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Claude Ellis

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One on One with Mr. Claude Ellis

By Esther Lee-Staler



First met Mr. Ellis at Shoneys where some of his children had taken him for breakfast to celebrate his 100th birthday. His daughter introduced me to him and the family. I asked Mr. Ellis what would he give credit for living so long? He said, "Following God's instructions." He said, "I see you are trying to do something good. He said, "I give you a few minutes of your time. I believe I can help you."

In the home of Mr. Ellis

Esther: Mr. Ellis, I met you at Shoneys and I want to talk with you if you feel up to it.

Mr. Ellis: Oh! Yes! I remember you, but I couldn't remember what about. Hal! Hal! Hal! I told you we would talk.

Mr. Ellis: Let me level with you I don't hear well, but I understand good.

Esther: How old are you?

Mr. Ellis: 103

Esther: He means 100 years and 3 months. He was born March. This month is June.

Mr. Ellis: Yes, 100 years & 3 months. I was born in March.

Esther: Tell me about your childhood.

Mr. Ellis: You mean the day I was born Hal! Hal! Hal! Springhill Church is the area where I was born. We stayed 3 or 4 years in that place. I remember my old boss man and his two daughters. His name was Joe Wilson and he had two daughters Bonnie and Ollie Wilson. His son name Grady.

Esther: Did you play with the children?

Mr. Ellis: Oh! Yes!

Esther: What age was this?

Mr. Ellis: I'm talking about 3 or 4 years of age.

Esther: What were the names of your parents?

Mr. Ellis: Mardick and Lizzie

Esther: What did your parents do for a living?

Mr. Ellis: My dad was a farmer, a sharecropper, and a turpentine hand. He had a turpentine still on his place. He dipped tar to make turpentine when he wasn't farming.

Esther: Do you go to school?

Mr. Ellis: I went to school at Scott's Creek just 3 months, and that's all the schooling I had. But I remember the name of every student in that class like it was yesterday. There were a lot of children in that class. The teacher was Anne Livingston.

Esther: How did you get to school?

Mr. Ellis: I walked to school about 300 yards or 1/2 mile. I was 5 years old when I started school. Esther: Why did you only attend school for 3 months?

Mr. Ellis: Daddy stopped me to work. He hired me out to an old colored man to plow. The handles were above my head. (He motioned with his hands how he had to reach up to catch the handles.) He stopped me from school and put me to the plow, and I did that until I got grown and earned. I worked for this colored man 1 year for fifty cents.

Esther: Did you ever learn how to read?

Mr. Ellis: Yeah! I can read. The Bible is my hearstring. I started off in a primer book and when I left I was in the third reader.

Esther: How much did you earn?

Mr. Ellis: I didn't. Hal! Hal! Hal! At the age of 5 I never knew because my dad never told me. My old man bought a shotgun that I had to work to pay off. I use to work at a sawmill. When the man paid me, he would put my pay in an envelope. When I get home, my dad would have his hand open. I put the envelope in his hand and never knew what I made.

I remember when my mother would take 8 children to the field to hoe and chop cotton for thirty cents an acre. They made a dime a piece. A smart man would get a job with a farmer. He would make \$8.00 a month. When the sun comes up he's getting the mule and work until the sun goes down. He worked from sun to sun. When I tell my story to young people, they say, "I would not have done that." Hal! Hal! Hal! I tell them that you would have because they did not have a choice.

Esther: This had to be hard and discouraging, but you sit here telling this story with a smile and such peace. You seem to have no resentment. What was one thing you wanted to change in your life considering how you were treated growing up?

Mr. Ellis: You can deal with something so long until you can become immune to it. I accepted this and was pleased with what the Lord had prepared for me, but I knew one day the Lord would make a change when I get grown. At the age of 17 I named Maude Lou. We had 7 children and not one of them pointed to his son Edward sitting in the room with us during the interview. I can say that I ever asked

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AABJ'S Most Amazing Man for August & September

Mr. Claude Ellis

Read what this one
hundred plus year old
man has to say



Article on page 11



when sixty-three percent of our children are born out of wedlock and we have more than a million black men in prison. So many times we attempt to pass judgment on those in the fire light when the truth remains that we are committing some of the same faults as they are. We all make mistakes and if we can be forgiven by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ then who are we to be unforgiving. The idea of looking for perfection out of imperfection only leads to insanity.

The idea of being inhumane with ourselves has to be implemented on all levels, regardless of sociopolitics. Our entertainers have to come to grips with fact that their lyrics actual do have an effect on their listeners, especially when you can look at our community's youth and see the connection. For instance, when one of Hip-Hop's biggest mogul's tries to explain the difference between the words "nigga" and "nigger". Stating that one is a term of endearment and the other is a derogatory term, as I shake my head and speech muffs were using coarse English when they were hanging our forefathers from trees that have been fertilized by the blood of its strange fruit. So, please Mr. Phil Farr, understand that we are not taking ownership of the term, we are stealing the term and I think that it is about time that we give those people back their belongings.

For years our community has advocated the idea of "keep it real", and in order for us to do that we must begin with being truthful with ourselves and with each other. We can no longer worry about candy coating or political correctness. We must learn to recognize our strengths as well as our weaknesses and move forward with the understanding that there will be stumbling blocks along the way, but we must continue to move forward. We can not expect to create working contracts with other groups until we have a working contract that is honored with ourselves.

them for one red penny of the money that they worked for. Not one of them can say (ignoring to Edward) that after gathering a crapload I kept all the money for my self I felt we all worked for it and it should be divided among us all. I have never asked my children for money. I had to give to them. I remember when I don't have a dime and nobody owed me one. Hal! Hal! Hal! Now that's bad when you can't find a dime and nobody owes you one. But we made it. I have never been in jail nor even arrested. Esther: Well Mr. Ellis! can't thank you enough for your inspiring and moving story, but my time is up. Mr. Ellis: Well your time may be up but my time is not. You've gotten started up. I have a message for you from the Lord. You must hear it.

