

## THE OXFORD FAMILY NEWSLETTER

[www.oxford9.com](http://www.oxford9.com)

October 2003 Number 59

### **“SHUFFLE OFF TO BUFFALO ”**

by Mrs. Josie T. Johnson

During the last week in August, 2003, “Aunt Nan’s” two daughters, Josie Johnson and Ozie Alexander, and granddaughter Angela Alexander decided to visit their first cousin, Dr. Monroe Fordham and his family in Buffalo, New York. Before leaving Atlanta we could sense that the trip would be most enjoyable, and it was.

After changing planes in Pittsburgh we landed in Buffalo. Waiting for us at the Buffalo airport were Dr. Fordham and his wife, Mrs. Freddie Mae Fordham. What a joyful spirit – cousins greeting cousins. After we picked up our reserved rental car, it was off to the Marriott Niagara Hotel. The Fordhams gave us a chance to check into the hotel and get settled.

They picked us up and took us to dinner at Frank and Theresa’s Anchor Bar and Restaurant, home of the “original Buffalo chicken wings.” There we met their daughter Pamela Fordham and their granddaughter “Tea.” The seven of us shared a huge platter of delicious Buffalo chicken wings. They were finger licking good. Filled with Buffalo wings, we went back to the Marriott for rest, relaxation and a good night in Buffalo.

At ten O’clock the following morning Monroe and Freddie and the three from Atlanta traveled about fifty miles to New York’s breathtaking Letchworth State Park, “the Grand Canyon of the East.” We toured the park and then enjoyed a picnic style lunch at a site overlooking the canyon. After much family chit-chat during and after lunch, we finished our tour of the park and took the scenic trip back to Buffalo.

Arriving back in Buffalo, we went to an IMAX theater, a special kind of movie that makes a movie experience seem real. “The Winged Migration,” title of the movie, was quite an experience. Seated comfortably and relaxed, we were able to take an imaginary tour of many countries following the migration patterns of many beautiful and varied species of birds of all sizes and descriptions. The experience showed the awesome beauty of God’s creation. The music and photography were compelling and entertaining.

Our next stop was Pamela and “Tea’s” home. Pamela had prepared dinner for us. This was totally unexpected. Sweet “Tea” was not at home when we arrived. She was a member of her high school varsity volleyball team and she was at practice. We spent much of the afternoon looking at historic photos of Oxford family members. The Fordhams had scanned digital images of family photos onto CDs. My congratulations and thanks to the Fordhams for their dedication, determination and dependable record keeping of the Oxford Family. The history, much of which has been put on the Oxford9

WEB site, is rich and based on the legacy of Mance and Sarah Oxford. After dinner, we returned to the hotel. What a day! There was never a dull moment.

Saturday, Angela drove the rented car and Monroe was the tour guide. We left the hotel at 10A.M. for Niagara Falls. The weather was ideal for a casual visit to the Falls. We spent about four hours taking in the natural beauty of the Falls area.

After leaving the Falls, we stopped off at the campus of Buffalo State University. The campus was quiet and almost deserted – due to the Labor Day weekend. As a retired faculty member emeritus, Monroe had a key to the building that housed the Department of History. We took the stairs to the second floor. To our amazement, we were standing in the midst of Buffalo State College's "Monroe Fordham Regional History Center." It was an awesome surprise to see Monroe's picture, and name mounted on doors and walls. There were offices, student research rooms and rooms filled his with computers. The Atlanta cousins were so proud of "Dr. Monte," as Angela called him. Not only is he "Dr. Monte", he is a genius – and his accomplishments are unknown to the majority of the Oxford Family. The younger generation of the family should consider him as a role model. He just sees himself as "Monroe". He just wants to help the family preserve its rich family history.

We should all support those efforts by supporting the "Oxford Scholarship Fund." The scholarship fund enables all of us to support the legacy of Mance and Sarah Oxford by supporting and encouraging the education of their descendents. The scholarship fund allows us to lift our family up.

After leaving Buffalo State University, we spent some time browsing and walking through a shopping mall. We did more looking than buying.

Later, back at the Marriott, Pam and "Tea" came up to spend some time with us prior to our departure the next day. It was a warm and fun filled visit. As Shakespeare wrote, "Parting is such sweet sorrow." The Buffalo "mini-family reunion" was a memorable experience. Monroe also gave us some articles that he had written on local church history. The articles demonstrate his profound interest in African American history and research.

The weekend with Monroe and his family made me more convinced than ever that the financially successful members of our family should support the Oxford scholarship fund and help and encourage the younger generation of Oxford descendents to be all that they can be. Who knows, there may be many future "Monroe Fordhams" out there in our family just waiting for encouragement to unleash their potential. After all, sixty-odd years ago, who would have thought that a baby born to poor black farmers in southwest Georgia would grow up to have a Research Center in a major University named in his honor.

