

Description: Special descendants reports, the reunion is a great success, Remembering John L. "Jaybird" Oxford Sr.

## THE OXFORD FAMILY NEWSLETTER

December 1989 Number 9

### **John L. "Jaybird" Oxford, Sr. 1929 - 1989**

Excerpt From Obituary

"The late Bro. John L. (Jaybird) Oxford, son of the late Mr. Jesse Oxford and Mrs. Johnnie D. Oxford, was born July 29, 1929, in Terrell County, Ga.

Bro. Oxford joined Macedonia Baptist Church at an early age and attended the public schools of Terrell County.

Mr. Oxford entered into God's Kingdom Thursday, October 26, 1989.

He leaves to mourn his passing a loving and devoted wife, Mrs. Ethel Mae Peters Oxford of Parrott, Ga.; children - Gloria Jean Oxford Hall of Webster County, Terry Lynn Oxford Arnold of Dawson, Ga., Dollie Will Oxford of Bronwood, Ga., Janet Louise, Scotty, and John L. Oxford, Jr., all of Parrott, Ga., Lucy Moses of Webster County and Linda Butler of Columbus, Ga.; five sisters, Arcolia Myers of Dawson, Ga., Mary Ann Clay of Sasser, Ga., Thelma Walton of Hartford, Ct, Jessie Mae Iverson of Spring Lake, N.C., and Mattie Griggs of Atlanta, Ga.; two brothers, James and Napolian Gasden of Florida; two loving mothers-in-law, Ethel Lee Jackson and Carrie Peters of Terrel County; father-in-law Marcella Peters of Dawson, Ga.; three sons-in-law, Albert Hall and James Allen Moses of Webster County, Willie Arnold of Dawson, Ga.; seven sisters-in-law, Patricia, Sylvia Rose, and Carrie Peters, all of Dawson, Ga., Ethel Griggs of Parrott, Ga., Mattie Jones of Dawson, Ga. and Ruby Gasden of Florida; eight brothers-in-law, Mr. Arthur L. Clay of Sasser, Ga., and Willie C. Peters, all of Dawson, Ga., Wilbur Griggs of Dawson; Three aunts, Nannie Oxford Telfare of Atlanta, Ga., Martha Faye Oxford of Hartford, CT, and Leola Darns Ousley of Albany, Ga.; two uncles, James Ousley, Sr. of Albany, Ga. and Willie Whaley of Parrott, Ga.; nine grandchildren, a host of nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends."

Funeral services were held on November 1, 1989 at Macedonia Baptist Church, interment was in the church cemetery."

### **Jesse Adell Oxford 1948 - 1989**

Jesse Adell Oxford, son of Carrie Mae and the late Adell "Sam" Oxford, died on November 3, 1989. Jesse Adell, born on May 31, 1948, was the grandson of the late Jesse Oxford and the great-grandson of the late Mance & Sarah Ann Oxford. Jesse Adell was also the nephew of the late John L. "Jaybird" Oxford.

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**Vera Bell May Mote  
1915 - 1989**

Mrs. Vera Bell May Mote died in Orlando, Florida on November 1, 1989. Mrs. Mote was born in Parrott, Georgia on January 15, 1915. She married Tommie Lee Mote on April 4, 1935. The Mote family had lived in Orlando, Florida for many years. Mrs. Motes survivors include the following: husband, Tommie Lee Mote; Daughters, Leila Bell Mobley, and Stephanie Mote, both of Orlando, Florida; Brothers, S.B. May, Orlando, and Charlie May, Parrott, Georgia; Sisters-in-law, Florine May, Orlando, and Walter Lee May, Parrott, Georgia; three grandchildren, Barbara Poole, Richard Mobley, Jr., and Jerome Mobley, all of Orlando; one great grandchild, two great-great grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and other relatives.

Mrs. Mote was an active member of Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Institutional Church in Orlando. Funeral services were held on November 7, 1989. Interment was in the Washington Park Cemetery.

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

This is to announce the establishment of a college scholarship award in memory of the late Mance and Sarah Ann Oxford. The first annual scholarship award, in the amount of \$500 will be made in August, 1990. The purpose of the award is to encourage and assist high school graduates who are relatives or members of families related to the Oxford clan. The initial amount of \$500 may be increased in future years. The following guidelines have been established to govern the annual award:

**Eligibility**

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.
3. Statement explaining your vocational or professional goals in life.
4. A copy of your high school transcript.
5. A copy of your letter of acceptance from the college or trade school that you plan to attend.

Send all of the above to:

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

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### **Application Deadline**

July 30, 1990

### **Notification Date**

The awardee will be notified on or before August 15, 1990. A certified check for \$500 will be mailed to the awardee on or before August 20, 1990. Scholarship awardees will be special guests at the next Oxford Family Reunion.

