

Description: Reunion plans for 1997, Remembering Anthony Harden, Willie Lee Iverson, Jr., Dollie Thorton, and Leona Huckleberry

THE OXFORD FAMILY NEWSLETTER

Look How Far the Lord Has Brought Us
December 1996 Number 33

Look How Far the Lord Has Brought Us

Last summer a local church singing group presented a musical interpretation of the African American experience. That program featured spirituals, gospel music, sermonettes, poetry, and quotes from the Scriptures to show the centrality of God and the black church to the African American historical experience. The music, and vocalized poetry and prose was carefully interwoven with dramatic interpretations of historical events--capture in Africa, slavery, post-reconstruction, and the "great migration" to northern cities. The main theme of the production was that God had shepherded African Americans through the darkness of three centuries of captivity and slavery into the light of freedom and on to the dawn of the 21st century. The program was powerful. It stirred the emotions of almost everyone in the audience. It would be difficult to witness such a presentation and not be moved to offer praise and expressions of gratitude to God for "bringing us over."

As a people, African Americans have long recognized the importance of historical knowledge to the future and well-being of our communities. Many black parents and community leaders have assumed that more knowledge about our past racial achievements and higher self-esteem were the key ingredients needed to guide our youth to success in the modern world. During the past two decades America's public schools have made important strides in introducing African American history into the curriculum. Those are indeed noteworthy developments, but pure history and knowledge about our past may not be enough. An intellectual connection with the past can be helpful, but that won't necessarily help us to cope with present and future obstacles. We need to connect with our past on a spiritual level. We need to understand and appreciate the spiritual forces that have helped and sustained us on our long and often troubled historical journey. We need to make our children aware of the role that faith in God and worship have had in our history. Like the ancient Israelites, we should teach each new generation about God's goodness to us. We should point out concrete examples of how God blessed our ancestors and made the way easier for their offspring.

Our children should be nurtured on the same spiritual values and beliefs that sustained our forebearers. The public schools probably won't teach our children those things. And fortunately, we don't have to rely on the schools to do that. We can teach those values in the home and in our churches and Sunday schools. We can reinforce those beliefs and values through our family reunions and family newsletters. When our teen-agers and young adults can say with conviction, and without being prompted, "Look how far the Lord has brought us," then most of our social problems will be solved.

Monroe Fordham

Oxford Family Reunion Update

Reservations can now be made for the 1997 Oxford Family Reunion. **The reunion has been set for July 12 (Saturday) and 13 (Sunday).** We will be headquartered at the **Albany Holiday Inn, 2701 Dawson Road, Albany GA, phone (912) 883-8100.** (The banquet facility had already

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been reserved by another family for the first weekend in July. July 11 and 12 was the only July weekend that was still available).

The special group room rate will be \$66 per night for a double (two double beds). Persons who plan to stay at the motel should make their own room reservations. (My advice would be to reserve early because 4 other families will also be meeting there for reunions.) When you contact the motel be sure to inform them that you want the group rate for the Oxford Family Reunion. The registration fee for the reunion will be \$50 per person. There is not a special rate for children. The \$50 registration fee will entitle each payee to the following: (1) Saturday noon buffet at Quincy's Restaurant, Albany. All you can eat, including salad and dessert bars, beverage, and gratuity; (2) Saturday evening banquet and family talent show at the Albany Holiday Inn. All you can eat buffet dinner (everything included); (3) Sunday after church buffet dinner at the Albany Holiday Inn (everything included); and (4) a reunion T-shirt.

There are two options for registration: (1) You can register for the entire package by paying the flat \$50 registration fee per person. That option entitles the payee to the four things listed above; or You may select parts of the package and simply pay for the parts that you want. See the attached registration form and select the option that works best for you and your family and budget. T-shirts and meal tickets will be handed out on Friday evening (July 11) at the motel, and Saturday morning (July 12) when we meet at Macedonia Church in Parrott.

