

Chapter Two

John Riddelsperger—Patriarch of the Riddlebarger, Riddlesberger and Riddleberger Families

We do not know when or where, exactly, **John Riddelsperger** was born, whether in South Carolina or in Pennsylvania. But we do know that he had moved to Elizabeth Township in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania by 1766,¹ and then to Warwick Township in 1769, when he appears on the Lancaster County Personal property tax list.² We also know that according to his father's will, John was the oldest son of Christian Riddlespurger and that he was living in Cumberland County when the will was probated. While it is possible that John may have born in Pennsylvania as early as 1733-1736 (shortly after Christian immigrated there from Europe) the evidence clearly points to the fact that John was born shortly after Christian received a one-hundred acre land grant in Saxe-Gotha in 1742, indicating there was one additional person under Christian's care—likely a new wife, Ann Struck. We also know that the last year John paid taxes to the Commonwealth of Virginia was in 1827,³ the probable year of his death.

But determining the date and place of John's birth is greatly complicated by an additional factor. South Carolina land records indicate that a certain "John Rhetelsperger/Riddles Sparger" owned land in South Carolina as early as December of 1752.⁴ The date of this document (1752) and the fact that a John

¹ Kenneth D. McCrea, Pennsylvania Land Applications, Volume 1: East Side Applications, 1765-1769 (Strasborg PA: Pennsylvania Chapter Palatines to America, 2002), record # es-1925.

² Arthur Seder, Four Families: Early Settlers of Western Virginia (self-published, 2003), p. 16.

³ According to the International Genealogical Index of North America, a "John Riddlesperger" was born in 1736 in Colleton County, SC. Most of the records which I have examined from this file are either in error, or show no supporting documentation. In several instances I suspect that the researcher has confused Christian Riddlespurger with one of the Christian Riedelspergers of Ebenezer.

⁴ The following records for JOHN RIDDLESBERGER/RIDDLESBERGER in SC from 1753 and 1754 were given me by Ethel Spurger Sheehan and come from the SC Dept. of Archives and History, Alphabetical Index (also known as the COM). (1). Rhetelsperger, JOHN: Keller, Martin, Jr., land grant for 50 acres in Amelia Twp. (1 page) Date: 1754/01/02. Entry nbrs: 0002 007 002F 00086 00. (2). Rhetelsperger, JOHN: Keller, Martin, land grant for 350 acres in Amelia Twp. (1 page) Date: 1754/01/02, Entry nbrs: 0002 007 002F 00096 00. (3). SC Plat Bk 5, p. 503, South Carolina Pursuant to a Warrant to me directed by George Hunter Esqr., Sur. Gen. bearing date December 7 1752 I have admeasured and laid out unto Martin Keller Jun. a tract of land in the Amelia Township containing fifty acres situate lying and being in Berkeley County butting and bounding to the N. Eastward on Land of old Martin Keller and to the N. Westward on Land of **John Riddle Sparger**, ye other two sides on vacant land and hath such form and shape and marks as are represented in the above delineated platt thereof. Certified this 8 of June 1753. Per me Peter Faure, D.S. (4). SC Plat Bk. 5, p. 506. South Carolina. Pursuant to a Warrant to me directed by George Hunter Esqr. S. Gen, bearing date Dec 7 1752 I have admeasured and laid out to Michael Keller a tract of land on a creek called Mavericks in Amelia Township containing three hundred and fifty acres situate lying and being in Berkeley County butting and bounding to the N. Westward part on land laid out to John Koneith and part on vacant land and to the S. westward part on land belonging to **John Riddlesperger** and part on vacant land

Rhetelsperger (Riddle Sparger) may have owned land by that time, seems to indicate that John was born much earlier than 1743, since only those who had reached majority could be given such fifty acre parcels by grant from the council. If this is our John Riddelsperger, it means that he was born at least ten years earlier than most researchers previously thought—in 1734-40 not during the 1750's as frequently mentioned in PA records—and that he received this land as a grant when still a young man between the ages of 16-21.⁵

If this is the case, it raises all kinds of questions. For one thing, it may mean that John was well in his nineties when he died. It may also mean that John, and not Ann Struck, was the party living with Christian when he received the 100 acre grant in 1742.⁶ We do know that Christian was at least seventy-five years of age when he died, and John's brother, Abraham, lived into his eighties. Although John Riddelsperger being born as early as 1734, living into his nineties, and having a different mother than Ann Struck is not beyond the realm of possibility, a date for John's birth about 1743 is much more likely, making John an octogenarian at his death.