### **Publicize The Scholarship**

If you know of relatives who are high school seniors, send them copies of the above announcement concerning the Mance and Sarah Ann Oxford Memorial Scholarship Award. Encourage them to apply for the award.

### **Date For The Next Family Reunion??**

During the past three months many people have called or written and asked when we were going to have another Oxford Family Reunion. Even during the reunion in July, 1989, there was considerable discussion of when it would be appropriate to get together again. Some people felt that we should meet every five years, others felt that we should meet every three years. If we go with the five year interval, the next reunion would occur in July, 1994. On the other hand, if we decided on the three year interval the next reunion would occur in July, 1992. What is your preference -- 1994 or 1992? Let me know what you think???. Drop me a card or call at the following:

Monroe Fordham  
49 Calvert Blvd.  
Tonawanda, NY 14150  
716-694-5096

### **Contribute To The Newsletter**

Anyone with news of births, deaths, graduation, marriages, awards, promotions, or other pertinent information concerning members of our extended family should send the information to me at the above address. I will include it in the next issue of the newsletter. The next issue of the newsletter will be mailed in March or April, 1990.

**Merry Christmas And  
Happy New Year**

## THE OXFORD FAMILY NEWSLETTER

August, 1989 Number 8

### The Reunion in Retrospect

The Oxford Family Reunion of 1989 has come and gone, and in the words of the guest speaker, Loverture Carter, it was truly an "historic event." For the benefit of those who were unable to attend, what follows is intended as a brief summary of the main activities of the reunion.

To begin, it was well attended. Mance and Sarah Oxford had nine children, and all of the nine branches of the Mance and Sarah Oxford family were represented. In addition, descendants of several of the sisters and brothers of Mance and Sarah Oxford were also present. According to McKinley Bradley ("Brad"), our on-site "point man" in charge of local arrangements, there were over 100 registered participants. And there were a lot more relatives in attendance at the church service on Sunday. Macedonia was packed--people were sitting in chairs in the aisles and standing in the the overflow in the back of the church. Virtually everyone in the church stood when the family was introduced.

The reunion began unofficially on Friday afternoon (June 30) when "out-of-towners" began checking in and congregating in the Heritage House Hotel sitting room and lobby. During the early evening many of the "out-of-towners" took advantage of the hotel's buffet style dinner which included fried catfish and peach cobbler. At 9 O'Clock that evening, family members met in the MacIntosh Room for a brief orientation meeting. Reunion T-shirts and meal tickets were handed out at that time. It was a very special meeting, some of the relatives in the room had not seen each other for 30 years or more. After the meeting ended, small informal groups adjourned to hotel rooms, the lounge, and other places and visited with each other late into the night.

Saturday morning, after breakfast, the entire delegation caravanned from Albany to Parrott (about 25 minutes driving time). The reunion began officially at 10 A.M. at Macedonia Baptist Church with a short devotion. Following the devotion, the delegation walked up the road to the cemetery for a memorial service at the grave sites of Mance and Sarah Oxford. Next came the bus tour out to the country. The bus ride was a special treat for young and old. During the tour along the roads that our forebearers once traveled in mule drawn wagons, Reggie and Loverture Carter entertained and enlightened the delegation with personal stories about growing up in Parrott during the depression and WWII years. Many of the old farmhouses and other landmarks from that era are still in place. We rode past the 400 acre farm that was once owned by Mance and Sarah Oxford. On the way back to the church, we drove through the town of Parrott (which is physically about the same as it was 50 years ago). We also drove past the house in which Mance and Sarah Oxford lived at the time of their respective deaths. The bus tour was an educational experience for the young, and an emotional journey back through time for many of the older folk.

After the bus tour, the delegation went back to Macedonia for lunch in the church's air-conditioned annex. All during the bus tour and lunch, relatives socialized and exchanged information about themselves and their families. Younger cousins, many of whom had never

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met, discovered their common and special heritage, exchanged addresses and phone numbers, and vowed to keep in touch in the future.

The time between lunch and the Saturday evening banquet was "free time." Many people went back to the hotel for an afternoon nap, some went swimming in the hotel pool, some went shopping in the malls near the hotel, and some visited relatives in Dawson and Parrott.

The Saturday evening banquet was planned as the main event of the reunion and it turned out to be just that. The banquet was inspirational, educational and entertaining. The featured events included special recognition of the two surviving children of Mance and Sarah Oxford. Token gifts of appreciation were presented to Aunts Nannie Mae Telfair and Martha Faye Oxford. The gathering was also treated to a beautiful solo by Angela Alexander (daughter of Ozzie Oxford and grand-daughter of Nannie Mae Telfair). There was also a slide show of pictures from family albums of the various branches of the Oxford clan. The highlight of the evening was a very moving oration by Loverture Carter.

