

W A T K I N S O N

WATKINSON Is not an English name. Dictionaries of surnames suggest that it came from Flanders or from the Netherlands early in the 11th century. Records refer to ADAM filius WATERKINI (*Cantulary Rolls, Osney Abbey, Oxfordshire, c1200 AD*), JOHN WATKYN (*Subsidy Rolls, Suffolk, 1327*), JOHN WATKINSON, son of WATKYN (*Register of the Guild of Corpus Christie, City of York, 1485*).

It would appear that WATKINSONS were in America before the mid 17th century, wills are recorded of descendants of the WATKINSON and Ackerly families (Library of Congress 2967, 'American and English Genealogies').

GEORGE FREDERICK (1788) was a Londoner, and was married in Christchurch, Newgate Street, in 1809. It was from this church opposite Newgate Prison that two WATKINSONS had been taken to Tyburn on a hurdle in 1580. The family, with nine children, lived in Fore Street, near Cripplegate, and worshipped at the Church of St Giles Without. George was admitted to the Guild of Clothworkers in July 1824, and was a Freeman of the City of London. JOHN FREDERICK (1827) was baptised at St Giles, and married there on 25th December 1850.

GEORGE FREDERICK (1813) was twice married with two families, but we have no details. Scant records of CHARLOTTE (1825) show that she took the veil and was still in the convent when she died. MARIE LOUISE (1821), also a Catholic, went to live at Deal, Kent, following her marriage to Prior. WILLIAM HENRY (1817) died in 1859 when his only daughter, Jane, was aged eleven, and she was adopted by her uncle John (qv), joining a family which was to grow to ten children.

HENRY JOHN (1851) was married three times, and his second and third wives were apparently sisters. MARIA LOUISA (1821) married an amateur painter, Tavener, who was also Unitarian Pastor at Ipswich, Suffolk.

FREDERICK GEORGE (1856) was apprenticed for seven years from the age of 12 to Thomas de la Rue in Bunhill Row. He rose to Chief Engineer and eventually retired having had a hand in developing machines for printing rail tickets, playing cards and stamps. He was a member of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers and patented the first four-wheel drive with radial steering. He also served on the first Council in Islington Borough, and in retirement in Billericay he was 'Guardian of the Poor' responsible for the workhouse, also a District Councillor and Churchwarden.

SAMUEL SUMMERS (1862) was also a printer, and went to work in Windsor, Ontario. From there he went to the Klondyke with the Gold Rush, and in a later photograph he is seen outside his general store in Payallup, Washington State with two sons.

LEONARD HENRY (1892) married in Kandy, Ceylon, and was buried six days later in Colombo after a car accident. KENELM FREDERICK (1881) joined the Indian Geological Survey in 1913 and was based in Calcutta for many years.

THOMAS (1887) lived to almost 100 despite smoking 40 Capstan Full Strength every day.

CLEMENT HENRY (1883) went to Moscow in 1908 for Union Cold Storage. Married during this spell, Barbara (1913) was born at home, but Peggy (1917) was born at Kosloff. Mother and children had to flee Russia as refugees, Clement was imprisoned by the Bolsheviks and many of his colleagues were shot. He was repatriated in 1920 on the first prisoner exchange, and was content to spend the rest of his working life commuting to the City.

PERCY JOHN (1885) left home aged 17 for Toronto, worked his way across Canada doing logging and some gold prospecting. Eventually settled in Kodiak Island, Alaska and ran a successful business for some years. Subsequently moved to the USA and started another business, in building components, and lived into his nineties.

Another nonagenarian was HAROLD EDWARD (1889), who had three careers as an architect and Chartered Surveyor: he worked on the First Garden City at Letchworth, then was District Surveyor for the London County Council until the age of 65, when he started in practice in North London; he was active as senior partner to the age of 92.

