

THE BATTEN FAMILY

Background

My grandfather, Earl Skinner, sometimes spoke of a friendship between his parents, Warren and May Skinner, and the Batten family. The only concrete piece of information I can recall is Earl telling me that ‘the Battens had a farm below Camden’.

The farm would be the Westville Grove farm of Russell Batten, a farm that my Dad recalls visiting in his youth with his father Earl (1940’s or so). Russell Batten was of the same generation as my grandfather Earl.

The Batten relationship is quite a story. My records indicate that the friendship must have lasted at least 50-60 years and involved at least three generations of the Skinners and Battens.

The Batten/Skinner relationship was centered around the friendship of Earl Skinner’s mother – May Skinner, with Russell Batten’s mother – Mary Batten. The friendship probably started much earlier. Mary Batten was also friends with May Skinner’s foster mother – Mary S. Leap (born 1829), and with the Leap clan in general.

The friendship appears to have had simple roots. The Leap family, who raised May (Cauley) Skinner, lived on a farm about 2-3 miles from the farm of the Batten family. And the Wood family, who were mutual friends, lived on a farm next to the Leaps.

Family Tree – the Battens:

Mary Anna Peters (1864 - 1945)
md. **George Washington Batten** (b. 1862 - d. 1943)

Children:

1. **Herbert G. Batten** (b. 1888 - d. 1966)
md. **Catherine Ann Eldridge** (b. 1884 - d. 1922)
Children include **George Batten** (b. 1918) – md. **Gladys Cassady** (b. 1924)

2. **Raymond Batten** (b. 1891 - d. 1970)
md. **Priscilla "Pearl" Dilks Braddock** (1894 - 1984)

3. **Russell J. Batten** (b. 1895 - d. 1972)
Children include **Warren Batten** (b. 1920 - d.1990) md. **"Retha" Anna Engle** (b. 1923 - d. 200x)

4. **Belmont W. Batten** (b. 1897 - d. 1956) md. **Martha Frances Fox** (b. 1902)

5. **Edward F. Batten** (b. 1905 - d. 1989) md. **Ida May Self** (b. 1905 - d. 1981)

Family Tree – the Leaps and Skinners:

Mary S. Dare (1829 - 1920)
md. **Joseph A. Leap** (b. 1829 - 1904)

Children (three):

1. **George K. Leap** (b. Dec 6, 1853)
md. 20 Nov 1877 in Camden Co., NJ to **Ella F. Moore** (b. circa 1856)

2. **Ellison Turner Leap** (b. Sep 2, 1856 – d. 1923)
md. 1879 at Camden, NJ to **Abigail Shute Allen** (b. 1856-d. 1929)

a. **Emma A. Leap** (b. Aug 5, 1880 Glassboro - d. 1961)
Not married. Per Earl Skinner- wild character, smoked cigars.

b. **Frank Leap** (b. Aug 21 1883 Glassboro - d. Mar, 1913)
md. 1902 **Ella C. Shreve** (b. 1884). Child – Allen Leap (b. 1903).
Earl Skinner had told me Frank committed suicide; The records say he drowned.

c. **Mary D. Leap** (b. Dec 6, 1888 Glassboro – d. 1977)
md. 1911 (h1) **Earl B. Park** (b. 1888)
Child – W. Burdsall Park (b. 1914); Kenneth Park per Earl Skinner.
Mary D. Leap md. (h2) _____ **Wood**, related to Wood School Bus Company.
Children - five

3. (Adopted) **Viola May Cawley** (1875 - 1963)
md. 1900 **Warren Skinner** (1887-1970)

Children – **Earl and Gladys Skinner**

Grandchildren – include **Dave Skinner**

Great-grandchildren – include **Kevin Skinner** (me)