Checks and money orders for the registration fee should be made out to the Oxford Family Reunion and sent to:

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

Persons who submit the registration fee before May 1, 1997, will be placed in a lottery pool from which two names will be drawn for two \$50 cash prizes. The drawing and cash awards will be made during the Saturday (June 12) banquet and family talent show. **Pay early and get a chance to win \$50 cash.**

The absolute deadline for the registration fee is May 31. Use the attached form and send in registrations as soon as possible. Thanks.

Family Talent Show During Reunion

Persons who wish to participate in the talent show during the banquet, should contact Mrs. Vera Thomas, 4429 Chateau Rd., Orlando Florida 32808, phone (407) 291-2226. Vera, Rosemary Oxford-Rucker, and Evelyn Williams will coordinate the talent show.

Mance and Sarah Oxford Scholarship

The Oxford Scholarship for 1997 will be awarded at the family reunion banquet. (Graduating seniors should begin planning to apply). An application announcement will be made in the next issue of the newsletter. Previous Oxford Scholarship awardees will be introduced if they are in attendance at the reunion.

In Memoriam

Description: Reunion plans for 1997, Remembering Anthony Harden, Willie Lee Iverson, Jr., Dollie Thorton, and Leona Huckleberry

During the Saturday morning devotion service at Macedonia, we will have a memorial in remembrance of all of our relatives who have passed since our last reunion in 1994. We are asking the immediate families of such deceased persons to send us the name, date of birth, and date of death of the family member who died since June, 1994. If we have published a death notice in the newsletter, there is no need to send information on those persons--we can glean the information from the newsletter. Otherwise, let me know who died since our last reunion. Send the information to Monroe Fordham, 49 Calvert Blvd., Tonawanda NY 14150.

Kim Oxford Featured in College Newspaper

The September, 1996 issue of the Wheaton (Mass.) College newspaper carried a front page feature story on Kim Oxford. Kim is the daughter of Marilyn Oxford, and the granddaughter of Annie Lee and the late "Flick" Oxford. The title of the article was "Oxford Sets High Goals." In the article Kim talked about her reasons for choosing Wheaton College over the dozen or so others that accepted her. She also mentioned her plans to major in English and become a teacher. Kim was one of the 1996 Mance and Sarah Oxford Scholarship winners. **Kim, you go girl!!** We are all proud of you. We will keep you in our prayers.

Freddie Mae Fordham, Outstanding Teacher Award

Mrs. Freddie Mae Fordham was a recent recipient of the Iota Phi Lambda's "Apple For The Teacher Award." The award, given annually during the observance of National Education Week, cited Mrs. Fordham for her 35 years as a public school teacher. Freddie, the wife of Monroe Fordham, has a lifelong dedication to teaching and working with young people. In 1974, B.U.I.L.D. Academy (the school where she currently teaches) recommended her for the New York State Teacher of the year Award. In 1984 she received the Jayne Kadney Rand Award from Buffalo State College for her work as a supervisor of student teachers. Freddie serves on the policy committee of the local Head Start Program, and is also active in many community and church outreach programs.

Leona Walton Huckleberry, 1912-1996

Sister Leona Walton Huckleberry died in a Hartford, Conn. nursing home on November 15, 1996. Sister Leona was the sister-in-law of Mrs. Thelma "Tip" Walton. Sister Leona was born in Steward County, Georgia, in 1912, but moved to Parrott at an early age. She was the wife of the late Lit Huckleberry. Her remains were interred in Northwood Cemetery, Wilson, Connecticut.

Description: Reunion plans for 1997, Remembering Anthony Harden, Willie Lee Iverson, Jr., Dollie Thorton, and Leona Huckleberry

Angela Alexander Allen In Concert

On August 25, 1996, the West Hunter Street Baptist Church (Atlanta, Georgia) presented Mrs. Angela Alexander Allen in concert. Angela is the daughter of Ozie Alexander and the granddaughter of the late Nannie Mae Telafare. Angela has extraordinary gifts as a singer and songwriter. She sang at our Oxford Family Reunion talent show. Angela has a bachelor of science degree in Biology and another in Medical Science and Health from Emory University. She is employed at Saint Josephs Health Systems as a Paralegal Risk Management Assistant. Angela has had three years of vocal study but credits her musical talents to "the anointing of God Almighty." The following essay was written by Angela.