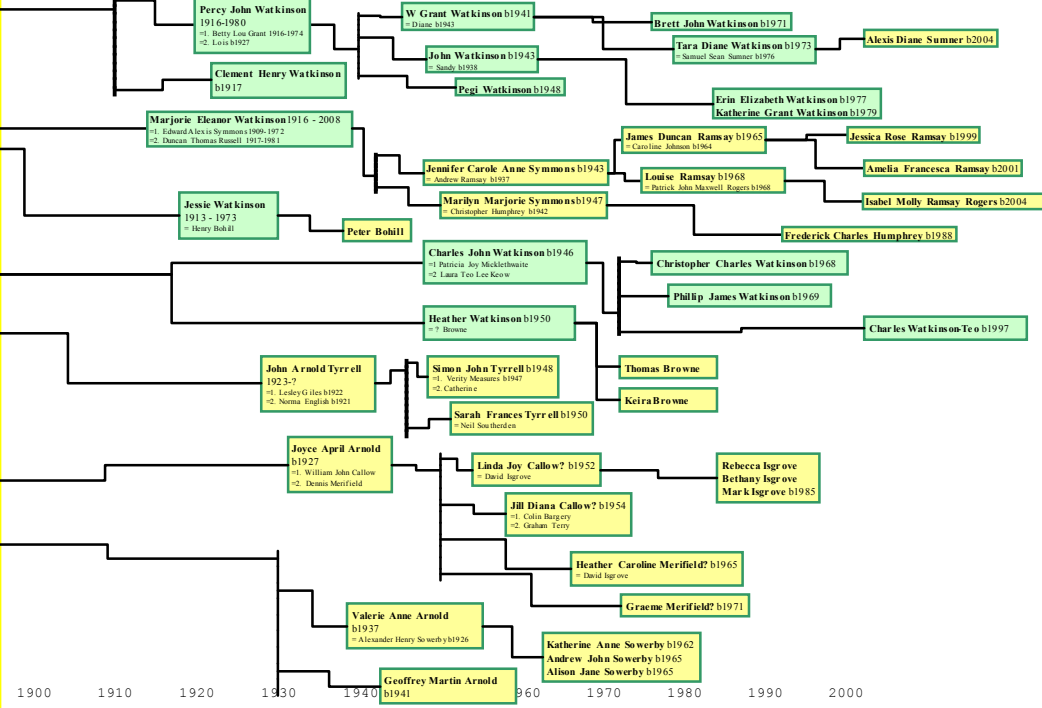
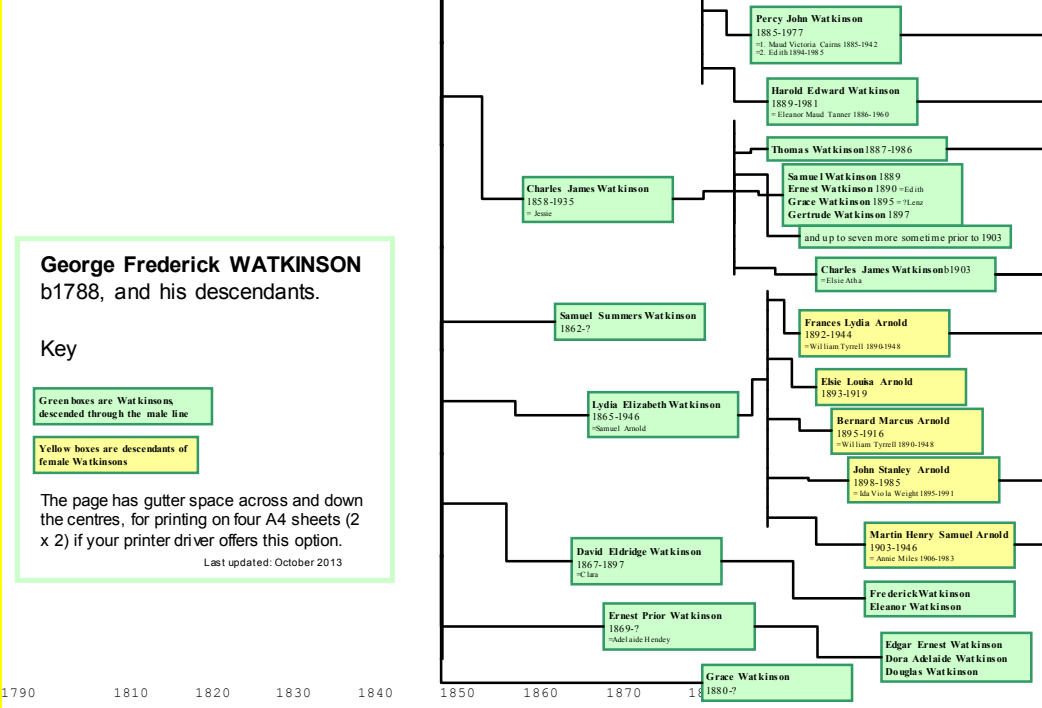
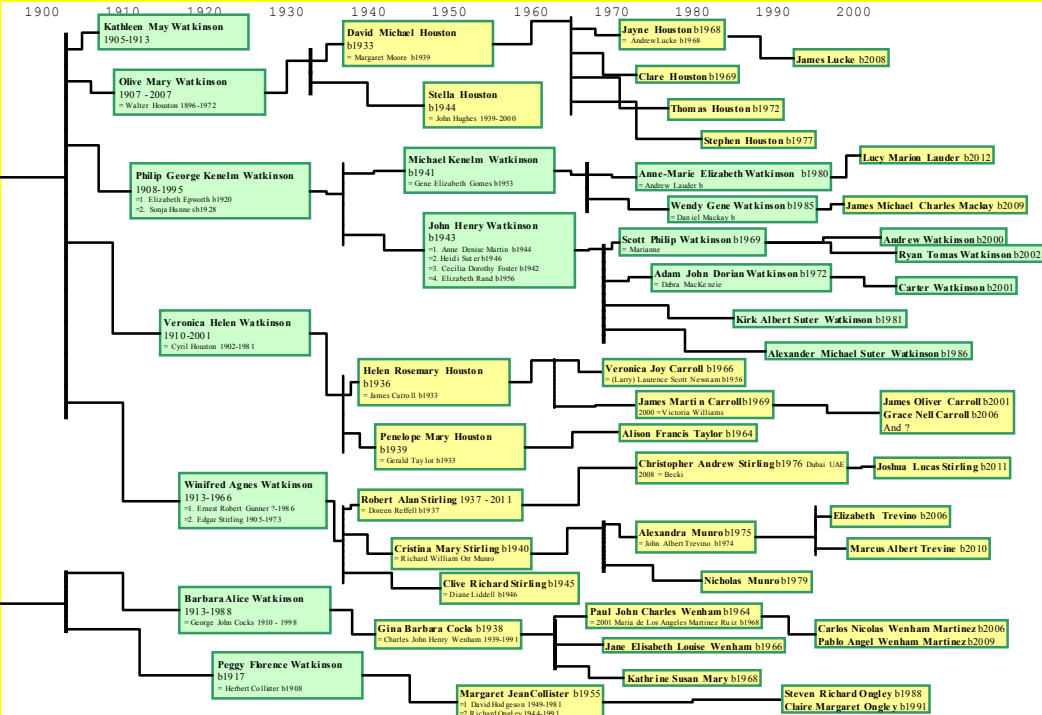
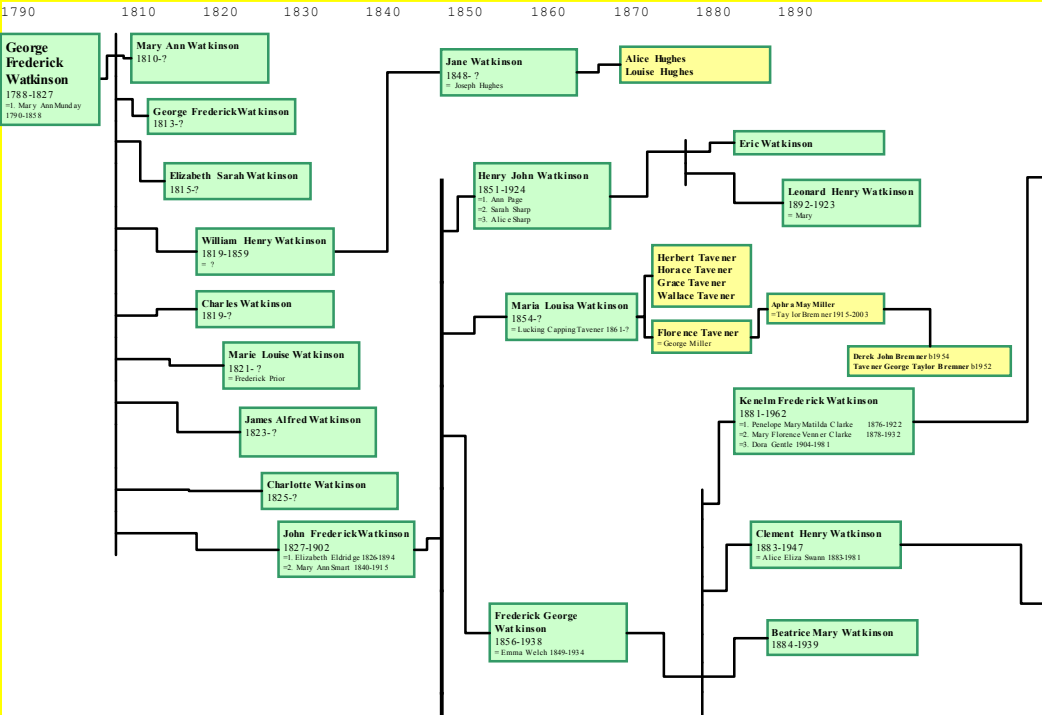
WATKINSONS lived in or near Fore Street for over 300 years, and worshipped at St Giles Without. Before the 1939 war ROBERT WATKINSON'S tombstone could be seen by the west door. He was Churchwarden in 1614 and again in 1617. After the Plague and the Great Fire people began to move away from the City, but the fire missed Cripplegate, and JOHN FREDERICK (1827) was still living in Fore Street in 1860. His five elder children were baptised at St Giles, and the four younger ones at Holy Trinity, Hoxton. This suggests that he moved before the Metropolitan Railway came in 1862/3, when over 70% of the population was displaced.