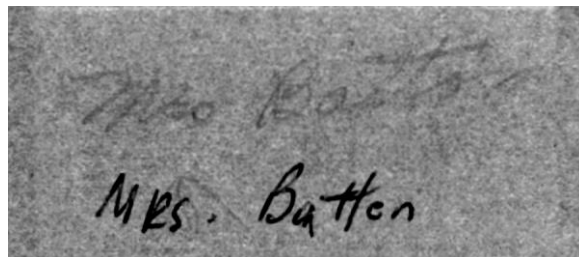
Mary Batten

The estate of my great-grandparents, May and Warren Skinner, included a photograph of a "Mrs. Batten". Mrs. Batten was Mary Anna Batten (1864-1945). The identity of the Batten photo was confirmed by a chance visit of a Mike Batten to the Gloucester Co. Historical Society, where I had sent a copy. Mary Batten was the mother of farmer Russell Batten, known to my grandfather Earl Skinner.

Mary Batten was 11 years older than May Skinner (1875-1963) but much younger than May's foster mother – Mary S. Leap (1829-1920), to whom Mrs. Batten was also a friend.



Mary Batten (1864-1945)



unknown writing; Earl's printing at bottom

History

The Batten clan is a large family in South Jersey. A portion of Swedesboro was once called 'Battentown' into the early 1900's.

In the late 1800's, May Skinner and her foster parents of the Leap family were living in the small community of Hurffville in Washington Township, Gloucester County, NJ. Mary Batten lived a few miles away at the town of Wenonah



Leap Family –lived north of **Hurffville**, a part of Washington Township;

Batten Family – lived on rural land outside of **Wenonah**.

The Battens were a large family in Gloucester County - a section of **Swedesboro** was once called 'Battentown'. [google maps]

1914 Letter

The earliest reference of the Leap / Batten friendship appears in a 1914 letter from a gal named Annie M. Wood to Mary S. Leap, foster mother of May Skinner. Annie was apparently friends with both the Leap and Batten families. Annie Wood, born 1849, was about the same age as Mrs. Mary Batten. In her letter, Annie updates the aging widow, Mary Leap (b.1829), with the latest news from the Batten family.

Annie Wood and Mary Leap were friends because they had once been neighbors - the Wood and Leap families had lived on neighboring farms in Washington Township, NJ for about twenty years in the late 1800's [per the 1880 and 1900 census records]. Annie Wood and Mary Leap were also in-laws – a son or other relative of Annie Wood married a granddaughter of Mary Leap (ref. Leap Family Tree).].

Wednesday
April 1, 1914

My Dear Mrs. Leap:

I certainly feel ashamed to think I have never answered your kind and loving letter. I did not mean to act so neglectful for I certainly love to hear from you. It does me more good than I can express. Saw Ell [Ellison Leap - son of Mary Leap] a few weeks ago and he said you were as good as gold. I am so glad you keep well in this changeable weather. Harry and I have been to White Haven to visit Walter and his wife, staid ten days, and you know that is a long time for me to be away from home. Had a very pleasant time, and saw lots of snow. I don't think I ever witnessed a more beautiful winter scene as the morning we left to go there, everything covered with snow, and the mountains and valleys looked grand. It was on the day of our thirty-sixth anniversary of our wedding and Walter and Emilie had prepared a lovely dinner for us. Wasn't it kind of thoughtful of them, they seemed as pleased with it as we did, and I know we did full justice to the good things. Last Sunday, we were at Mrs. Money's to supper with **Mr. & Mrs. Batten. Raymond and Pearl [Batten]** had a very pleasant time. **Pearl** has a sweet baby, and so good, but it has red hair. **Mrs. Batten** is very proud of it. I saw Mrs. Braddick and she and I want to come see you, but cannot say when, hope soon. Wasn't it sad, the death of Jim Corson, sister Sallie's husband. was sick only about three hours. Mrs. Leap, can't you get Ell [Ellison, son of Mrs. Leap] to bring you here to stay a week with us, how dearly I would love to have you. We could go and see all your old friends. I will take good care of you if you only will come. I have help now, and I could do it. Write to me again when you can, and I will try not to be so naughty. With love to all I remain your sincere friend.