Following the banquet, small groups continued to socialize at various places in the hotel. Many of the young adults went in car pools to Cousin Otis Oxford's night club in Dawson (fifteen or twenty minutes from the hotel).

Since Sunday church services at Macedonia were scheduled to start at noon, many of the reunion participants slept late on Sunday morning. The car caravan carrying the reunion delegation left Albany en route to Macedonia about 11:15 A.M. (The church was celebrating its 121st anniversary that Sunday). It was an inspiring and emotional experience to worship with the family in the same building in which members of the Oxford clan have worshiped for more than a century. The 2 1/2 hour church service was an experience that those present will long remember. Rev. Melvin McCluster, a young minister, has the ability to electrify a congregation with his preaching as well as his singing. The songs rendered by the choir and the congregation were moving and powerful. At the close of the regular service, the Oxford reunion group contributed \$431 to the church in memory of all of our deceased relatives who were former members of Macedonia.

Following the church service, we caravanned back to the Heritage House in Albany for a farewell meal together. The dinner, which was scheduled for 3 P.M., was the final official event of the reunion. The dinner turned out to be an emotional culmination of 2 1/2 days of memorable and inspiring events.

It may take some time for all of us to sort out the meaning and impact of the reunion activities on our lives and perspectives. The speeches, the musical solo, the slide show, the conversations with relatives, the church service, the bus tour, and the walk through the cemetery touched my life in ways that I do not yet fully appreciate. During the reunion, I learned many things about my family heritage that I had not known before. I left Albany with a greater understanding and appreciation of the importance of family and the church in the lives of a people.

I drove back through Parrott on Monday morning on the way to Atlanta to catch my flight back to Buffalo. I stopped off at the Macedonia cemetery to pay my final respects at the graves of Mance and Sarah Oxford. As I stood before the two graves, my mind raced back through the

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events of the reunion. In my trance I groped for some meaningful thought from the previous 2 1/2 days that I could carry with me from that place. There in the quiet and peacefulness of the cemetery, words from Loverture Carter's speech kept ringing in my ear. The words that finally stuck in my mind summarized the essence of the message that the reunion had for me -- "Take care of your family and the church."

### **Oxford Family Reunion Coincides With The 121st Anniversary Of Macedonia Church**

On the Sunday that the Oxford reunion met at Macedonia Baptist Church, the church was celebrating its 121st anniversary. That means that the church was founded in 1868. That was four years after the end of slavery, and about a decade prior to the births of Sarah Ann (Shepherd) and Mance Oxford. It is possible that the Oxford and Shepherd families were members of the church in those early days. According to the cornerstone on the present church building, the church was originally built on that site in 1881. It was rebuilt in 1943. At the time it was rebuilt, Mance Oxford and one of his grandsons--Adolphus Oxford, were deacons in the church. A great many of the descendents and relatives of the Oxford clan still live in the area around Parrott/Dawson/Albany, Georgia. Many of those families are still members of Macedonia. When the Oxford Family and relatives were asked to stand on the Sunday of our reunion, almost every person in the congregation stood up.

Macedonia Baptist Church played a major role in shaping and nurturing the lives and families of our forebearers. Many of our forebearers were buried in the Macedonia cemetery. Though we might live in many distant places today, in some ways Macedonia is still our family church.

During the Oxford Family Reunion, 1989, Macedonia was especially kind and gracious to our gathering. They opened all of their facilities to us and welcomed us to their services with open arms. The lunch in the church annex, the tour of the cemetery, and the Sunday service were memorable events in our reunion.

During the reunion, the Oxford Family gave a special collection to the church. Since the reunion, a number of persons have expressed a desire to send contributions to the church in memory of one or more of their family members. That is certainly appropriate, in fact we urge all of you to remember Macedonia from time to time as you make your contributions to the church. Persons who wish to support Macedonia should make checks or money orders payable to Macedonia Baptist Church and send to:

Adolphus Oxford, Jr.  
601 McPherson Circle, N.E.  
Dawson, Georgia 31742

### **Oxford Reunion T-Shirts**

Due to the large number of requests for extra "Oxford Family Reunion T-Shirts," Brad has made arrangements to get additional shirts if enough people want to order them. To order, send

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the size desired (note also whether it is for a child or adult), and \$12 for each shirt to Brad at the following address. Be sure to send your name and return address.

McKinley Bradley  
P.O. Box 108  
Dawson, Georgia 31742

In the future, we will attempt to publish this newsletter about every three months. M.F.

