

# COWARD FAMILY NEWSLETTER

July 1, 1976

Dear Ones,

It rained all night and up into the morning, but this did not keep the COWARD FAMILY from having a wonderful 85th REUNION! It stopped raining in time for us to spread the food on the table, as usual in front of "The Ol' House", and we had around 100 folks eating from the bountiful table of good food. It was so good to see the ones who came.

We want to say a special thanks to Jane Coward, our wonderful hostess, for all her work and effort over the years to make the reunions be a success. She provides us with the excellent location at "The Ol' House" and makes all the preliminary arrangements. She is there to greet each one who comes and makes all feel welcome. Dot Williams has always been there, helping her. She, too, is a wonderful hostess. We regret very much that Dot was in the hospital this year and could not be with us. Thanks also go to Dale and Bobbie Coward, Elda Coward, Katie Nicholson, and all the others who helped with the preparations. We know there is much to do: putting up signs to guide us to the right place, setting up the long table, getting all the chairs out on the porch, etc. All of you are great! God Bless You, each and every one.

The oldest person at the Reunion was Kitty Zachary Stevens, 94. The youngest person attending was William Bryan Wilson, who was born July 20, 1975, son of Bob Wilson. Bryan is a great-great-grandson of Nathan Coward. The person coming the farthest distance was David Bird, who came from Texas.

Uncle Dave Coward's family had the most representatives present. There were at least 42 (or more) members of his family present. There were 10 from Clara Coward Smith's family, around 9 from Oscar B. Coward's family, about 9 from Sally Coward Norton's family, 12 from Bob Coward's family, 4 representing Frances Coward Glenn, and, of course, JANE COWARD was there representing herself! We were sorry that Talvin and Ruth Coward could not be with us. He was called back to Florida on business, so there were no representatives of the Talvin Berry Coward line and there was no one representing the Mary Coward Zachary line. I don't believe. WE MISSED ALL OF YOU WHO WERE NOT THERE.

#### MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS OF INTEREST:

- Ray and Mary Henson Whitner of Waynesville, NC, are going to Greece in August to visit Jack and Patsy McDermott. Jack is with the State Department in Athens.
- James and Vara Henson Cox have moved to New York. (we need their new address.)
- Florence McGuire Thompson is going to check in St. Joseph's Hospital in Asheville on the 30th of June for an ear operation. (We hope all goes well, Florence.)
- Florence's son Bud is going back to Duke soon for additional treatment, resulting from his auto accident on July 8, 1973. (Bud, we were so glad you came to the Reunion this year.)
- Captain Samuel and Judy Levi Stevens have a new daughter, Tia, born November 23, 1975. They are in Germany at this time.
- Ron and Sharon Levi's son Christopher was born January 17, 1976 on his great-grandmother Emma Norton Hooper's 79th birthday.

Emma Norton Hooper was born January 17, 1897. Jane Coward was born the day before. Edna Coward Bird was born February 16, 1897, and Bonnie Stephens Norton was born July 7, 1897, and all of these wonderful ladies were at the 85th Coward Reunion! Isn't that great?

My Mother, Ellen Smith, had a white raincoat at the Reunion. Someone else also had a white coat, and by mistake must have picked up Mother's coat instead of her own when she left. Mother lives at 112 Golfview Drive, Franklin, NC 28734, Tel. 704-524-3834, and would appreciate hearing from the person who accidentally picked up the wrong coat. The other coat is still at "The Ol' House".

