

A Tiny Peak at our Watsons and Livingstons

By Anna L. Burton/ retyped by Jane Washburn

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Who are the Watsons? The Livingstons?

The ancestor of the Watsons came from Normandy and he can be traced in England very soon after the coming of the Duke of Normandy in 1066 A.D. England became his home and his descendants have formed a number of different colonies, even as far north as Durham and Northumberland counties, England. We hear of the Watsons often in official capacities, one of them being no less the Prime Minister of England!

Our ancestor, Joseph Watson, came from Alston Moor, Durham County, England to the large copper mines in the Vale of Avoca, county Wicklow, Ireland; because he was quite proficient in "dialing" {2013 NOTE: definition of dialing is a device that may be operated to make electrical connections or to regulate the operation of a machine}, he was given a large position, Captain of the mines. He met and married Elizabeth Cooper, daughter of a very influential nearby family, whose beautiful refinement and education, quality strengthened by a religious tenet, consciously or unconsciously threw a very gracious light on the life of us as descendants even to the present day. Of their children, we are especially interested later in Mary Watson and Thomas Watson, the teacher.

The ancestors of the Livingstons may have come from one of two places. One author thinks he sees evidence in our Livingston ancestor being a Saxon thane who was in Scotland near Edinburgh, a number of years before 1066 A.D. Other writers say the Livingston ancestor was Livingus, a Hungarian nobleman who came in the court of his princess, who was of both Hungarian and English descent in royalty, to near London just before William of Normandy came in the fall of 1066 A.D. to take the English throne.

The princess and her court attendants fled north to Edinburgh to be under the protection of the Scottish King. Livingus became a royal favorite and was given a large tract of land outside of Edinburgh. His villa, Livingus town, save the name Livingston; and its inhabitants, especially his children, were called Livingston. We prefer this explanation of our ancestry because it has been held in part, at least by many of our forefathers.

Livingus' descendants, one after another, for about 600 years, kept in very close touch with royalty, sometimes as tutor, sometimes as guardian, sometimes as keeper of the royal palace, etc., but never came into the royal line. They were always near and loyal to the loyal friend.

The Livingstons formed an honorable aristocracy (amongst them a long line of lords and earls) – not social aristocracy alone but the true aristocracy of the heart. From these families were many branches of honest yeomanry, David Livingstone, the great explorer and missionary, being amongst the number.

When the King needed services, two brothers of one family came to northern Ireland and were there during such troublous times as one reads of under James II of England (Baby Stuart) and the coming of William of Orange to northern Ireland. One descendant of these came to Carnew, county Wicklow, Ireland and settled there. The work was in leather and in the making of shoes, the sale for which they found very profitable at Avoca, county Wicklow. Here they kept in close touch of the Avoca Livingstons and Watsons both of which follow. In later years there were intermarriages, to which the Carnew Livingstons brought their excellent traits to be added to those in the later families.

From northern Ireland another Livingston descendant, John Livingston, came to Avoca, county Wicklow and had a [2013 NOTE: words missing from original copy—something about land?] copper mines just mentioned. He married a young woman in the neighborhood and of their children we, as descendants, are especially interested in Hugh, Robert and Elizabeth.

Hugh was a man who delighted in horticulture, especially in the raising of cherries and supervised one or more of the large cherry orchards in the neighborhood. He was very exact in business and this work, especially along administrative lines, kept him quite busy at home and in the locality of our ancestors in northern Ireland. His wife was Mary Ann Fitzsimons, a woman of a deeply religious nature. Their children were 8 in number; some of them, like father and mother, did not migrate to America, but remained at the different lines of work in which they were proficient. Two of them, Samuel and William, came to America; the latter, with his very excellent wife formerly Miss Katherine Meakin, settled in Livingston vicinity – southwest Wisconsin. Their 4 living children were John William, President of Platteville State Normal; Hubert Meakin; Thomas Edward; and Sue, who afterwards became Mrs. F. D. Rector.

We will leave this family now and go back to Hugh Livingston's brother Robert and sister Elizabeth. Robert's wife was Mary Watson and Elizabeth's husband was Thomas Watson, the teacher. Thus their children (Robert and Mary Watson Livingston had 12 and Thomas and Elizabeth Livingston Watson had 11), all born in or near the Vale of Avoca were double first cousins. When the older ones of Robert Livingston's found way to America, this attracted the interests of both families and finally by 1855 all of those two families and both groups of parents had left Ireland for a home in America. Thomas Watson, the teacher, died at sea on his way to America. Most of the children settled in southwest Wisconsin and with them their parents, Robert and Mary Watson Livingston and Elizabeth Livingston Watson—a concrete example of family loyalty! Not one parent nor child remained in Ireland. The Carnew Livingstons who were married into these two family groups are represented also. Through all our great ancestral families one great important trait shines out. They knew no socialism, no fascism and were the

very farthest from communists. Next to God, their home and family were supreme. So we find them making every effort to have their own home and to "keep the home fires burning".

After a time, because of the desire for coal mining occupation, Joseph Watson, wife and family moved from Wisconsin to near Pittsburg, PA where a large Watson colony was founded. After about '84 their son John (Cousin Jack) made quite regular visits to Wisconsin and kept in touch with his Watson relatives, at the same time keeping them in close touch with each other. (In Wis. And PA.) On the other hand, beginning at the time of migrating to America the family of Wm. Livingston, Sam's grandfather, kept in very close touch with family members remaining in Ireland and thus the Carnew Livingstons, the Robert Livingstons and the Watsons here in America were also kept informed. All this time, Wm. Livingston's children too, were deeply interested in relatives overseas and relatives here. Dr. Thomas Edward, already mentioned, very often expressed his loyalty and quite yearly visits to his people, the Livingstons and Watsons, at Livingston and vicinity, on each visit seeing each one even if only for a minute or two. All this strengthened all family ties. Thus he was and is the general favorite in all of the families.

On one of these visits - August, 1924 - plans were quickly on foot to have a family picnic in Dr. Tom's honor. Accordingly, on the afternoon of August 11, 1924, a large number of Watsons and Livingstons gathered in the Livingston village park; after pleasant visiting and a much enjoyed luncheon, the work of organizing a family association was soon under way. A President, Vice-President and Secretary were elected. Besides, there was the expressed plan of having a short family history collected.

And so the Livingston-Watson Family Association had its visible beginning. The annual meetings are held sometime in August and officers are elected by the regularly followed rule of having the President of one large family and Vice-President of another, alternating the selection each year. It works well.

Material for the family history has been quite fully collected and some of it has been written. It really makes a large amount of material collection, since it can be traced so far back and since such large families comprise its membership. Their directory covers many pages and their lines of business listed show a decided avoidance of destructive tendencies, such as dealing in alcoholics; but the choice of constructive uplift brings our people into enrollment as farmers, teachers galore, ministers, lawyers, doctors, dentists, nurses, dieticians, accountants, etc., etc., and in the proficiency of which we are and have the right to be justly proud.

Livingston Watson premi started in 1924

A BREVITY PEEK AT OUR WATSONS AND LIVINGSTONS

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