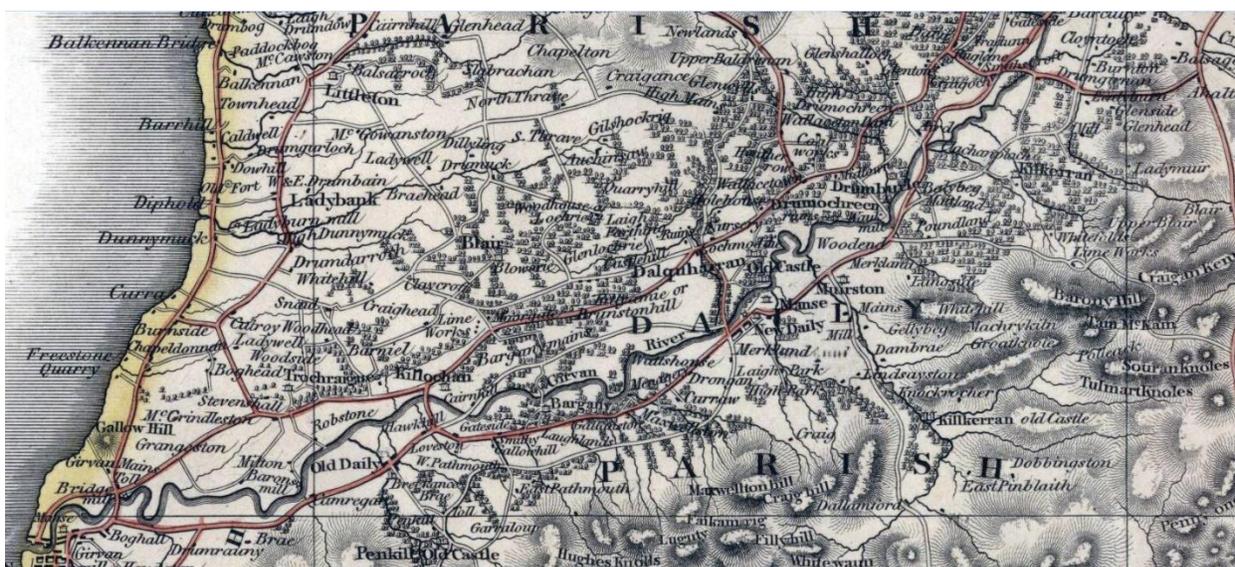




## The Watsons of Dailly Parish, Ayrshire, Scotland

*The Wasson line of our family tree is connected to five known generations of the Watson family of Dailly Parish, Ayrshire, in southwest Scotland.*



*This 1832 map includes Dailly Parish.*

Information about our Watson family history in Scotland can be found primarily in the Dailly Parish Church registry, Dailly Parish, Ayrshire, although there are some significant gaps in coverage before 1800.

- Parish birth and baptism registries date back to 1691, with some damaged and missing pages especially in the early years. Mothers' names were not included in birth records until 1794. For many records, only the baptism date was provided.
- Parish marriage registries date back to 1692, again with some damaged and missing pages especially in the early years. If the spouse was from another parish, the marriage may have been recorded in either or both parish records.

- Parish death records date back only to 1780, and only entitled burials were recorded before 1792.
- Civil registration, also called the statutory records, replaced the parish registries for births, marriages and deaths at the start of January 1855. However, by 1855 our relatives living in Dailly Parish did not include any of our direct ancestors.

Useful census records date back only to 1841. There are other limited sources of information, including tax records and wills. So far, I have not found any information specific to our known direct ancestors in Scotland in these other sources.



*The Dailly Parish Church registry holds birth, baptism, marriage and death records for our Watson ancestors.*



*View of Old Dailly from Garryloop Road. The white house at the left is the location of the Smithy, where our Watson ancestors were living by the start of the 1700s.*

## Generations 1 & 2 – Robert Watson and Unknown Spouse and their Children

We are direct descendants of Robert Watson and his wife.

### Birth

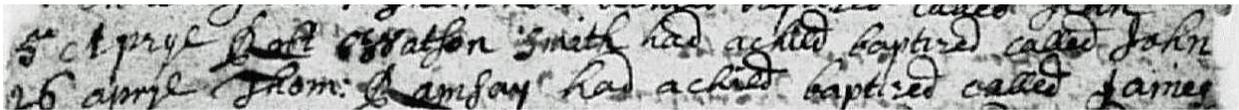
Dailly Parish records do not go back far enough to cover Robert Watson's birth. A search across all Ayrshire birth records for the likely period of his birth did not turn up any useful potential candidates born elsewhere.

### Marriage

A search across all Scotland parish marriage records for the likely period of Robert Watson's marriage turned up one reasonable potential candidate – a Robert Watsone married Agnes Beg in Sorn. However, there was nothing in the record that suggested he might have become a blacksmith in Dailly a few years later, and parish birth records showed that this Robert and Agnes were having children in Sorn from 1701 to 1711.