Without God, I Can Do Nothing

by Angela Alexander Allen

I cannot begin to recount the numerous times I've sat down at the piano and simply began to play. As the tune became pleasantly familiar to me, I'd simply add words. The words didn't fall into place as fittingly as did the notes, so editing of the lyrics often took place afterwards with thought and a little concentration.

If it sounds easy, it is; but that's because GOD has touched me and blessed me at that particular time and for that particular purpose. Sometimes I find no words adequate to embrace the beauty of the melody, but the melody stays with me even though I never record it or write it down.

There have been numerous times when my heart was heavy and words alone couldn't lift that heaviness. During those times I sit and begin to play. I know these are times of anointing because I'm filled with the Spirit; so much so, that at times all I can do is cry and play. At other times I may sing familiar songs as I've never sung them before and it doesn't even sound like me singing! And, at other times I'm able to bring to reality a composition which in some manner glorifies the life and/or teachings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

There are two facts that I've come to realize. One is that if I try to simply sit down and compose something, it doesn't happen. Without the Holy Spirit, I can do nothing. Secondly, I have never been able to write anything other than religious songs. Again, without the Holy Spirit I can do nothing.

When I wrote the song titled "Child Is Born" over 10 years ago, I was so excited by the acceptance of it by my family. I performed it only once for the public and the second time was at West Hunter Baptist Church on the third Sunday of December. The warmth and the joy I felt from the reception the choir and the congregation showed was a memory that will stay with me forever. My daily prayer is that GOD uses me in whatever way he sees fit.

EDITOR'S NOTE: God is truly using Angela by allowing her to stir the hearts of others through the beauty of her music. Thank you Angela for an inspiring testimony.

**Oxford Family Reunion
July 4,5,& 6, 1997
Albany and Parrott, Georgia**

Description: Reunion plans for 1997, Remembering Anthony Harden, Willie Lee Iverson, Jr., Dollie Thornton, and Leona Huckleberry

Begin now making plans to attend the Oxford Family Reunion in Albany and Parrott, Georgia, July 4, 5, & 6, 1997. This will probably be our last reunion in this century and we invite all of the Oxford descendants as well as descendants of relatives of Mance and Sarah Oxford to attend. We are all part of the same family tree. Send the editor of this newsletter the names and addresses of any relatives or friends who should receive information and announcements about the family reunion. Lets close out this century with a giant memorial to all of our ancestors. Cynthia Carter is currently making preliminary arrangements. There will be more details in the January issue of the newsletter.

The Oxford Scholarship

Since the last *Oxford Family Newsletter* we received a contribution of \$200 for the Mance and Sarah Oxford Scholarship Fund from Mr. & Mrs. Charles (and Josie) Johnson of Atlanta, Georgia.

Family News Tid-Bits

Recently, *The Hartford Courant*, Hartford's daily newspaper, featured a story on "DelMonico's Hatters" of New Haven, Conn., one of the dying breed of businesses that specialize in blocking and restoring hats. The story was front page with a continuation on page 5. There was a picture on page 5 that showed two of DelMonico's customers. One of those customers was none other than our dapper cousin, L'Overture Carter. L'Overture was appropriately dressed in a sport coat with a handkerchief in the breast pocket, a vest, a tie with tie pin, and a stiff-brim straw hat. He may have sported a walking cane, but that was not in the picture.

We received a "thank you" letter from Kimmetrice Oxford, one of the 1996 Oxford Scholarship recipients. Kimmetrice has decided to attend Wheaton College, a private college in Norton, Mass. She reported that her grandmother, Mrs. Annie Lee Oxford, journeyed to Boston for her high school graduation and visited for several weeks with Annie Lee's daughters Evelyn, Josie, and Marilyn. Annie Lee also visited a daughter Delois in Lanhem, Maryland. a daughter Martha Ann in Newark, NJ. She also stopped by to see L'Overture Carter and Martha Oxford in Hartford, Conn. Kimmetrice also reported that her uncle Otis Oxford went to Orlando, Florida to visit his many relatives in that area.

