

MY WATSON ROOTS

By Anna Belle Edwards

The Watsons were my mother's people. I do not know a great deal about them. I feel very badly that I did not ask my mother more questions. Now there is no one left to ask. But a few years back I contacted an elderly cousin of my mother's who lived in Oregon. She sent me what she had. She had visited her father, George Watson, who lived in Washington before he died. She sent me all the records she had copied out of his Bible. The name was not always Watson. The first ones to come to America changed it from Wotson to Watson. That is the story that was handed down in the family. I have no records of the family in Scotland.

The very first one to come to America was R.H. Watson. He was born in Scotland in 1778. There is no record of the year he came to America or where in Scotland he came from. His wife was Marjorie Kelly and she was born in 1779 in Ireland. I do not know whether they met and married before they arrived in America or after. They were the parents of two children; Daniel H. and Marjorie.

Daniel H. Watson was born in 1804 in Rhode Island. His wife was Louise Ballenger. She was born in 1807 in Rhode Island. They were the parents of three children: Robert George, Mary and Minnie.

Robert George Watson was born in New Hampshire in 1829. He was born with a full set of teeth! He lost only one of them in his lifetime. One began to ache. He took a chisel and put against it and knocked it out with a hammer. His wife was Christine Langford. She was born in Massachusetts. Their four children were all born in New York. They were George A., Robert Willis, Florence, and Ida. The family moved to Minnesota when the children were small. In the winter of 1866 a large river near them flooded. Robert hurriedly built a raft. His wife and oldest daughter got blankets and clothes and food to put on the raft. The children all helped. My grandfather, Robert Willis, grabbed a little pitcher of maple syrup off the table. I still have the little pitcher. Little Ida was only five. She got her puppy. Robert George tied the things on the raft and even tied the family on. But he was not tied. After a while the raft hit a submerged tree and he fell into deep water. His body was never found. He could not swim. He was just 37 years old. I do not know how long the family was on the raft. The oldest boy, George A., was fifteen. He got a job and supported the family. Christine eventually married a man named Chandler. But when they were old they separated. Christine died in Idaho in the 1890s.

Robert Willis Watson, my grandfather, was born July 23, 1854 in Elmira, New York. His parents were Robert George Watson and Christine Langford. He grew up in Minnesota. He was one of four children, having one brother and two sisters. His father was drowned in a flood when he was twelve. So he grew up without a father to guide him. From the stories my mother and her cousin told me, he gave his poor mother many worries. His older brother said of him that he was a miserable, ornery kid.

Grandpa grew up in the wilds of Minnesota. One day his mother became very sick and needed a doctor. Grandpa was sent on foot several

miles for the doctor. He took a short cut through some woods. He always carried a sharp axe with him. About half way through the forest he saw a bear ahead of him in the path. He crept up as close as he could and swung his axe. He split the bear's head wide open, but he never stopped. He ran on through the woods and into town and got the doctor. Later on he told his brother that he had killed a bear. His brother did not believe him. So grandpa took him out and showed him. His brother said it was the biggest bear he had even seen.

On July 2, 1879 Grandpa married Pheobe Anna Carey. She was the daughter of John Carey and Isabel McNess of Indiana. She was born in Oak Creek, Indiana and had several brothers and sisters. The family members were strong Quakers. Grandpa and Grandma settled in Hailey, Idaho. Grandpa ran the stage depot for a few years. They lived several places in the Woodriver area. Five children were born to them but they only raised two of them. The first baby only lived three weeks due to a long, hard birth. Their second son accidentally shot himself when he was thirteen while hunting rabbits. He died two hours later before a doctor ever got there. Grandpa made the coffin and Grandma lined it. The neighbor ladies washed and dressed the body. A few days later Grandpa went out and found the gun and bent it double over his knee and threw it in the brush. Christina Isabelle, my mother, was their third child. The third son was John Clarence. They called him Clad. He was a nervous child and had a speech problem. The fifth child was little Bessie. She was a very brilliant child and very sweet and loving. She was her parents pride and joy. She died when she was nine years old of spinal meningitis. She was sick for a long time, but never fussed about it. She told her mother a few days before she died that she was soon going to heaven to be with her grandma and brother.