An old map of the City dated 1550 shows 'Crepplegate' between Alders Gate and Moor Gate in the City wall. Cripplegate, a postern gate, was getting old in 1244 when the Brewers in Chiswell Street carried out major repairs (Notes on the History of St Giles Without - pamphlet from the church). The first church was Norman, 1090, rebuilt in the perpendicular style 1393, gutted by incendiary bombs in 1940, and again restored. Famous men buried here include John Milton and Martin Frobisher. Oliver Cromwell, aged 21, married Elizabeth in August 1620. For a time William Shakespeare lodged in Silver Street nearby, and in 1604 attended St Giles for his nephew's baptism.

Others living nearby and worshipping at St Giles include Sir Thomas More (1478-1535), John Foxe (1516-1587), Ben Johnson (1573-1637). The restored church surrounded by the vastness of the 20th Century Barbican may yet be just as quiet today after midnight as when the patrolling Watchman intoned the hours over 900 years ago.

Researched and described in 1966 by
PHILIP GEORGE KENELM WATKINSON (1908-1995)

Charted and updated October 2013 by Clive Richard Stirling, to whom please send
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George Frederick WATKINSON
b1788, and his descendants.

Key

- Green boxes are Watkinsons descended through the male line
- Yellow boxes are descendants of female Watkinsons

The page has gutter space across and down the centres, for printing on four A4 sheets (2 x 2) if your printer driver offers this option.

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