## **PUT YOUR FAMILY PHOTO ALBUMS ON CDs**

In this era of the digital photo revolution, many families are putting their family photo albums on CDs. If the photo images are put on CDs, the CDs can be

copied and copies given to all of the children, grandchildren, etc.. That way, anyone with a computer can have access to copies of the photos in the family photo album. And in another decade, every household in America will have a computer. Blank CDs can be purchased for a few cents for each CD. Anyone with a computer can copy and access the CDs. A photo service will put family albums on CDs at a cost of about \$7 per picture. Here is the best part!! We will put all of your photos on CDs at absolutely no cost to you. That's right. We will perform the service for relatives for FREE. No matter how many photos you have, we will put the images on CDs at no cost to you. When we return your original photos and the CDs containing your family photos, we will also send you a CD with 40 photos that were in Sarah Oxford's family photo album. Our turn-around time will take about three weeks.

If you want us to perform the service for you and your family, here's how it works. (1) **Package your photos so that they are well protected and send them to me "First Class, with a receipt notice request."** Send them to Monroe Fordham, 49 Calvert Blvd., Tonawanda NY 14150. (2) When we get your package of family photos, we will put them on CDS and return the original photos and one set of CDs to you within three weeks. That's all there is to it. Once you get the CDs that we will send you, make as many copies as you want on your compute and give the copies to whomever you want.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Monroe Fordham

## **MANCE & SARAH ANN OXFORD MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD**

This is to announce that the Mance and Sarah Ann Oxford Scholarship for 2004 is now open for applications. The scholarship awards, in the amount of \$500 each will be made in June, 2004. The purpose of the award is to encourage and assist high school graduates who are descendants of Mance and Sarah Ann Oxford.

### **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

- 
- ☀ Applicant must be a descendant of Mance and Sarah Ann Oxford.
  - ☀ Applicant must be a high school senior who plans to attend college or a trade school following high school graduation.
- 

### **PROCEDURE FOR APPLYING**

**(!!!! IMPORTANT, PLEASE DO ALL OF THE FOLLOWING !!!!)**

(Letter of application **MUST** include the following)

1. Applicant's name, **applicant's address**, phone number, etc.
2. Statement explaining applicant's relationship to the Oxford clan.
3. Statement explaining applicant's vocational or professional goals in life, and listing the college or trade school that you plan to attend.

Description: Remembering Loved Ones, Family Histories, and Families Making History

4. A copy of applicant's high school transcript.

The application deadline is May 1, 2004.

**APPLICATIONS THAT DO NOT INCLUDE ALL OF THE ABOVE WILL BE INELIGIBLE**

Send all of the above to:

Mance & Sarah Ann Oxford Scholarship

49 Calvert Blvd.

Tonawanda, NY 14150

#### **GRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS**

Oxford descendants who have been accepted, or are enrolled, in a graduate school are eligible for a one time graduate student award of \$500.

Deadlines for applications are the same as the above. Applicants should submit a copy of their letter of acceptance to graduate school, or a copy of their most recent grades for graduate courses. Applicants should also explain their education goals and list their major course of study.

#### **SEND US BIRTH AND DEATH NOTICES**

When there are birth and death notices in your family, let us know. We will update our database with birth notices and put obituaries on our WEB site.

**DON'T FORGET TO SEND IN YOUR FAMILY HISTORIES AND PERSONAL BIOGRAPHIES**

## **The Oxford Family Newsletter**

*July 2003 Number 58*

### **In Memorium Rev. Ernest Hill**

*Nov. 9, 1948 - May 4, 2003*

Rev. Ernest Hill was funeralized on Saturday, May 10, 2003 in St. Mark A.M.E. Church, Orlando, Florida. Rev. Hill was the son of Rosetta Hill Oxford (wife of the late Otis Oxford). He was born on November 9, 1948 in Kissimmee, Florida. He attended Holden Street Elementary

Description: Remembering Loved Ones, Family Histories, and Families Making History

School and was a 1966 graduate of Jones High School (both in Orlando , Florida ). Rev. Hill was ordained as a minister in 2001. He was a former Lance Corporal in the U.S. Marines. He was awarded the Purple Heart for action in Vietnam . Rev. Hill was joined in Marriage to Barbara Ann Paige in 1971. The couple were the parents of five children (Jerry, Angela, Gail, Sonya, and Andrea). They also had five grandchildren.

In addition to his wife, children, and grandchildren, Rev. Hill is survived by his mother (Mrs. Rosetta Hill Oxford), two brothers (Lester and Lorenzo), one sister (Rose Mary), in-laws, a host of nieces, nephews, godchildren, and other relatives and friends.

Rev. Hill's remains were interred in the Florida National Cemetery , Bushnell , Florida .

OXFORD SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT, 2003

The Mance and Sarah Ann Oxford Scholarship recipient for 2003 is Dexter Desmond Brunson, the son of Evelyn Bonnie Perry, grandson of Vera Thomas and great-grandson of Arie Fordham Jackson. Dexter graduated from Jones High School , Orlando , Florida . He was a star athlete at Jones. Dexter played defensive end on the varsity football team and he was a member of the wrestling team.

He was captain of the wrestling team in his junior year.

After high school, Dexter plans to enroll in an automotive school and study Mechanics. After that, he plans to get a degree in Mobile Electronics and Business Administration. His long term goal is to one day own his own business.

#### **BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR SISTERS KATHERINE HODGES & BESSIE COBBS**

A birthday party was held on March 15, 2003 for Katherine Landcaster Hodges (104 yrs, old), and Bessie Landcaster Cobbs (93 yrs. Old) of Orlando , Florida . The party was held in the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church . The sisters still live together and take care of each. They are the aunts of Mrs. Lois ( Oxford ) Hall ( Philadelphia , PA. ).