Grandpa was a painter and paperhanger by trade. For several years they lived in the Long Valley area. They had a big log house with a root cellar to store vegetables and fruit for winter. The winters were long and hard. During the summer grandpa cut and stacked the wild hay. Then in the winter he boarded cattle and horses for other people. When money became short he would go into Boise and get jobs painting and paperhanging. It was quite a long way to Boise so he had to stay in town. The family stayed on the ranch.

In 1902 the family migrated to California. They spent the first winter in Mariposa, California. Grandpa worked at his trade there. In the spring they moved on to the Los Angeles area where Grandma's sister, Aunt Bessie Elmore, lived. They spent some time there. Then they moved north to Watsonville. I do not know why they chose Watsonville. They rented the old Hickmore place in the mountains above Brown's Valley Road. Later they bought a ranch in the Hazel Dell area. While they were living there they adopted a little boy. He was two years old. They named him George after Grandpa's brother. He started school when he was four years old -- at Hazel Dell School to keep the school open. They lacked one child of having enough children in the district to keep the school open.

When little George was five, Grandpa decided to move again. This time they moved to Arizona, about thirteen miles out of Flagstaff. They homesteaded 160 acres. Grandpa built a good two-bedroom house, dug a well by hand, and built two huge barns. There were no nails in the barns. He drilled holes by hand and drove in wooden pegs! They were sturdy and beautiful. The land was fertile but rocky. He and Clarence picked up rocks and built many rock fences. They raised grain, hay, potatoes, and pigs. Grandpa butchered the pigs and sold them to butcher shops in Flagstaff. The last few years he lived he had to give up farming. He raised chickens and sold eggs and chickens. He retired his horses and bought himself a Model-T Ford. He drove it ten miles an hour. That was fast to him.

Grandpa died of cancer at the age of seventy-five. Mama went and cared for him for two

months. After he died, Grandma lived with Clarence for a while. Then she came to California and lived with Mama and Dad. Then Clarence's wife died and she went back to live with Clarence and his children. She died when she was eighty-one. Grandma and Grandpa are both buried at Williams, Arizona.

Christina Isabelle Watson, my mother, was born December 7, 1884 in Woodriver, Idaho. She was the third child of Robert Willis Watson and Anna Carey. She spent her childhood in Idaho. The family was very poor but happy. She and her brother, Clarence, went to school in the winter with a horse and sleigh through the tall pines. Many times the hungry timber wolves followed them. Their father made them snowshoes and skis and sleds. In the summer they rode horseback. Mama always rode with a sidesaddle. She wore long skirts and it was not lady-like to ride like we do today. They gathered wild berries for their mother to make jams for winter. They caught beautiful trout in the Salmon River. Those were happy years for them. Of course there was also work they had to do.

After Mama's little sister died, Grandpa was not happy and wanted to try living somewhere else. So they moved to Oregon. Grandpa and Grandma had a boarding house there. Mama helped cook and serve and clean rooms. But they were not happy with it for long and soon wanted to leave. They went back to Idaho for a short time. Then they packed all their possessions that they did not want to leave behind and headed for California in a covered wagon. It was a long trip. They camped at night where there was water. One evening Mama went down to the little stream to get some water. As she bent over to dip up a pail of water, a strange man grabbed her. She yelled and Grandpa came running with a gun. The man let go of her and disappeared. One place they stopped a lady gave Mama a canary in a cage. And another place a man gave her a baby pig! They spent the winter in Mariposa, California. In the spring they headed out for Los Angeles. Aunt Bessie, Grandma's sister, lived there. Mama's grandparents were also living there.

