

We boast of a rich history,
carrying out the vision of
Founders
Exiss Wishams'



Meek Powell



















Our Heritage

Told by the Mary E. Williams

Griffith,

Daughter of Founder,

Exill Williams





History and Heritage of the Williams and Powell Family Reunion <u>Founders: Mr. Exill Williams 3-27-1910 & Mrs. Alma Thrower Williams 1-4-1919</u> Founders: Mr. Meek Powell 1905-1987 Mrs. Gladys Powell - 2007

THE WILLIAMS & POWELL FAMILY REUNION

1943 - 2013

Written by Mary E. Williams Griffith, Daughter

Life takes some crazy directions sometimes, causing changes we can't anticipate. Even though we try to cope as best we can, some things are beyond our control. We can only accept them and try to move forward as best we can. We may have to lean on someone else's shoulders for a while, but that's what families are for, and that's why I am here to let you know about the history and heritage of the Williams and Powell Family Reunion. Together we can make it through anything.

Saturday before the third Sunday in August

Saturday before the third Sunday in August has always been an important day in the lives of the family of Grant W. and Narsissia Moten Williams' Family of seventeen (17) children and off springs - The Williams Family Reunion – Seventy (70) years old. When I was three (3) years old Daddy spanked me for disturbing him in bed at Uncle Theo's house. I wanted money to buy ice cream that Aunt Queen was making for the Family Reunion. Poor me, I didn't know it was free. What can you expect from someone only three? I shall never forget and I never let Daddy forget!

Daddy started the reunion in 1943 at our home in Eagle Mills, grand-mother Narsissia was living with us then. His father Rev. Grant Williams had died in 1936. He wanted to share the Williams legacy with as many as possible. He wanted to honor his mother and his living brothers and sisters and highlight the memory of his father and those who were deceased, his own wife and family and all the future generations.



Mother said the first menu was "meat and bread." At that time they would dig a big hole in the ground and cover it with a grate to make the bar-b-que. After designating the time and place The "Big Dinner" and Daddy called it, no other communications were made, only "word by mouth" remembered from one year to the next. As the reunion grew so did the menu.

Each reunion was hosted at one of the brother's home. The 1944 reunion was hosted by Uncle Theo at his home on Princeton Pike in Pine Bluff. It was wonderful; we had lots of food, cold drinks, ice cream and water melons. From Pine Bluff we went to Vicks at Uncle James' home, Uncle Bruce's home at Eagle Mills, he was a minister; Aunt Annie Mae, his wife was a very good cook. Daddy and men of the family always made the bar-b-que, and the women would bring salads and cakes and pies. The fun and fellowship was more important than the food. Daddy always stressed, "Let's keep the legacy Alive."

As times went by, Gracie Mae Wright of Warren began hosting the reunion. She was the daughter of

Aunt Lenora Moore of Hampton. She began serving more foods from her garden, like green beans and wonderful potato pies. She was a wonderful cook, and always had a great garden. We loved to go to Warren.

Down through the years Daddy always stressed the importance for us to know who we are and whose we are. He said, "Each family has a legacy and should show pride and ownership of that legacy." Daddy's family included (17) brothers and sisters and he was proud of them all. Because of his tradition to honor the Williams' legacy we all respect and teach our children and our children's children the importance and they get excited all over year after and can hardly wait for Sunday Before the Third Sunday in August.

We went to Uncle Theo's home very often. We were very happy when he moved to Townsend Park from Princeton Pike.



At the park we had a lot of other things to do. We always bar-b-queued all night Friday night. This Friday night was a rough one. It rained for a very long time, and the weather turned real cold to us children. We thought we were going to freeze. We had to go to Uncle Theo's home and get some of his coats and blankets to keep warm. We had never seen such weather in the middle of August. Saturday was beautiful, and we had a grand time.

One of the best reunions was held at Uncle James home way down in Vicks in Bradley, back in the woods. It was so beautiful there, cool, calm, pleasant, peaceful and refreshing, and the food was delicious! Everyone was just happy to be back on the ole home place of Uncle James.

The majority of the time either Daddy or Uncle Bruce and Aunt Annie Mae hosted the "The Big Dinner." In 1973 the reunion was at both Daddy's and Uncle Bruce's homes. They were just a hop a skip and a jump from each other. The food was at Uncle Bruce's home. That was the first time Aunt Annie made baked beans for us. The fun was at Daddy's. We had loud music, games and fun.

In 1975 Daddy was ill and all of his living children, Charles, John T., Jimmie Lee, Benny Ray, Harold Edward, Edith Carolyn and yours truly, Mary E. ("James Allen "Sonny" and LeRoy Gordon were deceased) started playing a greater role. We all tried to please him but it was hard for him to let go of his "Big Dinner." It was good, lots of family, fellowship and fun, but also the last one to be hosted at his home. In 1976 my husband Charles J. Griffith and I asked Daddy if we could host "The Big Dinner" at our home called "Pine Manor Estate." He agreed and the rest is history. We started decorating, planning themes for each year and providing a greater variety of foods



As time passed an the crowed increased for the "Big Dinner" family from all over the State and many other States came early to help kill the three or four hogs to be bar-b-queued. They brought the knives and guns hoping to be able to shoot one of the pigs. They loved scaling them and scraping the hair off with their knives.