### **KIM OXFORD RECEIVES MS DEGREE WITH HONORS**

Kimmetrice Oxford (granddaughter of the late Annie Lee Oxford) graduated summa cum laude with an MS Degree from Wheelock College in the spring of 2002. Kim taught in the Boston , MA Public Schools during the past year. She plans to return to graduate school in the fall semester (2003).

### **CONTRIBUTIONS TO OXFORD SCHOLARSHIP**

---

Josie Johnson (wife of the late Charles Johnson, Jr.), and Ozie and Angela Alexander recently made a contribution of \$1,000 to the Mance and Sarah Oxford Scholarship Fund. Josie and Charles were regular contributors before his recent death. Josie said that they "always felt a special duty to encourage the young generation of the family." The Oxford Scholarship is just a vehicle which allows those of us who have been blessed beyond our forbearers' wildest dreams to give a symbolic gesture of appreciation back to the family.

---

### **TANISHA FORDHAM FINALIST IN NATIONAL NAACP ACTSO COMPETITION**

TaNisha Fordham (daughter of Pam Fordham, and granddaughter of Monroe and Freddie Mae Fordham) won 1<sup>st</sup> place in the local NAACP-ACTSO competition for her essay entitled, "What's in a Name." She is one of ten local high school students who represented the Buffalo NAACP at the national competition in Miami in July. TaNisha was also a local second place finisher in both the poetry and oratory categories. This fall Tanisha will be a junior at the Buffalo Academy of the Sacred Heart High School.

### ***REPORTED FAMILY NEWS***

The husband of Mrs. Callye Holmes (SSG John Holmes) recently had surgery. (Callye is the daughter of Robert Carter). Callye has been commuting between their home in Douglasville , GA. and her husband's bedside in another city. Callye and her husband operate a jazz museum in Douglasville. Callye also reported that her dad, Robert, and her Aunt Naomi (wife of Reggie, Sr.) are recovering from surgery. Illness prevented many in the Carter clan from attending the family reunion.

Description: Remembering Loved Ones, Family Histories, and Families Making History

RoseMary Oxford Rucker reported that her mom, Rosetta Hill Oxford suffered a stroke on April 11. Her brother Ernest (obituary in this issue) died on May 4. She also reported that her son Harry Douglas Rucker II graduated from Jones High School on May 21<sup>st</sup> and will attend Bethune-Cookman College in August.

**If you want to report news about your family send it to 49 Calvert Blvd. , Tonawanda NY 14150 , or to [fordham@adelphia.net](mailto:fordham@adelphia.net).**

**TAKEN FROM THE INTERNET  
(Author not known)**

I grew up in the fifties with practical parents -- a mother, God love her, who washed aluminum foil after she cooked in it, then reused it. She was the original recycle queen, before they had a name for it... A father who was happier getting old shoes fixed than buying new ones. Their marriage was good, their dreams focused. Their best friends lived barely a wave away. I can see them now, Dad in trousers, tee shirt and a hat and Mom in a house dress, lawn mower in one hand, dishtowel in the other. It was the time for fixing things -- a curtain rod, the kitchen radio, screen door, the oven door, the hem in a dress. Things we keep. It was a way of life, and sometimes it made me crazy. All that refixing, reheating, renewing, I wanted just once to be wasteful. Waste meant affluence. Throwing things away meant you knew there'd always be more. But then my mother died, and on that clear summer's night, in the warmth of the hospital room, I was struck with the pain of learning that sometimes there isn't any 'more.' Sometimes, what we care about most gets all used up and goes away...never to return. So...while we have it...it's best we love it.....and care for it.....and fix it when it's broken.....and heal it when it's sick. This is true.....for marriage.....and old cars.....and children with bad report cards.....and dogs with bad hips.....and aging parents.....and grandparents. We keep them because they are worth it, because we are worth it. Some things we keep. Like a best friend that moved away -- or -- a classmate we grew up with. There are just some things that make life important, like people we know who are special.....and so, we keep them close! I received this from someone who thinks I am a 'keeper' so I've sent it to the people I think of in the same way. Now it's your turn to send this to those people that are "keepers" in your life.

---

**WRITE YOUR PERSONAL HISTORY: WE WILL PUT IT ON THE INTERNET**

Some of us older members of the Oxford Clan are at the point in our lives where we need to think about putting something in writing so that our descendents will know something about who we were and what we tried to do with our lives. We are willing to help you, if you need help. We are submitting a series of questions for you to answer. Send us your written answers to the questions and we will prepare a narrative from your answers. We will then put your personal narratives in a folder called "family histories" on the Oxford Website. Your story will then be available for future generations to read. We will also put narratives in future newsletters. Prepare your written answers to the following questions and send them to us:

1. Name:
2. Date of Birth:
3. Place of Birth:
4. Parents' Names:
5. Names of Siblings:
6. Recount several of your memories about your childhood:
7. What schools did you attend?
8. Did your family ever move? Where to? Why?
9. Was your childhood family active in church? Explain.
10. What did your parents do for a living?
11. Were you ever in the military? Explain.
12. List the jobs that you've held as an adult.
13. If married, list your spouse's name. (Maiden name)
14. List names of children.
15. List grandchildren's names (list with parents).
16. List great-grandchildren's names (list with parents).
17. Were you active in church as an adult? Explain.
18. What is your best advice to the younger generation?
19. How do you want to be remembered?