On August 28, 1996, Monroe and Freddie Mae Fordham celebrated their 36th wedding anniversary. They celebrated with a quiet dinner at home with their youngest daughter--Pam, and their granddaughter--Tanisha.

Several people have suggested a regular feature in our newsletter on "family recipes." Do you have recipes that have passed down through your family? Or simply recipes for dishes that are popular with your family--potato pie, brunswick stew, pear preserves, etc. Send your recipes to the editor of the newsletter.

Dollie Thornton, 1914-1996

Obituary from funeral program:

Description: Reunion plans for 1997, Remembering Anthony Harden, Willie Lee Iverson, Jr., Dollie Thornton, and Leona Huckleberry

Dollie Thornton was the former wife of the late Velmer Oxford. She was born in Richland, Georgia, in 1914, to the late Johnnie and Ruth (Covington) Thornton. She had many fond memories of her childhood days in Richland and the many family members and friends that became an important part of her life. She moved to Hartford and became affiliated with the Mt. Moriah Baptist Church, Holy Trinity Church, and then became a faithful and active member of the New Jerusalem Church of God in Christ. She lost her sight at an early age in life, but that did not deter her from full participation in missionary work. Her activities included craft making and special sewing projects for the State of Connecticut Services for the Blind as well as being actively involved with the Tuscan Homes Senior Citizens Group. She was always willing to help someone and offer encouraging words to the young and old.

Sister Thornton leaves to cherish her memory, two sisters--Mattie Washington, of Atlanta GA, and Faye Lee Watson of Wichita Falls TX. She also leaves her devoted cousin, Jessie Green of Hartford, two nephews, Robert Hollis of San Rafael CA, and James Sherman of Plainfield NJ.

She was predeceased by two brothers, Henry Latimore and Lemon Hollis; three sisters Carrie Sherman, Alice Covington and Ethel Covington. Sister Thornton was a person without sight but with a keen vision and insight who kept her eyes on the Lord. She always hoped that her eyesight would be restored and at last her dream has become a reality. She has left this earth and her sight is set on something greater than this world could ever offer.

"For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." 1 Peter 1:24 & 25.

A Retirement Poem

(dedicated to all of our relatives who have retired or who are planning retirement)

by Pam Fordham

The second Spring of life's journey
awaits you.
Reach out to the fruits of your labor.
Rejoice in the assurance of your faithful service.
Time is laced with blossoms
of your immeasurable impact.
Like artists,
we strive to create a masterpiece.
A portrait of
hopes, dreams, and ambitions.
Others may now be guided by
the beauty and detail of your painting.
A path of new opportunities before you.
Well deserved rest will be your companion
as you venture down this unbeaten trail.
May sweet memories of the life you have led thus far
encourage you on your way.

Description: Reunion plans for 1997, Remembering Anthony Harden, Willie Lee Iverson, Jr., Dollie Thorton, and Leona Huckleberry

Next Newsletter

The next newsletter will be published in January, 1997. Send news items to Monroe Fordham, 49 Calvert Blvd., Tonawanda NY 14150. Also send the editor a list of any persons to be added to our mailing list to receive the newsletter.

THE OXFORD FAMILY NEWSLETTER

June 1996 Number 31

Oxford Family Reunion July, 1997

Don't forget to plan for the 1997 Oxford Family Reunion. It will be held in Parrott and Albany Georgia during the first weekend in July, 1997. We will have more details in the next issue of the newsletter, which will be published in the early fall, 1996. The next reunion will probably be our last reunion of this century. It will be a glorious event, we have a lot to celebrate and be thankful for. Plan to be there.

Muhammad Ali: The Best of What We Were

Recently "Sixty Minutes" featured a segment on Muhammad Ali. The report, which highlighted Ali's present situation and some of the turns in his life in recent years, kindled a complex mixture of emotions in this viewer.