### Children

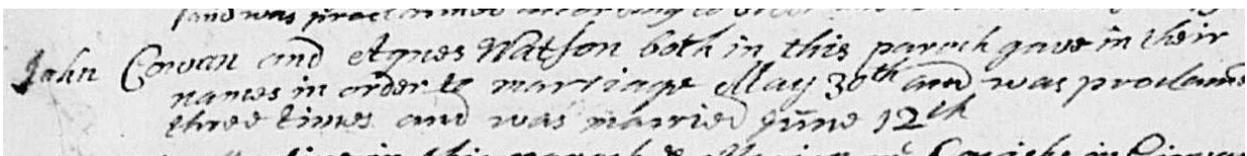
The earliest record I found for the Watson line of our family is the 1702 birth record for Robert Watson's son John Watson<sup>1</sup>.



*"5 April Robt Watson smith had a child baptized called John" [sic]*

We are direct descendants of Robert's son John<sup>1</sup>. (see below)

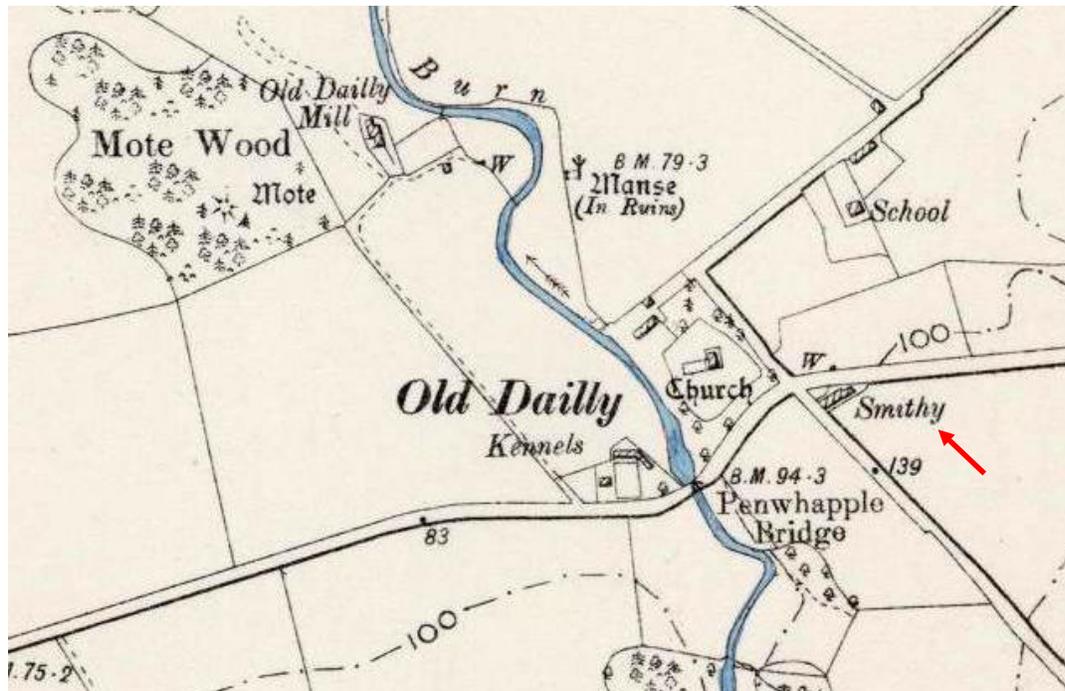
Robert may have had more children, including a possible daughter Agnes. The 1735 marriage record for an Agnes Watson to John Cowan is evidence that Agnes was age appropriate to be a possible daughter. However, the record for the birth of John Watson<sup>1</sup> is the only Watson birth record I found in the Dailly Parish registry dated before 1725.



*"John Cowan and Agnes Watson both in this paroch [parish] gave in their names in order to marriage May 30<sup>th</sup> and was proclaimed three times and was married June 12<sup>th</sup>" [sic]*

I have not found any other information that I could confirm is about this Robert Watson, including his wife's name. But this is the period where there are a lot of gaps in the parish records.

From a family history standpoint, we are lucky that at this time there were only about 300 residents in Dailly Parish, and that blacksmith was an uncommon occupation that was typically passed from father to son. There were other Watsons who moved into Dailly Parish over the next century, but none that I have been able to connect to our family.



*This 1897 map of Old Dailly shows that the Smithy is opposite the Old Dailly Church ruins. The Old Dailly Church was left to fall to ruins less than ten years before John Watson's 1702 birth, when a new parish church opened in a more central location.*



*The Smithy in Old Dailly in 2012. Except for the addition of a front entryway, the building has the same footprint as shown on earlier maps.*

- For more about the Smithy, see [The Smithy at Old Dailly, Dailly Parish, Ayrshire, Scotland.](#)

### Death and Burial

It is not known when Robert died, as Dailly Parish death records do not go back far enough. Robert Watson was likely buried in the Old Dailly Churchyard. There are a number of unmarked graves surrounding three marked graves for some of our Watson ancestors and their descendants.