Send us your written answers to the above questions. We will prepare a narrative from the answers. We will send you a copy of the narrative. **Do it today.**

Send to: 49 Calvert Blvd. , Tonawanda NY 14150



## The Oxford Family Newsletter

April 2003      Number 57

### *In Memorium* CHARLES SAUNDERS JOHNSON, JR.

Mr. Charles Sanders Johnson, Jr., (C.S.), the oldest of two children, was born to the late Charles S. and Louise Johnson in Oakland Park , Florida . He is survived by his devoted and loving wife, Josie T. Johnson, Atlanta, Georgia; sister, Calafra E. Johnson, Pensacola, Florida; a caring and compassionate sister-in-law, Mrs. Ozie M. Alexander, Atlanta, Georgia; affectionately called "Uncle Daddy" by a niece that he was exceptionally proud of, Ms. Angela R. Alexander, Atlanta, Georgia; brother and sister-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Curtis (Dorothy) Telafare, Atlanta, Georgia; niece, Ms. Janet Baquet, Atlanta, Georgia; cousins, Mr. and Mrs. Gerald (Jenny Ethel) Elliott, Tallahassee, Florida and Ms. Chaddie Waller, Milledgeville.

Charles attended public schools in Pampano Beach , Florida . He completed his B.S. degree in Mathematics and Chemistry from Morehouse College , the M.S. degree from Atlanta University , and a degree of Specialist in Education from Emporia State University , Emporia , Kansas .

Charles was a dedicated teacher for forty years. He taught at Mississippi Valley State University , Itabena , Mississippi and in the DeKalb County Public School System. The majority of his teaching career was in the Atlanta Public School System where he faithfully served at Samuel Howard Archer High School as a math instructor, Registrar and Manager of Chaney Stadium.

Charles was a member of a variety of organizations including Phi Beta Epsilon and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternities, Valhacha Community Club. As a people person, Charles cherished the thought of working and giving of himself to help and benefit others. He was a faithful donor of numerous charities and organizations, an inspirational motivator and mentor to countless students and educators in their pursuit of educational and life advancement. He learned to farm at an early age and developed a growing love for the art of food preparation and cooking. He loved to prepare meals

Description: Remembering Loved Ones, Family Histories, and Families Making History

and invite all who would to partake of his new found recipes and experiments in dining. One of his greatest joys was a weekly, if not more often, excursion to the grocery stores and food markets of Georgia . He was a collector of recipes and cookbooks. Charles loved to travel with the high points of each trip centering on the dining experiences encountered. He also loved to read and had an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, including medical literature. During his shut in time he continued to keep in touch and abreast of the latest events by spending a great deal of time communicating by phone.

Charles served as a Lector at Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Paul of the Cross Catholic Churches. He served as a faithful member of the Buildings and Grounds Committee, The Knights of Peter Claver and St. Vincent DePaul while at St. Paul of the Cross.

Charles experienced his transference on Sunday, January 12, 2003 at 2 P.M. The life he led speaks volumes to those whose lives he touched and serves as a precise road map to that which God has promised to all who diligently seek Him – a home in Heaven and eternal peace.

## REUNION UPDATE

April 2,2003

This letter is to let everyone know that the Family Reunion will be held at the Renaissance Atlanta Hotel Downtown in Atlanta , GA. on July 3rd through July 6th 2003 . The cost per room/ per night will be \$89.00 for a single or double(King suites are also available for \$169.00 per night). Individual attendees will be responsible for making their own reservations by calling (888) 391-8724 or (404) 881-6000 and ask for the Oxford Family Reunion. The cut -off date for the hotel reservations is June 3, 2003 .

The banquet will be \$30.00 pp., children under 5 are free, and children 5-12 are 50% of the adult price. All monies for the banquet should be sent to my home address no later than June 3, 2003 .

Tammy Jackson of Orlando , FL. will be in charge of the T-shirts and they are \$10.00 each. All monies for the T-shirts are due to Tammy by May 31, 2003 .

The agenda is scheduled but not limited to the following:

**Thursday:** Meet and Greet social in the Hospitality Suite

**Friday:** Family Outing/Fish Fry at park (Price is \$10.00 pp., children under 5 are Free) T-shirts will be worn on this day.

**Saturday:** Morning is open to sight seeing/shopping \*\*Fashion Show/ Dinner to be held at the hotel

**Sunday:** Church Service/ Old Fashion Sunday Dinner (Price is \$10.00 pp. children under 5 are free)

Description: Remembering Loved Ones, Family Histories, and Families Making History

\*\* Those that wish to partake in the fashion show please check the box on the registration form.

**Please complete the attached form and mail to me. ([click here for form](#))**

Respectfully Yours,

LaTrisha A. Walton - Coordinator

211 Tuxis Ave.

Bloomfield , CT 06002

C.C.

Torri Perry - Co-Coordinator

Denise Prendergast - Co-Coordinator

Tammy Jackson - Co-

Coordinator

## **MANCE & SARAH ANN OXFORD MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD**

This is to announce that the Mance and Sarah Ann Oxford Scholarship for 2003 is now open for applications. The scholarship awards, in the amount of \$500 each will be made in June, 2003. The purpose of the award is to encourage and assist high school graduates who are descendants of Mance and Sarah Ann Oxford.

