—in the Waynesboro Church, with an obituary appearing in the denominational publication of the Brethren, “The Gospel Messenger” in 1887.¹⁴

John and Elizabeth Riddlesberger III’s surviving children were: **Lydia Ann Riddlesberger**, was born on April 3, 1838, in Quincy Township, married William Geesman, and died in 1893; and **Isaac Riddlesberger**, who was born April 5, 1844, and married Joanna Benedict, dying on August 15, 1917. Isaac’s son, was **Henry Riddlesberger**, the first and foremost Riddlesberger family historian, and who was, as mentioned previously, in contact with my own grandfather, Glenn, in the 1950's. Henry was also in touch with a number of other family members from the Virginia and Ohio lines. Were it not for Henry Riddlesberger’s research, much of our family history would remain uncovered and lost to subsequent generations. The Riddlesbergers of Pennsylvania are descendants of this line.

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

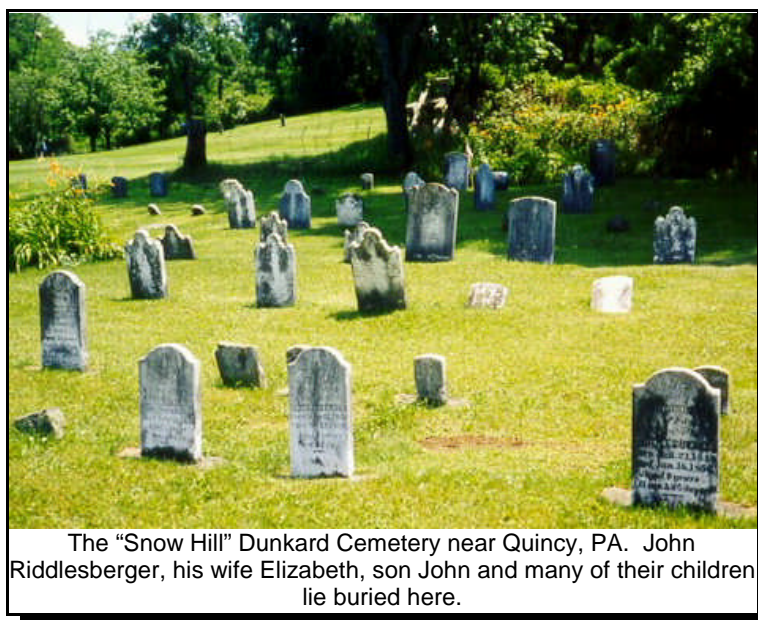
John and Elizabeth Riddlesberger II’s fifth child was **Francis**, who was born about 1814, and then married her brother- in-law, Jonathan MENTZER, after the death of his wife and her older sister, Nancy, in 1835. She bore Jonathan two more children, Nancy and Sarah Ann [b. January 29, 1838], who married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

¹³ I. H. McAuley, History of Franklin County, Pennsylvania: A Historical Sketch of Franklin County, PA (Harrisburg: Patriot Publishing, 1878), 614.

¹⁴ Durnbaugh, The Brethren Encyclopedia, III. 1748.

cousins.

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



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

son John Riddlesberger Executor. Signed 20 July 1838. Witnesses John Price, John Flanagan. Proved 12 August 1844.¹⁵ John Riddlesberger II died on June 12, 1844, and is buried in the "Snow Hill" cemetery, near his wife Elizabeth [who died May 31, 1857], their son Rev. John Riddlesberger III, his wife Elizabeth and at least eight of their grandchildren.

John "Samuel" Riddlesberger I—Patriarch of the Virginia Riddlebargers and Riddlebergers and the Ohio Riddlebargers

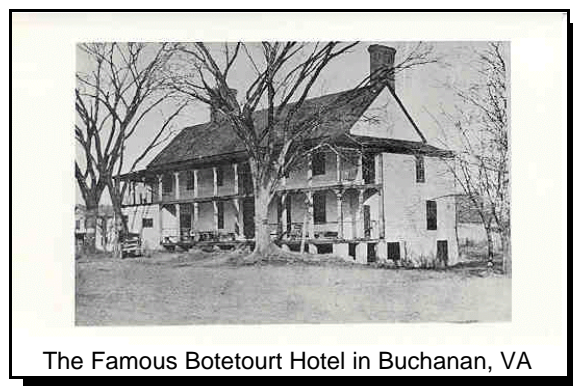
John **Samuel Riddlesberger I**, the second son of John and Catherine Riddelsperger, was born in 1773, when the family was living in Manheim, Lancaster County, PA.¹⁶ Although his given name is "John Samuel," he is listed in all subsequent records and documents simply as "Samuel," and his surname is most often spelled "Riddlebarger." Unfortunately, there are still many gaps and several discrepancies in the evidence documenting his life and that of some of his

¹⁵ Franklin County, PA, Willbook E, p. 67.

¹⁶ Baptismal records from Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Manheim, PA.

children.¹⁷ The exact date of his death, and the location of burial for him and his wife Sarah COMPTON, is presently unknown.

According to the Botetourt County Personal Property tax lists for the 1790-1830 period, Samuel Riddelsbarger owned several horses and other farm animals. He married Sarah Compton on September 1, 1794, in a ceremony performed by a Presbyterian



The Famous Botetourt Hotel in Buchanan, VA

minister, Rev. Edward Crawford.¹⁸ He is listed in the 1810 Federal Census for Botetourt County as having six sons and one daughter, and was living next door to his brother, John Riddlesberger II, at the time the census was taken. These six sons are presumed to be William Jacob, Samuel II, Jesse, James, Joel and Madison. Samuel's daughter is Sarah. David is also presumed to be a son of Samuel, but the evidence for this is purely circumstantial. There are also a number of Riddlebarger males who appear in various Botetourt County tax records in the 1820's and whose relationship to Samuel Riddlesbarger is still unknown. These include Robert, Isaac, Joseph and Elias.

That same year (1810), Samuel also appears in the Federal Census in Wythe County, Virginia, 75 miles or so to the southwest of Botetourt County. This raises the question as to whether or not there are two Samuel Riddlesbergers. Given the fact that a number of our kin were known to be gunsmiths and stage-drivers, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that the Riddlesbergers traveled the Shenandoah-Cumberland valleys between Franklin County, PA., in the North and Wythe County to the South on a regular basis. One of Samuel's sons, Jesse, was born in Maryland, but married a woman in Wythe County, indicating that our family very likely traveled the length of the "great valley."