How, then, do we explain the mention of John's name in these survey reports? There is the possibility that Christian had an as yet unknown sibling named John (although no records for such a person exist), or that Christian acquired this land in son John's name, either fraudulently, or on behalf of his son who was not yet not yet sixteen—if John was born in 1743, he would have been nine at the time the land was surveyed. While this is a possibility, in order to receive such a grant in 1752, Christian, who was well-known in the area, would have to personally appear before the council and lie about something which everyone would know to be false (something very unlikely), or else Christian managed to secure a grant which no one else is recorded to have received—land for a son under sixteen years of age. This too is highly unlikely.

There is yet another more likely possibility—John didn't own this land at all. The particular surveyor mentioned in these reports, Peter Faure, arrived in the Orangeburg district about 1735 and was rebuked at least twelve times by the council during this time for various errors he made in surveying various parcels of land throughout the area. Mr. Faure not only insisted upon surveying land in oblong parcels,

and on ye other two sides on vacant land and hath such form and shape and marks as are represented in the above delineated platt thereof. Certified this 9th of May 1753. Per me Peter Faure D.Surveyor. Note: this spelling is used for Christian Riddlespurger also at times.

⁵ It is thought that to receive a land grant in SC during the period between 1750-1775, an individual must be over 21 years of age, unless a parent or a guardian petitioned the government for the grant in the minor child's name. According to the council journal, there are a number of instances in which males as young as fifteen were given one hundred acre land grants. Christian Retelsberger arrives in PA in 1733, probably unmarried, and since *if* John were over 21 years of age in 1752, he would had to have been born as early as 1731, it is much more likely that John received the land grant as a minor, and for which his father, Christian, made the petition in John's name. Only discovery of the original grant petition can tell us for sure.

⁶ A number of Pennsylvania state records list John's date of birth as 175_?

when the law called for square parcels, he was also cited and fined for being two years late in surveying a parcel of land which he himself owned! Add to this the fact that there is no mention of John Riddelsperger in any other known deed, tax bill, or record of sale for this land (when excellent records of such things were kept), there is every possibility that Mr. Faure simply made yet another error and didn't consult the plat map for the area when surveying this land.⁷ Had he done so, he would have immediately discovered that this land was never owned by Christian or "John" Riddlespurger. Therefore, given the above, it seems most likely that John Rhetelsperger (Riddle Sparger) never owned this land, and that he was indeed born in South Carolina after Christian and Ann received the 100 acre land grant in 1743. Mr. Faure was simply wrong either as to the name or the ownership of the parcel. He probably failed to consult the map and entered this information based upon faulty memory.

Unfortunately, we know virtually nothing about John's wife Catherine,⁸ nor when and where they were married, whether in Pennsylvania or South Carolina. Some published sources suggest that Catherine's maiden name was TAMPLETT and that she was from a Huguenot family who arrived in South Carolina in the mid-eighteenth century who were known to be associated with the Riddlespurgers.⁹ LDS ancestral files, which have shown themselves to be notoriously inaccurate and incomplete in regards to our family history, list Catherine Tamplett as the wife of a "John Riddlespurger," of South Carolina. But the date as listed is quite vague—"before 1810." This particular John Riddlespurger is most likely the son of Christian Riddlespurger II, the grandson of Christian and nephew of John or else the date listed in the LDS file is incorrect.

One obvious question which arises at this point is, "why did John leave South Carolina for Pennsylvania?" Perhaps we can read between the lines in his father's will and wonder if there was not some kind of rift between father and son, motivating John to leave the area. John's mother, Ann Struck, had died after 1759, and his father had remarried the much younger Elizabeth Uldrich. John's half-brother Christian II may have been born and a new step-mother and siblings may have made family relations difficult. But such is mere speculation. John simply may have desired to make his own way in life and there were many opportunities to do so in Pennsylvania.

In any case, once he is in Pennsylvania, John Riddelsperger is relatively easy to track. He first surfaces in Lancaster County, PA, when on October 8 of 1766, a John REDELSBERGER made application to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for some 20 acres of land.¹⁰ The next time John's

⁷ Correspondence with Harriet Imrey of July 18, 2002.

⁸ John's wife, Catherine is, to date, the only member of our immediate line I have not been able to identify.