### **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

1. Applicant must be a descendant of Mance and Sarah Ann Oxford.
2. Applicant must be a high school senior who plans to attend college or a trade school following high school graduation.

### **PROCEDURE FOR APPLYING**

**(!!!! IMPORTANT, PLEASE DO ALL OF THE FOLLOWING !!!!)**

(Letter of application **MUST** include the following)

1. Applicant's name, **applicant's address**, phone number, etc.
2. Statement explaining applicant's relationship to the Oxford clan.
3. Statement explaining applicant's vocational or professional goals in life, and listing the college or trade school that you plan to attend.
4. A copy of applicant's high school transcript.
5. The application deadline is May 1, 2003 .

**APPLICATIONS THAT DO NOT INCLUDE ALL OF THE ABOVE WILL BE INELIGIBLE**

Send all of the above to:

Description: Remembering Loved Ones, Family Histories, and Families Making History

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

### LEON PERRY NEW COACH AT JACKSON STATE

Leon Perry, son of Vera Thomas, and grandson of Arie D. Fordham, is the new Offensive Coordinator and Running Backs Coach at Jackson State University in Jackson , Mississippi . This new position will give Leon the opportunity to use his football knowledge to coach the entire offense. Leon has been in the coaching profession for the past 12 years which includes coaching positions at Marshall University in Huntington W.V., and The University of Georgia in Athens , Ga. Leon is excited about his new position and cannot wait to get the program up and running. If anyone would like to contact Leon his new telephone number is 601 979 2763.

#### A POEM BY ROSEMARY OXFORD-RUCKER

Yes, I am the Queen of everything,  
Riches, houses and land are not my lot,  
I possess love with divine guidance.

Respect my time and position because I respect yours.  
Respect my opinion to opinionate, because yours will be  
respected by me. I treasure all of my life's experiences, and  
what other people think of me is none of my business.

I am in charge of my emotions; they are not in charge of me,  
because I choose to perceive the peaceful side of life.  
I trust the perfection of the universe and the God that  
gave it for my stewardship. I live my life in my own way.

Yes, I am the Queen of everything, everything that is  
entrusted in my

Rosemary Oxford Rucker

CORRESPONDENCE

Description: Remembering Loved Ones, Family Histories, and Families Making History

I am the oldest (although I say younger), daughter of Robert and Winifred Carter, (Bloomfield, Connecticut) living in a metro-Atlanta, city in GA My husband is SSG John S. Holmes, deployed, but NOT in Kuwait, thank God. With John deployed, I am not sure he'll attend the Reunion but I certainly hope to. On February 20, 2003, me and my Board of Directors opened Georgia's first (if not first, one of the first), museum which specializes in Jazz History only. Its 30 minutes west of downtown Atlanta called the Jocada Museum of Jazz History. I am President and Founder (recently named Pioneer of the Year). If family members have memorabilia or items related to JAZZ, we'll put them in the museum. I request family members CALL me at (770) 949-9890, if they wish to contact us. I look forward to seeing family during July 4th Stay strong - God bless the family and may he give you all the desires of your heart

Callye B. Holmes (770) 949-9890

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

### TaNisha Fordham

Words have the ability to create, break, hurt, heal, and project the meaning of life and the essence of living. Although words are often taken for granted, the value of a word remains unquestionable. Because words are so priceless, they should not be used negligently and treated as if they have no value. The power of our words often goes unevaluated, but words have the power to persuade. The way words are used can often misrepresent their meaning because people often use words irresponsibly. Political correctness has attempted to advocate for the responsible usage of words. However, this is to some extent, an unrealistic goal – different people use different words differently. Phrases like, “The American Dream,” attempt to express a national belief about the hopes of the citizens. Even these words are becoming less and less of a reality.

According to Webster's Dictionary, the word black can mean soiled, lacking light, dark, evil, gloomy and wicked. Black is often described as the color of least lightness. White, on the other hand, is often a synonym for the purest form of color, sinless and clean. These words have been used for many years to express the attributes of a person, or more extensively an entire group of people. Caucasian people are often attributed the more positive characteristics. Are there not white people who are evil, gloomy, and wicked? Likewise, have there not been thousands of black people who are pure in character and strive to live a life of spiritual cleanliness? Nevertheless, our society still uses these words as descriptors. White, in most cases, is not the color of Caucasian people's skin, nor do all Africans have skin that is the color of tar. People often assume that a person who is referred to as *black* is of African descent. Similarly when a person is referred to as white, most people imagine a person with Caucasian characteristics. There are more than one thousand races in the United States, alone. Yet the tendency is to put people into two categories, neither of which

necessarily presents a complete portrait of the person's identity. These words that are used repeatedly express the limitations of our understanding of the vastness of the world: pure vs. evil, white vs. black, Africans vs. Caucasians.

Political correctness exists to address our perceptions of others and the way we use words to uphold or destroy stereotypes that are revealed in our language. It could be said that political correctness is just a way to prevent people from saying damaging truths. Political correctness attempts to regulate what words should and should not be used. The task of making the world politically correct seems impossible at times. For example, rapper Eminem, who is a Caucasian man, is widely accepted among the black community. He has used the word "nigga" in his rap lyrics. He dresses in what is considered to be "black attire" and he talks in "ebonics," although he, himself is not black.