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

The oldest of Samuel and Sarah's children is presumed to be **David Riddelsbarger**, who was born in 1794—raising the possibility that his parents were married with a shotgun present and

¹⁷ For example, Henry Riddlesberger's "Notes," and the Riddleberger family genealogy, prepared by Mr. Paul Riddleberger of Islamorada, FL, do at times contain conflicting data.

¹⁸ Botetourt County VA., Marriage Bond, September 1, 1794 [certified copy].

a baby on the way.¹⁹ It is also possible that David is the youngest son of John and Catherine. We are not sure of the exact relationship. It is known, however, that David served in the Virginia militia during the War of 1812,²⁰ and that he married Anna LINKENHOKER, the daughter of one of the Riddlesbarger's next-door neighbors, on December 17, 1816.²¹ An unconfirmed family tradition holds that Jesse Riddlesbarger left Virginia together with one of his brothers—possibly David, who left Virginia about this time as did Jesse—and that they headed west through Kentucky, only to eventually separate and go their own directions, David to Ohio and then Indiana, and Jesse to Missouri.²² Another brother, James, also left Virginia about this time and settled in Green County, KY, so, perhaps it was James, and not David who traveled west with Jesse.

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

farmer and stock-raiser, P. O. Box Deerfield, is a native of Botetourt County, VA and was born on October 2, 1825. He is a son of David and Ann Riddlebarger, who removed with

¹⁹ David died on January 29, 1876, at the age of 81. This means he was born some time before January 29, 1795, indicating that if his mother was Sarah, who married his father, Samuel on September 1, 1794, she was pregnant with David when she and Samuel married. It is interesting to note that Samuel's marriage bond was not posted by his father, John, but by himself and his older brother, John Riddlesberger II [John Jr. on the bond]. Given the importance of children to the well-being of a family during this period of history, it was not uncommon for betrothed couples to live together as man and wife to see if children could be produced. The couple was not officially married until pregnancy occurred.

²⁰ Ebenezer Tucker, History of Randolph County, Indiana, reprint ed., (Winchester: Randolph County Genealogy Society, n.d.), p. 240. David is listed under the heading, "soldiers and wives who had pensions." The text simply reads, "David Riddlebarger, Virginia Militia, 1812, dead." According to records found in the National Archives, David was a private in the 4th Regiment of Boyd's Virginia Militia from April 18 through August 2, 1814, and the 5th Regiment of McDowell's group—[War of 1812 Muster Rolls]. According to the book, A Guide to Virginia Military Units in the War of 1812, by Stuart Butler (Athens, GA: Iberian Publishing Company, 198_), pp. 54-55, James McDowell's group was known as the "Flying Camp," and saw action in the Maryland campaign when the British burned the White House. David is also listed in Patrick Wardell's book, War of 1812, Bounty Land and Pension Applicants, as a pensioner.

²¹ Botetourt County, VA., Marriage Bond, December 17, 1816, [certified copy]. David posted the bond himself, and signed it in his own hand.

²² Henry Riddlesberger's "Notes," p. 12. This brother may be James, and not David.

their family to near Dayton, Ohio, in 1829, and to this county in 1830. Mr. Riddlebarger was raised on a farm, and attended school in a log cabin with a greased paper window, clapboard roof, puncheon floor, and split slab seats. In those early days they went to Richmond to mill, a distance of over thirty miles. Mr. Riddlebarger has many times crushed a hominy block. He was married September 28, 1852 to Miss Lucinda Barnhart . . . They have nine children, eight living—Josephine, Ella, Thomas, Claud, Mark, Oscar and Hattie. Mr. Riddlebarger owns 240 acres, and resides on section 18 (this is in Ward Twp.).²³

Other known sons are **David** (b. 1822) and **Lewis** (b. 1820). Two daughters appear in state marriage records for Randolph County. **Ann Riddlebarger** (b. 1821) married William LEWIS in November of 1850, **Eleanor Riddlebarger** (b. 1824) married John REITENOUR in January of 1849, and Harriet, who was born in 1828.²⁴ David Riddlebarger died on January 29, 1876, at age 81, and is buried in Ritenour's [Reitener] Cemetery, to the west of Deerfield.²⁵ Probate records from May 2, 1876, indicate that his estate was valued at \$4,488.33 at the time of his death.²⁶

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

Family tradition holds that William Jacob resided at Irongate, Virginia, about 35 miles up what is now highway 220 near Clifton Forge, that he married there, and had several children. The

²³ Tucker, History of Randolph County, Indiana, p. 422.

²⁴ Indiana State Library, searchable data base, "Indiana Marriages Through 1850." See also, Tucker, History of Randolph County, Indiana, p. 422.

²⁵ Tucker, History of Randolph County, Indiana, p. 129.

²⁶ Tucker, History of Randolph County, Indiana, p. 78.

same tradition holds that he and his wife separated, and he then moved to Maryland, where he met and married his second wife, MARY PENNER.²⁷ We do know Jacob was an iron-worker/blacksmith like his grandfather, John Riddelsperger. According to J. W. McKnight, the author of The Pioneer History of Northwestern Pennsylvania (1905), Jacob Riddleberger arrived in Brookville in Jefferson County, PA in 1822-23, the first blacksmith to do so.²⁸ But Jacob and his second wife, apparently, continued their trek west, moving next to Armstrong County, PA, and then to nearby Butler County (about 100 miles from Pittsburgh), where they settled for a time²⁹. The same family tradition holds that Jacob subsequently made his way down the Ohio River by boat to Hanging Rock, Ohio about 1839-40. He later moved to South Webster, Ohio, where he established a farm.³⁰

Jacob and Mary Penner's known children are **George Washington Riddlebarger**, who was born in Butler County PA, married Isabella Richardson on March 17, 1852, in Scioto County, Ohio; **William Alexander Riddlebarger**, born on October 18, 1836, in Armstrong County, PA, and married Elvira Partridge on December 22, 1857.³¹ He died in 1923 in Scioto County, Ohio; **Andrew Jackson Riddlebarger**, born on July 3, 1841 in Armstrong County, PA., and married Margaret Borden on July 6, 1862, in Scioto County and died on April 8, 1914; **David R. Riddlebarger**, was born on February 28, 1838 in Butler County, PA., and died on July 6, 1903, in Scioto County. He married Elizabeth Walk on December 6, 1865. Another son, **John M.**, was born on March 11, 1832 in Butler County, PA, but died on June 12, 1850, at the young age of eighteen.