Annie M. Wood
Sewell, N.J.

Wednesday.

April 1st 1914.

My Dear Mrs Leap;

I certainly feel
ashamed to think I have never

Last Sunday we were at Mrs Money's, to
supper with Mr & Mrs Batten, Raymond & Pearl
had a very pleasant time, Pearl has a
sweet baby, and so good, but it has red
hair, Mrs Batten is very proud of it.

I saw Mrs Braddock and she and I

can, and I will try not to be
so naughty. With love to all
I remain your sincere friend

Annie M. Good

Swell

N. J.

Visits With The Skinners

Chester Times, Chester, PA, Thursday, 11 Aug 1932:

Miss Ruth Batten has returned to her home near Pitman, N. J., having been, the guest of Mr. and Mrs. George W. Skinner, of Ninth Avenue. Miss Norma Batten, her sister, is now the guest at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Skinner.

Ruth and Norma are grandchildren of Mary Batten. They are sisters to George Batten, who is mentioned below. They were visiting May Skinner (Mrs. George Skinner), foster daughter of Mary Leap.

1956 Letter

The last sign of the Skinner / Batten friendship is this 1956 letter from George and Gladys Batten to May Skinner announcing the death of Uncle Belmont Batten, a son of Mary Batten.

Sunday night
February 12, 1956

Dear Aunt Mae and Uncle Warren:

Aunt Pearl had the enclosed card ready to mail to you when we received news concerning Uncle Belmont, so we took over from there.

Uncle Belmont Batten died at 9:30 a.m. this morning. He had another attack like the one he had in early December at 5 AM this morning. He went in a coma and never came out. They took him to the hospital. He died of complications of hardening of the arteries. Aunt Martha is doing as well as can be expected.

The viewing will be Wednesday evening at McCann's in Blackwood and services on Thursday from the same place at 2 PM.

If it is convenient for you to come Thursday morning, Aunt Pearl and Uncle Raymond [Batten] will be glad to have you for lunch.

Sorry to be writing such news but we felt you would want to know.

Love,
George and Gladys Batten

Sunday night
 February 12, 1956
 Dear Aunt Mae and
 Uncle Warren:-
 Aunt Pearl had the

for lunch.
 Sorry to be writing such
 news but we felt you would
 want to know.
 Love,
 George and Gladys
 Batten

G. W. Batten
 Hurlville, New Jersey
 Sewell R. F. D.

SEWELL
 N. J.
 FEB 13
 14 - PM
 1956

U.S. POSTAGE 3¢
 GOD WE TRUST
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Mr and Mrs Warren Skinner
 9th Ave.
 Prospect Park
 Penna