## THE OXFORD FAMILY NEWSLETTER

May 1989 Number 7

### Update on Family Reunion

June 30 - July 2!!! REMEMBER THOSE DATES. I talked to "Brad," who is in charge of making all of the arrangements in Parrott and Albany, Georgia, last weekend. He informed me that most of the contracts and arrangements have been confirmed. They are just waiting for our family members to arrive. It is still not too late for persons to send in their dinner and banquet r This will be the final newsletter before the reunion. Next month I will send the final reunion program with the time and location of all of the events. If you have any questions about local arrangements, please call Brad in Dawson:

McKinley Bradley  
P.O. Box 108  
Dawson, Georgia 31742  
Phone 912-995-4007

### Jessie Telfair ("Cousin Sis")

The following report comes from Mrs. Sheria Small of Bloomfield, Connecticut. The first part of the report is taken from a news article:

#### "Jessie Telfair's Quilts

Jesse Telfair was born and always lived in Terrell Counth, Georgia. She learned to quilt from her mother. Jessie Telfair's father was a farmer, carpenter and basketmaker. Mrs. Telfair did not begin to quilt full-time until about 1963, when she lost her job as a cook after attempting to vote. Several weeks later she was visited by several "freedom riders" who were en route to Americus, Georgia. One of them suggested that Mrs. Telfair make a "freedom quilt." The now famous quilt which resulted from that suggestion was included in the exhibit

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Mrs. Telfair died several years ago. She was the daughter of Mr. Jim Williams and Mrs. Ada Oxford Williams. Mrs. Ada Oxford Williams was the sister of Mance Oxford. Jim and Ada Williams had four children, Jos- phine, Bessie, Bubbie and Jessie Telfair (all deceased). Jessie Telfair was the mother of two children, Betty Lou Telfair Hall, and Sheria Telfair Small. The children and grandchildren of Mrs. Hall and Mrs. Small are as follows:

Betty Lou Telfair Hall  
Shirley Ann Clark  
Daryl Clark  
Shari Clark

M. Gale Hall  
Deatdrice Hall  
Tunicia Hall

Sheria Jean Waldea  
Andrean Walden  
Michael Waldea

Patti Hall  
Latoia Hall  
Marke Hall

Sharia. Telfair Small

Ernest "Rickey" Small  
Lesa Small  
Ernest Small, Jr.  
Cornelius Small  
Dontrovieus Small  
Antwann Small

Vedia Joyce "Babbie" Ragen  
Derrick Small  
Deshun Regan  
David Regan

Glen "Snooky" Small  
Andrea Small  
Glen Small, Jr.  
Denell Small

Betty Denise Small  
Kenny Small

Tony Lynn Small  
Garmar Small



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Tashiba Small

### Family Tree

Arie D. Oxford Fordham Jackson

Mrs. Arie D. Fordham Jackson was the youngest daughter of Mance and Sarah Oxford. She was born January 25, 1919, and died May 4, 1987. She lived most of her adult life in Orlando, Florida. She had five children--Monroe Fordham, Mrs. Vera Mae Thomas, Lawrence Fordham, Mrs. Evelyn William

Monroe Fordham (Wife, Freddie Mae Harris Fordham)

Cynthia Ann Fordham

Barry Vance Fordham

Pamela Kay Fordham

Tanisha Shavonne Fordham

Vera Mae Fordham Thomas

Deborah Allen

Jessica Janell Allen

Angela Delores Young

Tamikia Nicole

Evelyn Bonita Brunson

Dexter Brunson

Bonita Brunson

Leon James Perry

Tanya Lajuan Perry

Lawrence James Fordham

David Fordham

Andria Fordham

Tony Fordham

Tiffany Luckey

Evelyn Fordham Williams

Tammy Bonita Fordham

Marcus Jamell Jones

Ivy Rochell Williams

Mancefield Fordham

Faith Fordham

Nivea Fordham

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### **Otis Oxford**

Otis Oxford was born March 7, 1908 and died March 26, 1983. Otis Oxford lived most of his adult life in Orlando, Florida. He had two children--Rosemary Oxford Rucker, and Lorenzo Oxford. Their children are listed below:

Rosemary Rucker  
Elgin Douglas Rucker

Terri Synorvvvia Rucker

Harry Douglas Rucker II

Lorenzo Oxford

### **John L. Oxford**

John L. Oxford was born February 22, 1903, and died October 8, 1958. Johnny L. lived most of his adult life in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He had one daughter--Mrs. Lois Oxford Hall. The names of her children are listed below:

Lois Oxford Hall  
Valerie Ann Hall  
Kathy Renee Hall

### **Arie D. Jackson-Fordham--A Memorial POEM**

Tanya Perry, granddaughter of Mrs. Arie D. Fordham Jackson, submitted the following poem in memory of her grandmother:

ARIE  
Arie  
grandmother  
knowledgible, lovable, caring, respected  
who believed in equality  
who wanted her children to be happy  
her grandchildren to be successful,  
and never to be forgotten  
who used love, trust and a strict hand  
who gave everything she had  
who said "God is the answer"  
Jackson

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### **See You at the Reunion**

This will be the final newsletter prior to the reunion. We will mail the official reunion program sometime in early or mid June. In preparing for the reunion, we ask everyone to write down as much of your specific family history as you can. I will collect the material at the reunion and use it in future newsletters. I hope to see all of you in Albany and Dawson, Georgia.

