

## THE OXFORD FAMILY NEWSLETTER

*"Look How Far the Lord Has Brought Us"*  
December 1998 Number 40

### **James Bulger Retires From U.S. Army**

James A. Bulger, husband of Cynthia Carter-Bulger, recently retired from the U.S. Army after having served 21 years. Following his retirement, James accepted a teaching position and Fatherhood Initiative Coordinator with the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education at the South Georgia Technical Institute (SGTI) in Americus Georgia. Cynthia serves as chairman, SGTI board of directors.

### **Absentee Fathers: A National Crisis James A. Bulger**

The most disturbing social trend of our times is the dramatic increase in absentee fathers in the United States. Today the number of children living in father absent homes exceeds 22 million. That means that tonight nearly four out of ten children in America will go to sleep in a home in which their father does not live. Are kids worse off when their parents break up? Even when the dad is a bad one? I wish I knew.

More than 300,000 Georgia children live with single mothers, and 40% of those children have not seen their fathers in the last year. A major initiative has been launched to teach young men how to be more knowledgeable and responsible parents.

Lack of child support keeps single parents on welfare. There are men who are unable, or unwilling to pay child support. A key challenge is to help improve the well being of children by increasing the number of children growing up with loving, committed and responsible fathers. The birthright of every child should be a happy and secure childhood.

### **Reports on Past Mance and Sarah Oxford Scholarship Recipients**

Kimmetric Oxford (daughter of Marylyn Oxford and granddaughter of Annie Lee and the late Adolphus Oxford, Sr.) was a recipient of a 1996 Oxford Scholarship. "Kim" is in her junior year at Wheaton College (Mass.). Her major is Hispanic Studies, and her minors are education and business management. During the past summer she worked for the Visiting Nurses Association as a medical records clerk. Kim also volunteered to tutor two children in Spanish. She would like to participate in a student exchange program and go to Doba, Spain to study abroad.

Arvetta Washington (daughter of Brenda Washington and granddaughter of Mary Ann Clay) was a recipient of the Oxford Scholarship in 1997. Arvetta has successfully completed the Dental Assisting Program at Albany Technical Institute. Because of her high grades and overall performance as an outstanding student, she was one of 25 students chosen as an Albany Tech Ambassador. She graduated officially in October, 1998 and received her state certification. She is employed by Dr. Rosie R. Burroughs, of Americus, Georgia.

**We would welcome reports from other previous recipients of the Oxford Scholarship.**

### **Cynghia Carter-Bulger Attends FVSU**

## Description: Remembering Aunt Martha, Family Highlights

### **National Alumni Convention**

The Fort Valley State University (FVSU) Alumni Association held its 1998 annual convention in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, on July 30-August 2. The convention, hosted by the Detroit, Michigan chapter, was attended by over 200 FVSU alumni.

The Flint River (Georgia) area alumni chapter was represented by Cynthia Carter-Bulger (daughter of Reggie and Naomi Carter). While in the Detroit area, Cynthia was entertained by her cousin, Tony Carter (son of Robert Carter). Tony and his two sons, Eric and Jamal, treated Cynthia to dinner and a personalized tour of Detroit's historical sites.

### **Barry Fordham Earns M.B.A.**

Barry Fordham (son of Monroe and Freddie Mae Fordham and grandson of the late Arie D. Fordham-Jackson) received a Masters Degree in Business Administration (M.B.A.) from the University of Michigan. Barry graduated in December, 1998. He lives in Farmington, Michigan and is employed as an insurance adjuster with the Hartford Insurance Company. Barry did his undergraduate work at Michigan State University, where he majored in Marketing and Advertising. As an undergraduate, he was a star basketball player on the Michigan State Spartans varsity basketball team.

### **Postscript On Martha F. Oxford**

Aunt Martha Fay Oxford, who died on March 12, 1998, in Hartford, Conn., was buried in Springrove Cemetery, 3035 North Main Street, Hartford, CT. Her gravesite is in Section H, Headstone #143. Her funeral services were handled by Clark, Bell & Bell Funeral Home, Hartford, CT. L'Overture Carter, as her Power of Attorney, was in charge of arrangements.

### **Mance & Sarah Ann Oxford Memorial Scholarship Award**

This is to announce that the Mance and Sarah Ann Oxford Scholarship for 1999 is now open for applications. The scholarship awards, in the amount of \$500 each will be made in June, 1999. The purpose of the award is to encourage and assist high school graduates who are relatives of, or members of families related to the Oxford clan.

