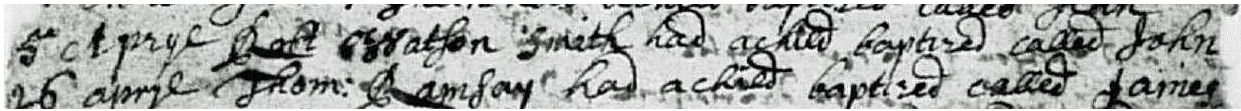




The Smithy at Old Dailly, Dailly Parish, Ayrshire, Scotland

At least four generations of Watsons lived at the Smithy at Old Dailly during the 1700s. We are direct descendants of those generations.

The earliest known record for our Watson line is the Dailly Parish church record of the baptism of John Watson.



"5 April [1702] Robt Watson smith had a child baptized called John" [sic]

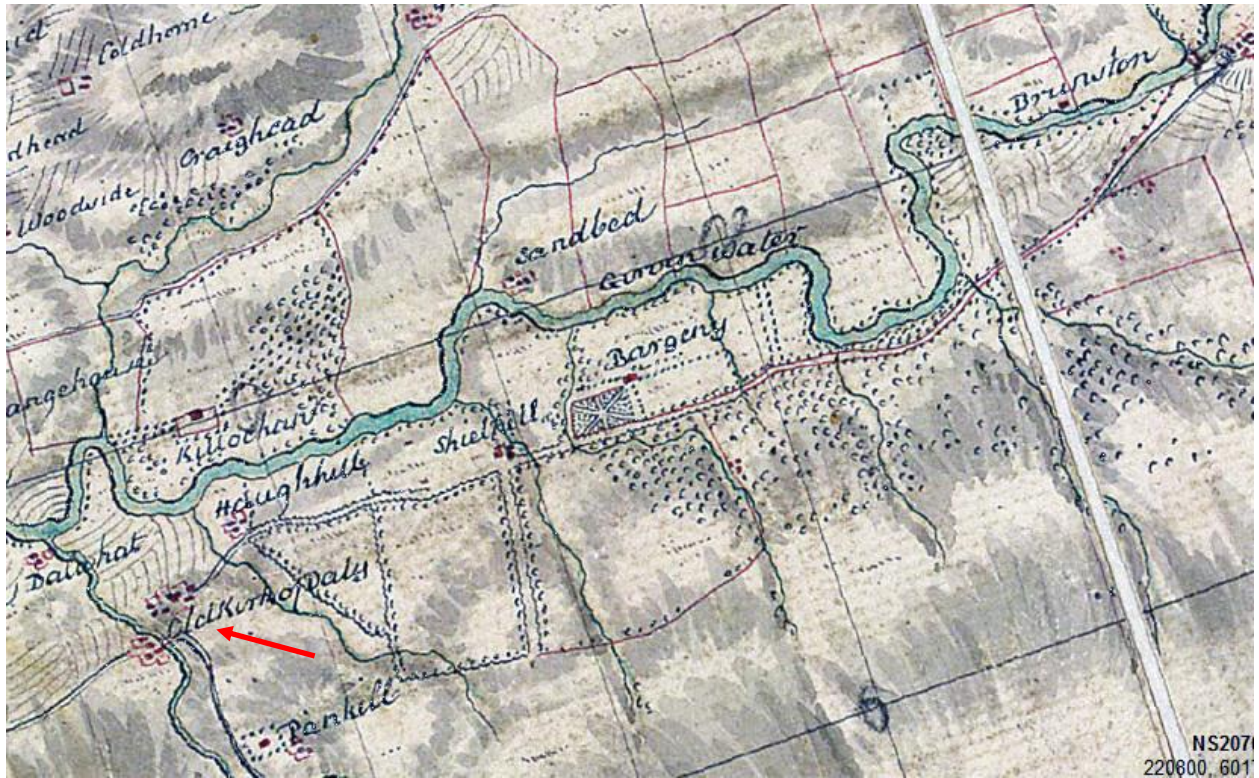
From a family history sense, we are lucky that there were only about 300 residents in Dailly Parish back then, and that blacksmith was an uncommon occupation that was typically passed from one generation to the next. This made it easier to connect our ancestors across generations, and to distinguish them from other Watsons who moved into Dailly Parish to whom we were not related.

"Smith" or "Smithy" showed up in family birth records for the rest of the century, through the births of the children of John Watson and Helen Skeene. It disappears from our family's birth records after that, although some of John and Helen's descendants remained in Old Dailly.

Near the end of the 1600s, the village of Old Dailly was just Dailly, and it was the population center of Dailly Parish. In addition to the parish church and its modest manse, the village consisted of rows or clusters of thatch-roofed houses, an inn, a wright's shop, a school and the schoolmaster's house, and the Smithy.

But a new parish church was built in a more parish-central location about 1696. Over the next century, a new village – New Dailly – was laid out near the new parish church, and New Dailly soon became the parish population center, complete with its own blacksmith.

The original village of Dailly became Old Dailly, and mostly faded away. But not completely. The ruins of the old parish church stand over the graves of our Watson ancestors. There are a few houses. And the Smithy still stands where it did, although it has been completely modernized.



This 1755 map identifies the Old Kirk of Dailly.



This 1856 map shows the scattering of buildings that survived at Old Dailly, including the unmarked Smithy on the corner opposite the church ruins.



This 1907 map shows that a covered front entryway had been added onto the Smithy.

Photos of the Smithy

When I visited Dailly Parish in 2012, I took some photos of or that included the Smithy. Other than the addition of a covered entrance, it generally has the same footprint as shown in the 1856 and 1897 maps. However, the residence has been modernized, and not surprisingly there is no sign of a blacksmith shop. Thus, it would likely be unrecognizable to those of our ancestors who lived there in past centuries.



My favorite photo of Old Dailly. The white building on the left is the Smithy.



The Smithy



The Smithy



Old Dailly and the Smithy from a nearby hill



This Google Satellite image of Old Dailly includes the ruins of the Old Dailly Church and the Smithy on the corner opposite the church.

Prepared by Mark David Wasson
Last updated August 31, 2021