

# Coward Family Newsletter

## A Brief History of the Coward Reunion

The annual Coward reunion began as a birthday party for Nathan Coward on his 74th birthday, June 12, 1892. It continued as a reunion even after his death on February 22, 1909. On the occasion of the first "birthday party" it was agreed that the family would meet every year during his life to continue the celebrations, rotating from one home to another beginning at the home of the eldest child, Clara Coward Smith. It took several days to prepare for the celebration. At that time, the family at whose home the reunion was held was responsible for preparing all the food and for gathering all the plates and utensils.

Nathan Coward was a cattle farmer and owned sev-

eral hundred acres of land and a few slaves. He was married twice, to Jane Rogers Coward and to Sophia Hedden Coward whom he married after the death of Jane in 1885. Jane was a native of Buncombe County, but moved with her parents to a place on Cullowhee Creek. Nathan and Jane had 10 children: Minerva Emeline, Clara Almira, Tolvin Berry, Jonathan David, Martha Samantha, Mary Alice, Oscar Bowman, John Hamilton, Sallie Jane, and Robert Rogers. Sophia Hedden married Natha when she was 16 years old, in October 1885. Nathan and Sophia had four children: John Homer,

Frances Emeline, Benjamin Franklin, and Jane Hedden. Minerva Emeline died in childhood and John Hamilton died as a young man.

In this space next newsletter will be brief histories of the children and their families.

The 111th Coward reunion will be held on June 9, 2002 at the Pavilion in Cullowhee (the park on the campus of Western

Carolina University).

Volume 2, Issue 1

April 2001



2001 Coward Reunion  
June 10, 2001

Cullowhee, NC

**Trudy Adams** at the  
Coward Reunion 6/10/01  
"Thanks for the Memories"

## The Dave Cowards Party Together

Quite a large number of the Dave Coward branch of the family got together on Saturday, June 9 and spent a wonderful afternoon and evening. The family met at the home of Lynn and Jim Riggsbee in the Yellow Mountain Community. Several

generations were in attendance and a large time was had by all. The "cousins", Trudy Adams, Elaine Nichols, and Sue Vail giggled like school girls and recalled their many adventures in the Cullowhee area. Many of the younger generations

were also present as well. Luckily, the house is removed from near neighbors and no one was disturbed!

Did any other family get together? Let me know!



## Congratulations!!! New Cowards Arrive!

### Talvin Coward Family

**Megan Ruth Ramba** was born to Judith and David Ramba on July 22, 1997. Megan is the granddaughter of Carolyn Ruth Coward and she has a baby brother, **Harley David Ramba**, born December 21, 2000. Grandmother is thrilled! They live in Tallahassee so "Granny" can see them often.

**George Thomas Anderson** was born to Oscar and Carin Anderson on May 17, 2001. George and Joy Coward Anderson are the proud grandparents. Oscar, Carin and baby live in the D.C. area.



## Congratulations!!! New Cowards Join Us!

### Dave Coward Family

**Katherine Elizabeth Harwood** was married on June 16, 2001 to **Nicolas Capiedra Ortega** at Candlewyck Baptist Church in Charlotte, NC. Lisa is the daughter of Rick and Kathy Harwood and the granddaughter of Carolyn Stillwell Harwood. Lisa met her new husband at La Paz (a fine Charlotte restaurant) where they are both employed.

**Russell Lawrence Bolin** married **Donna Lynn Jackson** on August 12, 2000 in Malibu, CA. Russ is an attorney and Donna is senior writer-producer at Warner Brothers. Russ is the son of Larry and Margaret Russell Bolin and his grandparents were Lynn and Elizabeth Brown Russell.

**Mary Rebecca Sillmon** married **Leo Michael Santowasso** in Raleigh, NC on April 28, 2001. The bride is the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. David Sillmon and the granddaughter of Nell Wilde Sillmon.

**Sandra Leigh Graves** married **Brian Shane O'Leary** on Saturday, August 11, 2001 in King's Mountain Methodist

Chapel. Sandra is the daughter of Joanne Sutton Graves and the late Whit Graves and the granddaughter of the late Davie Coward Sutton. All of Sandra's relatives were present and aunt Sue Vail reports that they has a "blast"!

### Louis J. Smith/Clara Coward Family

**Catherine Nicole Davis and William Blanchard Rideout** were married on February 24, 2001 in Raleigh, NC. Will is the son of Nan and Richard Rideout and granddaughter of Clara McGuire and F. Wendt.

**Mary Melissa Wendt** was married to **Daniel John Tymchuk** of March 24, 2001 in Homer, Georgia. Mary Melissa is the daughter of Fred and Judie Wendt and the granddaughter of Clara McGuire and F. Wendt.

**Anna Elizabeth Rouse** was married to **George Wayne Robinson** on June 24, 2000. Anna is the daughter of Julia and Daryl Rouse and the granddaughter of Frances Smith and J. M. Kidwell.