Some of the themes we used were "Celebrating the Past", "I Believe I Can Fly", Safari Hunt", "Ole Fashion Western Round-Up", "It's Mardi Gras", "The Hawaiian Feast", "The Joy of Christmas in August",

"A Time to Love," "The Year of the Heart", "A Salute to Our Soldiers", "A Taste of China" and many others.

The 2013 reunion is Super Bowl LXX – The Williams Heirs VS The Powell/McClellan Pairs.

Daddy's first cousin Meek Powell of Malvern, Arkansas and his family always attended our family reunions. They enjoyed them as much as we did. He always paid money to have his family here to help us celebrate. They attended for **37 years** before becoming a certified part of the reunion. The idea was accepted and the Williams Family Reunion became "The Williams & Powell Family Reunion." We all have been so pleased having this family with us. They brought new ideas and added so much to the reunion. Meek Powell and his wife Gladys Powell were fondly called *Daddy Powell* and *Mama Powell* by their off springs, and we do the same. This year marks 33 years since the Powell Family was been incorporated in the reunion. Juan McClellan is a great MC and soloist. We are blessed with the giftedness and talent that the Powell's bring.

Another significant portion of our heritage is that grandmother Narsissia had a half Brother, Andrew Hegler who lived in Calhoun County near the large farm where she and Grandfather lived. International Paper Company took their land away and they had to move out. Uncle "Bud" (Andrew) and Aunt Everlena lived there much longer than the Williams and they moved to Eagle Mills and they loved "The Big Dinner" also. Uncle Bud was born January 7, 1879 and died April 23, 1975.

Jimmie's project for the 1975 reunion was to buy a Tomb Stone for Uncle Bud. The stone has Williams Powell Reunion etched on it. Thanks to Jimmie and the Williams and Powell Family Reunion.

In 1986 Daddy Powell co-founder of the Williams and Powell Family reunion was ill and could not attend the reunion, this put a damper on our hearts but we were grateful for the rest of the family who came. Earlier, Daddy became ill and moved in with my family. I chose to miss my oldest son's Charles Jr. and his bride Cheryl Conway's wedding in Germany to be with my father and he slipped away from us on February 12, 1987 when

he went "Fishing in the Sky", leaving a big void in all of our lives. When the arrangements were made and all the services ended, our oldest brother "Charles Henry" as Daddy said "vowed" that we would continue to celebrate the Williams-Powell Family Reunion even if only Daddy's family attended." I found a letter that Charles wrote before his death and my heart was broken when I read it. He is no longer here to help us carry out his vow but nevertheless we will persevere. The 1987 reunion was the saddest reunion we experienced. We sang "We are Family" and there were very few dry eyes to be seen.

Daddy Powell went to be with the Lord a few weeks in March in 1987 after Daddy passed. Our daughter Wendy was small she said, "Won't he be surprised to see Grand Daddy is already there! We had a sad reunion in 1987, the loss of both our founders, Daddy Exill and Daddy Powell. Mama Powell lived on until she was 100, and had a birthday party out of this world!

She passed in 2007 as did my Mother-in-law, Mrs. Classie J. Griffith who always brought a vibrant and jovial spirit every year she attended. One of the fondest memories of her presence is when the children blew bubbles around her and she belted out in good "Ma" fashion..."B is for bubbles...Bubbles, bubbles, bubbles."

bles"

Since the inception of the reunion we have missed three years of actually holding "The Big Dinner."

In 1966 when Uncle James died and was buried on August 15th.

In 1998 yours truly had her first Brain Tumor

On August 10th. A "whole lot" of precious family members came to Baptist Hospital in Little Rock to visit me. Thanks to all of you. It was a reunion of sorts.

Then in 2007 our brother, Jimmie L Williams home was burned just two weeks before the reunion time. We tried to notify all the people but everyone did not get the message, and still we had fun. David Elvester, Uncle Elvester's son, came home from California in a Mobile Home with his entire family.

The newest addition to the W & P Reunion is the Sunday Morning Religious and Memorial s. The first service was held at the St. John Baptist Church of Eagle Mills, my church; Pleasant Grove Baptist Church of Camden where most of the Williams family is resting and then to the St. James AME Church of Eagle Mills where my husband Church is a member. We try to showcase alternate Ministers from the Williams and the Powell Family.

Some of the ministers who have blessed us with their messages are: Rev. Sheldon B. Williams, grandson of Uncle Johnny; Rev. John McClellan; Daddy Powell's son-in-law; Rev. Danny Phillip, Grandson of Uncle James, son of Claudia Phillips; Rev. Charles Hood, former pastor of Gayle Griffith; Rev. Lorraine Powell, niece of daddy Powell; Rev. Victor Mitchell, Son of Mittie Jean Powell and Grandson of Meek Powell. Rev. Anthony Newkirk, husband of Angela Griffith-Newkirk; Rev. Roy L. Owens, son of Aunt Ruby and Uncle Johnny; Rev. Dolphin Vassar, granddaughter of Uncle Maceo, daughter of Ira L. Williams; Rev. Wesley McClellan and Rev. Johnny McClellan, sons of Rev. & Mrs. John & Reola McClellan, grandsons of Daddy Powell; Rev. Clifford Williams, son of Deacon Levert and Mary Williams and grandson of Uncle James, and this year's speaker is Rev. J.C. Owen, son of Aunt Ruby and Uncle Johnny.