#### **Eligibility Requirements**

1. Applicant must be a relative of, or a member of a family related to a descendent of the Oxford clan.
2. Applicant must be a high school senior who plans to attend college or a trade school following high school graduation.

#### **Procedure For Applying**

(Letter of application must include the following)

1. Name, address, phone number, etc.
2. Statement explaining your relationship to the Oxford clan or related families.

## Description: Remembering Aunt Martha, Family Highlights

3. Statement explaining your vocational or professional goals in life, and listing the college or trade school that you plan to attend.
4. A copy of your high school transcript.
5. The application deadline is May 1, 1999.

Send all of the above to:

Mance & Sarah Ann Oxford Scholarship  
49 Calvert Blvd.  
Tonawanda, NY 14150

### **Oxford Family Feast, 1998**

On Thanksgiving day, November 26, 1998, descendants of Mance and Sarah Oxford, as well as descendants of the Oxford siblings, met at the Terrell County "governmental building" in Dawson Georgia for an old fashioned praise service and Thanksgiving dinner. The event, which was attended by about 150 kinfolk, was organized by Essie Bradley, Cora Myers, and Brenda Washington. While most of those attending were from the state of Georgia, delegations came from Jacksonville and Orlando, Florida; Hartford, Conn.; and Buffalo, New York. Devotion was led by Reginald and Loverture Carter, Otis and Adolphus Oxford, and the Scripture lesson was given by Darius Myers (his kindergarten aged daughter stole the show with the song, "I'm in love With Jesus Christ"). The welcome to Dawson was given by Cousin Lucius Holloway, an elected member of the Terrell County Government.

There was an overabundance of food, which included turkey, ham, chicken, brunswick stew, and all kinds of homecooked vegetables and desserts. The occasion was reminiscent of the old-fashioned thanksgivings and Fourth of July feasts that were held at Macedonia.

It was also decided that the family should convene in 1999 in Orlando, Florida. The organizers will send out more information at a later date.

### **Mance and Sarah Oxford Descendants**

For about three or four years we have been trying to identify all of the descendants of Mance and Sarah Oxford (living and deceased). So far we have been able to identify over 550. As far as we can tell, the list is virtually complete except for the descendants of Adell "Sam" Oxford, Johnny "Duke" Oxford, and "Sister" Iverson. The present list of descendants is attached to this newsletter. If we missed anyone, please send their names to me or give me a call (716-691-4257). Also I would welcome information on "Sam's", "Duke's", or the Iverson families.

What we have done for the descendants of Mance and Sarah Oxford (compiling the list), we are willing to do for the siblings of Mance and Sarah (Ada Williams, Emaline Moon, "Uncle" Bud, Dennis and Alfred Shepherd, Ophelia Smith, etc. In fact, we have already begun the process of compiling their lists of descendants. Persons that are descendants of any of the Mance and Sarah Oxford siblings should give me a call or send me a list of their individual families. When the lists are complete we will send them to everyone on our mailing list. If you know of persons who should be receiving the "Newsletter" send me their names, addresses, and phone numbers. Send to:

Monroe Fordham  
49 Calvert Blvd.  
Tonawanda, NY 14150

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July 1998 Number 39

### Something To Think About

It is perhaps instinctive for the human mind to ponder, at some point in life, the purpose of human existence. During life's ups and downs, almost every person has probably wondered to himself/herself about their own purpose and about meaning in life. Often such thoughts come, not during the down cycles of our lives, but after victories and achievements which we normally expect to bring feelings of satisfaction and fulfillment. We may be perplexed when material success, fame, personal pleasure, and the kind of experiences that we think should make us happy, instead, leave us feeling empty and unfulfilled. When achievements that bring material success and recognition leave us asking, "Why aren't I happy and content?" we should read the Book of "Ecclesiastes."

Most Bible scholars believe that the Book of Ecclesiastes was written by King Solomon near the end of his life. During his declining years, Solomon may have reflected on the meaning and significance of his earlier life. Perhaps he just wanted to pass some of the lessons he had learned from life on to future generations.

Solomon was the son of David (Israel's greatest King). As a child, Solomon enjoyed all of the trappings of wealth, power, and privilege. When he became king, after his father's death, Solomon ruled one of the wealthiest and most powerful nations in the region. During Solomon's reign, there was a tremendous influx of wealth into Palestine. Israel controlled many of the trade routes into the area. It also had a trading fleet that plied the Mediterranean and established trade ties with Africa, trading copper and bronze, as well as the bountiful agricultural products produced in the land of Palestine.