Because of the generosity of the family members, we collected \$103 to start the COWARD CEMETARY FUND, which will provide perpetual care for the cemetery in the future. Jane Coward is going to open an account at the Bank in Sylva for this project. Others who wish to contribute to this fund should make your checks payable to the Coward Cemetery Fund and mail them to Jane. This cemetery is located on Caney Fork, near the old Zachary place, and has been a burial place for the Coward family since 1853. Buried there are Jonathan Coward, his wife Martha Hudson Coward, their sons Jonathan Coward, Jr. and Nathan Coward, Nathan's first wife Jane Rogers Coward, three of Nathan Coward's children (Emeline, John, and Samantha), three of Robert Coward's children (Tommy, Beulah, and Lester), Huey and Woodie Hooper, Mary Jane Hooper, wife of Aaron Hooper, and many others. Because we love and respect our family members, we can show these feelings by maintaining the family cemetery in future years when many of us are not still around by establishing this fund now and making preparations for perpetual care for the years ahead. Jane and I want to express appreciation to all of you who contributed toward this project.

--Mary Ann Hatmaker born March 9, 1976, dau. of Jamie & Susan Hatmaker & granddau. of Gene & Peggy English. Dixie Coward English is her great-grandmother.

July 1, 1976

Next year at the Reunion we are going to have some entertainment! Dan Coward - who like his Uncle Linden - knows a lot of magic tricks, which will be entertaining to young and old, and he plans to be prepared at next year's reunion to "put on a show" for us. He gave us a lot of laughs this year with his "dog in a box". Incidentally his son, who was at the Reunion, has the name Nathan Coward and is the great-grand-son of the Nathan Coward whose birthday we celebrate each year at the Reunion.

Those attending the Reunion this year were (I hope I have not overlooked anyone):

Wilma Hooper, Box 2393, Gainesville, GA 30501  
 Bob Hooper, Cullowhee, NC  
 Ray Hooper, 1535 Mohawk Ct., #2, Cleveland, TN 37311  
 Clara McGuire Wendt, Rt. 1, Commerce, GA 30529 AND a friend, Eloise Dalton  
 Florence McGuire Thompson, her son Bud, and her friend Mary Catherine Bryson Holder.  
 Ellen Smith, Franklin, NC  
 Jo Ann Smith, 1223 Wake Forest Rd., Raleigh, NC 27604, and her son Douglas, age 19.  
 L. J. (Jay) Smith, Jr., Hot Springs, Arkansas  
 Edna Buchanan Cotter, 203 Allen's Creek Rd., Waynesville, NC 28786  
 Geneva Buchanan, Glen Buchanan, and Jimmy Lee Buchanan, Cullowhee, NC  
 Edna Coward Bird, 4907 Friendly Ave., West, Greensboro, NC 27410  
 Elaine Bird Nichols, Greensboro, NC  
 Johnnie & Judy Nichols Tayloe, Winston-Salem (we need an address for mailings.)  
 Mary Bird Nichols, Greensboro, NC  
 John B. Nichols, Greensboro, NC  
 David Bird, Dallas, Texas (Is 315 Overcreek Dr., Richardson, TX correct address?)  
 Dorothy Davis Bell, Buckhead, GA 30625  
 Charles Bell, Buckhead, GA  
 Curtis & Amy Bell, Lydia, Katherine & Clint, Burkhead, GA  
 Leigh Howell, Box 385, Buckhead, GA  
 Laura Morris, 615 Harris St., Madison, GA 30650  
 Mr. and Mrs. Edwin L. Tyson, 615 Harris St., Madison, GA  
 Davis Bell, Buckhead, GA 30625  
 Susan Bell, Buckhead, GA 30625  
 Mrs. Branson L. Dalton, Rt. 1, Baldwin, GA 30511  
 Emma Coward Holean, Marissa, Ill. 62257, 907 N. Main St.  
 Fred & Betty Laumbattus, 405 East Spring Street, Marissa, Ill. 62257.  
 Elda Coward, Norton Rt., Cashiers, NC  
 Dale, Bobbie & Tammy Coward, Norton Rt., Cashiers, NC  
 Hazel Potts (Bobbie Coward's mother), Norton Rt., Cashiers, NC  
 Julius Coward, Norton Rt., Cashiers, NC (Dale's brother)  
 Oscar Henson, Rt. 1, Box 1023, Waynesville, and his cousin Louise Henson, Cullowhee  
 Emma Norton Hooper, Rt. 67, Box 5F, Cullowhee, NC 28723  
 Bonnie Stephens Norton, Cullowhee, NC (I need a mailing address)  
 Jack & Kathleen Norton, 6733 Westlane Dr., Falls Church, VA 22042  
 Bobby Deyermond, LaPlata, Md. 20646 (son of Anna Deyermond & grandson of Oscar Norton)  
 Theresa Bender, LaPlata, Md.  
 Juanita Hooper Levi & Johnny, 700 Biltmore Ave., Apt. 90, Asheville, NC 28803  
 Bob, Trudy & Casey Adams, 2121 Darlington St., Birmingham, ALA 35226  
 David S. Stillwell, Cullowhee, NC  
 Leonard & Miriam Stillwell Allen, Boilings Springs, NC  
 Carolyn Stillwell Harwood, 6117 Springhouse Lane, Charlotte, NC 28211  
 Eric and Beverly Allen Greene, Shelby, NC (I need a mailing address)  
 Martha Lou Stillwell, Cullowhee, NC  
 Rachel Coward Wilson, 2121 Fernwood Dr., Nashville, TN 37200  
 Bob & Betsey Wilson & Bryan, Nashville, Tenn. (I need a mailing address)  
 Rosemary Wilson, Nashville, Tenn.  
 Margaret Coward Gray, 121 Sunrise Dr., Knoxville, Tenn. 27901  
 Laura Gray, Knoxville, Tenn.  
 Jane Coward, Sylva, NC  
 Martha Hampton Meyers, 1618 Shurtleff, Alton, Ill. 62002  
 J. Clark Coward, Rt. 1, Calhoun Falls, SC 29628 and two friends, Dorothy Finley & Ray & Jane Stephens, Julie, Angie & Jay, Walhalla, SC 29691 Walt Harmon of SC  
 Glenn & Gertrude Coward, Box 606, Belton, SC 29627  
 Dan & Betty Jo Coward, Terry & Nathan, Belton, SC. & Terry's friend Sharon Jennings  
 Lucy Hedden, Webster, NC  
 Kitty Stevens, Rt. 2, Cashiers, NC 28717  
 Louise Madison Reed, Webster, NC  
 Fay Shelton Taylor, Rt. 4, Box 179, Canton, NC  
 Katie Nicholson, Sylva, NC  
 Faye Fowler, Glenville, NC

