

THE COWARD FAMILY NEWSLETTER

1223 Wake Forest Road
Raleigh, NC 27604
April 18, 1979

Dear Kinfolks,

This newsletter is going out a bit early to tell you to mark your calendar for the next COWARD FAMILY REUNION, which will be held Father's Day, June 17, 1979. I want to give you plenty of time to mark your calendar and to make your plans for coming to this Jackson County, North Carolina, event.

I have several bits of news which caused me to write now.

Back in October I had a letter from Emma N. Hooper, which told of her new great-granddaughter, who is James Hooper's only grandchild. Parents are Sandra Hooper Hardwick and her husband Richard Hardwick. Their daughter Natalie Lynn was born September 20, 1978. This is Cousin Emma's 23rd great-grandchild.

Laura Suzanne Stevens was born December 30, 1977, to Judy Levi Stevens and her husband Capt. Samuel Stevens. (They attended the 1978 Reunion, Cousin Emma said.) They live in Columbia, S.C. They were in Germany when Tia was born. Since Cousin Emma wrote, they may have moved again. The Stevens have one other child, Malia Angeli, who was born May 5, 1972.

Ronald and Sharon Levi had a son, James Mathew Levi, born April 28, 1978. (Another son, Christopher, was born on Cousin Emma's birthday.) Clarence and Juanita Levi are the grandparents of these boys.

Hazel and Bill Lewis have seven grandchildren. Their youngest son, Morris and wife Lill have the youngest, about three, who is called Chrissy. the Lewises may have had another child since I heard from Cousin Emma.

Eugene Hooper has six grandchildren, Cousin Emma says. We appreciate so much her keeping us informed about the new family members.

A note dated March 8 from Charles D. Bird and Mary B. Nichols was received, which read as follows:

"Edna Coward Bird died February 26, 1979 in Greensboro at age 82. She was the youngest member of the children of Jonathan David (Dave) and Lou Norton Coward. With her death, the last survivor of the immediate J. D. Coward family is her sister Davie Coward Sutton. Edna leaves two children, Mary Elaine Nichols of Greensboro and Charles David Bird of Richardson, Texas, six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren."

Our sympathy is extended to all the family, and we will each keep the memory of Cousin Edna in our hearts.

In the March 8, 1979 WEBSTER NEWS article by Mildred Cowan was the following:

"All Joy Be Yours, Paul wrote to the church at Philippi. We feel that 'Miss Minnie' Norton Wilde had discovered that joy many years ago - the kind of joy that Christ brings. That joy is not the kind which ignores suffering, but the joy of having Christ in one's life. In His strength she could endure suffering, and yet create new hope in someone else. As Miss Minnie departed this life we can imagine her waving good-bye and with a smile and a twinkle in her eye say - 'All joy be yours - whoever you are.'

"During the years that Mrs. Wilde was a resident of Webster, she proved herself a good neighbor, a willing servant, an ardent support of the schools and churches of our little town. It was good to have known her."

I just talked with Cousin Minnie's daughter Nell Sillman who lives in Greensboro. Her mother passed away March 1, 1979, in Presbyterian Hospital in Charlotte. She was buried in the Webster Cemetery. The funeral service was held in the church in Webster in which Minnie had been married. She had celebrated her 95th birthday last June. Right up to the time of her death, she had a good keen mind and could still recite some of the poetry she had learned in her youth.

I had sent her a copy of BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAIN MEMORIES, which was written by Alice McGuire Hamilton, that told about the school days at Cullowhee around the time Minnie was in school. Nell read this to her while she lay ill in the hospital, and she said Minnie seemed to enjoy it.

This is a wonderful book, which I recommend to each of you. The names of people are changed, but are fairly easy to figure out, because they are not changed that much. For example, Greg McCloud is really George McGuire. Terence Byrnes is actually Terryll Byrd. Norman is actually Norton; Zimmer stands for Zachary, etc. I have tried to identify as many people as possible, and you can help be reading the book. It is printed by Conger Printing & Publishing Co, Atlanta, GA 30318.