The debate over who can use the word "nigga" is just one indication of the confusion about what words are acceptable and unacceptable within the African American community. Some feel that when African Americans use historically derogatory words in public, as a people, we bring ourselves down and open up doors for others to do so as well. What people do or say within their own environment is one thing, but certain words should not be available to the public. What makes the issue even more controversial is the fact that those words are often delivered through the icons of society. It's hypocritical for African Americans to get mad when other races of people use words that are derogatory, when we publicly use the same words ourselves. There is no way to regulate who uses what words and when.

Furthermore, the battle to overcome the effect of derogatory words that are used to characterize a culture is a fight that will not be won so long as that group projects and upholds the characteristics. It would be extremely useless to fight fire with wood because you would just be adding to the flame. The problem of overcoming derogatory labels is essentially the same type of battle. People must first elevate their way of thinking before engaging in the battle for political correctness. You *are* what *you* call *yourself*.

Another widely interpreted phrase is "The American Dream." The American Dream is supposed to represent the opportunities that living in America presents to its citizens. Is America really the "land of opportunity"? Do we stand united? Are we "proud to be American"? Are we free? Many would agree that the images projected by these phrases are not tangible for some people, no matter how hard they may strive. In spite of the freedom, unity, and pride, America has failed to deal with its poverty and homelessness. Do people choose to be homeless over earning money, and living in the "Americans way"? Or is this becoming the "American way"? Homeless people are proof that the "American Dream" is not made available to everyone and contrary to the meaning that the words would suggest, all homeless people are not bums, winos, crackheads, and lazy, shiftless drunks. Many of the homeless are children. The poor, homeless, and minorities are often shut out of the American Dream and the image of what America is. In many cases for minorities or the poor, one of the only options to pay for a good education is to go into the military, which is why an unbalanced

Description: Remembering Loved Ones, Family Histories, and Families Making History

proportion of the military consists of African Americans and other minorities. Nevertheless, commercials and other advertisements for the military don't usually depict images of African Americans or other minorities. It has been the American tradition to allow minorities to fight for the American Dream in a war, and then not recognize them because they don't represent the image of America. This is the attitude that leaves many people right back where they started, in the streets.

Do words represent people in the way that they deserve to be represented? Nigger, colored, powder, cracker, kinks, skinheads, redneck - are all derogatory terms that have been used for hundreds of years to characterize groups of people. These words were created by people and are proof that the power of a word has been greatly misused. Words that describe "The American Dream" don't describe the daily lives of many Americans. It could be said that words are the creators of all beauty and truth, but have become the essence of all evil and deception.

*TaNisha is a 10<sup>th</sup> grader at Sacred Heart Academy, Buffalo, NY. She is the daughter of Pamela Fordham and the great-granddaughter of Arie Fordham*

## Oxford Family Newsletter

*January 2003      Number 56*

**ANNIE BELL WIGGINS OXFORD  
1952-2002**

Sis. Annie Bell Oxford died after an automobile accident on December 13, 2002. Annie Bell was the wife of Otis Oxford (son of the late "Flick" and Annie Lee Oxford). She was the daughter of Deacon O'Neal Wiggins, Sr. and the late Lula Mae Collins Wiggins. She was born in Randolph County Georgia in 1952. Sis. Oxford confessed Christ at an early age at the Oak Grove Missionary Baptist. She later reunited with the Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church in Parrott Georgia. She served faithfully until her death. Her most recent assignment was that of Assistant Youth Directress and Church Reporter.

She was a 1970 graduate of George Washington Carver High School in Dawson, Georgia. She was employed by Cooper Lighting in Americus, Georgia.

Description: Remembering Loved Ones, Family Histories, and Families Making History

She leaves to mourn her passing a devoted husband, Deacon Otis Oxford and a loving father, Deacon O'Neal Wiggins, Sr., both of Dawson, Georgia. She also leaves five sisters, Lula Alexander of Jacksonville, FL, Ida Johnson, Mary Johnson, and Lucille Long, all of Orlando, FL, and Helen Wiggins of Dawson, GA; three brothers, Jimmy Wiggins, of Dawson, and Willie James of Parrott, GA., and Master Sergeant O'Neal Wiggins of Ft. Campbell, KY; five stepchildren, nine step grandchildren; nine brothers-in-law; thirteen sisters-in-law; two special aunts; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and sorrowing friends.

Rev. Lucious Mitchell, Sr., Macedonia's pastor, officiated.

### **CHARLES JOHNSON PASSES**

We have just been informed that Charles Johnson (husband of Josie Johnson, daughter of the late Nannie M. Telafare) died on Sunday, January 12. There will be more details and an obituary in the next newsletter. His obituary will be posted in the oxford9 web site as soon as we get it.

### **OXFORD FAMILY REUNION 2003**

**JULY 3-6, 2003**

**ATLANTA, GEORGIA**

An Oxford Family Reunion will be held in Atlanta, Georgia, July 3 - 6, 2003. Plans are being made for an exciting fun filled weekend in Atlanta, the capitol of the South. Hotel accommodations will be provided by the Renaissance Atlanta Hotel Downtown. An information packet with details on the family reunion will be sent to all families on the mailing list in January. If you are not on the mailing list please contact LaTrisha Walton (family reunion coordinator) with your mailing address so that she can get an information packet to you. We want this to be the best family reunion yet, so make your plans now to attend!!!