I do not know just how long they stayed in Los Angeles. Mama went to Millinery school there and learned how to make ladies hats and to decorate them. Mama always made her hats. She would buy what she called a hat frame. Then she would cover it with silk and decorate it with artificial flowers or ostrich plumes. Then for each season she changed it. They were always very pretty.

After a while Grandpa was ready to move on. So they headed north this time to Watsonville. I do not know what brought them here. Grandpa rented the Bickmore place up Redwood Road. The place later became the Batinich place. Mama would walk down to the mail boxes on Brown's Valley Road to get the mail. There she met Kate Aldridge. They became lifelong friends. One Sunday she asked Mama to spend the day with her. There she met my father, Ernest Aldridge. When evening came the two girls started out walking to church, about a mile down the road. They heard some weird noises and Aunt Kate ran off and left Mama. Then out of some bushes stepped Dad. He walked Mama to the church. Later, Mama learned that it was all planned between Dad and Aunt Kate. Dad courted Mama for one year. Then they were married in the Bickmore house with both families present on July 2, 1904, on Mama's parents' 25th anniversary.

Dad had built a small house on the ranch that became Aunt Kate's and had furnished it. They were very happy there. In those days after a wedding there was always a shivaree. Friends of the couple would come over after the couple had put off their light and gone to bed. They would make a lot of noise and the couple was supposed to get up and let them in and serve

refreshments. Well, Mama had baked a cake for the occasion. As it turned out, only one man came. He and Dad ate the cake.

Mama did not have an easy life. She worked very hard and did everything the hard way. She had five children, three sons and two daughters. She did all kinds of work to help support the family. She worked in the apple packing sheds packing apples for a few years. Mama was very fast with her hands and did very well at piece work. In 1926 she started nursing. At first she went into the homes and took care of women when they had their babies. In those days a woman stayed in bed ten days after having a baby. Most babies were born in the home. Mama worked some in the Watsonville Hospital as a practical nurse. She took patients in her home and cared for them. Then she opened the first Convalescent Hospital in Watsonville. Most of her patients were on Old Age Pension. They received \$35.00 per month. So that is all Mama received for board, room and care. She did have a few better paying patients. After a year or so her health became very bad and she had to have surgery. For a while a friend carried on her work. But the convalescent home was finally closed. Several years later the big house where she had her Convalescent Hospital was torn down and a big, new building was built for a Convalescent Hospital. After Mama regained her health she took an old lady to care for in her home for a couple of years. She loved to care for people.

Mama had to have something to do. And she loved to do for others. So she took to sewing for the poor in Redwood City where she and Dad now lived. People gave her material to work with. Someone wrote an article about her work and put it in the paper. After that she never lacked for sewing material. Dad was always finding boxes of it on the front porch. He fixed up the garage for her sewing room. He built shelves and the clothing was arranged according to size on the shelves. People came there and outfitted their children.

When Dad was eighty-seven years old he became ill with tuberculosis, and was put in a sanitarium near Redwood City. He was there five months. He was home just two months and had a stroke and returned to the sanitarium. He died two-and-a-half months later. The day after his funeral, Mama entered the sanitarium with tuberculosis. The doctor knew she had it but was waiting for Dad to die before confining her. She spent six months there. She returned home and tried living in her home with a housekeeper. After a while she became sick and spent some time in the hospital. When she was able to leave the hospital my brother, Frank, took her to Napa to live with him and his family. She spent about two years there. Then she came to Watsonville and moved into the Pajaro Valley Convalescent Hospital. She spent her time visiting the patients who were bedfast. She talked to them, read their mail for them, and helped them in many ways. When she became unable to walk, she took herself around to visit in her wheelchair. She never gave up doing for others. She spent three-and-a-half years there and then moved on to heaven. She was eighty-five.