The descendants of Jacob are quite numerous, and there are many cousins from this line still residing throughout the Southern Ohio area. They hold an annual Riddlebarger family reunion, and have done so for over seventy years. According to Henry Riddlesberger's notes, early-on, the reunion included members of the Virginia Riddlebargers as well, though for the last thirty years or so, it has been limited to members of the Ohio clan, the two family lines drifting

²⁷ Henry Riddlesberger's "Notes," p. 10b. Henry was given this information by Jacob's great-grandson, Ora A. Riddlebarger. It is certainly possible that these children, if sons, may explain the appearance of Riddlesbargers in Clifton Forge in Allegheny County by the early 1820's.

²⁸ J. W. McKnight, The Pioneer History of Northwestern Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1905), chapter XXXI.

²⁹ Correspondence with Mr. Joe Mosher dated October 12, 1997. Henry Riddlesberger's notes place Jacob in "Beaver or Bradford" county, but this is in error. A Jacob "Riddleberger" appears in the 1840 Federal Census in Armstrong County, PA.

³⁰ Henry Riddlesberger's "Notes," p. 10.

³¹ A William "Ridelsberger" served in the 4th Ohio Infantry during the Civil War.

apart. This fact also seems to support an historical connection between Jacob and Samuel, even if the exact nature of this connection has been lost through the generations.

Another son of Samuel and Sarah Riddlesbarger I is **Samuel Riddlebarger II**. At this point there is a great discrepancy among family researchers about the identity of Samuel II's children and reliable sources are sorely lacking. Henry Riddlesberger's otherwise reliable "Notes," and Paul Riddleberger's family history reach markedly conflicting conclusions from the same data, and clearly much more research needs to be done, especially with this line. Paul Riddleberger lists seven children from Samuel Riddlesbarger II and his first wife, Elizabeth HART, while Henry Riddlesberger lists many more children by two different spouses.³²

What is known for sure is that according to the 1850 Federal Census, Samuel [50 yrs.] and his second wife Nancy [29 yrs.], were living in Botetourt County along with several of Samuel's adult children from his previous marriage to Elizabeth Hart. All were residing on the family farm. Mentioned in the census are: **James**, 24, a mill worker; **Damaris**, 20, **Samuel** 19, a farmer; **Diuguid**, 16, a farmer, **Frederick**, 13, **Elizabeth**, 10; and **John** [under one year].³³ Virginia is listed as place of birth for all. In the 1860 Census for Botetourt County, Samuel is listed as a farmer with real property worth about \$4000.00 and only Frederick (21) and Fannie (18) still reside in the home.³⁴ But in the census for 1870, Samuel was now living in Fincastle Twp, with a Dagers Springs, P.O. Box. He is listed as a farmer with real property of \$1000.00, and the following children are mentioned (**Addison** 21, a farmer), **Lucian** (19, a farmer), **Evans** (17, a farmer) and **Rebecca** (15, working at home).

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

³² Paul Riddleberger's sources are the 1850 census and various VA birth records. Henry Riddlesberger's "Notes" are full of chronological problems in this line and it appears to me that if Henry was not sure how a particular person fit in the family, he simply assigned them to Samuel Riddlesbarger II. Though much more research remains to be done on this line, it appears to me that Paul Riddleberger's work is much more reliable in regards to this line.

³³ Botetourt County, VA: Western District, No. 8, reel # m432-936, page 101a

³⁴ It is not known why the ages of Frederick and Elizabeth (presumably the same young lady as "Fannie") do not correspond.

lands owned by Samuel.”³⁵

What is known of Samuel's children by wife Elizabeth Hart, whom he married on January 7, 1823, varies greatly: **James Riddlesbarger**, a carpenter/mill-worker, who is listed in both the 1850 and 60 Federal Census for Botetourt County, VA, as well as in the 1870 Census as living in Fincastle Township; **Martin Riddlesbarger**, who was born in 1829 in Botetourt³⁶ and by the 1870 census had moved to Allegheny County; **Charleston Riddlesbarger**, who was born in 1832 and served as a private in “K” company of the 57th infantry; **Duguid Riddlesbarger**, who was born in 1833. His name is variously spelled, but appears as “Duguid Riddlesbarger” in the 1860 Federal Census for Botetourt County. He also served in the 60th Virginia Infantry during the Civil War; **Frederick Riddlesbarger**, who was born in 1839, and also served with his brothers in the 60th Virginia infantry; but died of typhoid fever in Richmond VA, in 1863³⁷ and **Elizabeth Riddlesbarger**, who was born in 1840. Another son, **Samuel Riddlesbarger III**, also fought in the Civil War with the 60th Virginia Infantry, known as the “James River Rifles.”³⁸ According to the book, Austin's Related Families of Botetourt County, VA, a “Sam Riddlebarger,” [born 1831] was a descendent of Samuel Riddlebarger and Sarah Compton, and married Betsy KELLY and died in 1910.³⁹ In addition, Samuel Riddlesbarger II had at least four sons with his second wife, Nancy BARGER;⁴⁰ **John, Addison, Evans** and **Lucian** Riddlesbarger.⁴¹

³⁵ “Ancestors of Samuel Riddlesbarger, Jr.” prepared by Mr. Arthur Seder.

³⁶ Martin “Riddlesburger” is the only one of the family to appear in the 1850 census index for Botetourt County. He was 21 at the time. His occupation is listed as a carpenter. Martin was a private in company “C” of the 20th battalion of the Virginia Heavy Artillery.

³⁷ According to the “Germanic Surnames in Grey,” webpage, there were five “Riddlebargers” and three “Riddlebergers” in the confederate army.

³⁸ One other Riddlesbarger who appears on the roster for the “Allegheny Rifles” during the Civil War is Elias Riddlesbarger, about whom we have a great deal of conflicting information. Irongate, Virginia, is in Allegheny County, where the Allegheny Rifles were formed, which makes me wonder if Elias is possibly one of William Jacob's sons by his first marriage. Both Henry Riddlesberger and Paul list him as a son of Samuel Riddlesbarger II, but given the fact that the dates they give conflict so greatly—there may also be a father Elias and a son of the same name—I remain unconvinced.

