

Coward Family Newsletter

May 2003

112th Coward Family Reunion To Be Held in Cullowhee

The Coward Family
Newsletter
Volume 3, Issue 1
May 2003

The 112th Coward Family Reunion will be held in Cullowhee on Sunday, June 15, 2003. It will be held in the park on the campus of Western Carolina University. I understand that this is Father's Day. There has been some disagreement within the family regarding the scheduling of the reunion. It can be scheduled on the Sunday closest to Nathan Coward's birthday (June 12) or the second Sunday in June. To date, most people have expressed a preference for scheduling the reunion for the second Sunday in order to reserve the use of Father's Day for more immediate family. We will return to the second Sunday date next year. We appreciate Jack Norton being so willing to reserve the Pavilion for us each year.

TIDBITS FROM THE FAMILY

Norma Robertson (**Sallie Coward Norton**) sent me some interesting information about her family.

Her mother, Juanita Hooper Levi, daughter of Emma Norton Hooper, told a story about Sallie. It seems that Sallie died of an experimental dose of a sulfa drug and that the **whole** valley turned out for her funeral. Norma notes that her granddaughter, Kari Myers, is extremely allergic to sulfa drug. Just goes to show you, doesn't it, that we are the product of all that came before and that many of our ancestors were well respected and loved in their communities?

She also noted that Sallie wrote for the local newspaper. That could be one of the reasons that we have some talented writers in the family.

Congratulations!!! New Cowards Arrive!

Lauren Elizabeth Riggsbee was born May 1, 2003 to Jon and Patti Riggsbee of Charlotte, NC. She weighed 7 lbs. 5 oz. and measured 19 3/4 inches. Her older sister, Katelyn, named her "Talulah" and the name seems to have stuck! Her paternal grandparents Lynn and Jim, and her paternal great-grandmother, Elaine Nichols, love it!!!

The good part about editing the newsletter is that I get to

put what I want into it. Here is a snapshot of Katie the first time she met "Talulah".

Isn't it too cute for words?

**Katelyn and Lauren Riggsbee
May 1, 2003**



WHERE ARE YOU???

The following are missing in action. Can you help me find them?

Robert T. Hughes, Warner Robbins, GA
Dorothy Barnes, Verona, VA
Roy Burch Brown, Brevard, NC
Noland Coward, Miami Springs, FL
Wallace Coward, Beech Island, SC
James Cowart, Sugarland, TX
Laura Henaker, Knoxville, TN
Nell Hughes, Winter Haven, FL

Family News:

Jo Ann Smith's (**Clara Coward Smith**) Christmas letter included the details of a busy, busy year. She and husband Jack celebrated their 49th wedding anniversary in December. The spring and summer brought attendance at Jack's 55th Shelby High School reunion (my how time flies) as well as Jo Ann's WWHS reunion. She didn't tell us how many years it's been. :) Jack has had some health problems and Jo Ann has had some vision problems, but they are in pretty good health at

this time. They met cousins Fred Wendt and Nan and Richard Rideout and Jo Ann's sister for dinner late last year. Fred has been assisting Jo Ann with the computer.

Laura Cowart Farrell (**granddaughter of Thomas and Alva Cowart**) was accepted to the Stetson School of Law in Petersburg, FL. She is completing her first year there.

Thomas Cowart passed away in August 2000 and Alva followed

in May of 2002. I apologize for having no other information. If someone in the family will forward the particulars to me I will include them in the next newsletter.

A Thought From Norma Robertson

Norma quotes Ephesians 3:14-15 expressing her family feelings.

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."

She adds, "We can all be part of the real family!!!"

A Son's Remembrance: Rachel Coward Wilson October 24, 1919—August 16, 2001

My mother was born in a small mountain town in North Carolina, early in the last century. Perhaps unusually for a Southerner of her generation, she was born into a family where education was prized, women often worked outside the home, and liberal politics were practiced. They were a leading family in the area, providing generations of farmers and teachers and lawyers and playing a large role in the founding of the school that later became Western Carolina University. My grandfather died when Mom was only nine, and our grandmother went back to work as a schoolteacher, providing Mom and her sister with a Victorian upbringing full of travel and poetry, music, and classical literature.