Down through the years we have lost some of our greatest supporters we will miss all of them and cherish their precious memories. 2012 and 2013 has brought to an end of many of our beloved including Uncle James' children, Mrs. Hattie Davis, Mr. Levert Williams; Otha Williams' daughter Marilyn, Uncle James' granddaughter; Gracie James, daughter of Parlee James and granddaughter of Aunt Lenora; Joseph Williams, son of Uncle Theo and Aunt Queen, and husband of Peggy Williams; Mittie Jean Mitchel, daughter of Daddy and Mama Powell and mother of Rev. Victor Mitchel; Charles H. Williams and Benny Ray Williams, sons of Founders Exill Williams and Alma D. Thrower Williams. Benny was our Bread man! After Benny died I wondered who was going to provide the bread. Carol consoled me saying we are going to have bread in memory of Benny.

May God rest your souls.

We are proud of our history and heritage from both the Williams and Powell Families and appreciate

the fun and fellowship, and cooperation of this three-day event. We have enjoyed the reunion for more than 70 years and we pray that all who encountered it has been blessed by all aspects of our "Big Dinner" and the Memorial services and all our other phenomenal attractions that accompanied it. We will always treasure our families and honor our founders:

Mr. & Mrs. Exill and Alma D. Williams and Mr. Meek and Mrs. Gladys Powell!

MAY GOD CONTINUE TO GRANT US FAVOR AND BLESSINGS AND MAY WE SHOWOUR GRATITUDE TO HIM IN RETURN!

Please forgive me for any mistakes or omissions I am not aware of.
If you have any additions, please let me know because this material will be place in our archives and be considered as official documentation of our rich history and heritage.

Williams

Descendants of Grant & Narsissia Williams

T31: 1 -1			
Elizabeth	James	Hattie	Johnnie
Marshall Lovette	G.W. Williams	Gertie	Rachel Lee
Burl Lovette	Elbert	Robert	Sarcie Lee
Edward Lee Lovette	Moses		Ruby Lee
Geneva	Irma		Illinois
George Burns	W.J.		Grant
Grant	Levert		Cornelius
			Daniel
	Bruce		
	Paul		
Lenora	Clarence	Theo	Exill
Monroe Cook	Maceo	Marion	Charles Henry
Parlee Taylor	Elester Williams	Bruce	Mary E. Griffith
Gracie Wright	Neomia Crain	Joseph	James Allen (Sonny)
Rosco	Mable Sue Robinson	Uriah	John Thomas
Elmer	Earl Lee Cummings	One daughter?	Benny Ray
Brizman	Ira Lee Vasser	Narissia (Deddie)	Jimmie Lee
	William Terrell	Sylvester Galbert	Harold Edward
Azree Joyce	Eli		Edith Carolyn
(no children)	&		LeRoy Gordon
	Three unnamed Childr	en	Harvey
			Dewitt
Elvester Our connection to the Powell family was a result of			
Carolyn Delores Andrew Hegler (Uncle Bud) and Narsissia Williams			
David (Uncle Bud's) half sister as well.			

The Powell Family

Annie & George Powell ~ Meeks & Gladys Powell

Otis Dean Powell Sr.

Otis Jr, Richard, Lorraine, Jacqueline & Cynthia

Lois

Genell

Margaret

Arthur

Reola McClellan

Juan

Johnny

Janice

Cornell

Wesley

Sharon

Floyd (Herm)

Lucille

Flora

Kent & Trent

Kenneth

Lawrence (Pug)

Tyrone

Larry

Yolanda

Rodney

Mittie Jean Mitchell

Victor & Varcel

Meek, Jr.



Daddy's House

What was, what used to be is no more as well as you can see. The house I loved, grew up me.

The joys, the happiness the love and untold bliss-Oh god, how much I miss.

There was new life and birth to death of a precious two.

The old endured one loved and feared with wisdom untold. We saw her life unfold.

Back to her Master she went. Truly she was heaven sent. Oh how good it feels to vent.

My dad was always sad, he soon moved in with me. All together we were as happy as could be. Now the house and he too are all gone. Now I cherish the memories of my mom and Daddy's house that made our home.

The Williams | Powell

2013 Honorees



Grandson of Meek Powell



Son in law of Meek Powell

James Williams







James Williams



G.W. Williams

Elbert

Moses

Frma

W.J.