Original Letter

Retha Batten

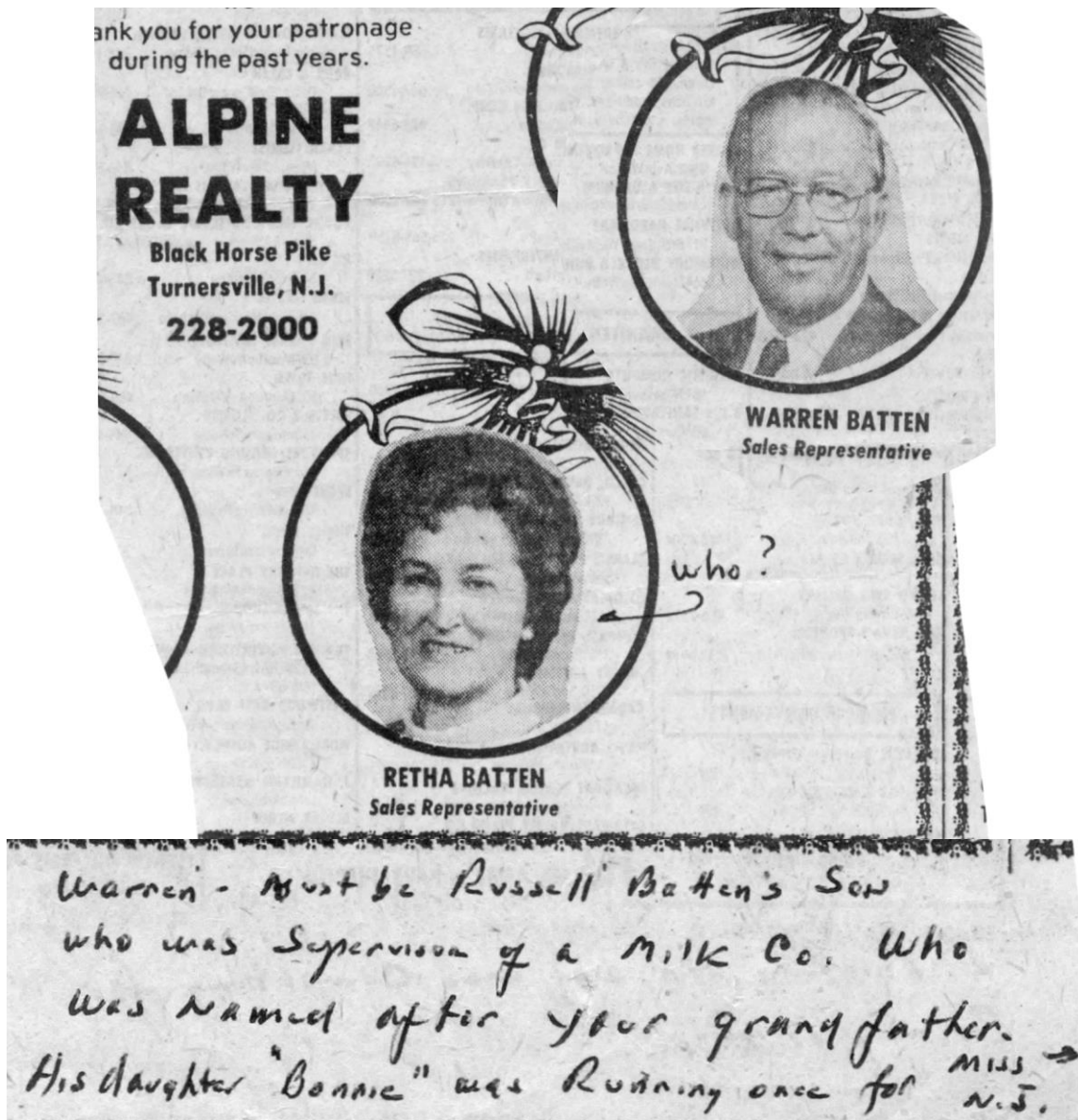
Retha Batten (deceased 2000's) published the Batten family history, available Glou. Co. Historical Society. My father purchased the book for me in Aug, 2004. The book assisted me in understanding the Skinner/Batten friendship.

Retha, as a huge coincidence, turns out to be closely related to the branch of the Battens known to our family. Retha's husband was Warren Batten, son of farmer Russell Batten, known to my grandfather Earl, and the grandson of Mary Batten.

Notes of Earl Skinner

My grandfather, Earl Skinner, cut out a newspaper ad in the 1960's that pictured Retha and Warren Batten and wrote a comment to his son David wondering who Retha was. Earl had only known earlier generations of the Battens.

Retha is the husband of Warren Batten. Earl and son David had visited the farm of Warren's father, Russell Batten, in the 1940's. Earl's notes, below, indicate that Warren Batten had been named after Earl's father, Warren Skinner - Don't know if Earl was speaking tongue-in-cheek.