## **THE OXFORD FAMILY NEWSLETTER**

April 1989 Number 6

### **Update On Family Reunion**

June 30 - July 2. 1989!!! REMEMBER THOSE DATES. The time for the reunion is fast approaching. Have you sent in your payment for the reunion banquet and other activities? (\$40 per each adult and \$26 per each child under 10) Cousin "Brad" has informed me that he has received a number of reservations already. He has opened a special reunion account at a local bank. Make your checks or money orders payable to the "Oxford Family Reunion" and send them to "Brad" at the following address:

McKinley Bradley  
P.O. Box 108  
Dawson, Georgia 31742  
Phone 912-995-4007

Brad has to make a \$200 down payment in early May to reserve the banquet room. He also has to inform the food service people about the number of people to prepare for. If you can't send in your money by the end of April, give Albany, Georgia "Brad" a call and let him know that you plan to attend the reunion and ask him hold a space for you. Don't be left out, send in your money as soon as possible.

### **Program**

Vera Thomas and the program committee has submitted the following tentative program for the family reunion.

#### Friday Evening, June 30

No formal activities planned, but persons who will be staying at the Heritage House Hotel will begin arriving and checking in.

#### Saturday, July 1st

10 A.M.

Macedonia Baptist Church Cemetery

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Parrott, Georgia

Gravesite Memorial Service in memory of Mance and Sarah Ann Oxford. Following the service there will be an informal tour of the cemetery where many of the relatives from our grandparents generation and earlier are buried. Some of the families in the Oxford Clan may want to place flowers on the grave of their family members that are buried in the Macedonia Cemetery.

11 A.M.

Bus ride out to the "country" where many of our ancestors lived before leaving Parrott.

1 P.M.

LUNCH - Macedonia Baptist Church, Parrott, Georgia.

8 P.M. - 10 P.M.

Banquet

Heritage House Hotel/Motel

Albany, Georgia

Banquet program has not been completed, but it will feature the following activities: (1) slide show of pictures from our family albums, shown over a music background; special recognition of Nannie Mae Telafare ("Aunt Nan"), and Martha Faye Oxford ("Aunt Martha"); and speaker-Mr. L'Overture Carter.

SUNDAY, JULY 2nd

Morning

Attend church services at Macedonia Baptist Church, Parrott, Georgia.

3 P.M.

Farewell Dinner at the Heritage House Hotel/Motel, Al-

### **Family - Picture Slide Show**

LAST CALL FOR PICTURES FOR THE SLIDE SHOW. If you want your family pictures to be included in the slide show, please send me your photographs immediately. The photos will Vera Thomas and the program committee be returned to you next month after I copy has submitted the following tentative. program them onto slides.

### **Family Tree - Jess Oxford**

Jethro "Jess" Oxford was the oldest child of Mance and Sarah Oxford. Jess was born December 14, 1897 and died November 7, 1971. Jess was the father of six children -- Thelma Oxford Walton, Jessie Mae Oxford Iverson ("Little Sister"), Adell "Sam" Oxford (deceased), Acolia "Teck" Oxford Myers, John L. "Jay" Oxford, and Mary Ann Oxford Clay. We did not receive a report from Thelma Walton and Jessie Mae Iverson, so their families will be listed in a future newsletter. Below we list the children and grandchildren of Acolia Myers, John L. Oxford, and Mary Ann Clay.