³⁹ Henry Riddlesberger's “Notes,” un-numbered summary page.

⁴⁰ The Barger family (not to be confused with the Riddlebargers), were a family of German Lutherans, who came through Holland to Pennsylvania before settling throughout the Shenandoah, in Rockbridge and Botetourt counties. There were several marriages between the Riddlebargers and the Barger family. See, Rockbridge County, Virginia, Heritage Book, 1778-1997 (Rockbridge Genealogy Society, 1997), pp. 154-155 .

⁴¹ LDS ancestral files also list a son, Lucian, as coming from this marriage. Henry Riddlesberger lists Lucian as a son of Samuel Riddlesbarger II and Elizabeth Hart.

The fourth son of Samuel Riddlesbarger I may well be the most interesting of all. **Jesse L**



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

Riddlesbarger was a successful banker, trader, land-owner, slave holder, and outspoken defender of the Confederacy, who accumulated a huge fortune, only to lose it all virtually overnight through an official edict of a Union general, Thomas Ewing.

Jesse Riddlesbarger was born on March 17, 1800, in Maryland, and died in May of 1883, in Fayette, Howard County, Missouri.⁴² Jesse was married twice and fathered fourteen known children. His first wife was Mary SPROUL, who, it is believed, was born in Botetourt County on July 7, 1808. Mary and Jesse were married on April 27, 1827, in Wythe County, VA., and, according to family sources and census information, were the parents of at least nine children: **Madison Maitland Riddlesbarger**, born January 28, 1830;⁴³ **Mary Ann Riddlesbarger**, born in 1832, married William BARLEY ; **James H. Riddlesbarger**, who was born on April 9, 1834, married Francis HUNTER and shortened his name to

"Riddle"; **Heazlett Riddlesbarger**, born in 1836; **Robert Riddlesbarger**, was born on June 14, 1839; along with his twin sister **Sara Riddlesbarger**, about whom nothing more is known; **William Riddlesbarger**, born on December 18, 1841; **John Riddlesbarger**, born on October 4, 1843, and **Rufus Zacharias Taylor Riddlesbarger**, who was born on October 13, 1846, married Sara

⁴² According to the 1850 Census for Howard County, MO., Jesse was born in Maryland in 1800, though family records place the location of Jesse's birth in Virginia. This is a bit of an enigma, since all of Samuel's other children appear to have been born in Virginia. Washington County, Maryland, however, lies between Franklin County, PA, and Virginia, and the Maryland-Pennsylvania border is just a few miles south of Waynesboro, in an area where the border between the two states was disputed for some time. It is certainly possible that the Riddlesbargers traveled between Franklin, Botetourt, and Wythe Counties, a point which is reinforced by the fact that Jacob Riddlesberger is residing in Franklin County in 1810, Samuel has residences in both Botetourt and Wythe counties, and given the fact that a number of the family are described as "smiths" and "stage-drivers," who certainly traveled as part of their work. It is possible that John Riddelsperger or one of his sons still owned land in Franklin County, and that his sons, traveled back and forth quite routinely. This fact probably accounts for Jesse's birth occurring in Maryland. The facts surrounding Jesse's death appear in the *Howard County Advertiser*, May 24, 1883.

⁴³ In the 1850 Census for Howard County, MO, it is indicated that Madison was born in Virginia—the only one of Jesse's children born there, the others are all born in Missouri—and that his occupation is that of "clerk."

KOLKER on June 29, 1884, and who died in Sioux City, Iowa, in 1923.⁴⁴ According to handwritten notes in Rufus Z. T.'s Bible, his mother, Mary, died during childbirth of an as yet-unknown daughter, who died shortly thereafter.⁴⁵

It is also part of the family tradition that five of Jesse's sons, Madison, Robert, William, John and Heazlett were killed during the Civil War. At present, there is no corroborating evidence for this tradition, though all of these boys were all of military age, and none of them surface anywhere after the war. According to family records, James survived the war and moved to Sacramento, while Rufus Z. T. was sent west by his father, due to his failing eyesight to protect him from the hardships of war.

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

Family tradition also describes a series of tragic circumstances surrounding Jesse's second family. Jesse's second wife was Susan Lavinia NORTON, the daughter of a noted Kansas City physician, whom he married on June 23, 1853, in Jackson County, Missouri.⁴⁶ She was sixteen and Jesse was well in his fifties, when they married in a lavish ceremony, before moving into a mansion that he had built for his new bride on Pearl Street Hill, overlooking the Missouri River.⁴⁷ Together they had four children, 3 daughters and a son: **Emma Riddlesbarger**, born December 12, 1854; **Jesse T. Riddlesbarger**, born January 1, 1856;⁴⁸ **Fannie Riddlesbarger**, born may 5, 1859; and **Nettie Jeanette Riddlesbarger**, born on February 27,

⁴⁴ Henry Riddlesberger's "Notes," p. 12. Rufus Zacharias Taylor Riddlesbarger is the father of Rufus Riddlesbarger who is mentioned in connection with the case "Riddlesbarger vs. Riddlesbarger."

⁴⁵ Information supplied to me by Patricia Riddlesbarger Nevius, grand-daughter of Rufus Z. T. Riddlesbarger in correspondence of February 17, 2001.

⁴⁶ International Genealogical Index, M515212.

⁴⁷ The Kansas City Star, Sunday, June 9, 1929.

⁴⁸ It is believed that Jesse T. Riddlesbarger is presently buried in Union Cemetery in Kansas City, MO. According to a published history of the cemetery, a number of people were buried here from small cemeteries in the outlying communities. It is believed that Jesse died while a small child and was possibly interred here at a later date. The date of internment is October 18, 1869 (block 15-or perhaps-14 according to a note in the records, lot 35).