*Old Dailly Church ruins and churchyard. The line of three grave markers starting with the large marker at the left edge of the photo are for descendants of Robert Watson and their spouses.*

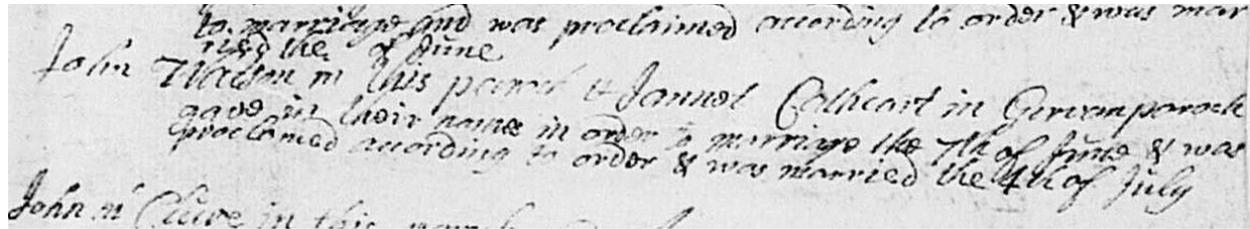
- For more about the church and churchyard, see [Old Dailly Church, Dailly Parish, Ayrshire, Scotland.](#)

## Generations 2 & 3 – John Watson<sup>1</sup> and Jannet Cathcart and their Children

We are direct descendants of John Watson<sup>1</sup>, son of Robert Watson and unknown spouse, and Jannet Cathcart, daughter of unknown parents.

### Marriage

John Watson<sup>1</sup> next appears in the Dailly Parish registry when his marriage to Jannet Cathcart was recorded in 1728.



*“John Watson in this paroch [parish] & Jannet Cathcart in Girvan paroch gave in their names in order to marriage the 7<sup>th</sup> of June & was proclaimed according to order & was married the 4<sup>th</sup> of July” [sic]*

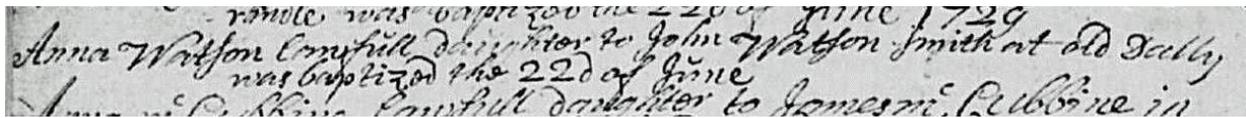
I was not able to confirm a birth record for Jannet Cathcart. There was an age-appropriate birth record for a Janet Cathcart in Ayr, Ayrshire. However, Girvan Parish, Ayrshire birth records date back to only 1733, and there is no reason to assume that Ayr’s Janet Cathcart moved to Girvan.

There were a number of Cathcarts in the Old Dailly and Girvan area. Killochan Castle, just to the north of Old Dailly, was the ancestral home of the Cathcarts of Carleton a.k.a. Clan Cathcart. Tax records showed Cathcart families living at Grangeston and Girvan Mains, just west of Killochan Castle along the road to Girvan Village in the late 1600s. However, neither Girvan nor Dailly Parish records go back that far, so there are no known records that connect Jannet Cathcart to the Grangeston, Girvan Mains or Killochan Castle Cathcarts. That said, I believe that it is likely that Jannet Cathcart is related to these Cathcarts.

- For more about our possible ancestral ties to the Cathcarts of Carleton, see [Clan Cathcart of Killochan Castle](#).

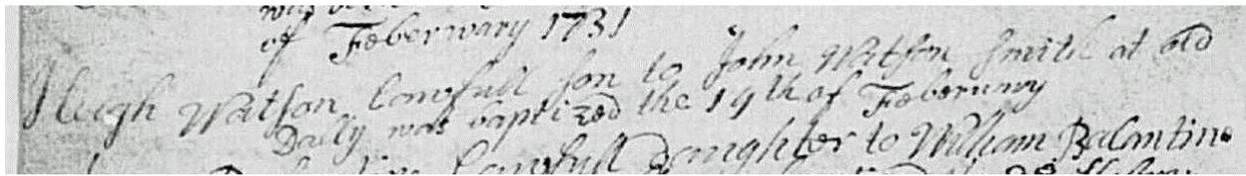
## Children

John<sup>1</sup> and Jannet had at least five children, all while John<sup>1</sup> was the blacksmith at Old Dailly.

A snippet of a handwritten baptism record in cursive script. The text reads: "Anna Watson lawfull daughter to John Watson Smith at Old Dally was baptized the 22d of June 1729".