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Arcolia Myers  
John Lewis "Joe Man" Oxford  
Lisa Oxford  
Brenda Oxford  
Rosiland Oxford

Cleveland Oxford  
Laquashi Huckaby

Essie Bell "Sister" Myers Bradley  
Shandra Yvonne Bradley  
Oshey Demetrious Bradley

Henderson Myers  
Kenyatta T- Asberry  
Demetrious Lumkin  
Markis Myers  
Nekesha Myers

Wallace Myers  
Anthony Cooper  
Levin Myers  
Garry W. Myers  
Derrick Myers

Darious Eugene Myers  
Toccora Satlaway  
Darious O'Brien Myers  
Amandra Marie Myers

Leary Lee Myers  
reported that his wife is expecting

Leonard Myers  
Laquita Clyde  
Dontrell Myers

Jeffrey Jerome Myers  
Brittany Quamsha Myers  
Lashonda Nichols Myers

John L. "Jay" Oxford (Wife-Ethel Mae)

Gloria Jean Oxford Hall  
Derek Latrail Hall  
Kevin D. Had  
Deandrea Denise Hall

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Terri Lynn Oxford Arnold  
Vontressa LaVette Oxford  
Brian Antonio Oxford

Chirlene Oxford (deceased)  
(May 15, 1962 - April 11, 1965)

Dollie Will Oxford  
Ashley Katnna Key

Scottie Oxford  
Darius Anthony Graham

Janet Louise Oxford

John L. Oxford, Jr.

Mary Ann Oxford Clay

Brenda Darns Washington  
Willie L. Darns  
Raven Darns  
Arvelta Uigh Washington  
Tasha Washington

Dennis Darns

Patricia A. Clay

Arthur L. Clay, Jr.

Elizabeth Clay  
Lacresha A. Clay  
Detric S. Clay  
Vonice S. Clay

Michael Clay

Denise Clay

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EVENT: Oxford Family Reunion

DATE: June 30 - July 2, 1989

THEME: "Proud of Our Heritage; Faith in God and Our Future."

PLACE: Parrott and Albany, Georgia

BANQUET SPEAKER:-L'Overture Carter (grandson of Mance & Sarah Oxford).

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## THE OXFORD FAMILY NEWSLETTER

February 1989 Number 5

### Editorial

A family reunion should provide an opportunity for a family to re-establish the ties that bind it together as family. In some instances that will mean renewing acquaintances with cousins, uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews, and perhaps even with sisters and brothers that we may have lost contact with over the years. It will mean meeting and getting to know relatives that we've never even met before. Those are important purposes of a family reunion. To strengthen the bonds of a common biological heritage.

But our reunion this summer should afford us an opportunity to do much more than that. We should endeavor to rediscover and rekindle that faith and spirit that sustained this family during difficult times. We should seek to understand that faith and hope on which Mance and Sarah Oxford struggled through the "great depression", kept their family together, purchased their own farm, and sent their children into the world to make their mark. We want to renew our commitment to that faith which has carried our family from the cotton, and peanut fields of Terrell County, Georgia to cities and small towns from Florida to California to Connecticut and many points in between.

At our reunion this summer, as we tour the back roads of Parrott, Georgia--the same roads that many of us walked barefooted to Helen Gull School many years ago; the same roads that we traveled in mule drawn wagons to Macedonia Baptist Church to listen to the sermons of Rev. J.E. Brown; as we tour those same dirt roads as sightseers and ride past the fields where our forebearers labored as sharecroppers and tenant farmers and landowners, I hope that we give some thought to the question of what was it that enabled them to keep their families together and inspire their descendants to keep on climbing "Jacobs Ladder?" Our forebearers were challenged by economic poverty, racial discrimination and exploitation, and a political system that afforded them little protection in terms of legal and civil rights. Yet they triumphed over their obstacles and they tried to pass the insights of their rich heritage on to us, their descendants.

What was it that enabled our grandparents to persevere and maintain hope during times when the odds seemed stacked against them? They didn't have much formal education, they didn't have many worldly possessions, and they didn't hold positions of power and prestige in the larger society in which they lived. What was the source of their strength and optimism? When we can answer those questions, we will have discovered what is special about the heritage that they left to us.

I've pondered those questions many times over the years and the search for answers takes on a greater importance when we consider the problems and obstacles that confront us today. Regardless of where we live or how much we've achieved, we are all confronted daily with the trials and temptations of a technological and materialistic society. Faced with the alluring fruits of affluence and modernization, it is easy to forget the simple truths that our grandparents tried to pass on to us.

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Each generation must face and conquer obstacles if they are to prevail in their personal and collective struggles against adversity. The obstacles we face are very different from those faced by our grandparents. But their successful strategy for confronting life's problems will work for us as it did for them. I believe that our- grandparents knew the secret to overcoming worldly problems and temptations, and they tried to pass those insights on to us. Those in- sights represent the true legacy of Mance and Sarah Oxford.

I was blessed with the opportunity to have lived with my grandparents during the first seven years of my life. As I've pondered the questions of what made them special, a number of memories keep coming back. In all of my reflections, my most vivid memories of those years have to do with the role of the church and religion in the lives of my grandparents.

As I think back on the central role that the church played in their lives, I recall numerous Sunday sermons, church programs, and revival meetings at Macedonia Baptist Church. On special Sundays in the summer, I recall that families would bring food baskets filled with fried chicken, biscuits, fried corn, butter beans, big coconut cakes, egg custard pies, and lots of other things. The congregation would set up benches and tables under the trees out behind the church, and people would eat and talk, for what seemed like hours.