As King, Solomon acquired personal wealth that would stagger the imagination. Second Chronicles 9:13-28 describes Solomon's wealth. (All of the Biblical quotes in this essay were taken from the New International Version Bible). On a yearly basis, he received "666 talents" of gold (25 tons). That did not include the "revenues brought in by merchants and traders. Also all the Kings of Arabia and the governors of the land brought gold and silver to Solomon." (2 Chronicles 9:13-14). The Scriptures inform us that "King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other Kings of the earth." (2 Chronicles 9:22)

During most of his life, Solomon was able to acquire virtually anything that he wanted. He had more material wealth than any man alive. As a King he was responsible for building some of the great monuments of his era, he had a worldwide reputation as a great leader, he had a harem which included women from around the world, he had good looks, he was popular, and he had power. He had an overabundance of everything that modern man strives for. Where modern man is trying to go, Solomon had been there. And yet, he informs us in Ecclesiastes that his life had

## Description: Remembering Aunt Martha, Family Highlights

not been fulfilling. In Ecclesiastes Solomon grapples with nagging questions about life's meaning and purpose, and personal fulfillment.

In the book, Solomon tries to assess the meaning and significance of some of the carnal things that he had pursued and valued in life. In his reflective assessment, he concludes that pleasure, mirth, wealth, and great achievements, did not lead to happiness and personal fulfillment. He says, "I denied myself nothing my eyes desired: I refused my heart no pleasure.... Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind. Nothing was gained under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 2:10-11).

In the end, he suggests that the only thing that really matters in life is our relationship with God. The sole purpose of man's existence is to worship, and praise God, and work to maintain a relationship with God. After all is said and done, "here is the conclusion of the matter:

*Fear God and keep his commandments,  
for this is the whole duty of man.  
For God will bring every deed into judgment,  
including every hidden thing,  
whether it is good or evil."*(Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)

The author of the Book of Ecclesiastes did what is perhaps instinctive for a person in the autumn of his life, that is, reflect back over the years and ask the question, "What lessons have I learned from my life experience?" Then try to pass the answers on to future generations so that they can learn from the mistakes that were made. The Book of Ecclesiastes has a very important lesson for modern man. In our mad quest to acquire position and wealth, earn popularity, and experience personal pleasure, we often throw spiritual beliefs, and ethical and moral values aside in attempting to achieve our goals. The Book of Ecclesiastes suggests that after we acquire wealth, power, and other things that we desire, we may discover that those things, in and of themselves, do not bring happiness and personal fulfillment. We should remember the writer's conclusion and advice, "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

God knows that man needs material things and other amenities to satisfy his human needs, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33)

Monroe Fordham

### **Mance & Sarah Oxford Scholarship, 1998**

The 1998 awardees of the Mance and Sarah Ann Oxford Scholarship were Lonnie LaRone Wonnum and Andrea Lecole Fordham. Both awardees received a certificate and \$500. Lonnie Wonnum is the son of Gwendolyn Carter-Jenkins, and grandson of Reggie and Naomi Carter. He is the great-grandson of the late Ozie B. Carter. Lonnie graduated from Taylor County High School in Butler, Georgia on June 5, 1998. He has been accepted at Valdosta State University (Georgia). His professional goal is to become a high school biology teacher or guidance counselor. Lonnie earned a 90 cumulative average during his high school years, and in four years he was only absent two days.

Andrea Fordham is the daughter of Lawrence and Jeanne Fordham, and the granddaughter of the late Arie D. Fordham-Jackson. Andrea graduated from Apopka High School in Apopka, Florida. During her high school years Andrea earned a cumulative grade point average of 3.4.

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She has been accepted at the University of Florida (Gainesville) where she plans to begin attendance this summer. Andrea plans to major in Physical Therapy. Her goal is to work in rehabilitative services, and eventually cross over to sports medicine.

We are proud of Lonnie and Andrea for what they already accomplished, and we bid them well in the promising future that awaits them. We urge them to always keep God first in their lives and give Him the credit for all that they achieve. We urge all of our family to lift them up in prayer.

### **Josie & Charles Johnson Contributes To Mance & Sarah Oxford Scholarship**

Josie and Charles sent a recent contribution of \$300 to the Mance and Sarah Oxford Scholarship. All contributions to the scholarship will be acknowledged in the newsletter. In addition, contributors will receive a receipt for their contribution.

### **MEMORIAL TRIBUTE TO AUNT MARTHA**

Your radiant smile and pleasing personality we will surely miss. With tender love and compassion in your voice we can imagine you breathing a sigh of relief and saying:  
I am safely home in heaven dear ones: there is perfect joy and beauty in this everlasting light!  
All the pain and grief are over, every restless day has passed: I am now at peace forever. Safely home in Heaven at last!