The face and demeanor of "the Champ" had been tempered by time, and by the palsy that had battered (but not defeated) the man. In spite of the slow and slurred speech and the subdued responses to the interviewer, one could detect faint traces of the wit, the strength of character, and the strong self-confidence of the Ali of a bygone era.

Watching the aging fighter during the "Sixty Minute" interview conjured up mirror reflections of memories and perceptions of my own generation's past. After all, Ali was one of us. Those visions are especially meaningful now, as we approach the autumn of our lives. In his youth, when he stood at the top of the boxing world--brash, cocky, and skilled at his trade, he personified the spirit that propelled a generation of Americans over the top. To me, Ali was a symbol of those values that made us strong and gave us the courage and confidence that enabled us to gain victory and success.

I remember leaving my home and family, and the only world that I knew, in the summer of 1957 to enter college a half-continent away. I was just a 17 year old kid from the housing projects and a stranger in a new world. Success or failure in my new world would be dependent on whether or not I was able to make the college basketball team, and whether I was able to compete academically with students who had come from more privileged backgrounds. In

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retrospect, it was a chancy venture, but strangely, the thought of failure never occurred to me. I had been taught to believe that all things are possible through God who strengthens me.

That is probably the reason Muhammad Ali became one of my heroes in later years. His life exemplified many of the values that I associated with my own success. The strong self-confidence that made Ali appear cocky, the "never-say-die I-can-do-anything attitude," the willingness to stand up and defend his perception of what was right--even if standing up meant personal loss; those are the things that made Muhammad Ali special.

Ali even showed strength and grace in losing. I recall that after losing a fight, a commentator asked Ali, "What happened Champ?" Ali's response was simple, "I just got a whuppin." Losing a boxing match was not a personal defeat. But he didn't lose many fights. His quest in life was to win, to overcome, to prevail, to succeed. And he dared to believe that, no matter what the odds, victory was always possible. His life reflected an absolute confidence that that possibility would be realized.

As an aging "champ", time has clearly taken its toll on the figure that once reigned as the world heavyweight boxing champion. But time has taken its toll on all in our generation. As we grow older, we struggle to merge the self-concept of our youth with the physical realities of the here and now. The positive outlook that "the Champ" exudes in his current struggle to come to terms with his physical frailties is vintage Ali. He shows all mankind how to grow older and deal with infirmities with class and dignity. There is some psychological comfort in being reminded that the purest symbol of the best of what we were, is in transition with us on our journey through time. The "Sixty Minute" portrait of Muhammad Ali calls to mind the words of the English poet, Alfred Tennyson:

tho,
We are not now that strength which in old
days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we
are, we are,--
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in
will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to
yield.

Monroe Fordham

`96 Oxford Scholarship Winners

The recipients of the 1996 Mance and Sarah Ann Oxford Scholarship Awards were Kimmetrice L. Oxford (of Dorchester, Mass.), and Oshey "D.D." Bradley (of Dawson, Georgia). Kimmetrice is the daughter of Marilyn Oxford and the granddaughter of the late Adolphus Oxford, Sr., and Annie Lee Oxford. Kimmetrice recently graduated from Needham High School. Needham is a special "Metco" suburban school that accepts minority students from the city. Her high school counselor reported that "Kim" was enrolled in a "college preparatory program of studies." In the second part of her high school program, "50% of her classes were at the honors level." Her counselor also commented on her personal qualities: "Kim Oxford consistently demonstrates the meaning of motivation, persistence, effort, and commitment. She demands a lot

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of herself and is not satisfied with the mediocre. Kim wants the stamp of quality and care on what she does. Her cooperative work ethic makes Kim an ideal student." In addition to being an outstanding student academically, Kim was involved in numerous extra-curricular activities. She participated in cross-country, track, the high school gospel choir, and the black student union. She was also a volunteer tutor for inner-city elementary students. In addition to several athletic awards, Kim received an honor roll pin and a merit award for Spanish. She has not decided which college she will attend (she has been accepted at several), but she plans to major in Pre-medicine studies or early childhood studies.

