



Watts Reunion, Inc.

Newsletter – December, 2002

Editor: Jacob Sanders

Greetings, Family and Friends.

It's hard to believe another year has passed so quickly and that our fiftieth anniversary has been history for almost half a year. If you weren't there, you missed a good one. We would like for everyone to start planning now to attend next year's reunion and hopefully we can outnumber the three hundred plus that attended this year.

As we are nearing Christmas, let us all be thankful for our many blessings during this life but most of all the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, if we'll only accept Him and His forgiveness of our sins and live for Him. Let us all give Him praise and honor during this time of celebration and throughout the coming year. May you have the most joyous Christmas of your life.

Love in Christ,

Fred Watts

President, Watts Reunion Inc.

Happy Holidays to each of you! May God Bless You and Yours this Holiday season and throughout the coming year.

Watts Reunion Inc. is pleased to present *Watts Cooking* to you as an idea for a Christmas gift for that special someone on your list. It contains down home country, holiday favorites. What more could one ask as a gift than this wonderful cookbook? Watts Reunion Inc. will be happy to mail them for you to that favorite someone. All you need to do is send \$7.00 and the name of the person you want the cookbook sent too and we will wrap it, enclose a gift card as well and send it on its way. We will need that information by the 18th of December to guarantee Christmas delivery.

You can send that information to: Brenda Watts,
167 Burton Subdivision Rd.
Nancy, KY 42544.

Thank you so much and have a wonderful holiday!

-- Brenda Watts,
Vice President, Watts Reunion Inc.

Congratulations, Mary Beth Watts!

As member of the Centre College graduating class of 2002, Mary Beth received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology during Commencement Exercises at Danville, KY. Campus on May 26, 2002. During the summer of 2002 Mary Beth worked at the University of Louisville School of Medicine engaged in medical research related to breast cancer. On August 19, 2002 she began the 4-year Medical School program there. The proud parents of Mary Beth are Charles John C. and Barbara J. (Mattie) Watts of Lexington, KY. She is the granddaughter of Leonard and Marcella (Saale) Mattie of St. Charles, MO. and the late George W and Malvery (Allen) Watts, former residents of Breathitt County, KY.

-- *Connie Watts*

Lisa Michelle Watts, of Austin Indiana, was this years recipient of the Watts Reunion, David Watts Memorial Scholarship. Lisa graduated from Austin High School in May with "High Distinction". She was a member of the National Honor Society, Student Council and band. Lisa is attending the University of Southern Indiana majoring in Nursing. She is the daughter of Hershel and Donna Watts, the granddaughter of Opal and the late Andrew Watts and the great grand daughter of Joe and Callie Watts.

Congratulations Lisa!

-- *Connie Watts*

Watts Reunion, Incorporated - The Beginning

By Vinson A. Watts, Former President of Watts Reunion, Inc.

The Kentucky Encyclopedia records that the first penetration of white settlers into the area that was to become Breathitt County, Kentucky, began in the 1780s. The names of these settlers included those such as Haddix, Neace, Noble, Strong, Turner, and Watts. Apparently these families settled in Lost Creek in what is now Cockrell's Fork, Leatherwood Creek (Watts), and River Caney. The first winter (1800) of the Watts families on Cockrell's Fork was described by Stephen Bowling in the December, 2001 Watts Reunion, Inc. Newsletter.

Now let us fast forward to the early 1950s. As we all know, the above names are still familiar and proud names on Leatherwood/Caney Creek and beyond. The purpose of this article is to relate my memories of Leatherwood in 1952 or so, which I remember for several reasons on the occasion of our 50th annual meeting.

First, I remember I graduated from Berea College in early June 1952 with a Bachelor Science Degree in Business Administration. I returned to Leatherwood Creek to live with my parents, Leslie and Annie Watts, and my sister, Mollie. My mother was a midwife and she certainly delivered most of, if not all of the babies born in the area during the 1920s - 40s period.

At this point I need to go back to 1939 when a flash flood washed out the bridge across Troublesome Creek at Riverside (mouth of Lost Creek), which was the only access for travel up Lost Creek to Leatherwood/Caney Creek. There was an old swinging bridge near the north end of Riverside campus for foot travel, but any vehicles (which amounted to fewer than six or seven) had to cross Troublesome Creek at one of its wide places. This crossing was near the area where the BP Station is now across from Riverside. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) had just finished or at least was working to build a road from the mouth of Lost Creek to the mouth of Leatherwood Creek. As I remember, my father worked everyday possible on this road project.