It was a remarkably innocent upbringing, touched by tragedy but not hatred and it left her with a belief in the innate goodness of people, a tolerance for those with backgrounds different from her own, and a strong compassion for those less fortunate than herself. Although her work as a school social worker often took her through the most depressing of slums and housing projects, and brought her into contact with parents who were behaving at their worst toward their own children, she never lost her stubborn determination to treat others as worthy of trust. She was the most doggedly naïve person I ever knew. Her attitude sometimes allowed others to take advantage of her,

but more often I believe that in her eyes others saw their best selves and responded accordingly. I know that as a child, being told that I had disappointed Mom was always the worst punishment that I could receive. As a teenager I would complain to my parents about this completely unfair tactic on their part, compared with the mere whippings or groundings that the other kids got.

She was a early version of the supermom, serving as our family's primary breadwinner while always taking time to be attentive and affectionate to my sister and me. I never once remember her saying that she was too busy to do anything with us that we asked. Her own mother had been somewhat distant and

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A Son's Remembrance: Rachel Coward Wilson

October 24, 1919—August 16, 2001

(Continued from previous page)

Coldly intellectual, treating her daughters more like favored students, and Mom made up for it by being a world-class nurturer. She shared out little childhood pains and joys with enthusiasm and she was easily moved to tears by the slightest sign of affection or good behavior on our part. That was fortunate, because I'm afraid such signs didn't come along too often, at least not from me. I'm glad that she was able to get so much mileage out of the few good things that I did.

Our grandmother was thirty-nine when Mom was born, and Mom was thirty-eight when Rosemary was born. Because both Mom and her mother had both had their children late in life, our grandmother became too feeble to live alone and moved in with us when my sister was still very young. Sandwiched between generations Mom uncomplainingly made time for everyone's needs while insisting on an active lifestyle for all of us. She supported our activities in Scouts and band, rock-collecting and horseback riding, and took us on trips around the countryside at every opportunity in spite of our inevitable squabbling over who was on whose side of the car. My parents once took both my sister and me and both our grandmothers all the way to Florida in a little Ford sedan, stopping every few miles when I got carsick. Dad's mother had never seen the ocean and Mom couldn't conceive of anyone not having that experience. Dad was a homebody and could never quite keep up with

Mom's pace, and he often complained that she was always going somewhere as if that were a truly serious fault. Our world was a very wide one because of her.

Mom met my father at Vanderbilt Hospital, where she was a social worker and he was a patient undergoing disfiguring surgery for tuberculosis. He lost a lung and his family didn't expect him to live through it, but he pulled through and survived a long convalescent period and Mom and Dad got to know each other during this time. I can only imagine the strength of that early attraction to have kept them together through his long and painful recovery. There were other barriers to their love even more challenging than his physical condition. They shared intellect and liberal, humanistic politics, but many of their other values were quite incompatible. She was religious and her was an agnostic who was hostile to religion. She wanted children and he didn't. She was extremely social while he was an introvert, she a teetotaler and he a drinker. There must have been some strong sparks to bring them together, and it was quite a challenge for them to remain together as they did for 43 years until Dad's death. I've sometimes wondered if she didn't see him as a fixer-upper, never giving up hope that she could mend his many flaws and bring forth the brilliant and sensitive man who she saw within him. I suspect her greatest frustration with him was that he died long before she was done

working on him. But an ever greater one may have been that neither my sister nor I ever came to share the religious faith that meant so much to her.

I carry her with me as we all carry our parents, seeing the world through her eyes at least some of the time every day. Through those eyes I see a world full of possibility, where a caring person can make a large difference in the lives of others. I see a world of good and valuable people, well worth getting to know. And through my mother and my children I see my place in the chain of generations, stretching backward and forward through time. I cherish the view.

Bob Wilson



In Memoriam: Mildred Hooper Stanley

Mildred Hooper Stanley (**Clara Coward Smith**) died September 10, 2002 in Jacksonville, FL. She had been living in Palm Gardens Nursing Home for a number of years and was 90 years old.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Nellie Smith and Lee Hooper of Speedwell, community; by two husbands, George

Crout and Carl Stanley; by a daughter, Nell Crout Garrison; and by her brothers, Grinnell, James, and Lewis Hooper. She is survived by four grandchildren and by her sister-in-law, Wilma Hooper.

Our sincerest sympathies are extended to Mildred's loved ones.



In Memoriam: Felix Hilton Norton

Felix Hilton Norton was born on February 21, 1921 at Norton, NC, son of Lewis and Lula Norton. He graduated from high school in 1928, attended John F. Campbell Folk School at Brass-town, NC for one year, and then studied art in Chicago prior to joining the US Navy in March, 1943. While in Chicago he met Dorothy Heston and they were married on May 18, 1946 in Omaha, Nebraska.