My husband was sorry he could not attend the Reunion; he had National Guard duty that weekend. He has just been promoted to Colonel and is now commanding officer of the National Guard State Selective Service Section.

Minnie Norton Wilde had a fall, I understand, a short time ago - since I visited her. Minnie, I hope you have recovered from it. Be careful in the future.

JO ANN SMITH

## THE COWARD FAMILY HISTORY

by Jo Ann Smith  
6-23-1976

The Coward families in America are of English ancestry. The name is spelled three different ways by different branches of the family: Cowherd, Coward, and Cowart.

The research of family historian Joe A. Cowart, Jr., 829 Indian River Drive, Cocoa, Florida, reveals that over 95% of all the present Cowherd-Coward-Cowart families now in the Southern United States originate from three - apparently unrelated - men:

- 1- James of Rappahannock County, Virginia, through his son William.
- 2- James of old Rutherford County, NC
- 3- John Coward, Revolutionary soldier, who was born in New Jersey but settled in Jefferson County Georgia after the Revolutionary War.

Other early settlers were Richard Coward in Talbot County, Maryland and James Coward of Dorchester County, Maryland, and Hugh Coward of Monmouth County, NC. The Virginia and Kentucky lines usually spell the name Cowherd, while other lines retain the use of Coward, and some lines have changed this to Cowart.

Tradition has it that our forbear JAMES COWARD came to North Carolina from Culpeper County, Virginia. Certainly there were Cowards (Cowherds) in that area of Virginia as early as 1678. (Ref: Edythe Cowherd Newton's Cowherd Genealogy printed by Roberts & Son, Birmingham, Alabama, 1962).