⁹ See Peter Tamplett's will, in: Caroline T. Moore, Abstracts of Wills of Charleston District South Carolina, 1783-1800, 303-304.

¹⁰ McCrea, Pennsylvania Land Applications, Volume 1: East Side Applications, 1765-1769, record # es-1925. John's land adjoined that of Jacob Nave, Henry Reyer, Daniel Clark and Matthias Albrecht.

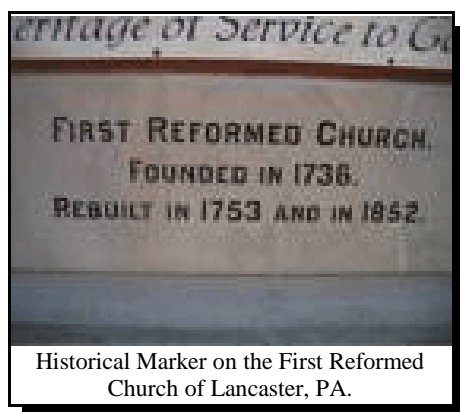
name is mentioned he is in Warwick Township in 1769, when he appears on the Lancaster County Personal property tax list. John's name surfaces again on September 29, 1770, the occasion of the birth of his son, **John Riddlesberger II**.¹¹ The surname is spelled RIDDLESBERGER in the church register, the most common spelling of the name while the family remained in Pennsylvania.

Several years later, John appears in the same location, this time on October 5, 1773, the occasion of the baptism of another son, **John Samuel**, in the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church of Manheim. John, his wife Catherine and son, John Samuel, appear in the baptismal register, Samuel being baptized by the noted pastor-politician Frederick Augustus Conrad Muhlenberg. According to his congressional biography, Muhlenberg was a Delegate and a Representative from Pennsylvania. He was born in Trappe, PA., January 1, 1750. His father was the noted Lutheran minister Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, whose journals remain in print unto this day.¹² Frederick attended the University of Halle, where he studied theology. He was subsequently ordained by the ministerium of Pennsylvania as a minister of the Lutheran Church on October 25, 1770. He preached



Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg

in Stouchsburg and Lebanon, Pa., 1770-1774, and then in New York City 1774-1776. When the British entered New York, Muhlenberg left and returned to Trappe, Pa. And then New Hanover, Pa. He was subsequently became a member of the Continental Congress in 1779-1780; then a member of the Pennsylvania state house of representatives (1780-1783), and its speaker, (1780-1783; delegate to and president of the Pennsylvania state constitutional convention in 1787 called to ratify the Federal Constitution; elected to the First and to the two succeeding Congresses and elected as a Republican to the Fourth Congress (March 4, 1789-March 3, 1797). He was Speaker of the House of Representatives for the First and Third Congresses and died in Lancaster, Pa., June 4, 1801.



Historical Marker on the First Reformed Church of Lancaster, PA.

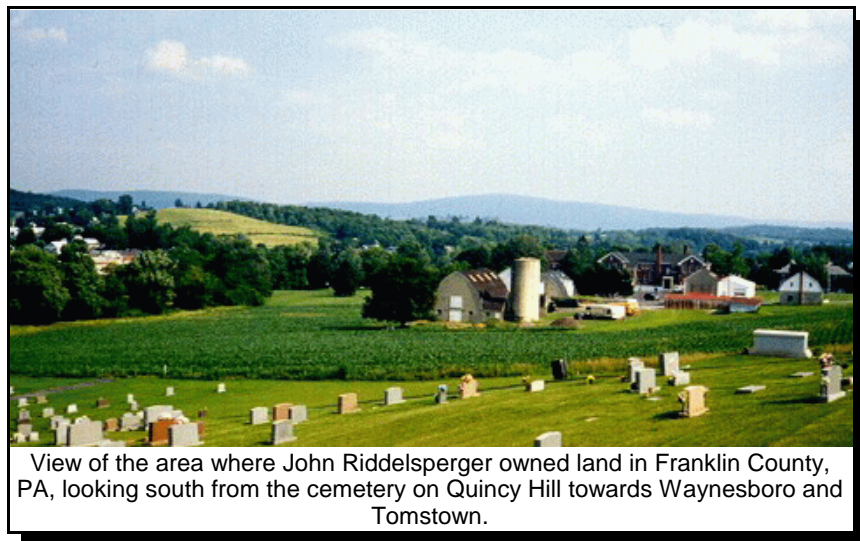
The fact that our family surname is spelled "RIDELSPERGER," in the baptismal register is yet another strong piece of evidence linking John and Christian together as

¹¹ Birth Record from Lancaster County, PA, and supplied to me by Mr. Joe Mosher. John Riddlesberger II, is mentioned in Federal Census records for Botetourt County, Virginia, as "John Jr."