<u> Levert</u>

Otha

Hattie

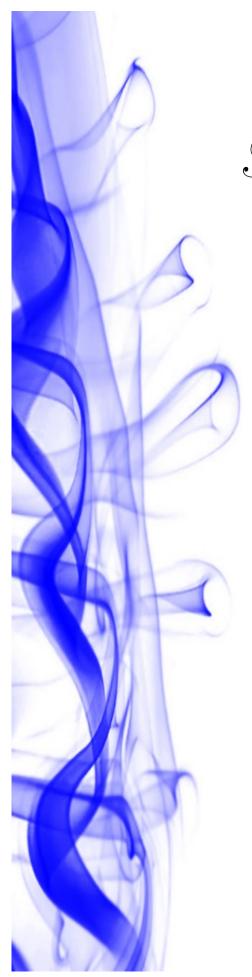
Claudia

Joseph

James Franklin







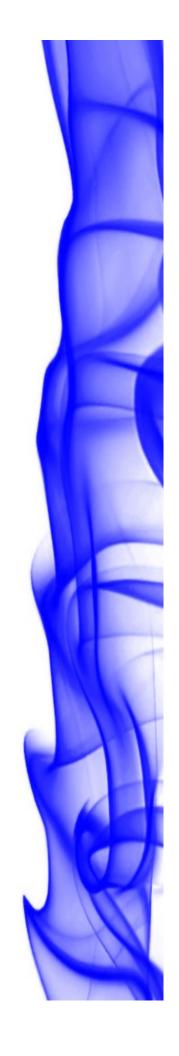
Hattie Williams

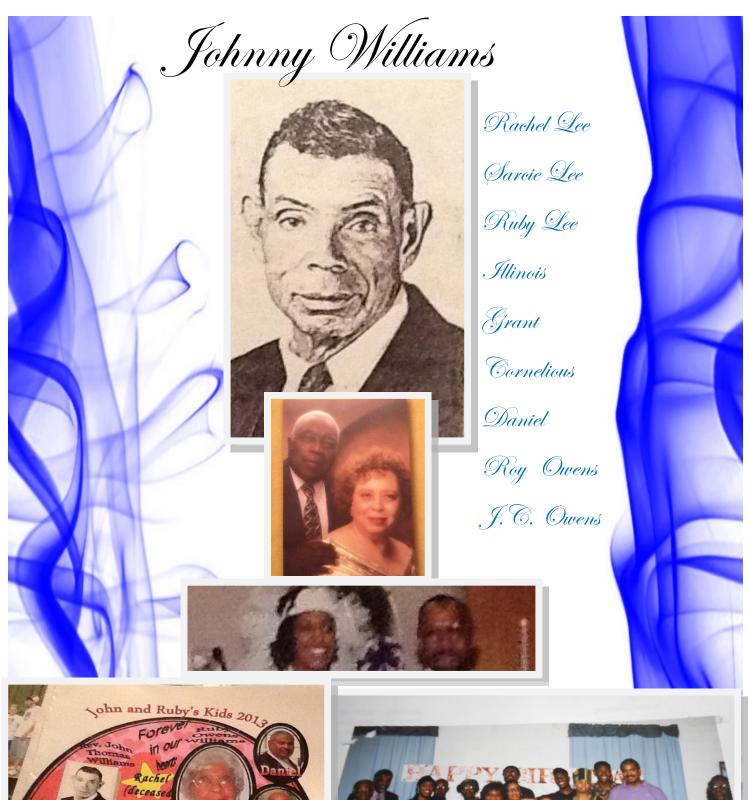


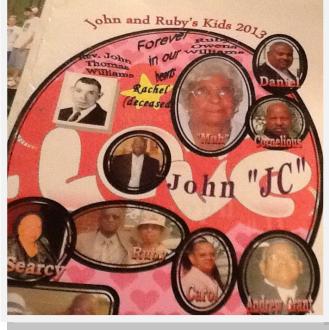
Children

Gertie

Robert

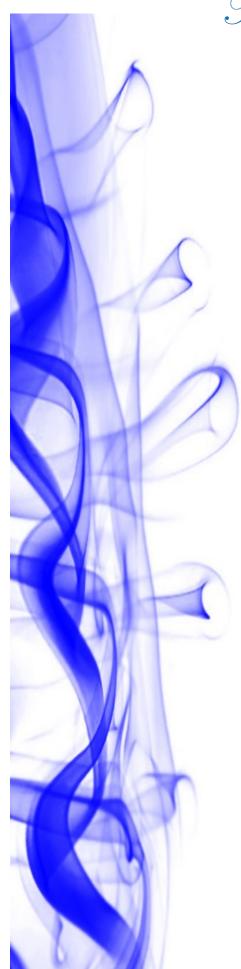








Mrs. Lenora Cook