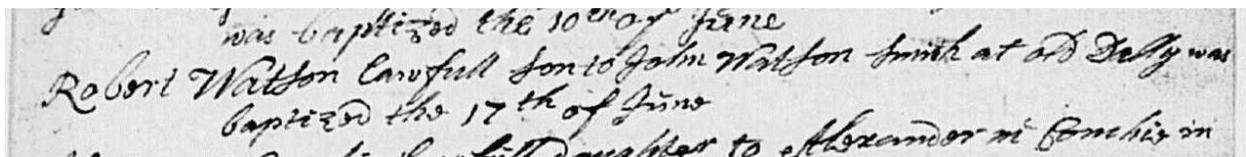
*"Anna Watson lawfull daughter to John Watson Smith at Old Dally was baptized the 22d of June [1729]" [sic]*

I found no further information about this Anna Watson.

A snippet of a handwritten baptism record in cursive script. The text reads: "Hugh Watson lawfull son to John Watson Smith at Old Dally was baptized the 19th of February 1731".

*"Hugh Watson lawfull son to John Watson Smith at Old Dally was baptized the 19<sup>th</sup> of February [1731]" [sic]*

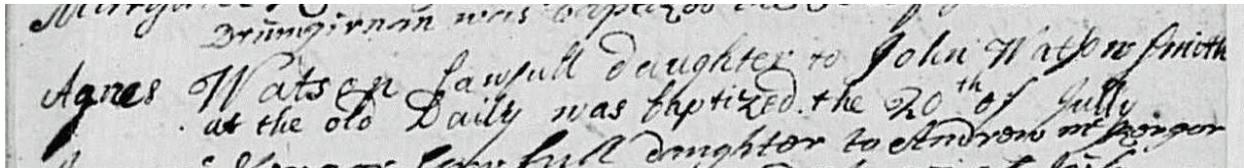
I found no further information about this Hugh Watson.

A snippet of a handwritten baptism record in cursive script. The text reads: "Robert Watson lawfull son to John Watson Smith at Old Dally was baptized the 17th of June 1733".

*"Robert Watson lawfull son to John Watson Smith at Old Dally was batized the 17<sup>th</sup> of June [1733]" [sic]*

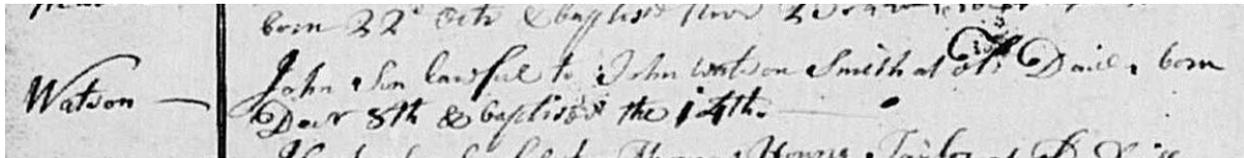
An age-appropriate Robert Watson married an Agnes Crawford in the parish, and they resided at Kilkerran, also in Dailly Parish, when their children were born. However, there is no information that specifically connects the Kilkerran Robert Watson to John<sup>1</sup> and Jannet's son Robert.

The only death record for a Robert Watson in the 1700s notes that he died in Dailly Parish in 1786 and was buried in nearby Kirkmichael Parish, even though Agnes Crawford was from Dailly Parish, as were John<sup>1</sup> and Jannet Watson. Was this Robert Watson her husband? Kilkerran is close to Kirkmichael Parish, no further births were recorded for Robert and Agnes after 1786, and Agnes was a widow when she died in 1803. I believe that stronger although not yet conclusive evidence suggests that the Kilkerran Robert Watson instead may have been from Kirkmichael Parish, Ayrshire.



*“Agnes Watson Lawful daughter to John Watson Smith at the Old Dailly was baptized the 20<sup>th</sup> of July [1735]” [sic]*

I found no further information about this Agnes Watson.



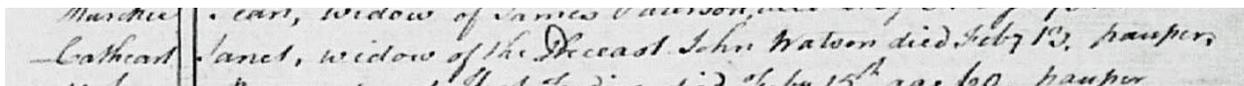
*“Watson – John son lawful to John Watson Smith at Old Dailly born Decr 8<sup>th</sup> & baptized the 14<sup>th</sup> [1740]” [sic]*

We are direct descendants of John<sup>1</sup> and Jannet’s son John<sup>2</sup>. (see below)

Deaths and Burials

I have not found a death record for John Watson<sup>1</sup>. His wife was a widow when she died in 1784, and Dailly Parish deaths were not recorded before 1780, so he likely died before 1780 and was likely buried in an unmarked grave in the Old Dailly Churchyard.

Jannet died Febrary 13, 1784, and was likely buried in an unmarked grave in the Old Dailly Churchyard.