Sadly missed by:

Angela R. Alexander

Ozie M. Alexander

Josie and Charles Johnson

### **L'Overture Carter's Son-in-law Elevated To Bishop**

On July 4, 1998, the Rev. Terry A. Stringer (son-in-law of L'Overture Carter) was ordained a Bishop in the Bible Way Churches World Wide, Inc. Pastor Stringer was consecrated as Bishop during the 41st National Convention at Bible Way Temple, in Washington, D.C. The following excerpt was taken from the *Northend Agent: Connecticut's Largest African-American Newspaper*:

Pastor Stringer, the fifth child of Willie and Dorothy Stringer, the husband of Renee J. Stringer and the father of four. He was consecrated as Elder by the late Apostle Smallwood E. Williams and two months later, was installed as pastor of the Bible Way church in 1985 by Bishop Franklin Fountain and in 1992 he was elevated to the office of District Elder by Bishop O'Dell Lyerly. In 1985, he was appointed president of the International Young People's Union of the Bible Way Churches World Wide, Inc. He was appointed to the General Board of Bishops in March of 1998 and assistant to the Diocesan Bishop of the New England Diocese, Bishop D'Dell Lyerly.

He has established his own recording studio, TAS-1 Studios. He is a talented composer and musician, and has worked with local groups such as, Trinity College Gospel Choir, Temple of Praise Choir, Leroy Belcher Choral, Voices for Christ Community Choir and the IYPU National Choir. His message has been broadcast the world over and can be heard on PRAYZE FM 105.3,

## Description: Remembering Aunt Martha, Family Highlights

every Wednesday night from 9-10 P.M. Pastor Stringer is currently working on launching his recording career as producer and songwriter. He has several recording projects due out in 1999.

### Thanksgiving Gathering II

Brenda Washington, Essie Bradley, and Cora Myers are planning the Second Thanksgiving Day Oxford Family Gathering to be held on Thanksgiving Day, November 26, 1998 at the Government Building in Dawson, Georgia. Their first Thanksgiving Day Gathering, several years ago, was a huge success. They hope to bring all of the Oxford Family and related descendants that live in that region together on Thanksgiving. **Persons interested in attending should contact Brenda Washington at the following address.** Once you contact Brenda, she will communicate with you and provide all of the details. I plan to attend, it will be my first opportunity to visit in southwest Georgia during the fall in many years. Give Brenda a call or drop her a line and let her know that you're interested.

P.O. Box 66  
Bronwood, GA 31726  
(912)-995-2418

### Next Newsletter - December `98

49 Calvert Blvd.  
Tonawanda, NY 14150  
(716) 691-4257

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March 1998 Number 38

### Martha Fay Oxford February 12, 1917 - March 12, 1998

Martha Oxford, 81, 92 West Euclid Street, Hartford, CT died peacefully Thursday, March 12, 1998 at Kimberly Hall Nursing Home & Rehabilitation Center, Windsor, CT. Martha Oxford was the eighth of nine children born to Mance and Sarah Ann Oxford. She joined Macedonia Baptist Church, Parrott, GA at an early age. She married Willie Whaley and the couple farmed for a while in Parrott. They had no children. Martha later moved to Orlando, Florida. When her aging parents became ill she moved back to Parrott to care for them. She lived with them until they died. After their deaths, she moved to Hartford, where she worked at Hartford Hospital until her retirement. She was a faithful member of Mount Moriah Baptist Church for many years.

She is survived by twenty nieces and nephews and a host of grand-and great-grand neices and nephews. Her local relatives include; nephews L'Overture Carter (Hartford), Robert Carter

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(Bloomfield CT) and nieces Thelma Walton and Jessie Mae Iverson (Hartford) and Winifred Carter (Tariffville CT), and a devoted Friend, Tina MacDonald (Windsor CT).

The funeral services were held on Saturday March 21, at Mount Moriah Baptist Church, (Hartford). The Rev. Wayne A. Carter officiated.

During the services, the family expressed special appreciation to Tina MacDonald for the kindness and concern she showed in caring for Aunt Martha during the final stages of her life. In addition, L'Overture Carter, Winifred Carter, and Robert Carter looked after Aunt Martha's needs until the end. The home going services and family dinner (arranged by L'Overture Carter), was more like a family reunion. Aunt Martha would have wanted it that way.