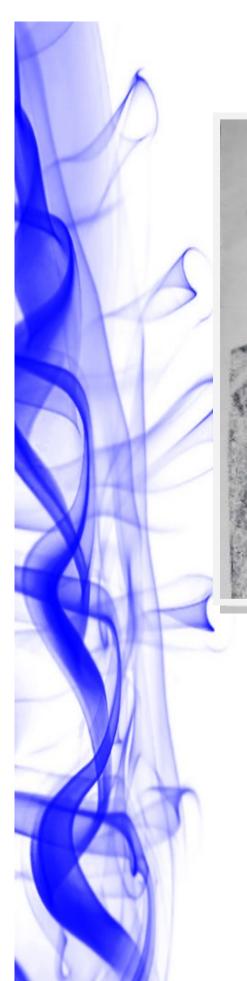


Monroe Cook Parle Taylor Gracie Wright Rosco Elmer Brizman





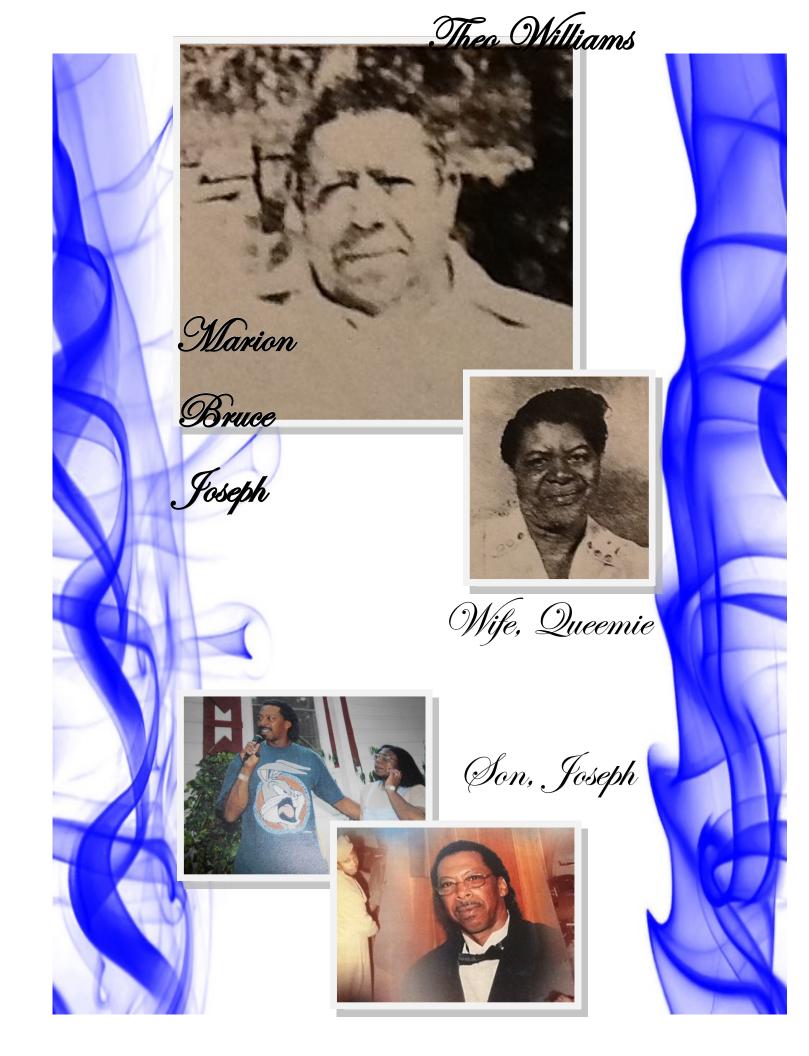




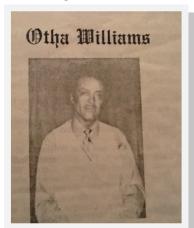
Maceo



Elester Williams
Neomia Crain
Mable Que Robinson
Earl Lee Cummings
Tra Lee Vasser
William Terrell
Mary Nell



Uriah One Daughter (unknown)