*“Cathcart Janet, widow of the Deceast John Watson died Feby 13, pauper.”*

- For more about Jannet Cathcart’s status at death as a pauper, see [Janet Cathcart, Pauper?](#).

Research Notes

It was common practice in Scotland during the 1700s to name children after the grandparents, parents, great grandparents, aunts and uncles. Given the names of John<sup>1</sup> and Jannet’s children, this suggests that Jannet Cathcart’s father may have been named Hugh Cathcart, and that the children’s grandmothers may have been named Anna and Agnes. This naming practice was neither required nor universally followed, however, and it broke down in the 1800s.

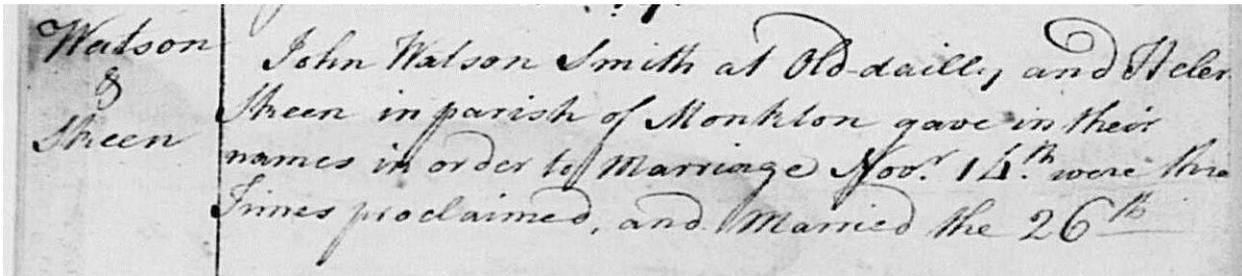
- For more about this naming practice, see [Scottish Given Name Conventions for Children](#).

### Generations 3 & 4 – John Watson<sup>2</sup> and Helen Skeene and their Children

We are direct descendants of John Watson<sup>2</sup> and Helen Skeene.

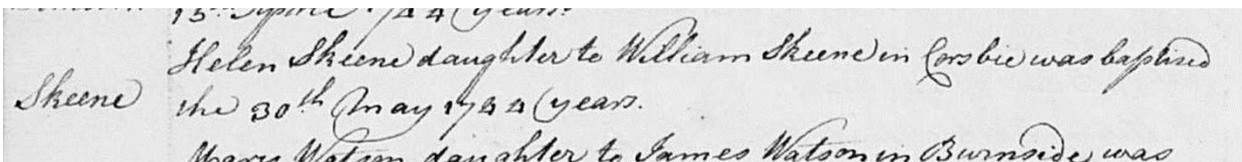
#### Marriage

John Watson<sup>2</sup> next appears in the Dailly Parish registry when his marriage to Helen Skeen (Skeene) was recorded in 1767.



*“Watson & Skeen – John Watson Smith at Old Dailly and Helen Skeen in parish of Monkton [Ayrshire] gave in their names in order to marriage Nov. 14<sup>th</sup> were three times proclaimed, and married the 26<sup>th</sup>” [sic]*

I found a likely birth record for Helen Skeene.



*“Skeene – Helen Skeene daughter to William Skeene in Corsbie [Dundonald Parish, Ayrshire] was baptised the 30<sup>th</sup> May 1744 year” [sic]*

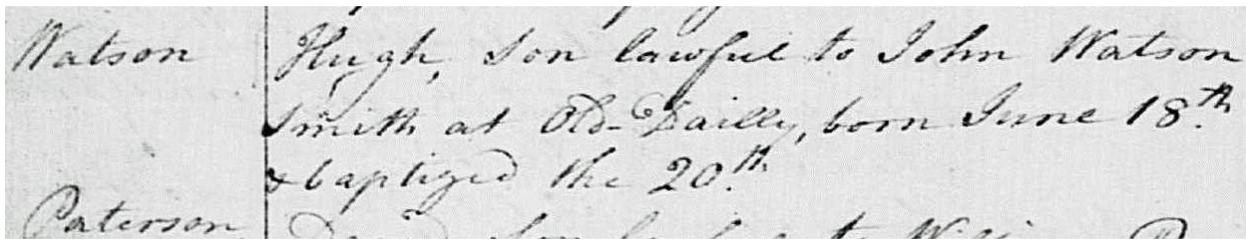
Corsbie (Crosbie) is located towards the south end of Dundonald Parish, Ayrshire, just to the north of Monkton and Prestwick Parish, Ayrshire, between Troon and the Prestwick Airport. Much of Corsbie Castle was torn down in the 1700s, its stones used in the construction of Fullarton House, which was built nearby.

Helen had at least two siblings, an older brother Alexander, born in 1738, and an older sister Agnes, born in 1742. I was not able to find any more details about her father William. Her mother’s name is unknown.

- For more about the Skeenes, see [The Skeenes of Dundonald Parish, Ayrshire, Scotland](#).