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OUR CAREYS

By Anna Belle Edwards

Our Careys are my Grandma Watson's people. They go back to England to Queen

Elizabeth, the daughter of King Henry VIII. The farthest ones back that we know of are John Carey and his wife, Elizabeth, of Plumstead Township, Buck's County, Pennsylvania. We are the descendants of this John and Elizabeth Carey.

The first record we found of them is the Warrant survey, and patent for 100 acres of Plumstead Township, for the sum of fifteen pounds and ten shillings and yearly quit-rent of one-half penny sterling for every acre -- 4 January 1737. We do not know who his parents were or when he arrived in the United States. John Carey died an "old man" on February 20, 1792. His will was proved on August 9, 1792. Elizabeth died May 23, 1794. Her will was proved on December 23, 1794. Their children: John, Thomas, Elizabeth, Ann, Hannah, Elias, Mary and Samuel.

Samuel Carey, the eighth child of John and Elizabeth, was born in Plumstead Township, Buck's county, Pennsylvania on April 2, 1732. He served in the Revolutionary War as a "Second Class Private" under Captain Robert Gibson from Plumstead Township, on June 6, 1780; and as "Second Class Private" under Militia Law on May 19, 1781. He married Rachel Doan, a Quaker, on March 18, 1776. Quakers being against war, he did not enlist. If they were drafted, they were disowned, but given the protection of prayer. We have no record that Samuel was a Quaker at this time, even though his wife, mother, and several brothers and sisters were. Many battles of the revolution were fought near their home and when "Washington crossed the Delaware," that also was near their home. The first migration was to Fairfax County, Virginia. The next move was to Highland County, Ohio. Samuel died of cholera on September 6, 1823 on his way home from a trip to Virginia. Samuel and Rachel were the parents of nine children: Cynthia, Sarah, Jonathon, John, Samuel Jr., Rachel, Elizabeth, Thomas, and Elias.

Thomas Carey was the eighth child of Samuel Carey and Rachel Doan. He was born January 13, 1791. He was married to Rhoda Ballard on December 20, 1815. They were the parents of ten children: Elizabeth, Joseph, Rachel, Susanna, Sarah, Samuel, John B., Alameda, Rhoda, and Mary Jane Carey. Thomas died September 11, 1854.

John B. Carey was the seventh child of Thomas and Rhoda Carey. He was born July 23, 1828. He married his first wife, Elizabeth Cox, on October 10, 1850. She died the following year during childbirth. The baby, a girl, lived. He insisted on caring for it himself. When it was about three months old it died in the night of croup. He married his second wife, Sara Isabel McNess, on October 9, 1853. They had many children but only raised a few of them to be grown. They lived in a Quaker settlement in Indiana. John B. served in the Civil War with the Indiana irregulars. He never received a pension. He died in 1910 or 1911 in the Los Angeles area.

Phebe Anna Carey was the daughter of John B, Carey and Sara Isabel McNess. She was born May 2, 1861 in Oak Creek, Indiana. I do not know much about her childhood in Indiana. She did tell me about shaking hands with Abraham lincoln. He passed through the area where she lived on the train. The train stopped and he got out and shook hands with the people. That was quite a thrill for her. When she was grown the family moved to Minnesota. There she met and married Grandpa on July 2, 1879. They settled in Idaho. Five children were born to them but they lost three of them. They lived in Idaho twenty years or more and then moved to California. Later they moved to Arizona. There they

homesteaded 160 acres on government prairie, near Flagstaff. They worked hard and built themselves a good home and were happy there. After Grandpa died Grandma spent a year in California with Mama. But she returned to Arizona when her son's wife died to keep house and care for his children. She died of pneumonia at the age of eighty-one. She and Grandpa are buried at Williams, Arizona.

I did not have the privilege of growing up near my Watson grandparents. We did visit them when I was eight years old. But I dearly loved Grandma. She was very sweet and patient. She never complained. And we know life was not easy for her. She enjoyed being with young people more than with people her age. She was always ready to help others and to share with any who had less than she.

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