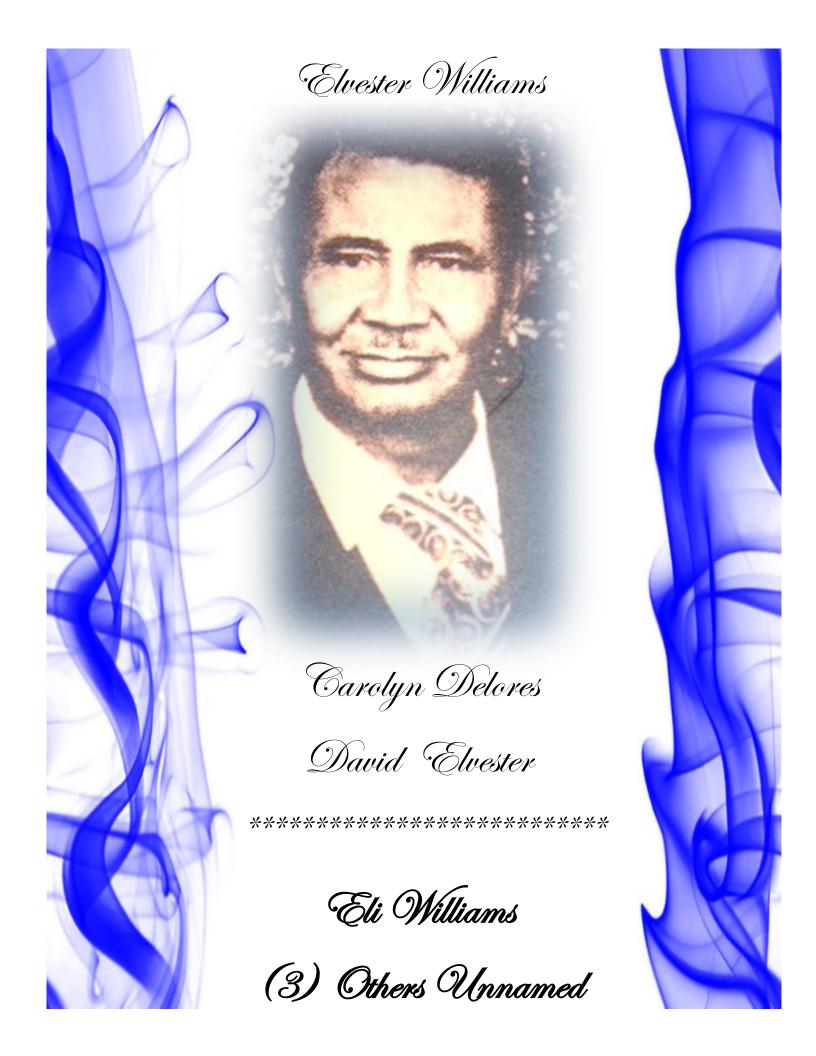








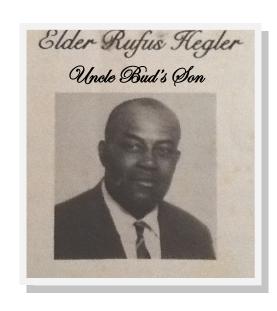








Uncle Bud & Hunt Everlena Hegler







Otis Dean Powell Sr.,

No photo available children

Otis Dean, Jr.

Richard

Lorraine

Jacqueline

Cynthia



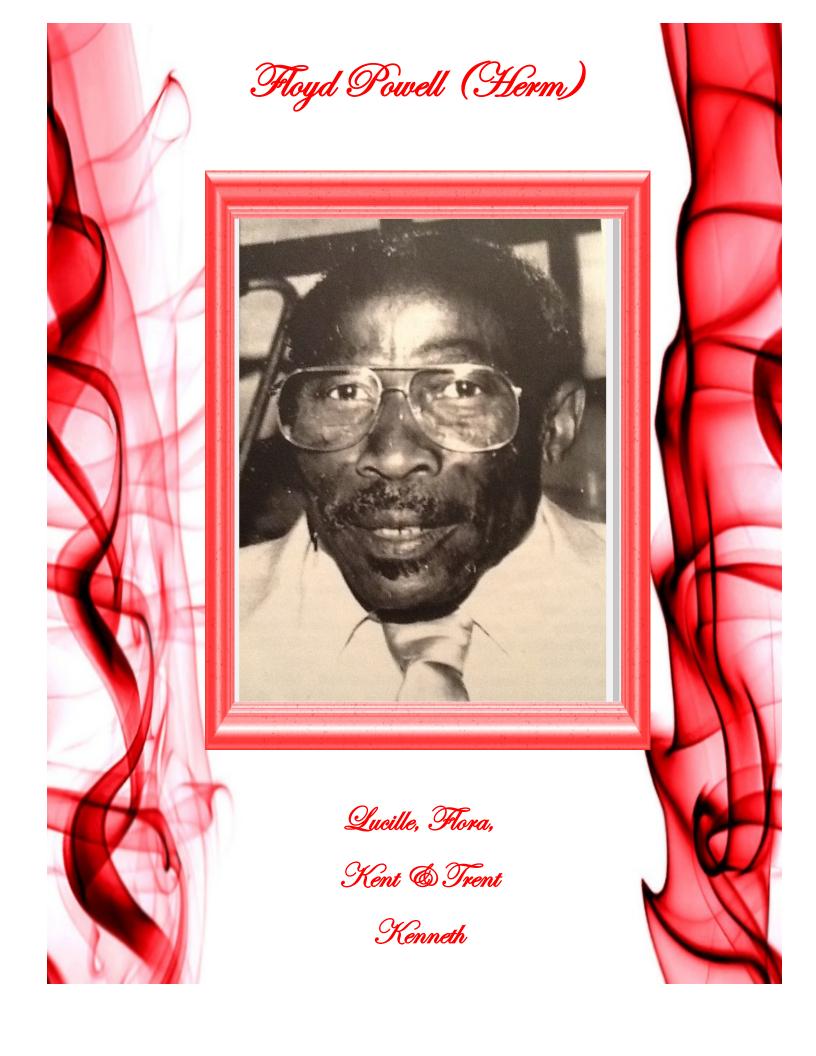
















Mittie Jean Mitchell



Victor

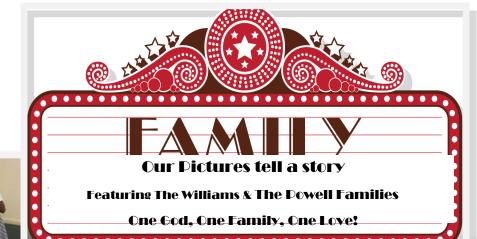


& Varcel























Terry Howard Wed at 10:29pm · 1

Uncle bugg so 100 this who i learned the game from and still learning from this man. . I watch his every move and suck up the free game that i dnt have to pay for ... He is a wonderful father and husband to his family .. He is a father that i never had ... True OG rite here know how to turn something into nothing ... My round my dawg my brother my thugga my friend my father figure THAT'S MY UNCLE BUGG



