

**He was a musician, right?
What did he play?**



I went looking for the answer and I found an article online that I wish I had kept, but did not, it was dated Sept 20, 2010. It mentioned John Valentine Reece.

Part of it said:

"...But long before that, Burress' maternal grandfather was the town blacksmith in Pine Log. On his father's side, his great-grandfather John V. Reece walked into the mountains of North Carolina via Cataloochee Valley after killing a man in a dispute in central Alabama after the Civil War. Reece ran a grist mill in Crusoe and used the drum he played during the war as a measuring bucket. Burress counts the drum as his prized possession."

This was definitely something I wanted to follow up on! Was my gg grandfather's drum still around! Still in the family so-to-speak? I couldn't wait to find out! Thanks to technology I found a contact link for David Burress on folkschool.org and sent him the following email mid-April 2012:

*I feel pretty sure this John V. Reece was my gg grandfather. He was a musician in the civil war. This is him: **taken from North Carolina Troops 1861-1865, Vol II, Infantry) Reece, John V., Musician Co. F. 25th Regiment N.C. Troops: Resided in Haywood County where he enlisted at age 17, July 13, 1861. Mustered in as a Musician. Present or accounted for until discharged on or about September 14, 1861, by reason of "disability caused by an old cut on his foot."** Later served as Corporal in Company I, 62nd Regiment N.C. Troops.*

The reason I am contacting you is that I wanted to see if you thought it was the same John V. Reece and if you still had the drum. He was quite well known in the area as a minister and a blacksmith (family stories say that his ggg grandson Adrian has the anvil). There was also a story that he built his own hot air balloon but I haven't seen anything else about it.

Thank you for any information you can share. Norma Stamp

He wrote right back:

Date: Wed, 18 Apr 2012 06:35:49 -0400

Subject: Re: John Valentine Reece question

*Hi Norma. He is definitely the same man although the young man who interviewed me got his story mixed up with my paternal grandfather's .John V never killed anyone that I know of. He was my mother's Grandpa on her Dad's, Charlie Reece side. I do have his drum and would love to see the anvil as I am a working blacksmith. John V was captured at the battle of Cumberland Gap and was taken to Camp Douglas prison camp in Chicago Ill. a notorious camp where 6000 men died of hunger disease and exposure it was known as 80 acres of hell by those who survived it. You don't hear much about this camp because the victors get to write the history books. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like to see the drum. I live in Balsam and my number is 828-XXX-XXXX
David Burress*

"After he returned home from the war he moved to Crusoe in Haywood County where he founded the church and started a grist mill. He nailed a wooden bottom on the drum and used it to scoop corn from the mill with one edge of the top rim is worn down a bit. The wooden bottom is gone now. I haven't heard about the hot air balloon but I will ask my mom about it. If you would like to talk to her (Eva Mae) her number is I'm sure she could tell you first hand stories about John V. Look forward to hearing from you soon." April 2012

David's line is: his mother, Eva May Reece married Walter Burress; her father was - Charles Compton "Charlie" Reece⁶ and etc: *Rev. John Valentine Reece⁵, Daniel Reece⁴, Anthony Reece³, Johann Valentine Reece², Johan Jacob Ries¹.*

So now I knew where a piece of my family's history was. He very graciously sent photos too! Sorry, I never did call his mother.

I have placed more photos in the Family Heirlooms section – check them out!