After the meal, we children would climb up into the wagons or into our grandmothers and mothers laps and go to sleep, and the adults would visit with each other and sing religious songs until it was time for the evening service. Then we'd go back into the church for our second inspiring sermon of that day. When it was all over, my grandfather would hitch up the mules and we'd take the long ride home with only the moon and stars to light our way. On cloudy nights when we couldn't even see each other in the wagon, we had to rely on the instinct of the mules to get us home.

In addition to Rev. Brown's sermons, I remember that my Uncle Willie Whaley and Mr. Henry Gunn could inspire the congregation with their long prayers--which were almost like short sermons. Yes, the church had a special place in our grandparents' lives.

And there are other memories; memories of my grandmother going through her daily routine around the house--cooking, sewing, sweeping the yard with brush-brooms, working in the garden early in the morning before the dew dried, or churning milk and making butter. I remember sitting and fishing with my grandmother for hours on hot summer after- noons at our favorite fishing hole "down on the creek." As I recall the many hours I spent with my grandmother, it seems that she was always humming and singing--"Amazing Grace," and "Jesus is Mine" are the songs that I remember.

I also recall images of my grandmother and my Aunt Ozzie Carter reading the bible in the evening by the light of the ol' kerosene lamps. My Aunt Ozzie taught me to say the blessing before eating and to say "Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep," before going to bed. As I think back on those early years with my grandparents, I think I now understand the basic principle that guided their lives. They tried to take God with them wherever they went-- everyday. They believed in the scripture that says, "All things are possible for those who love God." That is the faith that sustained them and enabled them to prosper. They tried to pass that same faith and key to a successful life on to their descendants. That is the essence of their legacy to all of us.

Sarah and Mance Oxford left their descendants a heritage that is priceless. Yet, it is free to us as it was to them. All we have to do is accept it.



Description: Special descendants reports, the reunion is a great success, Remembering John L. "Jaybird" Oxford Sr.

### **Update On Family Reunion**

REMEMBER THE DATES: June 30-July 2,'89.

1. If you will be coming to Albany from out-of-town and plan to stay at the Heritage House Hotel, please call the Heritage House and make your own room reservations. The address and phone number are as follows:

The Heritage House Hotel  
732 W. Oglethorp Blvd.  
Albany, GA  
31701 Phone 912-888-1910

2. Use the enclosed form to send your reunion registration fee for the banquet, Sunday dinner, T-shirt, and bus ride to the country to McKinley Bradley.

3. We are planning to have a slide show at the Saturday evening banquet and we want to make slides of pictures from your family albums. If you have recent pictures of your family members, please loan them to us to photo copy. We will return them to you in April. **REMEMBER: IF YOU WANT YOUR FAMILY'S PICTURES TO BE INCLUDED IN THE SLIDE SHOW, I MUST HAVE YOUR PICTURES BY APRIL 1.**

Send them to:

Monroe Fordham  
49 Calvert Blvd  
Tonawanda, NY 14150  
Phone 716-694-5096

3. We will include information on the reunion program in next month's issue of the newsletter. We will also resume our family tree report next month.

Do you know of relatives that are not receiving our newsletter? Send me their names and addresses and I will put them on the mailing list.

## **THE OXFORD FAMILY NEWSLETTER**

January 1989 Number 4

### **Update on Family Reunion**

Most of the preliminary arrangements for accommodations have been made. Those of you who plan to attend the reunion should begin making your reservations, June will be here before you know it. This issue of the newsletter contains information about steps you should begin taking:

Description: Special descendants reports, the reunion is a great success, Remembering John L. "Jaybird" Oxford Sr.

1. If you will be coming to Albany from out-of-town and plan to stay at the Heritage House Hotel (that will be the reunion headquarters), please call the Heritage House and make your own room reservations. The address and phone number are as follows:

The Heritage House Hotel  
732 W. Oglethorpe Blvd  
Albany, GA 31701  
Phone 912-888-1910

2. Send your reunion banquet, Sunday dinner, bus ride to the country, and reunion T-shirt fee (\$40 per adult & \$26 per child under 10) to:

McKinley Bradley  
P.O. Box 108  
Dawson, Georgia 31742  
Phone 912-995-4007

"Brad" has opened a reunion account at a local bank and will acknowledge receipt of your monies. Please make checks or money orders payable to "The Oxford Family Reunion." Send \$40 for each adult and \$26 for each child (10 years or younger). It is important that you send in your money as soon as possible. Brad has to pay a deposit for the banquet and the Sunday dinner. He also has to order the reunion T-shirts in March or April.