1861. According to family tradition, when Jesse married his second wife, Susan Norton, “his wife is supposed to have been very hateful of the children of the first wife. They scattered to the four winds and most of them lost track with each other.”⁴⁹

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

But Jesse did not stick with the family vocation for long. According to his descendants, “Jesse built up quite a fortune, for those days, by equipping and outfitting caravans for the Santa Fe Trail.”⁵⁰ This family tradition is, no doubt, related to the first of two articles appearing in the *Kansas City Star*, this one written about the early history of Kansas City, entitled “A Rambling Record” and which appeared in the *Kansas City Evening Star* on May 28, 1884. In the section dealing with the recollections of prominent early merchants in the city, we find the following bit of oral history:

Riddlebarger & Co. ran a large commission and shipping house on the levee in the days of the first administration and did about all the business on the line. Riddlebarger had a pathetic history. He accumulated considerable means, and when he married a young wife was supposed to be happily fixed for a man who has passed the median point in life. A series of unfortunate speculations, however, stripped him of every dollar, and completely disheartened he died at last friendless and alone in the county poorhouse in Fulton.⁵¹

It is now known that while the gist of the newspaper story was true, Jesse's misfortunes did not come as a result of poor business acumen nor speculation, nor did he die in Fulton.⁵² His

⁴⁹ Henry Riddlesberger's “Notes,” p. 12.

⁵⁰ Henry Riddlesberger's “Notes,” p. 12. Henry gleaned this information from my own grandfather, Glenn, who indicates in correspondence with Henry, that he had interviewed Jesse's daughter-in-law, Sarah Riddlebarger (wife of Rufus Zacharias Taylor Riddlebarger), who was in Los Angeles, and who had given him this information during an extensive interview. This was confirmed in a letter from Ada Riddlebarger, daughter of Rufus Z. T. [who went by “Taylor,”] to Sarah, which indicated that her own father “often remarked that his father [Jesse] said that his grandfather [John Riddelsperger] had moved from PA to VA. My father Jesse and brother [David or James?] came from Virginia to Kentucky in the early days. Later Jesse moved to Missouri. My father [Taylor] was born near Kansas City.”

⁵¹ “A Rambling Record,” in the *Kansas City Evening Star*, on May 28, 1884. From the Kansas state genweb project.

⁵² Information provided to me by Patricia Riddlebarger Nevius, February 14, 2001.

misfortune came directly from the hand of one Thomas Ewing, Union General, in charge of the Federal forces in Kansas City, and who personally ordered Jesse and his family banned from the city and the neighboring counties.

This harsh act, it must be remembered, occurred in those days of great upheaval in August of 1863, after Quantrill's Raiders crossed over from several border counties in Missouri into Kansas, where they brutally killed more than 150 pro-union men and boys in the town of Lawrence, Kansas, while destroying some \$1.5 million in property. In response to this brutal attack, Gen. Ewing issued his infamous "General Order Number 11," which ordered the general evacuation of four Missouri Counties bordering Kansas, where pro-Confederate citizens were thought to be harboring Quantrill's men. But General Ewing also issued another lesser known edict: Special Order No. 64, which read, in part, "Jesse Riddlesbarger and family, residents of Kansas City, Mo., are ordered to remove from this district within ten days from the date hereof. They will not go to the Counties of Platte, Clay, Ray or Carroll, Missouri, to reside, nor return to this district during the rebellion, without previous express permission from competent military

authority. By Order of Brigadier General Ewing, P.B. Hunt, Major and Provost Marshal." With that order, Jesse's fate was sealed, the full account of which appears below in another article from the *Kansas City Star* based upon information from Jesse's granddaughter, Francis Adkins Schafer.



Not only does the newspaper account confirm the known facts of Jesse's life and the oral history passed on to my grandfather by Jesse's descendants, there is additional evidence to confirm this account as well. Another Kansas City newspaper, *The Herald of Freedom*, refers to a "J. Riddlesbarger & Co.," located in Kansas City, which was serving as the agent for the river packet [river boat], *Financier*.⁵³ According to records found in the Johnson County, KS, archives, on July 17, 1857, Jesse Riddlesbarger filed a monetary claim against G. M. B. Maughs, the disposition of which is not recorded. Johnson County is near Kansas City.⁵⁴ Furthermore, the city Federal Census for 1870, shows a Jesse "Ridelsbarger," now nearly broke and seventy-years old, as a resident of St. Louis, Missouri. He would live some thirteen more years and die under tragic circumstances. According to a notice found in the Howard County *Advertiser*, dated May 24, 1883:

⁵³ *The Herald of Freedom*, Saturday, April 7, 1855. Reproduced on Kansas-L digest 1168, on the University of Kansas webpage.

⁵⁴ File number, 025 92-235-002.

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

All of this evidence, obtained from independent sources, certainly confirms much of the family tradition set out in the amazing newspaper account below.

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

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

So began the story of a Civil War Evangeline. Born years later in exile, a daughter, Frances Adkins Riddlesbarger, keeps the fires of memory bright. She passed through Kansas City the other day on her way from St. Louis to Los Angeles. A representative of The Star met her in Moberly, Mo., and between Moberly and Kansas City heard the story of the young wife of Jesse L. Riddlesbarger, 24 years old at the time she had to leave her beautiful home and her loving friends.

Frances Adkins Riddlesbarger is now Mrs. Schafer of St. Louis, widow of Pierre G. Schafer. She is the only surviving member of the Riddlesbarger family. She is without relatives and not very well supplied with worldly goods.

But she is a woman of breeding. A true daughter of the Old South, loyal to the traditions implanted by her mother, Mrs. Schafer remembers everything she heard as a child of the family's past grandeur, the luxuries of the old slave-owning days. Over and over again, the exiled mother told her children of the splendor of the old days.

Moreover, the children heard of "valuable papers" in possession of their mother. These papers would, the mother said, restore old properties to their rightful owners. Now, Mrs. Schafer wonders what became of the papers and whether they would have been so valuable to the family as her mother supposed. She knows her father owned thirty-seven lots on Main street in addition to the old Riddlesbarger mansion. Does any of the property of which her father was dispossessed in 1863 belong to his only living descendant? That is the question she hopes to hear favorably answered.

The records consulted in the offices of an abstract company say all the property was either transferred by deed to early purchasers or else it passed into other hands under the statute of

limitations. But Mrs. Schafer believes she still has a moral, if not a legal, right to the property. She feels that it is hers.

The father dies in his banishment. So did the mother. Their youngest daughter, born when the father was old and the mother middle-ages, told their dramatic story as she sat in a Wabash train. At heart still an exile from the home and environment in which she never had lived, Frances Adkins Schafer seemed to feel all the old sorrows that had wrecked the lives of her parents.