The second awardee was Oshey "D.D." Bradley. "D.D." graduate from Terrell Middle-High School in Dawson, Georgia. He is the son of McKinley "Brad" and Essie "Sister" Bradley, and the grandson of "Teck" Myers. Oshey is graduating as a "B" student and plans to attend Georgia State University, in Atlanta. He plans to major in sports medicine. He also plans to participate in sports at Georgia State.

Kim and "D.D.", congratulations on your award. The entire "Oxford Clan" is proud of both of you. These scholarship awards are our way of saying that we are confident that you will succeed.

Oxford Scholarship Winners, 1990-1996

Since its beginning in 1990, the Mance and Sarah Ann Oxford Scholarship Fund has awarded a total of \$5,000 to high school graduates in our family. The list of awardees are as follows:

1990

Tanya Perry

1991

Terri Rucker
LaTrisha Walton
Demetrius Smith

1992

Kenyata Asberry
Andre Fordham

1993

no applicants

1994

Katrina Carter
Shandra Bradley

1995

no applicants

1996

Oshey "D.D." Bradley
Kimmetrice Oxford

Persons who wish to make contributions to the Oxford Scholarship should send contributions to:
Oxford Scholarship

49 Calvert Blvd.

Tonawanda, NY 14150

All contributions will be acknowledged in the newsletter.

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Family News

Nekesha Myers, daughter of Henderson Myers and granddaughter of Arcolia "Teck" Myers, was appointed as a charter member of Generation Success. This is a leadership program designed to equip its members with leadership skills to help improve their communities. Nekesha was one of 24 members selected from 90 applicants. She is a member of the National Honor Society and National Achievement Academy. Nekesha was also ranked no.2 academically in her junior class. At the 1996 junior/senior prom, she was crowned prom Queen. Keep up the good work Nekesha.

Arcolia "Teck" Myers had surgery on her left eye on May 6, 1996. She had cataracts removed from her eye as an out-patient at Kennestone Hospital in Marietta, GA, where she lives with her son Darious and family. The operation was successful, she can see much better now. "Teck" celebrated her 72nd birthday on May 9. She would like to thank everyone that called about her surgery and to wish her a happy birthday. She also thanks those that called and sent items to her when she, her son and his family home was destroyed by fire.

Prom '96 for Terrell Middle-High School, in Dawson, GA was held on May 4. Attending the prom was Oshey "D.D." Bradley, son of Essie "Sister" and Mckinley "Brad" Bradley and grandson of Arcolia Myers. Also attending were Nekesha Myers, Vontressa Oxford (daughter of Terry Oxford Arnold and Willie Arnold, and granddaughter of the late "J-Bird" and Ethel May Oxford.

ANTHONY HARDEN

February 6, 1965 - March 18, 1996

"Anthony Harden was born on February 6, 1965 in Newark, NJ to Mr. and Mrs. James Harden. [He was the grandson of Annie Lee Oxford]. He attended Newark Public Schools and furthered his education at Essex County College and Kean College of Union, NJ.

Anthony became a Christian when he was quite young and was baptized at an early age. He was a member of Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, also attending the Welcome Baptist Church. Anthony had been employed at the Essex County Courthouse for the past four years. Anthony loved the Lord and would do anything for anyone. He always wore a smile on his face. He was a lover of sports. Anthony had a great love for children, always working with them. He was a coach of the Little League in Irvington for a number of years.

Anthony departed this life on March 18, 1996 at University Hospital, Newark, NJ. Survivors include his wife, Diane Harden; three sons, Anthony, Isaiah, Rashad; parents, Mr. and Mrs. James Harden, grandmothers, Mrs. Annie Lee Oxford and Mrs. Jessie Bell Miller, Dawson, GA; mother-in-law, Mrs. Dorothy Grant, one sister-in-law and brother-in-law of New Jersey; twelve aunts, one great aunt, five uncles, two great uncles and a host of relatives and friends.

Funeral services were held at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Shellman, Georgia, Rev. Lucious Mitchell officiated. Interment, church cemetery."