Hilton attended and graduated from the Kansas City School of Watchmaking. He worked in Lafayette, Indiana until the spring of 1949 when he and Dorothy returned to Omaha. He was part owner of the Beacon Time Shop for eight years and then went to work for Richardson Scale Company as a service technician.

He was promoted to District Manager of sales and held that position until he retired in 1985.

In the summer of 2002, Hilton and Dorothy visited the Folk School. Hilton had never been back to the school since 1939. While in North Carolina, they also attended the 132nd Norton Family Reunion where Hilton was the guest speaker. On the following day they attended the 64th reunion of his graduating class where he was also guest speaker. They returned home on August 3 and Hilton became ill on the following Monday, August 5. His memorial service was on September 4, 2002 at Presbyterian Church of the Master in Omaha.

In addition to his wife, Dorothy, Hilton is survived by a daughter, Laurie Wilson and her husband, Dennis; by a son, Bill, and his wife, Karen; by grandchildren, Jennifer, Katlin, and Mara Wilson; by Bret and Becky Norton; and by his brother, Edwin of Nashville, GA.

Our thoughts and sympathies are extended to Hilton's family.



In Memoriam: Eugene N. Hooper

Eugene N. Hooper, 77, of Falls Church, VA (formerly of Cullowhee, NC) died on February 4, 2003 in Virginia. Gene, a Jackson County native, was the son of the late John E. and Emma Norton Hooper. Services were held on February 10 at Cashiers United Methodist Church with burial at the Upper Zachary Cemetery in Jackson

County, NC. He was preceded in death by his wife, Celeste. Surviving are four daughters, Lynn Monday, Gaye Rittig, Jo Cheatham, and Dana Smith; one son, Mark Hooper; three sisters, Hazel Lewis, Sally Bose, and Ruth Fusom; one brother, James Hooper; 11 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Conrad Hooper of Raleigh is a double cousin to Eugene, James, Hazel, Sally, and Ruth, by being kin to them through the Coward and Hooper family lines.

Our thoughts and sympathies are extended to Gene's family.



In Memoriam: Edwin Louis Tyson

Edwin Louis Tyson died on February 18, 2003 after an extended illness. Ed was born on November 11, 1920 in Pitt County, NC and was the fifth son of Elbert and Ruberta Tyson. After serving in the Army Medical Corps from 1942-1945, he graduated from Duke University and was a Wildlife Biologist for the Florida Game and Fish Commission. Upon receiving his doctorate in Zoology from FSU, he taught there and in the Panama Canal Zone.

In 1964 he worked with the National Institute of Health in Bolivia to study how bats spread hemorrhagic fever. He continued this work in Korea with the Smithsonian Institute. In Manaus, Brazil he helped the

Brazilian Government develop a commercial fishing industry. After returning to the US, he was employed by Woodcraft in Madison, GA.

In retirement Ed was an active member of the Kiwanis Club, served as chairman of the Morgan County Republican Party and the Morgan County Board of Equalization.

Among other things, he enjoyed his orchard and his garden.

Ed is survived by his wife, Barbara Bell Tyson; two sons, Edwin Louis Tyson II, of Charleston, South Carolina, and Scott Hardy Tyson of Dallas, Texas; a daughter, Laura King Rutledge, Georgia; three grandchildren; one sister, Olive Fulfer of Greenville, NC; three

Brothers, Robert Tyson of Greenville, NC, Jack Tyson of Greenville, NC, and Jesse Tyson of Waynesville, NC.

Our thoughts and sympathies are extended to Ed's family.



Reach the Coward Family Newsletter!

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**CELEBRATE
YOUR
FAMILY!!!**

Thanks to all of you who have donated to the cause of the newsletter publication. It takes a lot to print and mail 300 copies so everything is greatly appreciated. Don't forget your family! Special thanks to the following for their donations this time.

**Carolyn Harwood
Barbara Tyson
Chuck Bird
Daniel Cowart**

Notes From Lynn's Desk

Once again I apologize for the tardiness with which this newsletter has been delivered. However, once again also, my personal life has taken on a dimension of its own and over which I have had zero control. Hope your year has been good up to now and that it will continue to be good from now on. Please make every effort to get to the reunion.

Relatively Yours,

5/03