¹² Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, The Notebook of a Colonial Clergyman (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998).

father and son.¹³ The Riddelspergers were sponsored by a Sebastian Wittmer, and his wife, Margareta. At the time, Manheim was an thriving farming community of mostly German emigrants, only six miles to the northwest of the city of Lancaster, where his father Christian had been sponsor to a baptism at the First Reformed Church of Lancaster, some thirty-four years earlier. Ironically, we had driven by this same church during our 1998 Summer vacation, and noticed how beautiful it was, only to find out several weeks

later that one of our forebears had actually witnessed a baptism here some 250 years earlier!



View of the area where John Riddelsperger owned land in Franklin County, PA, looking south from the cemetery on Quincy Hill towards Waynesboro and Tomstown.

By the following year, 1774, John Riddelsperger had moved to Antrim Township in Cumberland County where a number of the members of our immediate family resided for several generations.¹⁴ This particular portion of

Cumberland County is now Franklin County which was formed in 1787. The portion of Antrim Township, where John originally located is now in Washington Township, which formed in 1779. The actual spot where John settled is near Tomstown, several miles northeast of the present day Borough of Waynesboro—named for famed Revolutionary War General Anthony Wayne—and near what is now the border between Washington Township and Quincy Township, which, in turn was formed from a portion of Washington Township in 1838.

John Riddelsperger is listed in virtually all the records associated with his years near Waynesboro as “Jno Riddlesberger.” He purchased additional acreage adjoining the property of William Beddy [Beatty], John Potter, Samuel McCrea and Christian Flougher in 1779. The land was purchased from a twenty-year old Daniel Royer, then of Bedford County, PA., for an unspecified amount. The Royers were one of the more noted families of the Waynesboro area, and Daniel Royer’s father Samuel, was captain of

¹³ Baptismal Record from Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, in Manheim, PA. John Samuel appears in all Federal Census records as “Samuel.” As we have seen, in the only two known instances where we have possess copies of signatures in John’s own hand, he spells his name “Reddelsperger,” or “Riddelsperger” (Botetourt County, VA, Marriage Bonds, dated March 5, 1800, and November 9, 1811, [certified copies].

¹⁴ Coleen Swantner, The Riddlespurgers: A Colonial Family of the South (Baltimore: Gateway Press, 1988), p. 33.

the militia in which John Riddleberger served as a second lieutenant. Another deed, from “James Potter, Vice President” presumably of the Council of the Borough of Waynesboro, is dated Oct. 17, 1782. Again, there is no mention of acreage involved nor mention of the purchase price. A third deed has been found, a “warrant to Jacob Fyock, dated April 15, 1773, who sold to John Riddlesberger, Aug. 12, 1777. Situate in Antrim Twp., called ‘Fiascone’ [Fyerstone].”¹⁵ Due to poor surveying and recording at the time, it is difficult to determine the exact location of these parcels, but they are thought to be relatively small sections of farmland, just to the north and east of Waynesboro, between what is now the villages of Quincy and Tomstown, in a low valley just over the hill from Waynesboro, and running parallel to what is now known as the “Nunnery Road” near the Snow Hill brethren community.¹⁶

That John Riddlesberger did not own huge amounts of land is apparent from various Pennsylvania State land records in which his name appears. In Vol. XX, for the years 1778-79, John owned 60 acres, 2 horses and 2 cows.¹⁷ In the same volume, for the year 1782, John is listed as owning 100 acres, 2 horses and 6 cattle in the Washington Township area, then, in Cumberland County.¹⁸ This would seem to fit with the fact that Christian Riddlespurger’s will indicates that John was a blacksmith, not a farmer. This small farm, with but few horses and cows, would be typical of those who had a trade, such as that of a blacksmith, and who owned just enough land to provide for the needs of their own families.