LaTrisha can be reached via e-mail at [latrisha.walton@cigna.com](mailto:latrisha.walton@cigna.com) or the following numbers: Work 860 226 4244, or Home 860 242 6572.

### **DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE**

*Pam Fordham*

Last summer I had the opportunity to participate in the week long New York Council for the Humanities Teacher Institute at Bard College in Annandale-on-the-Hudson. The focus of the Institute was Beloved, written by Nobel Prize winning



author, Toni Morrison. The novel is based on the real life of Margaret Garner, an escaped slave who killed her baby daughter and attempted to take the lives of her other three children to prevent their return into slavery. Throughout the week, a variety of speakers addressed issues related to the institution of slavery and the life of Margaret Garner in particular. The highlight of the week was the presentation given by Toni Morrison, during which she answered questions and talked in depth about specific themes in her novels. However, throughout the course of the week there were several memorable moments.

One of the most memorable moments occurred on the train ride to Bard. The train was a wonderful and relaxing way to travel the seven hours it took to get to the college campus. The scenery along the Hudson was beautiful, and for the first part of the trip, I was able to do some reading and even catch up on some sleep. However, at each of the dozen or so stops I had a feeling that I was being watched. My suspicions were confirmed when I noticed a woman peaking at me through the small opening between the seats. A whole range of thoughts went through my mind. I wondered if maybe I was snoring or talking in my sleep. Maybe, I thought, the woman had never seen a person of color before. Perhaps, she was captivated by my beauty (I didn't really think this - but stay with me). Eventually I decided to dismiss *the stare*. However, that didn't stop her from staring, so I did what my New York City friends told me was the ultimate "no-no" when dealing with *strange* strangers. I made eye contact. My connection was met with a smile, and for the rest of the ride the stranger endeavored to make a closer connection. After about an hour I discovered that she was on her way to a rehabilitation center for alcoholics in Schnectedy. Her nervousness, her eagerness to talk (in spite of my attempts to go back to sleep at each pause), and the ten to twelve drinks she had during our conversation helped me to get a sense of the desperate circumstances that may have led up to that point in her life. She shared things with me - a stranger - that many are reluctant to share with even the closest of friends or family members. She talked about her six year old son, her guilt, her failures, and her hopes. She just needed to talk, and knowing that she would probably never see me again (along with the alcohol) helped her talk more easily.

About twenty minutes before her destination, she asked me where I was going and why. When I told her I was a teacher, the entire tone of the conversation changed. She pleaded with me for the remainder of the ride to keep all of her secrets. She obviously wasn't aware that she had been talking so loudly that everyone in the five rows in front and behind us had probably heard every word she said. Nevertheless, she begged me not to tell anyone and apologized for all she had shared. She probably believed that since I was a teacher I was obligated to inform other educators or someone "official" about her failures as a parent. When she got off of the train, she was hopeful about her future and terrified about her past. She concentrated on my gaze and waved as she staggered down the walkway, compelling me one last time to keep her secrets.

I'm not good at keeping secrets, but when I tell, it's never with malicious intent. Therefore, I share her story because she probably represents how many parents feel

Description: Remembering Loved Ones, Family Histories, and Families Making History

about sharing confidential information with teachers. While there are those who share... and share... and share some more, there are most certainly others who keep the family secrets secret.

I was reminded of the woman on the train at the end of the summer when I attended a back to school event at the downtown branch of the Buffalo Public Library. Motivational speaker, Terrie Williams, encouraged students to speak freely about their hopes for the coming year. One girl unexpectedly burst into tears as she spoke about wanting to make her mother proud. She talked about how her mother, who lives in New York City, had sent her to live in Buffalo with her father. Her mother, like the woman on the train, was a struggling alcoholic. I have little doubt that her story will find its way into the classroom. Sometimes the responsibility to keep family secrets is overpowered by the need to speak to and through painful situations.

Thinking about these events has caused me to re-evaluate my understanding of and reverence for the idea of confidentiality. Will the children of the two women described above be better off if their schools and the teachers don't know about their family struggles? Probably not. Nevertheless, it's easy to understand why someone wouldn't want his or her personal business exposed - even if it might be in the best interest of the child. This, after all is, the information age when one can find out a great deal with minimal effort in a very short period of time. Hackers invade computers, private files disappear, and people talk. At least in the solitude of the secret, there may yet be some dignity.

The value of my experience at Bard began on the train ride along side the Hudson and continued in a local library weeks after I returned. Families have concealed problems since biblical days, and in spite of Oprah, Dr. Phil, and even Jerry Springer, that will sometimes still be the case. For every reason why a person should share a painful family issue, there is probably an equal response as to why the person might choose not to do so. There are no easy answers, but the philosopher Plato once offered an invaluable piece of advice to put these ideas into perspective. He said, "Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle."

### **MANCE & SARAH ANN OXFORD MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD**

This is to announce that the Mance and Sarah Ann Oxford Scholarship for 2003 is now open for applications. The scholarship awards, in the amount of \$500 each will be made in June, 2003. The purpose of the award is to encourage and assist high school graduates who are descendants of Mance and Sarah Ann Oxford.