Willie Lee "Coot, Jr." Iverson, Jr.

September 15, 1941 - May 23, 1996

"Willie Lee 'Coot, Jr.' Iverson, Jr., of Hartford, husband of the late Margarette (O'Neal) Iverson, departed this life Thursday, May 23, 1996 at the Saint Francis Hospital. Willie was the

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son of Jessie Mae (Oxford) Iverson of Hartford, and the late Willie Lee Iverson, Sr. He was born September 15, 1941 in Parrott, GA, and was a resident of the Hartford area for over 38 years, as well as a member of the Greater Hartford-Springfield C.B. Club.

Besides his mother, he is survived by ten sons, Randy, Wesley, Kenneth, Timothy, and John Iverson, Anthony, Michael, and Rodney Barco, Anthony Agee and Chuck Minion; seven daughters, Ethel Ann, and Jessie Iverson of Virginia, Shelly Morton, Laurie Iverson, Aretha Minion, and Vicki Iverson, all of Hartford, Geneva Johnson of Georgia; five brothers, Eddie, Curtis, and Lawrence Iverson of Hartford, Jimmy Iverson of North Carolina and Ronald Iverson of Virginia; first grandson Alan Iverson of Washington, D.C.; 20 other grandchildren, two great-grandchildren....Besides his wife and father, Willie was predeceased by a brother, Joseph Iverson."

Next Newsletter

The next issue of the *Oxford Family Newsletter* will be published in September, 1996. If you wish to share information about your family, please send it to me by the end of August. The September issue will contain more about the family reunion. If you move, remember to send me your new address. In addition, send me the names of children or other relatives who wish to receive the newsletter.

THE OXFORD FAMILY NEWSLETTER

March 1996 Number 30

Take Care of the Children

Elijah was one of God's most outstanding prophets. He lived during the reign of Israel's King Ahab. It was a time of fierce religious conflict in northern Israel. Jezebel, Ahab's Phoenician wife, had introduced the Baal cult of her people into Israel. Her ultimate objective was to have her pagan religion replace the faith of Israel. One of her tactics was to systematically murder God's religious leaders and persecute the true believers and force them to accept Baal. God sent the prophet Elijah to Israel to confront Ahab and the evil Jezebel and stand against the pagan religion.

After a series of clashes between Elijah and the prophets of Baal, in which Elijah and his God triumphed, the furious Jezebel threatened to kill Elijah. "Elijah was afraid and ran for his life." (1 Kings 19:3) Elijah escaped to the desert where he eventually became deeply depressed and almost gave up hope. He needed desperately to speak with God.

Elijah traveled for some forty days and finally reached Mt. Horeb, God's Mountain. There he spent the night in a cave. Elijah's spirits were low and he waited on a sign from God. The depth of Elijah's depression is evidenced by what he said in his prayer to God: "I have been zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too." (1 Kings 19:10). Elijah clearly needed encouragement from God. And God didn't let him down. According to the scripture, "The Lord said [to Elijah] `go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.'" (1 Kings 19:11)

Description: Reunion plans for 1997, Remembering Anthony Harden, Willie Lee Iverson, Jr., Dollie Thorton, and Leona Huckleberry

With faith in his heart that God would rescue him from his predicament and tell him what to do, Elijah stood up and waited on God's answer to his prayer. 1 Kings 19:11-13 describes what happened next: "Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave." Elijah knew that he was in God's presence.

God may not always come to us in the ways we expect him to come. He may not come in a flash or a bang. He may come in the form of a whisper or a soft breeze. Unlike Elijah, we may not even recognize his presence when he comes. But one thing is sure, if we humble ourselves and call--he will come!!

God spoke to Elijah and told him to go back the way he came. God informed him that God had agents in Israel that Elijah was not even aware of. "I reserve seven thousand in Israel--all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouth have not kissed him." (1 Kings 19:18) Things were not as hopeless as they seemed to Elijah. In time, Ahab and Jezebel met violent deaths. God was still in control. Evil and unrighteousness may rule for a while, but the power of God will eventually prevail.