The two items listed above are crucial to the success of the reunion, (1) make your reservations at the Heritage House, and (2) send your reunion money to Brad. Please take care of both of those items as soon as possible. We are counting on your support to make this a reunion that we can all be proud of. Thanks.

### **The Albany Airport**

I went to Albany early in January to meet with Brad. I am happy to report that Albany has an excellent airport, for those who plan to fly in to the reunion. Both Eastern and Delta Airlines have commuter flights in and out of Albany on a regular schedule, consequently, you can make airline connections to Albany from most of the major Southern cities. In addition, four companies, Avis, Budget, Hertz, and National have car rentals at the airport.

The Heritage House Hotel is about five minutes from the airport and there is no traffic problem. The reunion banquet and dinner will be held at the Heritage House, and the other events will be held at Macedonia Baptist Church in Parrott. Parrott is about 20 or 25 minutes from Albany (all four lane highway). The planning committee that went to Albany last summer did an excellent job of selecting the location for the reunion. I think that you will be happy with the accommodations.

### **Program**

Vera Thomas reports that the program committee will have a tentative program ready for the February or March newsletter. The theme for the reunion will be: "Proud of Our Heritage. Faith in God and Our Future."

Description: Special descendants reports, the reunion is a great success, Remembering John L. "Jaybird" Oxford Sr.

### **Family-Picture Slide Show**

During the Saturday evening banquet, we are planning a slide presentation of pictures from the scrapbook that belonged to Sarah Ann Oxford. The slides will be shown over a music background. We would also like to include slides of pictures of the modern day Oxford descendants. In order to do the modern day part, I will need some help from you. Please read the next paragraph carefully and respond immediately.

If you would like to have pictures of your family and children included in the slide show, please send me the pictures that you want to be part of the show. I will make slides from the pictures and return the originals to you by mid-April. It is important that I receive your pictures no later than March 1, 1989. You should send school pictures, family group shots, or other pictures in which the subjects are clear. Remember, your pictures will be returned to you by mid April.

### **Family Tree Report**

The family tree report for this issue will feature the descendants of "Dock" Oxford, the second son of Mance and Sarah Oxford. "Dock" had three children, Adolphus "Flick" Oxford, Sr., Essie Bell Oxford Leary, and Johnny "Duke" Oxford. All are still having--"Flick" lives in Dawson, GA, Essie lives in New York City, and "Duke" lives in Brooklyn, NY. We were unable to contact "Duke," consequently we have no information on his family.

Essie Bell Oxford Leary had four children, six grandchildren, and one great great-grandchild. They are listed as follows:

Geraldine Leary  
Gwendolyn Leary  
Drena Leary

Jerome Leary  
Jerome Leary, Jr.  
Sheika Leary  
Tasha Leary  
Christiana Leary

James Leary  
Swandella Leary

Donald Leary

Adolphus Oxford, Sr., and his wife Annie Lee had 11 children. Ten of the children are still living. They also have 20 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren. The children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of Adolphus Oxford, Sr., are as follows:

Adolphus Oxford, Jr.  
Adolphus Oxford III

Description: Special descendants reports, the reunion is a great success, Remembering John L. "Jaybird" Oxford Sr.

James Calvin Oxford  
James Calvin Oxford II

Phyllis Denise Oxford  
Ken Davis

Michael Oxford

Nicholas Oxford

Edith Theresa Oxford

Cessy Oxford Reed

Otis Lee Oxford  
Angelia Marie Oxford  
Mark Oxford  
Kanisha Oxford

Brandon Oxford

Gerard Crumbley

Charlotte Oxford

Otis Oxford, Jr.

Evelyn Word Anderson  
Deborah Faye Anderson  
Zachary Perkins  
Tamia Duboyd

Wendell Anderson  
John T. Anderson

Josie Oxford Garrett  
Clarence Bernard Garrett

Marylyn Oxford Elliott  
Kimmetrice Oxford

Martha Oxford Harden  
Anthony Harden  
Tony Harden

Willie James Oxford  
Reginald Oxford  
Christopher Oxford

Description: Special descendants reports, the reunion is a great success, Remembering John L. "Jaybird" Oxford Sr.

Annette Yvonne Oxford  
Antonio Oxford  
Antwan Oxford

Delores Oxford James

**Reminder!!**

1. REMEMBER THE DATES: June 30-July 2.
2. Send the \$40 per each adult and \$26 per each child to Brad as soon as possible.
3. Call the Heritage House Hotel and make your reservations.
4. Send me your family pictures for the slide show.

Monroe Fordham

49 Calvert Blvd.

Tonawanda, New York 14150

Ph. 716-694-5096