## Children

John<sup>2</sup> and Helen had at least six children, all while he was the blacksmith at Old Dailly.



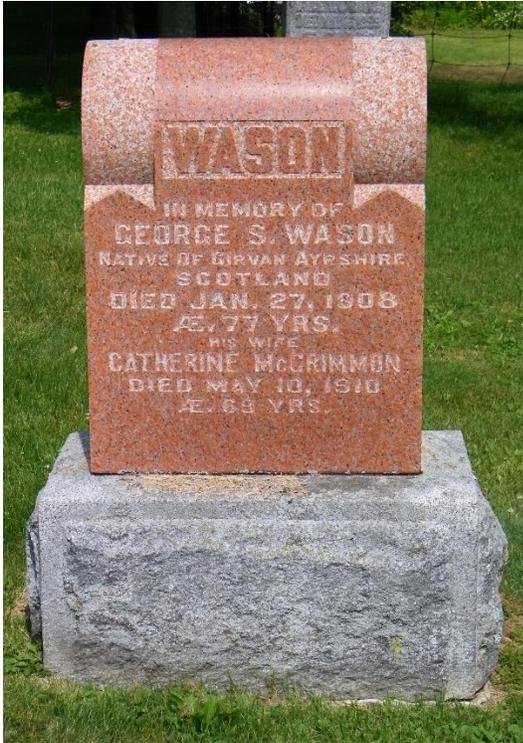
*“Watson – Hugh, son lawful to John Watson Smith at Old Dailly, born June 18<sup>th</sup> & baptized the 20<sup>th</sup> [1769]” [sic]*

Son Hugh Watson married Janet Craig. They moved to the Newton-on-Ayr, where he worked as a plasterer. Several of their children were born in Newton-on-Ayr. The West of Scotland Glottalization dialect change was occurring during this time, so his first son was born “Watson”, the second “Wawson”, and his last four children were all born “Wason”.

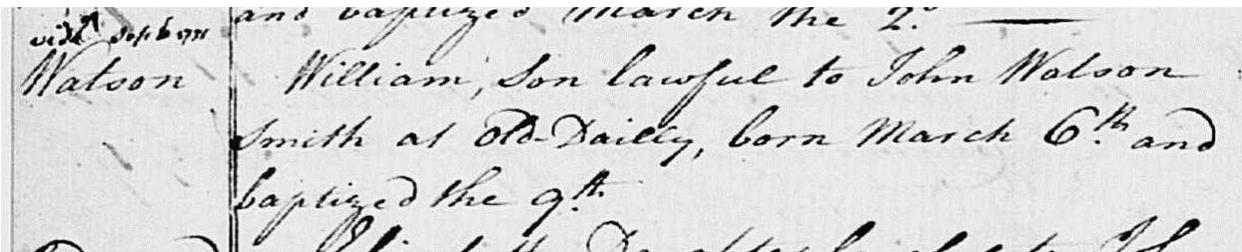
We see this name change for a number of children born in this generation of John<sup>2</sup> and Helen’s descendants.

- For more the evolution of the name “Wasson”, see [From “Watson” to “Wasson” and “Wason”](#).

Hugh and Janet’s grandson, George Smith Wason, emigrated to Canada, eventually settling in Lochiel, Ontario, where he and his eight children used Wason as their surname. At least one of George’s children, William Kay Wason, ended up in the United States.



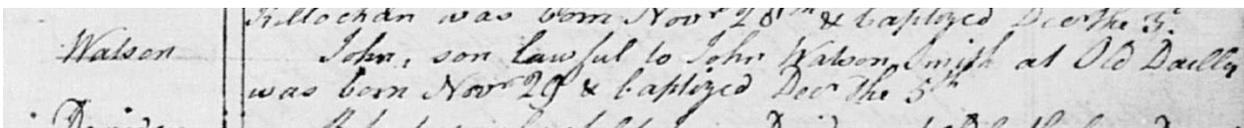
George Wason and his wife Catherine were buried in Hillside Cemetery, Hawkesbury, Ontario.



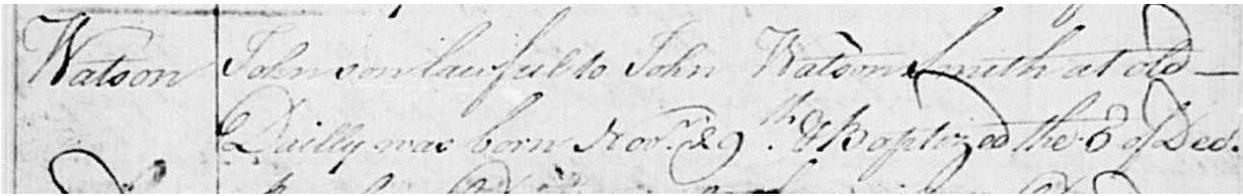
“Watson – William, Son lawful to John Watson Smith at Old Dailly, born March 6<sup>th</sup> [1771] and baptized the 9<sup>th</sup>” [sic]

I found no further information about son William Watson.