The bridge that crossed Troublesome Creek that would link Highway 15 with the WPA road was not replaced until 1948, the year I graduated from Breathitt High School. School buses then came to the mouth of Leatherwood Creek. There remained no road up Leatherwood Creek except the creek bed with three to four sandbars along the creek. Foot travel, horseback, wagons, sleds and any vehicles all traversed the same creek bed or paths. I maintain that I became as familiar with every "nook and cranny" of Leatherwood Creek as much or more than anyone. The real estate owned by my ancestors on Leatherwood Creek and McIntosh fork is now owned by the writer.

Now, let's go forward to 1952. When I got to the mouth of Leatherwood returning from Berea in June of 1952, I found that the road from the mouth of Leatherwood Creek to the mouth of McIntosh Fork was under construction by Wood and Barton Company. My dad also worked on this project. Within a week, I was employed as a temporary part-time employee. I found the payment stubs that covered the time frame of June 15, 1952 to July 21, 1952 (to prove I worked on Leatherwood Road). The school buses began coming to the mouth of McIntosh Fork in August 1952.

It is recorded that on the first Sunday in June of 1952, a group of the Watts clan from the George Washington Watts generation got together at Natural Bridge State Park in Slade, Kentucky. The purpose of this gathering was a combined birthday for Joe and Callie Deaton Watts. Members from other Watts' families were there as well. During this gathering, the idea for a Watts family reunion was born. During the past 50 years, the Watts Family Reunion has met at Natural Bridge on a Sunday in June and July, as we are now on July 28, 2002.

In 1977, we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Watts Reunion. This organization was incorporated and chartered by the state of Kentucky in December of 1976. Over the years, by-laws have been adopted and states that the primary purpose of the organization shall be two-fold as follows:

1. To develop a scholarship fund and use interest from this fund along with supplementary contributions to assist students in the pursuit of higher education.

Any such scholarship is to be awarded without discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, national or ethnic origin, or handicapping condition.

2. To support genealogical research generally, but beginning with the Watts and related generations.

In August of 1952, I was hired by Marie R. Turner to teach seventh grade at Quicksand School. Now, as the saying goes, "the rest is history."

*Vinson A. Watts, born on
McIntosh Fork. Attended
McIntosh School and Upper
Leatherwood School Through
Eighth grade 1936-1944.*

Families living on Leatherwood Creek in 1952, give or take a year or so. Families are listed in order of where they lived from beginning to end of creek, fork, etc.:

Main Leatherwood Creek

Arthur and Willis Noble Combs
Lige and Katie Smith Combs
Walter and Addie Noble Spicer
Jerry and Cassie Watts Noble
Luther and Carrie Campbell Noble
Zack and Kate Noble Fugate
Isaac and Clara Noble Watts
Carson and Nell Watts Warrix
Will Penn and Sarah Chaney Watts
Lewis and Susan Jane Noble Watts
Von and Lizzie B. Allen Watts
Taylor and Lillie Combs Campbell
Cager and Hallie Neace
Jim and Lula Watts
Martin T. and Lula Mullins Noble

Todd Hollow

Millard and Dell Fugate Noble

Meadow Branch

Tom and Audrey Watts Combs
John L. and Eva Francis Combs
Bulah and Lucy Henson Neace

McIntosh Fork

Monroe and Nannie Fugate Henson
Woodrow and Laura Henson
Walter and Mahala Fugate Henson
William and Naomi Francis Fugate

Little Leatherwood

Former home of Joe and Callie Watts
Otholo and Eurabane Neace
Johnnie and Katie Combs Neace
Whick and Eva Fugate

Right Fork Main Leatherwood

Marion and Ida Francis Combs
Thomas and Mary Noble Francis
Louise Neace
Lewis and Casie Neace
Chester and Dee Turner Watts

Left Fork of Main Leatherwood

Leslie and Annie Fugate Watts
John E. and Sallie Noble Watts
Luther and Martha Watts
Washie and Missouri Noble Francis
Logan and Katie Combs Francis.

Watts Family Reunion
c/o Connie Watts
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41348