Persons of interest from Retha Batten's book are summarized below:

Washington G. Batten (b. 1825 - d. 1881 nr. Chews Landing, NJ
md **Elizabeth Ann Cheesman** (b. 1829 NJ - d. 1900 Camden Co., NJ)

Partial list of children:

3. **Clara "Cad" Batten** (b. 1859 nr. Chews Landing - d. 1938 Camden Co.)
md. **Ambrose Jaggard** (b. 1855 Almoneson - d. 1906)

4. **George Washington Batten** (b. 1862 nr. Chews Landing, NJ - d. 1943 Fox's
Corner, Camden Co., NJ). By 1897, dairy farmer in Deptford; By 1905, tenant
farmer on Lower Landing Road nr. Chews Landing; In 1927, bought a service
station and store at Fairview Corner, Washington Twp.

md. **MARY ANNA PETERS** (1864 - 1945), her photo found in the estate of May
Skinner and passed on to me, with mention of the Skinner / Batten friendship.

i. **Herbert G. Batten** (b. 1888 Chews Landing - d. 1966 Hurffville)

md. **Catherine Ann Eldridge** (b. 1884 - d. 1922 Chews Landing). Farmed his
father's land; later Glou. Co. Mosquito Commission.

George Batten (b. 1918 Chews Landing) – m. **Gladys Cassady** (b. 1924)

Lived Hurffville on the Cassaday farm which they sold and continued to live at
as a housing development. 1956 letter from George and Gladys invited May
and Warren Skinner to funeral of Belmont Batten, below.

ii. **Raymond Batten** (b. 1891 Chews Lndg - d. 1970 Fairview, Deptfd Twp.)

md. **Priscilla "Pearl" Dilks Braddock** (1894 - 1984 Texas);

A letter from Mary Leap to dau. May Skinner mentions 'Mrs. Braddock'.
Raymond was a mechanic at father's Fairview garage; later worked at Van
Sciver's, Camden.

iii. **Russell J. Batten** (b. 1895 Chews Landing - d. 1972 Woodbury)

md. **Elsie May Adams** (b. 1901 Laurel Springs - d. 1955 Blackwood)

Produce farmer who last farmed on Almoneson-Westville Road near Westville
Grove until 1947. This would be the farm that my grandfather referred to when
he said the Battens had a farm below Camden. He took my Dad there in 1940's.

Warren Batten (b. 1920 Chews Landing - d.1990 Underwood Hospital,
Woodbury)

md. **Euretha "Retha" Anna Engle** (b. 1923 Glendale, Camden Co.
- d. 200X)

Warren lived and worked at Locust Grove Farm in Westville as a herdsman.
In 1958, moved to Hurffville and drove for Haines Dairy. Sold real estate for a
short time with Alpine Realty, where his wife also worked. Then drove for
A.R.A. and Balford (wholesale milk). Raised the Batten lima bean.

Batten Family (continued):

iv. **Belmont W. Batten** (b. 1897 Deptford Twp. - d. 1956 Camden)
 md. **Martha Frances Fox** (b. 1902 Fox's Corner) Belmont farmed on the Fox farm of his in-laws.

v. **Edward F. Batten** (b. 1905 Chews Landing - d. 1989 Wash. Twp.)
 md. **Ida May Self** (b. 1905 Phila - d. 1981 Stratford, NJ) Held various jobs, not all in Jersey.

5. **Clark Hurff Batten** (b. 1866 nr. Chews Landing - 1940 Camden)
 md. **Laura Leap** (b. 1873 NJ - d. 1905, killed by Camden trolley) daughter of unknown Ira Bradshaw Leap and Anna E. Tullman.
 [KDS note – Bradshaw and wife appear in the 1880 census for Paulsboro.]
 Lived Haddon Twp; In 1910, Clark and children were living with his widowed sister Clara V. (Batten) Jaggard and her children in Camden.

Many of the above Battens would have been known to the Skinners. The Skinners were invited to the 1956 funeral of Belmont Batten, a son of Mary Batten, who appears in the above tree. The funeral invitation was sent by George Batten, a grandson of Mary Batten, who also appears in the above tree. Would have been fun to ask Batten historian, Retha Batten, if she recalls Warren and May Skinner. Retha, having married a grandson of Mary Batten, would have known of one or more generations of Skinners.

end