#### **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

1. Applicant must be a descendant of Mance and Sarah Ann Oxford.

Description: Remembering Loved Ones, Family Histories, and Families Making History

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

#### **PROCEDURE FOR APPLYING**

**(!!!! IMPORTANT, PLEASE DO ALL OF THE FOLLOWING !!!!)**

(Letter of application **MUST** include the following)

1. Applicant's name, **applicant's address**, phone number, etc.
2. Statement explaining applicant's relationship to the Oxford clan.
3. Statement explaining applicant's vocational or professional goals in life, and listing the college or trade school that you plan to attend.
4. A copy of applicant's high school transcript.

The application deadline is May 1, 2003 .

**APPLICATIONS THAT DO NOT INCLUDE ALL OF THE ABOVE WILL BE DISQUALIFIED.**

**Send all of the above to:**

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

#### **GRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS**

Oxford descendants who have been accepted, or are enrolled, in a graduate school are eligible for a one time graduate student award of \$500.

Deadlines for applications are the same as the above. Applicants should submit a copy of their letter of acceptance to graduate school, or a copy of their most recent grades for graduate courses. Applicants should also explain their education goals and list their major course of study.

#### **CENTRAL FLORIDA BRANCH OF OXFORD CLAN**

During the 1930s and early 1940s, many of the relatives of the Mance and Sarah Oxford clan began leaving Parrott, GA. and heading to cities in the North and South. They went to Hartford CN, New York , Philadelphia , Atlanta GA , Orlando FL , and other places in search of employment and greater opportunities for their young and sometimes future families. The first wave of Oxford migrants would be followed by other relatives, and eventually pockets of Oxford descendants began to concentrate

in and around these cities. Today groups of our kin can be found in those areas.

Last October some of the members of the Central Florida branch of the family got together at a family dinner in Orlando . We reported on that dinner in our October family newsletter. In this issue we have a photo taken at that dinner (see last page).

### OXFORD-RUCKER, ROSE MARY

I was born on March 25, 1950 in Orlando , Florida on Vineland Road , which has since been renamed, to Goldwyn Avenue . I am the third child of my Mother's and only girl. My father's name was Otis Oxford and my mother's name is Rosetta Hill Oxford. My father was born in Parrott , Georgia , March 7, 1908 and my mother was born in Osceola County , Florida , June 18, 1926 . My fraternal grandparents were Mance and Sarah Oxford from Parrott , Georgia and my maternal grandparents were Alex and Mary Raye Hill from North Carolina . My grandmother Mary was Black and Cherokee from Raleigh and lived on a Cherokee Indian Reservation and my grandfather, Alex was from Fayetteville .

My parents met here in Orlando and were married. I can remember Orlando when Kress Department store, had "Colored" and "White" drinking fountains and when we I rode the bus with my mom we had to go to the rear of city bus. Well, I am sure that this was not a welcomed thing to my mother and aunt Arie because every since I can remember those ladies learned how to drive early. I spent the first 2 years of my life on Lee Street near downtown Orlando , where most of the streets were not paved. Then we moved to Lake Mann Housing Projects where I lived unit I was 8 years old. At age 8 we moved to Johnson Village where my mother still has a home. I attended Griffin Park Daycare for a while and then I attended Mrs. Davis' kindergarten until she sent me home one cold morning by myself for a nickel for milk money. My mother placed me in Lake Mann Homes Daycare and from there I went to First Grade at Holden Street Elementary, I truly enjoyed waiting on the bus and riding to Holden Street; something I had always anticipated since my older brother Lester and Ernest (my mother had 2 sons from a previous relationship, Lester and Ernest), were going there, I tried a few times to go with him, but was unsuccessful. My 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade years were spent at Washington Shores Elementary, my 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade years, I attended Eccleston Elementary. I went to Jones High for my 7<sup>th</sup> grade year and then a new school was build in my community, called Carver Junior High, we only had two wings at that time, but the administration staff was marvelous educators. My 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade years were at Carver. I attended Jones High School for my 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade years where I graduated in 1968. I furthered my education at Valencia Community College , Orlando Vo-Tech and Mid-Florida Technical Institution. My aspirations are to continue college with interest in psychology, religious studies, world history, African-American history and Christian Education.

Description: Remembering Loved Ones, Family Histories, and Families Making History

### **FAMILY NEWS**

Ordination services for Rev. Elgin Douglas Rucker, grandson of the late Otis Oxford and Rosetta Hill Oxford was held on December 8, 2002 at 6:45 P.M. at First Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church in Sanford, Florida, where Elgin's Father the Rev. Harry Douglas Rucker, D.D., is the Pastor. His sister, Terri Rucker-Slaughter rendered a solo entitled "The Battle is not Yours It's The Lord's. This theme is what the Otis Oxford Family Clan, with Christ's blessing, gives to all our Oxford members.

Jessie Mae Oxford Iverson is now living at a convalescent home in Bloomfield, CT. According to her granddaughter, Daneen, she is doing very well. (Jessie Mae Oxford Iverson is the daughter of the late Jesse Oxford, and the great-grandmother of the star basketball player Allen Iverson).

---