...AND THEY LIVED  
HAPPILY EVER AFTER...

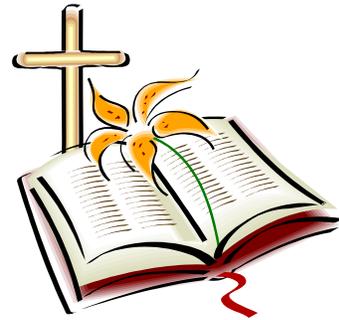


## In Memoriam: Gertrude Jordan Coward

Gertrude Irene Jordan Coward of Belton, SC died January 12, 1999. She was born February 5, 1906, the daughter of John Macajah and Mary Woodson Jordan. She was the widow of R. Glenn Coward (son of Robert Rogers and Lena Allen Coward and grandson of Nathan and Jane Rogers Coward).

Memorial services were held on January 13, 1999 in Belton, SC.

Our sympathies are extended to Gertrude's family.



She is survived by her daughters, Jane Stephens and Glenda Conley, six grandchildren, and five great grandchildren.

## In Memoriam: Miriam Stillwell Allen

Miriam Stillwell Allen died May 5, 2001. She was born in Jackson County, daughter of Edgar H. and Gertie Coward Stillwell. She moved to Cleveland County in 1945 with her husband, Leonard H. Allen and taught school there until her retirement.

College and was a member of Boiling Springs Baptist Church.

She is survived by a sister, Carolyn Stillwell Harwood; a daughter and son-in-law, Shirley and Gene Byers; a granddaughter, Beverly Allen Greene; two grandsons, Chris and Scott Byers; and four great grandchildren.

She held a master of Education degree from George Peabody

Our sympathies are extended to Miriam's family.

## In Memoriam: James A. Myers

James A. Myers died June 13, 2001 in Alton, Illinois. James was the husband of the late Martha Hampton Myers (Dave Coward family).

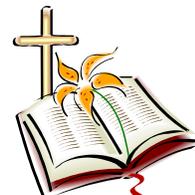
James was born November 3, 1927 in McAlester OK, the son of Arthur and Tilda Kent Myers.

He served in Korea with the occupational forces and then worked for the Alton School District for more than 35

years as a teacher and school administrator. He is survived by two sons, Brad of Alton, IL and Scott of Omaha NE. He is also survived by two sisters, Beverly Olds of Indianapolis, IN and Sue Neely of Oklahoma City, OK.

Funeral services were held June 18, 2001 in Alton.

Our sympathies are extended to James' family.



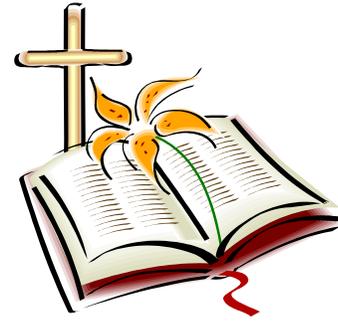
## In Memoriam: John H. Clayton, Jr.

John H. Clayton, Jr. of Cullowhee died on July 15, 2001. Funeral was held at Cullowhee Baptist Church on July 18, 2001.

John retired in 1980 after working as a paint contractor and in retail sales. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He was a member of Cullowhee Baptist Church, a board member for the Cullowhee Fire Department, served on the Jackson County Planning Board for 15 years and on the Jackson County Recreation Board for 18 years. He was a charter and lifetime member of Land of the Sky PDCA and a lifetime member of Mike Martin VFW Post 9493.

He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Catherine McGuire Clayton; daughters, Ann Fowler of Hendersonville and Janie Lambert of Morganton; sons, Pat of Cullowhee and David of Valdese.; and six grandsons.

Our sympathies are extended to Johns' family.



## TRIBUTE PAID TO LEWIS J. SMITH

The Lewis J. Smith Association paid tribute to our relative, Lewis J. Smith on the 100th anniversary of his death (May 22, 1901) at their annual meeting held at the East Laporte Baptist-Methodist Church on June 16, 2001.

The association, which promotes history and education, is named for Lewis J. Smith, a founder of the school that is now Western Carolina University.

After teaching in Haywood County, he enlisted in Company C, 29th Regiment, North Carolina Troops and served during the Civil War.

After the war he was married to Clara

Coward Smith and they became the parents of 12 children. Needing a larger place to live they built a house in the "Painter" community that is now part of Cullowhee. As noted by his daughter Nannie Smith McGuire, "My father was not one to live in a community long without a school and church." So the Smiths donated an acre of their own land to establish a one-room subscription school. Liberty School was constructed on that site.

In 1888 Smith was elected to represent the 42nd state senatorial district which encompassed Jackson, Macon, Swain, Graham, Clay and Cherokee counties.

## THE STATE NURSE: FLORENCE "MAC" THOMPSON

The following was written by Clay County poet, Brenda Kay Ledford, to honor Florence "Mac" Thompson.