Benny Williams May 1 at 9:42am • 🕞



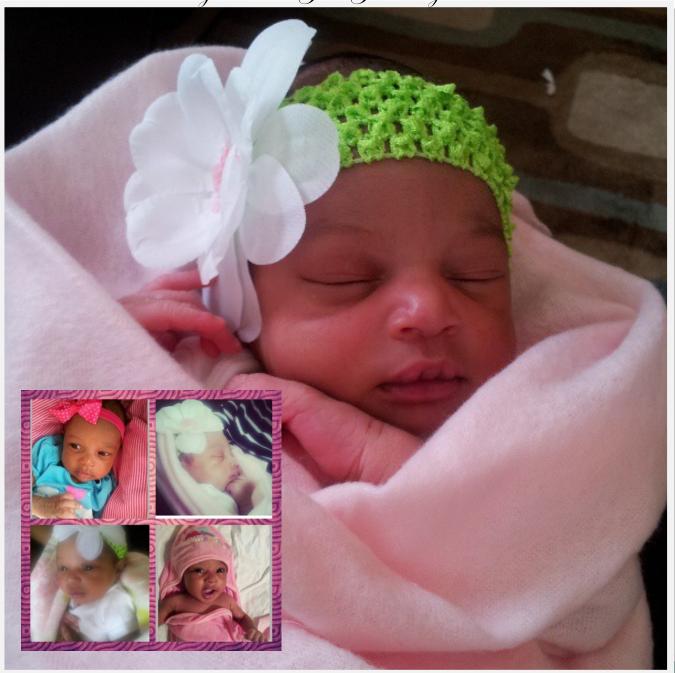






The newest addition

Benny William's Great Granddaughter



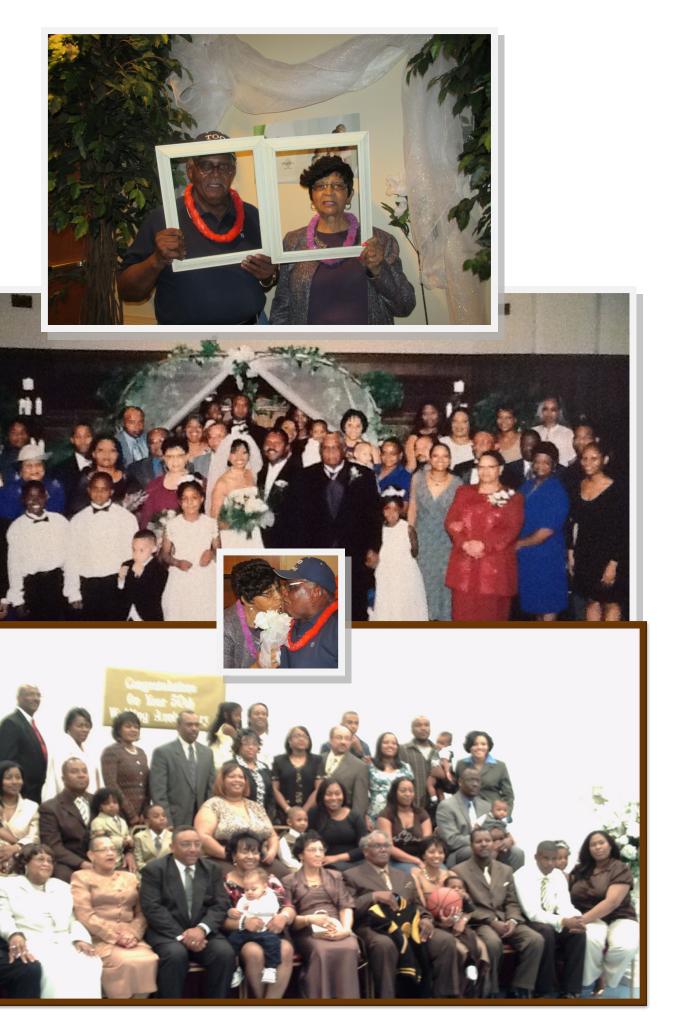
FAMILY



















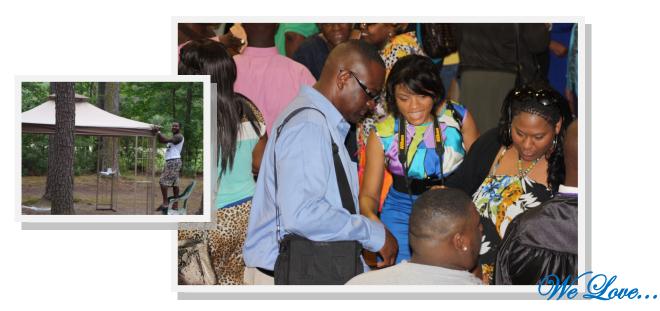




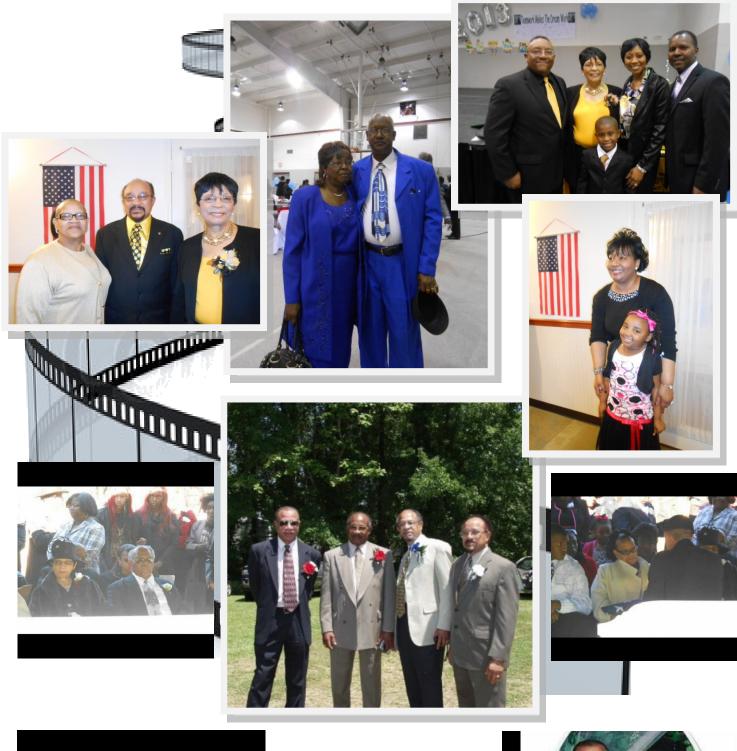


We laugh...









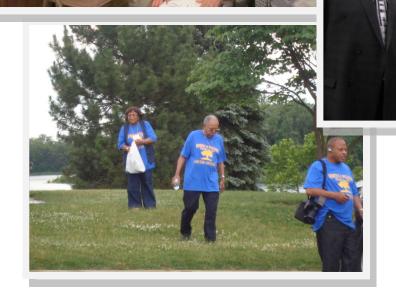








We Live...



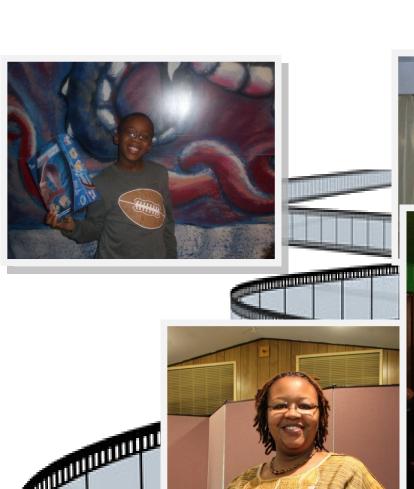






















Descendants of Harold Williams





Always in our hearts...

We shall remember all of our dear loved ones

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

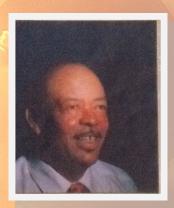
















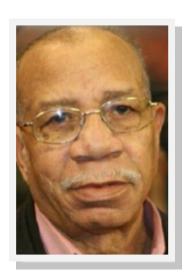




Sonny Williams



Harold Williams



Benny Williams

7 Uncles

I was Blessed with 7 Uncles