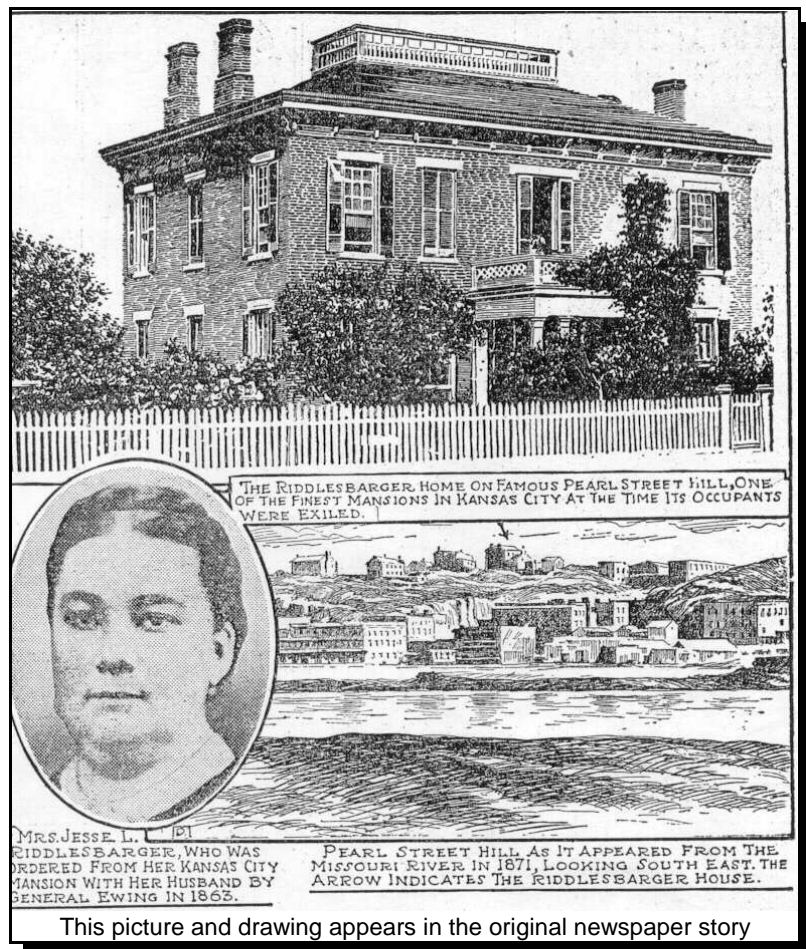
Many Kansas Citians still remember the Riddlesbarger mansion, built by the first banker of Kansas City for his young bride. A widower, 55 years old, Jesse L. Riddlesbarger had married young Susan Lavinia Norton, the only child of Dr. Joshua Norton, when Susan was only 16. At first they lived in the old Riddlesbarger residence on Delaware street with the grown-up sons and daughters of Mr. Riddlesbarger's first marriage.

Then the banker built a grand mansion on exclusive Pearl street hill. The Delaware street residence remained the home of Mr. Riddlesbarger's eldest daughter, by that time married to William G. Barclay. A commanding site was chosen for the new home. It was built at the crest of Pearl street hill, with a view of the steamboats as they came up the Missouri River.

Mr. Riddlesbarger was a rich man. For those days, his wealth was considered extraordinary. It was said that a scheming stepmother brought about the marriage of young Susan Lavinia, the adored only daughter of Dr. Norton, to the wealthy widower who was more than three times her age, and with sons and daughters twice the years of the bride, who was married at 16.

The new Pearl street hill mansion had carved rosewood furniture in the drawing room, carved mahogany in the bedrooms. On its floors were a velvet carpet and the first Brussels carpets brought to Kansas City. It was the first home in Kansas City to have French paper on its walls. From the ceilings hung chandeliers holding coal oil lamps.

The Norton-Riddlesbarger wedding was a sumptuous affair. The wedding cake bore a wonderful castle made of icing, said to have been the handiwork of a slave in the household of the bride. There was a



charivari that was talked about for generations afterward.

In the mansion on Pearl street hill, the young bride reigned like a queen. Her husband was generous and proud of his wife - of her youth and beauty. Her complexion was dazzling, her cheeks crimson, her hair jet black. On state occasions she wore a wonderful shawl her husband had given her. It was the color of ashes of roses, heavily embroidered and with fringe eighteen inches deep.

The hospitality dispenses was lavish. The great table in the dining room fairly groaned with the feasts spread upon it. Among the slaves owned by Mr. Riddlesbarger was Hulda, a famous cook. It was Hulda who baked the home-cured hams. It was Hulda who made the toothsome pound cake, Hulda who fried the chickens, made the gingerbread and cookies and who saw that the Riddlesbarger cellar was stocked with preserves and pickles and home-made wines.

"Mis' Sue" was only 22 when the Civil War began. Her husband treated her as if she were a child. He gave her everything she desired - beautiful dresses, a velvet mantle, a bonnet with the finest of French roses that wreathed her face as she wore it, a set of corals that set off her black hair, a set of agates.

Born to be a southern sympathizer and to think of slaves as necessities, "Mis' Sue" listened undisturbed to her husband's tirades against the "thieving northern army" and a government so heartless that it could rob its own. To him, slaves were property and he owned many.

His wife begged him to be careful. She implored him to be moderate in his speech, even if he couldn't be moderate in his thoughts. She hoped fiercely herself that the South would win. She and Hulda cooked constantly for the southern troops. They filled great clothes baskets with baked chickens, boiled hams, home-made bread, gingerbread and cake.

Then came disaster - an order of banishment, issued by General Ewing. Too old to enter the Confederate army as a soldier, Jesse L. Riddlesbarger could only fight with his tongue and with the food he gave the Confederates. He was hot-headed, autocratic, and he believed implicitly in the merit of the southern cause. He spoke his mind everywhere. He felt such hatred and ire for the northern troops stationed in Kansas City that he seized every opportunity to criticize and even to taunt them. Personal enmities arose. It was said the banishment of Riddlesbarger was due to a single company of Federal soldiers, mostly Kansas City men. Between them and Riddlesbarger a feud had arisen and grown very bitter.

But the order for banishment came as a profound surprise to Riddlesbarger. It came as almost a death blow to his young wife, who was only 24. It included her and her small children.

The family had just eaten breakfast. The day was warm, for it was August, and even the breezes from the river could not cool the air. The young wife was standing on the veranda to get a breath of air.