There was a James Coward, along with 35 other immigrants, who came to Virginia in 1688 (Ref: Rappahannock County, Va. Order Book, 1686-1692, page 77). It is possible that he could have been the ancestor of our James Coward. It should be explained that Culpeper County was formed in 1748 from Orange County; Orange County was formed in 1734 from Spotsylvania County; Spotsylvania was formed in 1720 from Essex Co., King & Queen County, and King William County; Essex Co. was formed in 1692 from Rappahannock County; Rappahannock County was formed in 1656.

Although tangible proof is lacking that our James Coward came from Culpeper County, Virginia, it is quite likely that he did, but other possibilities should be examined until positive proof is obtained.

We should consider whether or not he could have been the James Coward, gardener, age 21, who in 1774 came from Dorsetshire, England, on the ship "Chance" to Maryland. (Ref: Emigrants from England 1773-1776, transcribed by Gerald Fothergill, Port of London, 2nd to 9th January 1774, page 15.) Or perhaps he descended from the Stephen Coward who was in Charles County, Maryland as early as 1675 (Ref: Charles County, Md. Will Book 2, page 358; Liber A32, ff. 21-23 Maryland Calendar of Wills, Cotton Vol. 1, page 110; also Cotton Vol. 2, page 70). Also there were Cowards in Dorchester County, Maryland at an early date.

Carolina Cradle, Settlement of the Northwest Carolina Frontier, 1747-1762, refers to James Coward as a pioneer from Charles County, Maryland.

When James Coward came to western North Carolina has not been established. He married a Miss Weaver ca. 1772, but we do not know where. Their son Jonathan Coward was born ca. 1774, and family tradition has it that he was born in Rutherford Co.

Many of those who settled the western North Carolina lands were Revolutionary soldiers, because the government gave these soldiers priority in making land grants. Lewis Smith, who came to Haywood County, is an example. He was born in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and his family moved to Augusta County, Virginia prior to the Revolutionary War. It was here that Lewis Smith enlisted. (His Revolutionary War record is on file in National Archives.) After the war, he left Augusta County, Va. and obtained land in Haywood County; he married Mary (Polly) Wikle, and they became the forbears of many of our kin.

It is possible that James Coward could have participated in the Revolutionary War and became eligible for a land grant on the newly acquired Cherokee land in Western North Carolina. We know he was in Rutherford County in 1785 - the year a treaty was made with the Cherokee Indians - because he entered land in that county on May 10, 1785 (Ref: Secretary of State's Office, File No. 305, Grant 266, Book 65, page 321). He probably was already living there at the time he applied for a grant, and it is possible he could have been there sometime.

According to Joe A. Cowart, Jr., and other family historians, James Coward was the father of seven children:

- I. JONATHAN COWARD (ca. 1774 - 1853) married Martha Hudson (in S. C.??)  
 II. PETER COWARD (17\_\_\_ - 18\_\_\_) married 13 January 1801 in Rutherford Co. to Nancy Dimsdale.\*\*  
 III. SARAH COWARD (17\_\_\_ - 18\_\_\_) married 13 January 1802 to David Cockram.\*\*  
 IV. JAMES COWARD (1785 - 18\_\_\_) married 8 November 1812 to Mary Worley in Rutherford County, NC. \*\*  
 V. STEPHEN COWARD (1790 - 18\_\_\_) married 29 November 1815 to Amelia (Millie) Rogers in Rutherford County, NC \*\*  
 VI. REBECCA COWARD (17\_\_\_ - 18\_\_\_) married 13 June 1821 to Obadiah Worley. \*\*  
 VII. ELIHU COWARD (1793 - 18\_\_\_) married 27 January 1823 to Charlotte Bird.\*\*  
 \*\* Ref: Rutherford County, North Carolina, Marriage Bonds

According to family tradition, Jonathan Coward and his brother Peter went from Rutherford County, North Carolina, to South Carolina on the Colonois River in what is now Pickens County. According to Linden Coward's book, Nathan Coward-Jane Rogers Family, it was here that Jonathan met and married Martha Hudson. According to his record they settled on the French Broad River for a while and later moved to Caney Fork Creek, where they lived for the remainder of their life. According to Linden Coward, Jonathan was a cooper by trade.