As we face the daily trials and crises in life, we must hang on to that simple truth. God Almighty still controls the universe. Even when we are down and out, he alone can lift us up. We should model our faith after that of Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." (Job 13:15) If we put our faith and trust in God, he will come to our rescue when we are in trouble. That is the lesson that our family has learned over the generations. God doesn't always come in the roar of the wind, or an earthquake, or in a fire. He may come in a gentle whisper, or in a beautiful melody that tugs at our heart and brings tears to our eyes, or he may come in the form of a little child. **Take care of the children, they may be Gods answer to our prayers to lift our family up.**

Monroe Fordham

Family Reunion, July 1997 Mark Your Calendar

Mark your calendar! Start planning your vacation for 1997! Begin making plans to attend the Oxford Family Reunion in Albany/Parrott, Georgia in July 1997. We want to make 1997 our biggest and best reunion to date. This will probably be our final reunion in this century. We plan to publish a newsletter in July, 1996, and again in the fall and winter of this year. Look for more details in future newsletters. Cynthia Bulger and her dad--Reggie Carter have agreed to do the planning. If you have ideas or suggestions for activities contact:

Reggie Carter
Rt. 1 Box 69
Butler, GA 31006
912-862-3837

Family News

Ivey Williams, a 6th grader at Carver Middle School, Orlando, Florida, made the honor roll in the last grading period. Ivey is the daughter of Evelyn and Russell Williams and granddaughter

Description: Reunion plans for 1997, Remembering Anthony Harden, Willie Lee Iverson, Jr., Dollie Thorton, and Leona Huckleberry

of the late Arie D. Fordham-Jackson. At this stage in her young life, Ivey wants to eventually become a nurse--like her grandmother. She wants to be the first of her cousins to follow their grandmother's footsteps and enter the field of nursing. Good luck Ivey! You can do it!

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Leon Perry was recently hired as an assistant football coach at the University of Georgia. Leon is the son of Vera Fordham-Thomas, of Orlando, Florida. Leon was a fullback on the national champion University of Oklahoma football team. Prior to accepting the coaching position on the staff of the Georgia bulldogs, Leon was an assistant coach with Marshall University. Shortly after arriving on the University of Georgia campus, Leon had an opportunity to get together with his cousin--Demetrius Smith (Son of Cynthia Bulger). Demetrius is a graduate student at the University of Georgia.

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Deborah Allen ranks as one of the leading officials in American women's college basketball. Deborah regularly works some of the top women's games in the nation. She officiated games on national television during the recent NCAA women's regional tournament in Charlottesville, Virginia. Deborah is the daughter of Vera Fordham-Thomas. Deborah lives with her husband and daughter in Orlando, Florida.

Aunt Martha

Aunt Martha Oxford, who lives in Hartford Conn., is the sole surviving offspring of Mance and Sarah Oxford. Usually we check with Aunt Martha prior to sending out each issue of the newsletter. Last week when we talked with Aunt Martha, she informed me that she has arthritis and sometimes its hard for her to get around, and even to do basic things for herself. She also informed me that Loverture Carter, who also lives in Hartford, comes by to see her almost every day. If anyone would like to send Aunt Martha a card or letter to cheer her up, her address is: Martha Oxford, 41 Tower - G, Hartford CN. 06120.

Mance & Sarah Ann Oxford Memorial Scholarship Award

This is to announce that the Mance and Sarah Ann Oxford Scholarship for 1996 is now open for applications. The scholarship awards, in the amount of \$500 each will be made in July, 1996. 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.

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2. Statement explaining your relationship to the Oxford clan or related families.
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 June 1, 1996.

Send all of the above to:

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

Next Newsletter

The next issue of the newsletter will be out in late July. If you want to share news about your family with the entire Oxford Clan, send me your news-items. Also, send me the names and addresses of persons you want to receive copies of the newsletter. If you move, be sure and send me your new address and phone number. I will try to compile and mail an up-dated list of addresses and phone numbers in July. Hope to hear from you.

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