For a few years there were two copies of some Dailly Parish records. The birth and baptism of John Watson<sup>3</sup> were recorded in both copies.

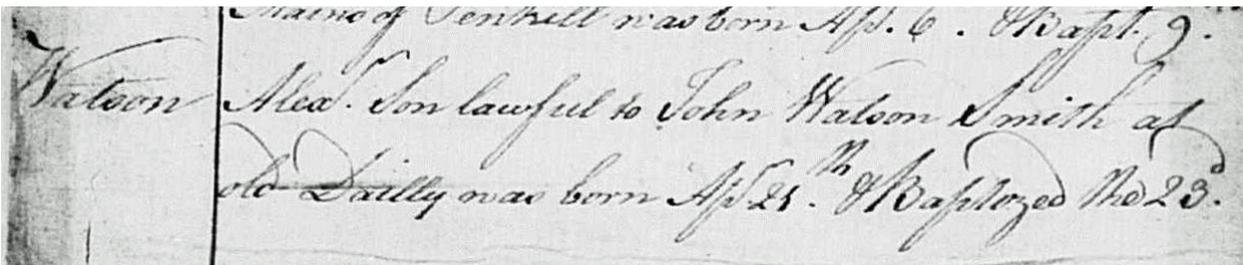


“Watson – John [John Wasson<sup>3</sup>], son lawful to John Watson Smith at Old Dailly was born Nov 29 [1773] & baptized Dec the 5<sup>th</sup>” [sic]



*"Watson – John [John Watson<sup>3</sup>] son lawful to John Watson Smith at Old Dailly was born Nov. 29<sup>th</sup> [1773] & baptized the 5<sup>th</sup> of Dec." [sic]*

John<sup>2</sup> and Helen reused the name John for a later son who was born in 1778, which suggests that John Watson<sup>3</sup> died in early childhood.



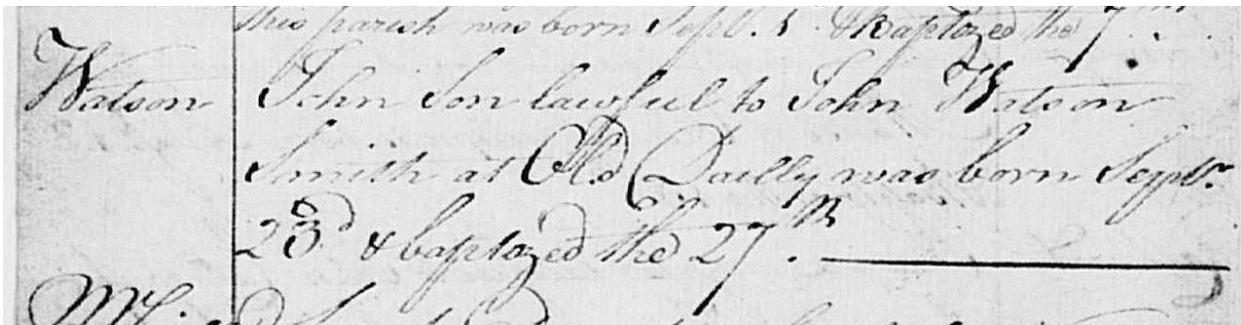
*"Watson – Alexr. Son lawful to John Watson Smith at Old Dailly was born Apr 20<sup>th</sup> [1776] & baptized the 23<sup>d</sup>." [sic]*

Son Alexander Watson married Elizabeth Craig. They settled on Kilgrammie in Dailly Parish, where their six children were born, the first four named "Watson", the fifth "Wawson" and the sixth "Wason".

Alexander and Elizabeth's granddaughter Elizabeth Downie Wason married William Alexander. Elizabeth, William and their eight surviving children emigrated to the United States, settling in New Straitsville, Ohio before 1880.

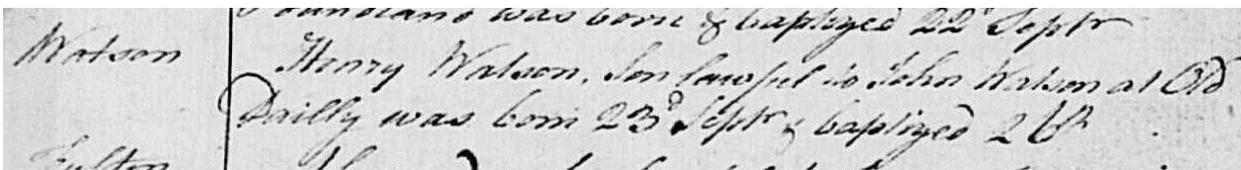


*Elizabeth Downie Wason Alexander, her husband and several of their descendants were buried in New Straitsville Joint Cemetery, New Straitsville, Ohio.*



*“Watson – John [John Watson<sup>4</sup>] Son lawful to John Watson Smith at Old Dailly was born Sept. 23d [1778] & baptized the 27<sup>th</sup>.” [sic]*

We are direct descendants of John<sup>2</sup> and Helen’s son John<sup>4</sup>. (see below)



*“Watson – Henry Watson, Son lawful to John Watson at Old Dailly was born 23d Sept [1784] & baptized 26<sup>th</sup>” [sic]*

Son Henry Watson first married Janet McBlain, but she died a couple years later. He then married Jane Roxborgh. They had two children, the first born as “Wasson” and the second as “Wason”.