### A Family Tribute To Aunt Martha

Aunt Martha was the last living offspring of Mance and Sarah Ann Oxford. She was the oldest direct link to our common roots. Her presence reminded us of who we were and of how far we've traveled as a family. She exuded many of the values that form the bedrock of our family heritage--values that have taken our family from southwest Georgia to the far corners of this nation and beyond, and to all of the levels of the ladder of success.

Aunt Martha was a simple person. She was honest, generous, hard-working, God-fearing, plain-spoken, and unpretentious. She was not one to use insincere flattery to gain a personal advantage. At heart, she remained a simple country girl all of her life. She never had children of her own, but she was a surrogate mother to all of the nieces and nephews who knew her. Her family was very special to her. One of her favorite activities was sharing old family stories and recollections with her many nieces and nephews. She could recall vivid details of events that we had only heard about. In many respects, she was the family griot who provided first hand accounts of what life was like for a black family in southwest Georgia in the first-half of the 20th century.

During her lifetime, Aunt Martha experienced **more** than her share of hard knocks and disappointments. But she refused to allow her set-backs to keep her down. She always persevered and bounced back to exude the outgoing nature, and the exuberance for life that helped to define her personality. Aunt Martha had grit! She was a survivor, and she was free! Life is not always fair, but our challenge is to accept the hand that fate deals to each of us and do the best that we can with it. Aunt Martha's life of 81 years was a testament to that quest.

### Book Review

At the time of his death in 1997, the Rev. Dr. Samuel Dewitt Proctor had distinguished himself as a college president, a scholar, an appointed official in the administrations of two American Presidents, and as one of the nation's most gifted preachers. Two years prior to his death, Dr. Proctor published a personal memoir entitled, *The Substance of Things Hoped For: A Memoir of African-American Faith*. In the early chapters, Dr. Proctor outlined the history of his family's journey from slavery to a position of success in modern America. In its broad outline, the history of Dr. Proctor's family is the story of an African-American family that maintained a strong bond with the church.

The book defines the spiritual heritage that has sustained millions of black Christian families on their journey through the American time machine. The book is about faith, hope and optimism. It is about the values and beliefs that have enabled many black families to persevere and overcome. Dr. Proctor defines the motivating force that drives that determination as a



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"persistent faith...faith in God, faith in their own worth and dignity, and faith in the idea that America's 250 million diverse peoples can cohere in a true community." It is a faith that "gives loyalty to the basic values of equality, compassion, freedom and justice." It is a faith that enables them to transcend obstacles and "press forward toward helping America fulfill a unique and unprecedented role in the history of humankind." (xx)

Proctor's life personifies that faith. His memoir is also the story of a young black man with a strong religious upbringing growing to maturity in America. The story is told within the context of some of the landmark events in the 20th century history of African Americans. And along the way, Proctor offers commentary on some of those historic events. Proctor recounts some of his experiences as a student, who would eventually earn a doctorate in theology at Boston University. He went on to become president of two colleges--Virginia Union and North Carolina A. & T. University. His personal memoir also recounts some of his experiences as associate director of the Peace Corps under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, a tenured professor at Rutgers University, and as pastor of Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem.

Throughout the book, and especially in the final chapters, Proctor offers his insight and personal analysis of some of the pressing issues facing African Americans and the nation. *The Substance of Things Hoped For* is "one mans positive prescription for today's society, delivered with warmth and conviction, and founded [on] a lifetime of faith and reflection." (bookjacket) It is an inspiring book that should be read by anyone who seeks a deeper understanding of the impact of religion and faith in the history of the African-American family.

The faith and spirit that Dr. Proctor describes in his book, is the same faith and spirit that motivated the forebearers our family. It is a faith and spirit that is still alive today among the determined strivers and achievers of the Oxford Clan--we have written about many of them in past issues of this newsletter. The Oxford Clan is indeed "Climbing Jacob's Ladder" and the key to continued progress as a family was passed on to us through our grandmother--Sarah Ann Oxford. "**Keep your hand in God's hand,**" was her constant admonition.

### **Mance & Sarah Ann Oxford Memorial Scholarship Award**

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#### **Eligibility Requirements**

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2. Applicant must be a high school senior who plans to attend college or a trade school following high school graduation.

#### **Procedure For Applying**

(Letter of application must include the following)

1. Name, address, phone number, etc.
2. Statement explaining your relationship to the Oxford clan or related families.

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3. Statement explaining your vocational or professional goals in life, and listing the college or trade school that you plan to attend.
4. A copy of your high school transcript.
5. **The Application Deadline is May 1, 1998.**

Send all of the above to:

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49 Calvert Blvd.  
Tonawanda, NY 14150