For forty years Mac fought  
Polio, diphtheria, whooping cough,  
All diseases that threatened  
The health of mountaineers.

She worked to heal  
The bleeding hillsides,  
To feed the hungry  
Comfort the brokenhearted

She helped rid poverty  
From the rural region.  
She worked for power  
To light dark homes.

And brought joy to sad  
Faces filled with pain.  
She gave hope to patients  
Who gave up on life

The state nurse traveled  
Muddy roads and forded  
Shooting Creek to reach  
Sick, bedridden folks.

For forty years Mac Thompson  
Touched the lives of people.  
She cared for mountaineers  
With heartfelt love.

## News from the “Family”

### Dave Coward Family

**Richard Nathan Tayloe**, son of Judy and John Tayloe, graduated from UNCW on May 19, 2001. Nathan, like some of his cousins, was on the 5 year plan and everyone (especially his parents) was excited that he will now be on his own. Congratulations, Nathan!

**Mary and Rob Diaz** went on a Mediterranean cruise on May. Lynn and Elaine kept Ana and Zach, the 7 year old twins. We survived! The Diaz family will move into a new house sometime if Mary doesn't kill the contractors first. Her patience is at an end!

**Lee Tayloe** has moved out of his parents home (a rite of passage to adult-

hood) and his mother, Judy Nichols Tayloe was so distraught that she ate 4 bowls of ice cream at one sitting. Is eating to assuage depression a Coward trait? Just wondering.

### Sally Norton Family

**Luther Norton** had surgery for colon cancer on June 8. He is doing fine.

**Hilda Norton Hales'** colon cancer is in remission and she is doing fine.

**Ray Hooper** had a heart attack on June 7 and was unable to attend the reunion. He is recovering well..

### Clara Coward Smith Family

**Catherine Davis Rideout** has joined the alumnae relations staff of Meredith College as director of alumnae and parent relations. She will plan and execute all alumnae programs. Catherine holds a bachelor's degree in English from Meredith.



## OH WHERE, OH WHERE CAN YOU BE?

The last Coward Family Newsletter to the following people were returned to me as undeliverable. If you can help me get the correct addresses, I will be very grateful.

Janet Coward, Richmond, VA

Gordon Dean Hooper, Whittier, NC

Irene Phillips, Sylva, NC

K.G. Shepherd, Travelers Rest, SC



Gertrude Green, Jasper, GA

Bruce Coward, Marietta, GA

Mary Coward, Beech Island, SC

Frances Parsons, Lenoir, NC

## Thanks for the money...and could you send more?

Thanks to all of you who have contributed money to the Coward Family Newsletter.

Many thanks to **Marilane Bird Nichols** for making memorial contributions to the Coward Family Newsletter. Marilane made contributions in the names of Miriam Stillwell Allen and Rachel Coward Wilson.

As you know, the cost of printing and

mailing of about 300 copies of the Coward Family Newsletter is very expensive. (Production if free!) We did not collect enough at the reunion and through other donations to cover the cost of this newsletter. I do have some cushion since Trudy left me a positive balance, but this issue will use up most of the reserve.

So, if you have not made a contribution,

please consider doing so, either through direct contribution or through a memorial or honorarium contribution. I will send an acknowledgement to the person being honored or to the family of the person being remembered. You may mail your contribution to me at the address on the last page of this newsletter. I will love you forever!



## Reach the Coward Family Newsletter!

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## Meet Your Family: Carolyn Ruth Coward

Carolyn Ruth Coward is a member of the Talvin Coward branch of our rather extended family. She is the daughter of Talvin Coward and Ruth Brown Coward. She has a sister, Joy Anderson, and two brothers, George Talvin and Robert Charles. She lives in Tallahassee, Florida

Two of the joys in Carolyn's life are her two grandchildren, Meagan Ruth Ramba (age 4) and Harley David Ramba (almost 1). They live in Tallahassee with their parents, David and Judy, and Carolyn has much opportunity to be with them.

Carolyn says that her "real" education occurred when she took a trip to Europe after completing school. She sailed to the Strait of Gibraltar, a trip that took 7 days in weather that had at least one day when the use of ropes to hold on was necessary. Looking on the

bright side, Carolyn said that was okay since they needed the ropes for dancing anyway.

Carolyn had many adventures, most of them hilarious, as she visited France, the Spanish Riviera, Casablanca, Malaga, Monaco, Florence, Rome, Tel Aviv, Capri, Austria, Germany, Holland, Sweden, and England.

One of her (mis)adventures involved trying to get the luggage of 4 young ladies into a small car which Carolyn described as a French VW. Apparently, the girls entertained some Spaniards who were in town for a festival for quite a long time and, guess what, nobody helped...they just enjoyed the show!

She also had a little scare in East Germany (before the fall of the Soviet Union and the Berlin Wall) when their passports were taken and they were

## Notes From Lynn's Desk

detailed because their driver took a wrong road. They were eventually freed and made haste getting to Berlin!

Carolyn, write us a book!!