TO BE CONTINUED

CELEBRATION OF A LIFE AND HOME GOING SERVICES FOR



DEACON CLAUDE ELLIS
SUNRISE: MARCH 10, 1905 SUNSET: DECEMBER 21, 2006

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2006
2:30 P. M.

NEW HOPE MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
REGISTER, GA

REV. LEE HUNTER, PASTOR AND OFFICIATING OFFICER

REV. JOE FLOWERS, PRESIDING

INTERMENT IN CHURCH CEMETERY

Professional Services Entrusted To: **WHITAKER FUNERAL HOME**
25 North Kennedy Street
Metter, GA 30439
Information Line: 912 685-4254
Telephone Line: (912) 685-5158
Minister Larry and Mrs. Brenda W. Gould, Owners/Operators

Obituary

To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heavens:

A time to be born: Claude Ellis was born on March 10, 1905 in Bulloch County Georgia to the late Mr. Mordecai and Mrs. Lizzie Williams Ellis.

A time to die: He peacefully entered into eternal rest on Thursday, December 21, 2006 at his home in Pulaski after a very short illness.

A time to get: He received very little education (approximately 3 mos.) at the Scotts Creek Church in Register, GA.

A time to sew, a time to plant, and a time to embrace: At an early age he united with the New Hope Missionary Baptist Church, Register, GA through the Mt. Zion United Methodist Church in Pulaski, GA where he remained faithful until his health failed. He was Chairman Deacon for many years and because of his merits and age, was declared Chairman Emeritus. For years, he faithfully and willingly made numerous improvements to the church. He was a Christian man and a dedicated leader who believed and trusted in God and loved to share His word. He was also a member and Father of the WMBS Burial Society. As a husband and father, Claude loved and provided for his family and many others. He was a caring, compassionate and charitable man who was always helping someone in need and welcomed all who entered his home. He worked with the Candler County NAACP Organization in purchasing land for a swimming pool near the Elementary School in Metter; and assisted in other tasks related to the improvement of other public facilities/establishments. At his death, he was an active member of the Candler County NAACP Branch.

A time to reap: Claude enjoyed his family and friends and all of his many hobbies; which included fishing, hunting, building/carpentry and farming. This devout man was featured in the African American Business Journal for his 100th birthday in 2005.

A time to love: Claude was united in holy matrimony to Mattie Ellis on May 10, 1925. To this union, eight children were born. His wife, Mattie and one son (Roscoe Ellis) preceded him in death. This couple lived, loved and shared together for a blissful 75 years and 10 months.

A time to weep: Left to cherish his memories are: Two sons, General L. Ellis (Lovie) of Cincinnati, OH and Edward Ellis of Pulaski, GA; Five daughters, Janie Kirkland (Percy), Geraldine Roberson, and Lizzie Sludder of Cincinnati, OH, Josephine Neal (George, Sr.) and Delores E. Hagins (Willie James "Will") of Pulaski, GA; One sister, Almeter Phillips of Metter, GA; One sister-in-law, Ethel Mae Dawson, Jacksonville, FL; 39 grandchildren, 70 great grand children; 23 great-great grand children One adopted brother, Harvey (Neta Mae) Holloway, Five adopted daughters, Patricia Hills-Brunson, Barbara Ellis Jackson, Shirley Odom-Barnes, Pearl Tanner & Betty Spence; and a host of loving nieces, nephews, other relatives and sorrowing friends.

The day is past and gone; the evening shades appear
O may we all remember well, the night of death draws near.

We lay our garments by, upon our beds to rest
So death will soon disrobe us all, of what we have possessed.

Lord keep us safe this night, Secure from all our fears
May angels guard us while we sleep, till morning light appears?

And when our days are past and we from time remove
Oh may we in Thy bosom rest, the bosom of Thy love.

Order of Service

Presiding.....Rev. Joe Flowers

Processional

Selection.....Choir

Invocation.....Rev. George Coleman

Scripture: *Old Testament: Job 13:1-19*.....Rev. John Leggett

New Testament: John 14: 1-6.....Rev. Larry Lawton

Hymn: The Day Is Past & Gone.....Elder James Johnson

Remarks.....Dea. Harold Deloach

Ms. Shirley Hodges

Reflections.....Sis. Josephine C. Parrish

Solo.....Sis. Shaunta F. Ellis-Rivers

Family Tribute.....Sis. Delores E. Hagins

Acknowledgements (*pause for silent obituary*)...Sis. Brenda W. Gould

Selection“Sending Up My Timber”.....Bro. Maurice Hill

The Message.....Pastor Lee Hunter

Final Gance

Recessional.....“Get My Mansion Ready”Shaunta & Choir

Honorary Attendants & Pallbearers

Deacons of New Hope

Dea. John Parrish, Sr. ~ Dea. William E. George, Jr. ~ Dea. A. D. Davis

Active Pallbearers:

Grandsons

Floral Attendants

Granddaughters

The family wishes to express our gratitude for the many acts, deeds, means & ways of kindness shown to us during our time of bereavement.

We have been truly strengthened by the outpouring of love we have received.

May God bless each of you as you have been a blessing to us.

~The Ellis Family~