In the WEBSTER NEWS article by Mildred Cowan, dated March 8, she referred to Holly Coward, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dale Coward of Norton Community, who was born Christmas Day 1978. She said Holly will captivate anyone's heart. The Dale Cowards have one other child, Tammy, who is a student at Brevard Junior College.

Jack's and my son, Frank Anderson Smith - known as "Andy" - was married February 10, 1979 to Louise Hern, daughter of the Reverend and Mrs. William Hern of Raleigh. The marriage took place in the Hern home, and the temperature that day was 8^o; snow was on the ground.

Our son Douglas was in Boone, NC - fortunately - the night that a fire destroyed the house he was living in which was located just outside of Raleigh. Had he been here, it could have been a bad experience because he might have been asleep in the house at the time. He lost all his personal possessions, but we rejoice that he has his life. This happened the night of April 6.

On April 12, our third "son" - Jimmy Robinson - was involved in a serious automobile accident. Miraculously, he came out of this without serious injury. Again, we rejoice that he has his life!

My sister Frances Payne had surgery on March 27 and is now recuperating at her home, 801 Runnymede Road, Raleigh, NC 27607. Her birthday was March 25. My other sister, Nell Hughes, became ill March 24 and spent several days in the hospital. She is now o.k. and back at work.

Our mother, Ellen Smith, is at the Hughes' home, 402 Avenue F, Southeast, Winter Haven, Florida 33880. We don't know when she plans to come back to Raleigh, yet. Mother's brother, Charlie Higdon of Franklin, died January 22.

Jack and I visited Jane Coward on January 27, 1979. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit. She would be happy to have any kin stop by for a visit, and I recommend that if you are in Sylva that you give her a call and stop in to see her.

Garth and Florence Thompson and Clara Wendt visited their sister Elise Meeks in latter part of January. I had hoped to join them, but could not get to Florida at the same time they did. I did get down to Ft. Lauderdale on February 2. Clara was still there, and I enjoyed a visit with her and Elise. The three of us went to Winter Haven and saw Mother, Nell and Tommy Hughes. I arrived back in Raleigh on Feb. 7 (by train). Snow on ground. Bad weather throughout February here in Raleigh. Ft. Lauderdale had beautiful weather - wish I could have stayed longer. However, the visit was grand, though short.

All the SMITH COUSINS are working on a project, and we need your help. The Western Carolina University Trustees are to name the new Administration-Heritage Building in May. We are urging them to name the building for LEWIS J. SMITH, the first chairman of the Board of Trustees. Lewis J. Smith was married to Clara Coward, oldest child of Nathan Coward/Jane Rogers. He was very instrumental in getting the school started at Cullowhee, and he has never been properly recognized. We feel that now is the time! We need letters written to the Trustees in support of this. Will you please take time to write and give support to this endeavor? I personally will be forever grateful.

The Smith Cousins have started "The Lewis J. Smith Fund" which will go to the Heritage Center if the building is named for Lewis J. Smith. We have raised about \$1,500, so far. We are just getting started, and contributors have been Cassie W. Griffin, Mrs. S. K. Mohanty, Jimmy Hooper, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Smith and their three boys, Clyde Smith, Rebecca Smith, Clara Wendt, Elise McGuire, and Jo Ann Smith. We are hoping other kin will make contributions. There is no contribution too small. In fact many small contributions grow into large amounts. We have this Fund in the State Employees Credit Union, drawing interest, and we are counting on the building being named for Lewis J. Smith and the Fund supporting worthwhile projects at the Heritage Center located in the new building.

For the sake of Western Carolina University, for the memory of the efforts of Lewis J. Smith and his wife Clara Coward Smith, and all the other Coward family members who helped make the school possible, and for lending a helping hand to your present kin, please contact the Chancellor H. R. "Cotton" Robinson and the Board of Trustees and urge them to name this new building for Lewis J. Smith (1843-1901).

(Should you wish to make a contribution to the Fund, make your check payable to "The Lewis J. Smith Fund" and mail it to me: Mrs. H. A. Smith, 1223 Wake Forest Road, Raleigh, NC 27604.)

*The Family Scribe,
Jo Ann Smith*