Henry and Jane's grandson Henry Wasson/Wason moved to Lewis County, New York, where he married, and where he and his wife had seven children, some named "Wasson" and some "Wason", but they seemed to settle on "Wason".



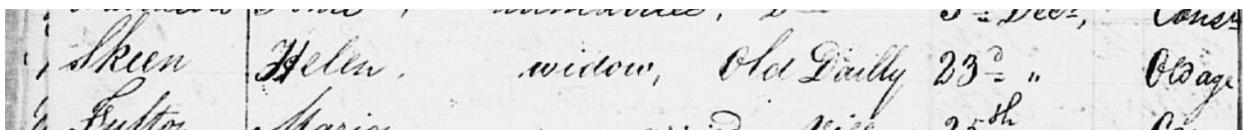
*Henry Wason, his wife Clara and some of their children were buried in Port Leyden Cemetery, in Port Leyden, Lewis County, New York.*

Henry and Jane's grandson Alexander McGill moved with his wife and at least one child to Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan in Canada.

### Deaths and Burials

According to his tombstone in the Old Dailly Churchyard, John Watson<sup>2</sup> (now Wason) died on May 17, 1818. I did not find a parish death record for him. The appropriate page from the Dailly Parish Church registry has no entries from March through May 1818. Entries resumed in June with different handwriting.

Helen Skeen died December 23, 1832, and was buried in the Old Dailly Chuchyard.



*"Skeen Helen, widow, Old Dailly 23<sup>d</sup> Old age" [sic]*



*Marker for John Watson<sup>2</sup> (now Wason) and Helen Skeene (now Skeen), Old Dailly Churchyard*

John<sup>2</sup> and Helen's marker in the Old Dailly Churchyard is flanked by two markers for some of their descendants and their families.



Marker for Jane Wason and her family. Jane Wason is John<sup>2</sup> and Helen's granddaughter. John McGill is her husband. James, William, Jane, Helen, John and Jane are some of their children. Margaret Wilson McMinn is John and Jane's granddaughter, and Robert Knox is likely her spouse.



*Marker for Charles Dalton Wasson and his family. Charles Dalton Wasson is John<sup>2</sup> and Helen's great grandson. Margaret is his wife, and John Cathcart Wason is their son.*

#### Research Notes

Although all of John<sup>2</sup> and Helen Watson's children were born at the Smithy in Old Dailly, references to the Smithy in our family's Dailly Parish records disappeared after this, although some of their descendants continued to live, have children and die in Old Dailly. The village of Old Dailly started fading after the parish church was moved to Milncavish. The village of New Dailly was laid out near the new parish church in the mid-late 1700s, and New Dailly soon became the population center of the parish, complete with its own blacksmith.

## **Generations 4 & 5 – John Watson<sup>4</sup> and Jane Lambie and their Children**

We are direct descendants of John Watson<sup>4</sup> and Jane Lambie.

John Watson<sup>4</sup> married Jane Lambie in Dailly Parish in 1802. Jane was the ninth of at least eleven children born to William Lambie and an unknown spouse at Liffnock in Galston Parish, Ayrshire.

- For more about the Lambies, see [The Lambies of Eastern Ayrshire, Scotland.](#)

John<sup>4</sup> and Jane settled on Hawkhill in Dailly Parish where their children William (1803) and Robert (1806) were born.

- For more about Hawkhill, see [Hawkhill, Dailly Parish, Ayrshire, Scotland.](#)

They then moved to Craighead in Dailly Parish where their children James and Agnes (twins, 1808), Janet (1811) and John<sup>5</sup> (1813) were born.

- For more about Craighead, see [Craighead, Dailly Parish, Ayrshire, Scotland.](#)

When living at Drummellan in Dailly Parish, their children Helen (1816) and Hugh (1820) were born.

- For more about Drummellan, see [Drummellan and Kilkerran, Dailly Parish, Ayrshire, Scotland.](#)

It is not known where the Watsons lived in the period after Hugh was born up to their 1834 emigration to the United States, where they lived the rest of their lives.

- For more about John Watson<sup>4</sup> and Jane Lambie, see [John Watson and Jane Lambie.](#)

We are direct descendants of their son John Watson<sup>5</sup> and his wife Jemima Russell.

- For more about their lives, see [John Watson and Jane Lambie](#) and [John and Jemima Wasson in Iowa.](#)

Prepared by Mark David Wasson  
Last updated August 31, 2021