Unlike his loyalist younger brother Abraham, John Riddelsperger was clearly on the side of the Patriots in the Revolutionary War. The historical record shows that John was a Second Lieutenant in the Pennsylvania Militia of Cumberland County, serving from 1777-1781 under Captain Samuel Royer in the Eighth Pennsylvania Battalion, Company 1, which was formed in Waynesboro. Samuel Royer [b. 1738-1823] is Daniel Royer’s father, hence John’s connection to Daniel, who sold John land, presumably when he moved to Bedford County. Jacob Foreman, whose niece, Josephine would later marry John’s son, Jacob, also served in the same company as the First Lieutenant.¹⁹ Whether or not this unit saw combat in the Revolutionary War is presently unknown. The History of Franklin County lists the roster of various units formed in Franklin County, including John’s Eighth Battalion, but notes that records for this unit were lost or missing when the book was written in 1887. Royer family legend holds that Samuel Royer and his

¹⁵ Virginia Shannon Fendrick, American Revolutionary War Soldiers of Franklin County, Pennsylvania (Chambersburg, PA: Historical Works Committee of the Franklin County Daughters of the American Revolution, 1944), p. 226.

¹⁶ Information supplied by the Waynesboro Historical Society.

¹⁷ Pennsylvania Archives, Vol. XX, p. 246.

¹⁸ Pennsylvania Archives, Vol. XX, p. 668. Cf. Also, Pennsylvania Archives. 5th Series, Vol. 6, p. 89, 112, 524, 532, 541, 511.

¹⁹ History of Franklin County, p. 185. Cf., also, Fendrick, American Revolutionary Soldiers of Franklin County, PA, p. 226.



The site of John Riddelsperger's farm on Beaverdam Creek as it looks in July of 2000

son Daniel, moved their entire herd of cattle from Waynesboro, across Southern Pennsylvania in the dead of winter to provide Washington's army with food during their infamous stay at Valley Forge. The legend holds that Washington commended the Royers by inviting them to dine with him in his winter quarters.²⁰ Samuel Royer was also instrumental in the formation of Franklin County, serving as a justice of the peace and county judge. Daniel was a member of the state legislature, and following his father, was also justice of the peace, verifying all the signatures on

the petition to organize Waynesboro.

The Riddelspergers move to Virginia

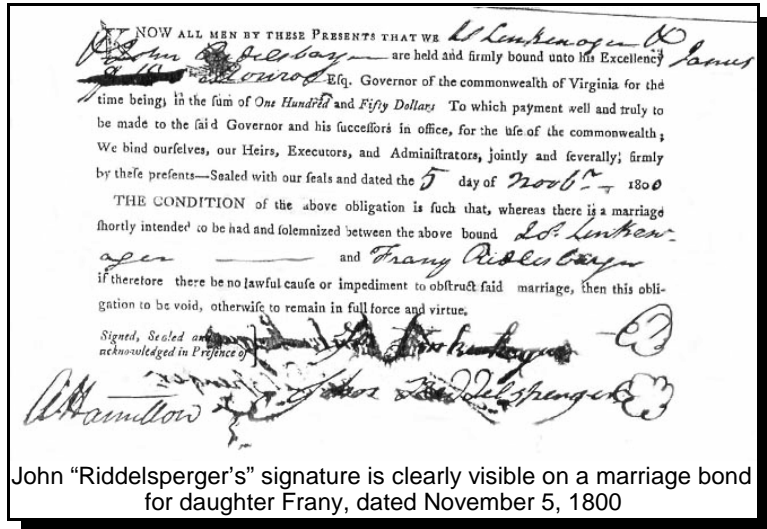
John Riddelsperger, apparently, stayed in the Waynesboro area for thirteen years.²¹ In 1787, John and his family headed south down the Cumberland Valley into the lower Shenandoah traveling along the famed "Valley Road," or "Great Wagon Road,"²² which took merchants, trappers and settlers heading southwest, just to the east of the Appalachian Mountains through the low broad valley which runs in the shape of a huge crescent from Harrisburg, PA to Lexington, VA.

According to court documents found in Botetourt County, VA, John Riddelsperger initially

²⁰ [Royer Family History](#), "Antietam Ancestors" Web-page.

²¹ Though it is likely that John sold his land in PA upon moving to Virginia, the fact that two of his sons returned here seems to indicate that the family remained tied to the area.