A soldier in Federal blue was coming toward the house. As he approached, he took from his pocket a long white envelope. "Mis' Sue's" heart sank. Instinctively, she was aware that the end of her world had come - the end of her bright, beautiful, joyous world.

"Mis' Sue" was watching her husband as he opened the envelope, read the brief order, and his face went white. Suddenly, it seemed to her, that he was an old man. He had been young for 55 when she married him eight years before. He had been rather a beau and a catch. The loss of their first child, a son, had saddened him, but the coming of two little girls brought back the joy of living.

When he handed her the terse order that meant banishment from their home and city for him and his family, "Mis' Sue" knew that her husband's spirit was broken, as well as his heart.

The order was dated "District of the Border, Kansas City, Mo., August 29, 1863." This is what was printed and written upon it:

Special Order No. 64 (Extract)

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

By Order of Brigadier General Ewing
P.B. Hunt, Major and Provost Marshal

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

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

In St. Louis, Mr. Riddlesbarger opened a small grocery store, the family living in rooms above it. The limited quarters formed a marked contrast to the home they had left in Kansas City. Not content to make a meager living in his grocery store, the once-wealthy banker decided to try his fortune in Quincy, Ill., where friends advised him there were many opportunities. So the rosewood piano, the furniture, the seven feather beds, the embroidered shawls were packed again.

When the family and all its belongings were aboard the boat, the children were happy at thought of the strange land for which they were bound. The first day on the boat was a delight. Up to 2 o'clock the second day, all went well. There were music, dancing, card playing, good conversation. The sun shone and the children played on deck.

Suddenly the alarm rang out, "The boat is sinking!" The craft had struck a sandbar and was going down. There were many boats on the Mississippi in those days and one came to the assistance of the disabled vessel. As the passengers were being taken off, it was discovered that one of the staterooms was locked. Mrs. Riddlesbarger was pounding on the door. The family of four had occupied two staterooms, a parent and child in each. Mr. Riddlesbarger did not awaken when the boat grounded. After much difficulty, he did awake and all were saved.

But, while it seemed at first that no cargo could be saved from the wreck, it was found later that most of the furniture could be got out safely. While it had been badly damaged by being under water, it would sell for something.

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

Again the family sought a refuge and found it in three small rooms. There was born the youngest of their children. Frances Adkins, named after Mrs. Fannie Adkins of Kansas City. When the baby was born, a Negro boy, James, son of Hulda, of Pearl street cookery fame, was working the grocery store owned by the father. When he saw the two little girls returning from school, James ran to meet them with the news that a "little missy" had come to live with them.

It was black James, too, who brought the news to St. Louis of the ruin wrought in the Riddlesbarger mansion in Kansas City by Union soldiers, who entered it as soon as it was vacated by the owners. Later it was sold to the Shannon family and became known as the Shannon house.

The Kansas City property owned by Mr. Riddlesbarger at the time of his banishment, he received so little that his one living descendant believes he did not take the trouble to dispose of all of it. Mrs. Schafer remembers how poorly the family lived after the father, too old to conduct a regular business, got a job at \$40 a month in the city hall in St. Louis. He was more than 70 years old when his youngest daughter was born.

"He looked like Santa Claus," recalls his daughter. "He was greatly embittered by the military order that banished him from his home and friends just after he had built up his fortune. His holdings had been very large. He had owned a farm in Missouri - a plantation on which were many slaves. While he undoubtedly did sell the Pearl street mansion to the Shannon family and while he probably disposed of other properties similarly, I do not think he ever bothered to sell all his property in Kansas City. I believe that, if the truth were known, some of the lots he owned on Main street were never transferred by deed. How their present owners can hold valid titles to them, I do not know."

Mrs. Schafer says her father felt he was a ruined man when he was banished. Of the thirty-seven lots he owned on Main street, she thinks he could not have sold all, else why was it that his wife used to tell her children that she had valuable papers? "Some day," she would say, "the papers I have will be very valuable to us."

The father died. Of the three sons of Mrs. Riddlesbarger by his first marriage - Maitland, James and Taylor - only one kept in touch with the widow, then an invalid, and her young children. That was Taylor, who had gone to live by himself in the Black Hills. He sent money regularly to his stepmother and this saved her from actual want.

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

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

Even in those days of comparatively small housekeeping resources, Mrs. Riddlesbarger dressed daintily. She made a home for her children, even when there was little of which to make it. Mrs. Schafer recalls that a new piano replaced the one brought from the Pearl street home.

Once the widow of Jesse Riddlesbarger brought her children on a visit to Kansas City. She hoped at that time to settle near the old home. But the sight of the mansion on Pearl street, changed sadly by the passing of the years and by the war, so depressed her that she wanted to go back.

After a month, during which she visited several old Kansas City friends, among them the Stone family at 1108 Armour Boulevard, the family of Dr. Ridge, the Troost and Gillis families, she returned with her children to St. Louis, where she did not long survive.

The sisters of Frances were married and she went to live with one of them at Carthage, Mo. There she grew to womanhood and there she was married to the son of a farmer of St. Charles, Mo., descended from an old St. Louis family. Their two children died in youth and Mr. Schafer suffered a nervous collapse and took his own life.

Alone in the world, without a relative to her knowledge, Frances Adkins Schafer wonders if perchance she still owns an interest in some of the property her father held so lightly. Would an investigation disclose the fact that deeds still exist bearing the name of Riddlesbarger? "My father never bothered with his Kansas City holdings after the banishment," she says. "That I know. When there were so many, I feel certain some of the old Main street lots are rightfully mine."

Yet another son of Samuel and Sarah Riddlesbarger I is believed to be **Joel Riddlesbarger**, who was born on Botetourt County in 1804. Little is known about him. He appears in county tax records for 1830, as well as in the Federal Census for Botetourt County, VA., where he is listed a "gunsmith" with small children in the home. By 1837, Joel is residing in Salem, near Roanoke, VA.⁵⁵ He also appears in the 1850 census as a resident of Madison County, just to the east of the Shenandoah. Nothing is known of his descendants, if any, or any of the details of his life. No known descendants have been found.