JONATHAN COWARD/MARTHA HUDSON had the following children:

- A. JAMES COWARD, born 1801, married in 1825 to Chloe Denton, daughter of Samuel.  
 B. BETSY COWARD, born 18\_\_\_, married 1 April 1828 to Matthew Carson  
 C. NANCY COWARD, born 18\_\_\_, married \_\_\_\_\_ Kelly (or John Chastain)  
 D. JONATHAN COWARD, born 10 April 1807, married Sallie Barnes.  
 E. JANE (JENNY) COWARD, born 18\_\_\_, married 11 February 1820 to Elijah Denton.  
 F. ELIHU COWARD, born 1809, married twice: 1- \_\_\_\_\_ Chastain, 2- \_\_\_\_\_ Ford.  
 G. POLLY COWARD, born 18\_\_\_, married John R. Queen.  
 H. HUDSON (HUTSON) COWARD, born 1814 or 1815; married twice: 1- Miranda Wikie; 2- Rebecca \_\_\_\_\_.  
 I. BENJAMIN COWARD, born 30 January 1816, died 22 May 1896; married twice: 1- \_\_\_\_\_ Queen; 2- Nellie Fisher.  
 J. MARTHA (MATTIE) COWARD, born 18\_\_\_; married in Haywood County to William Chastain.  
 K. NATHAN COWARD, born 12 June 1818, died 22 February 1909; married twice: 1- Jane Rogers; 2- Sophia Hedden.

NATHAN COWARD had ten children by his first marriage, and four children by his second marriage:

1. MINERVA EMELINE (26 June 1845 - 4 Oct. 1852)
2. CLARA ALMIRA COWARD (2 March 1847- 29 March 1915) married Lewis J. Smith.
3. TALVIN BERRY COWARD (8 Nov. 1849 - 5 Nov. 1892) married Rebecca Bryson
4. JONATHAN DAVID (26 Oct. 1851- 3 June 1928) married Lou Norton.
5. MARTHA SAMANTHA COWARD (5 Dec. 1853- 23 April 1885) married George Tumlin.
6. MARY ALICE COWARD (14 Aug. 1856- 16 Dec. 1934). On 4 Oct. 1877 married Christopher Bradshaw Zachary.
7. OSCAR BOMAN COWARD (20 Jan. 1859- 26 Aug. 1937) married twice: 1- Emma Long, 2- Eleanora Zachary.
8. JOHN HAMILTON COWARD (30 Jan. 1861- 27 March 1885) did not marry.
9. SALLIE JANE COWARD (3 July 1863- 2 Sep. 1940). On 6 May 1880 married William C. Norton.
10. ROBERT ROGERS COWARD (3 Aug. 1866- 4 May 1943). On 20 April 1886 married Lena Euella Allen.
11. JOHN HOMER COWARD (\_\_\_\_ 1886 - 27 Feb. 1951) married Mrs. Jean Appleby Smith.
12. FRANCES EMELINE COWARD (18 Aug. 1888 - 19 June 1962), married Raymond Glenn.
13. BENJAMIN FRANK COWARD (18 July 1891 - \_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_\_) did not marry.
14. JANE HEDDEN, born 16 January 1897, lives in Sylva, and is hostess to the COWARD FAMILY REUNION

The first COWARD FAMILY REUNION was held June 12, 1892. The family of Nathan Coward had gathered on this date to celebrate his birthday. The tradition of having an annual family reunion on or near his birthday has continued each and every year from that date to the present time. The 85th Reunion was held June 12, 1976.

Mrs. H. A. Smith  
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