²² Merle C. Rummel, "Brethren Migration," from the Brethren Rootsweb Project. According to Rummel, "the Great Wagon Road followed the Great Warrior's path down the valley of Virginia. From Waynesboro it came down the path, through Hagerstown MD to the Potomac. It crossed the Potomac at Watkins ferry, south of Hagerstown, and followed Opequon Creek past Fort Loudon and old Frederick Town (now Winchester VA). It crossed over to Strassburg on the north fork of the Shenandoah River. It stayed in the main valley, west of the Massanutten Mountain Ridge . . . west of the River, the Shenandoah. Towns grew up along it: Woodstock, New Market, and Harrisonburg VA. It went on, past Staunton and Lexington, on to the North River of the James. It went to the rare Natural Bridge, and James River City. It left the James going to Fincastle and on to Big Lick on the Stanton or Roanoke River (now Roanoke VA)." John settled near the spot where the road left the James River heading for Fincastle.



purchased 400 acres of land from Abraham and Moses McConnell on June 12, 1787²³ and later on November 15, 1794 purchased an additional 160 acres from Conrad Wall.²⁴ According to the various deeds, John's land was situated, "on the waters of Beaverdam Creek, a branch of Looney's Creek, a branch of the James River."²⁵ This land is located on what is now Beaverdam Creek Road, just over three miles to the west from the present town of

Buchanan, near the junction of the Interstate [81] and State Route 11.

1787 is also the year that a number of German Baptist Brethren families left the Waynesboro area, also traveling down the Cumberland Gap into Botetourt County. It is not known if John Riddelsperger ever officially affiliated with the *Taufer*—that is doubtful— but as we will see, two of John's sons, John Jr., and Jacob both married daughters of prominent Dunkard families [The Secrists and the Foremans] and were active in that church. Both sons eventually moved back to the Waynesboro area which remained for some time a center of German Baptist missionary activity.

In the 1787 census for the Commonwealth of Virginia, John and son John Jr. both appear, with John Sr. listing two horses and two cows as taxable property. The census is not clear as to whether the male shown residing in the home between 16-21 years of age is John Jr., who is listed separately, or an as yet unknown son. Samuel would not turn sixteen until 1789. John owned 2 horses and 2 cows. As reported in the 1788-1827



²³ Botetourt County, Deed Book 3, pp. 466-468 (certified copy). The purchase price was 250 Pounds.

²⁴ Botetourt County, Deed Book 5, pp. 227-228 (certified copy). The purchase price was 240 Pounds.

²⁵ See corrected deed in, Botetourt County, Deed Book 4, pp. 305-307, dated September 13, 1791 (certified copy).

Botetourt County taxable [titheable] lists, John appears each year, owning between 1-4 horses and no more than one male slave. The last year he is assessed Botetourt county taxes is 1827. Ironically, the practice of slaveholding, cost the Riddlebarger family dearly. According to a news item which appeared in the *Staunton Eagle* Newspaper, dated August 4, 1808, a certain “Mr. Riddlesberger—died in Botetourt County, killed with the stroke of a pitchfork by one of his own Negroes.” The identity of this poor fellow cannot be determined from such scant information, but perhaps he was an as yet unknown fourth son of John.²⁶

There are still a number of mysteries surrounding John Riddelsperger which will give future researchers something to do. The first of these mysteries is the exact number of his children and the dates of their respective births. We know that John and Catherine had at least three sons, **John Riddlesberger II**, John **Samuel** and **Jacob**, our immediate ancestor. As mentioned previously, there is also the possibility of a fourth son, Christian, who appears in Augusta County property records in 1804.²⁷ In addition, it is also possible that David Riddlesbarger, often listed in various family histories as the oldest son of Samuel Riddlesbarger and hence, a grandson of John, might also be the fifth and youngest son.

The evidence at this point remains inconclusive.

The Riddlesbergers also had at least four daughters: **Catherine**, who married neighbor John McConnell on January 2, 1799, **Francis**, [Frany or “Fannie”] who married another neighbor, Joseph Linkenhoker the next year, on November 05, 1800, **Nancy** (about whom nothing is known), and **Elizabeth**, who married Jacob Wyand on November 9, 1811.²⁸ An extensive Linkenhoker family tree documents the descendants of Francis and Joseph, although nothing is known of the fate of John and Catherine’s other daughters.

Court records can also give us important clues about our ancestor’s life and times. According to Botetourt County court records, on August 13,



This blacksmith shop is part of the exhibit at Mabry Mill along the Blue Ridge Parkway, near Botetourt County. The blacksmith shop dates from the 1770's and would have been similar to John Riddelsperger's—aluminum smoke vent excepted!.