Another likely son of Samuel Riddlesbarger is **James**, though there is no proof that this is the case. It is known that during the War of 1812, James Riddlesbarger served as a private in the 5th Regiment of McDowell's Virginia Militia. He appears on the muster roll from September 3 to December 14, 1814. His total pay amounted to \$27.07. He is listed as a substitute for Michael Redinger. The only year he appears in county tax records is in 1816. Apparently, he does not stay in Botetourt County for long. On December 10, 1822, James married Ann MARSHALL in Green County, Ky. It is believed that they had three sons, **John M.** and **Samuel A.**, who moved to Nashville, TN, and **Matt**, who ended up as a state legislator, politician and newspaper editor in the Pueblo, Colorado, area.

A James "Riddlesbergen" is listed in the 1830 federal census, as a resident of Greenburgh Twp. in Green County. According to the book Kentucky Land Grants, Vol. 1, Part 1, p. 701, James Riddlebarger received 30 acres in Green County, KY on February 2, 1832, possibly the result of his service to his country in the War of 1812. This fact may indicate that it was James who traveled west into Kentucky with brother Jesse, and not David.

⁵⁵ Robert Douthe Stoner, Seed Bed of the Republic. Early Botetourt, p. 229.

Another known son of Samuel and Sarah is **Madison Riddlesbarger**, who was born in 1809 in Botetourt County and died in 1880 in Edinburg, Virginia, in Shenandoah County. Madison Riddlesbarger was reportedly a gunsmith and a stage driver in the Shenandoah Valley, and family tradition states that he came to the Edinburg area, “from over the mountain in Botetourt.”⁵⁶ Reliable family tradition states that Madison Riddlesbarger’s father, Samuel, lived in Botetourt, and that the family had originally come to VA from PA.⁵⁷ By 1835, he was a private in a company of Grenadiers, made up of men from Edinburg and vicinity which was attached to the 13th regiment 2nd Battalion, Virginia Militia, which was under the command of Captain Philip Grandstaff.⁵⁸ He also appears in the 1840 Federal Census as a resident of Shenandoah County.

Madison’s connection to the Grandstaff family is interesting. According to a published history of Edinburg, Virginia, Madison “Riddleberger,” was a gunsmith, who worked for the Grandstaff family, who manufactured one of the most widely sought-after weapons during the War of 1812 and again during the Civil War, the famed “Grandstaff Rifle.” The “Grandstaff Rifle” was a well-made, had an ornate brass stock, and a distinctive octagonal barrel.⁵⁹

On December 15, 1830, Madison married Susan SHRYOCK, who was a native of Edinburg, VA. Madison was twenty-one, and though his bride was only sixteen, she already owned hundreds of acres of land in and around Edinburg.⁶⁰ Together, they had at least two least two sons, **Harrison Holt Riddleberger**—to whom we will turn shortly—and **William Ira Riddleberger**, who was born in 1847. They had at least three daughters: **Amelia Riddleberger**, born in 1835; **Louisa Riddleberger**, born in 1839; and **Sara Riddleberger**, also born in 1839. In addition, there was also another son who died in infancy in 1840.⁶¹

United States Senator from Virginia, Harrison Holt Riddleberger

Certainly the most famous and successful member of the entire Riddleberger clan—serving as United States Senator from Virginia—Harrison Holt Riddleberger was born in the

⁵⁶ John W. Wyland, *A History of Shenandoah County, Virginia*, 2nd. ed., (Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1980), p. 635.

⁵⁷ Henry Riddlesberger’s “Notes,” p. 9.

⁵⁸ Wyland, *A History of Shenandoah County, Virginia*, p. 267.

⁵⁹ Mary Ann Davis and Jean Allen Davis, *The History of Edinburg, Virginia*, p. 20.

⁶⁰ Henry Riddlesberger’s “Notes,” p. 8.

⁶¹ Henry Riddlesberger’s “Notes,” p. 8.

Shenandoah on October 4, 1844. Like many of the Virginia Riddlebergers, the name was spelled variously as "Riddleberger," or "Riddlebarger" in census records and official documents. Son of Madison and Susan Shryock Riddleberger, H. H. Riddleberger married Emma V. Belew and



HARRISON HOLT RIDDLERBERGER

Soldier, editor, and statesman, was born in Edinburg, Shenandoah County, 1843, the son of Madison Riddleberger and his wife, Susan Shryock. He died in Woodstock, January 24, 1890. His residence is now one of the buildings of Massanutten Academy. For eight years he was a member of the Virginia General Assembly from Shenandoah County; in 1876 and 1880 he was a Presidential Elector; and from 1883 to 1889 he was U. S. Senator from Virginia.

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

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

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

After attending several private schools in the village, he went at the age of about fifteen to Harrisonburg, VA., to take employment as clerk in a general grocery store, where he was working at the outbreak of the war.

When only seventeen years old, he joined and helped organize a company of cavalry in Harrisonburg, and was later made captain of this company, which participated in the first battle of Manassas. A considerable part of his military activity consisted in doing scout duty in the Shenandoah Valley, from the hills and mountains which he reported the movements of the armies under Generals Banks and Sigel. His company was probably a part of the command of General Imboden.

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

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

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

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

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



Riddleberger Hall at the Massanutten Military Academy in Woodstock, Virginia, is Senator Riddleberger's former home.

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

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

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

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

By a combination of circumstances not unusual in political bodies, Riddleberger, the only member

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

Mr. Riddleberger in the first part of his term generally co-operated with the republicans, but later on showed a tendency to assist the democratic side. He is swayed by his own personal feelings in regard to public matters, and no one can tell how he will vote on any given proposition upon which he has not previously declared himself. With no party ties to bind him to support caucus resolutions, his individual prejudices or fancies may swing him to one side or the other. This feature of uncertainty in his character is a constant source of apprehension to both sides when political questions are involved. Riddleberger is not popular with the grave and reverend senators. Defeated by them for the position of sergeant-at-arms, his late ally, Mahone, then in control of the politics of Virginia, made his erratic lieutenant his colleague in the senate, and constructively the equal of the senators who had refused him the less exalted position of sergeant-at-arms. Under such conditions Riddleberger felt under no obligations to his fellow-senators. He has been a terror to them for his utter disregard of the ponderous dignity of the senate. The rules of the body confine him within no pent-up Utica, and regardless of points of order he says and does what he feels inclined to when upon the floor. For nothing does he show such manifest contempt as he does for the sacredness of the secrets of executive sessions, which he has time and again announced as a humbug.



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

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

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

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