²⁶ *The Staunton Eagle*, Library of Virginia Microfilm, 324, p.3, c. 1. Dated Thursday, August 4, 1808. This is probably not a son of John Riddlesberger II or Jacob as they are accounted for. There is also the possibility that this is the Christian Riddleberger who purchases 400 acres from Peter Stover in Augusta County in 1804, but from whom nothing else is ever heard again.

²⁷ The appearance of Christian Riddleberger, from whom nothing is heard again, raises the possibility that John had a son born before John II.

²⁸ Botetourt County, Marriage Bonds (certified copies).

1799, John Riddlesberger was fined for not appearing as a juryman.²⁹ Like his fifth great-grandson—yours truly—John Riddelsperger was not particularly fond of jury duty. I took great pleasure in the discovery of this fact, since my own propensity for ducking jury duty is becoming a family legend. I just hope that I am not fined! In addition, we see the family's willingness to help others in difficult circumstances. On June 8, 1790, John Newgent, son of Richard Newgent who died suddenly, was bound to John Riddelsperger by the court.³⁰ It is not known how long he remained with the family, although he is not listed in the census for 1800.

In addition to court records, there are a number of other extant documents which shed light on John's years in Virginia. According to a published history of the Flory family, John sued David Flora and his business partner Samuel Noftzinger for fifteen pounds, eight shillings, on December 9, 1800, for a debt they owed him. A local newspaper, *The Herald of the Valley*, which was published from 1820-1823, posted the names of those who had mail waiting to be picked up from the Fincastle post office. John's name appears in these notices a number of times (July 9, 1821; Monday, January 8, 1822), as do sons John (April 8, 1822) and Samuel (April 9, 1821), as well as David (April 9, 1821) and Jessee Riddlesbarger, a son of Samuel (July 9, 1821).³¹ This indicates that the Riddlesbargers' P.O. Box was located in Fincastle, not Buchanan nor Springwood, which were both closer to the Riddlesbarger home.

Then, there is this most interesting recollection found in a published history of the Harshbarger Family of a certain "Granny Riddlesbarger," who was summoned to help one of the ailing Harshbarger relatives some time in the early 1800's. According to one of the Harshbarger relatives, "while I was still nursing, mother took the white swelling in her hip and I had to be weaned. When it came to a head so that it had to be lanced, father sent for old Granny Riddlesbarger, a doctor woman, who came and lanced it."³² The Harshbargers were known to have lived on Mill Creek, a few miles from our family. This must be a reference to John's wife Catherine, since neither John nor Samuel's wives would have been old enough to be called "granny." In any case, while I am sure "Granny Riddlesbarger" was a sweet and kindly old woman, the very thought of such primitive medical conditions makes me cringe!

²⁹ See, Summers, *Annals of Southwest Virginia 1769-1800*, p. 482, 440.

³⁰ Summers, *Annals of Southwest Virginia 1769-1800*, p. 440.

³¹ *The Herald of the Valley* was a short-lived publication. In addition to publishing rather sparse information about local events, the Herald concentrated on major news events gleaned from other newspapers, as well as popular literary pieces. During the publication run from 1820-1823, there was extensive coverage of Napoleon's death, a brief death notice for Daniel Boone, and two articles indicating that a "sea serpent" had been seen off the east coast of the United States. Adds for sales of Negroes were also prominent.

³² William L. Anderson, *History of the Harshbargers*, published about 1900, and available on-line.

The other great mystery surrounding John Riddelsberger has to do with the date of his death and the location of his burial. He appears in the Federal Census for Botetourt Counties in 1810 and 1820. It is clear from these records that his wife Catherine is still living. But John continued to pay county taxes until 1827, so it is presumed that John and Catherine both had died before 1830 census when neither are mentioned, probably in 1828, the first year John does not pay taxes. They are buried somewhere in Botetourt County in any one of a number of small and long forgotten family cemeteries that can be found in the hill country between Buchanan and Fincastle. Unfortunately, many of the tombstones in this region were made of a beautiful red sandstone, which have not withstood the years nor the weather. We may never know for sure when they died or where they are buried, one of the truly great frustrations of genealogical research!

Even more unfortunate is the fact that after John and Catherine's death, it appears that John Riddlesberger II and Jacob, now residing in Franklin County, lost contact with the descendants of their brother Samuel, the most prolific of the sons of John Riddelsperger. The issue of slavery might just be the reason, although whatever was the cause of our line losing contact with our Virginia cousins, it will undoubtedly remain a mystery.