The Youngest was the 1St to go.

I was blessed with 6 Uncles

The next to MY MOTHER was next to go.

I was blessed with 5 Uncles

The 7th child of the 9 my Grandmother bore,

Was the hardest BY FAR to LET GO.

I was blessed with 4 Uncles

Now, the Oldest today I stand to say

Good bye AND LET GO.

I was blessed with AND STILL

BLESSED TO HAVE 3 Uncles

Thomas, Ray and Lee are left.

I was blessed to have 2 uncles

'cause brew was called to be a cameraman in

Heaven.

Now Thomas and Lee remain.

But I Loved HAVING 7 Uncles the Best.

And now my uncle from another mother will

TO SPEAK OVER, yet another brother of MY MOTHER.

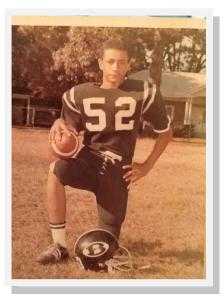
I have 8 uncles, plus 2 I barely new.

BUT

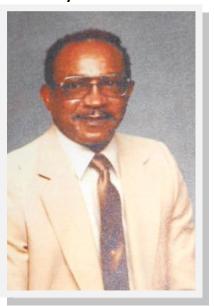
I was blessed to have 7 UNCLES.

By Gaye Griffith-Hartley





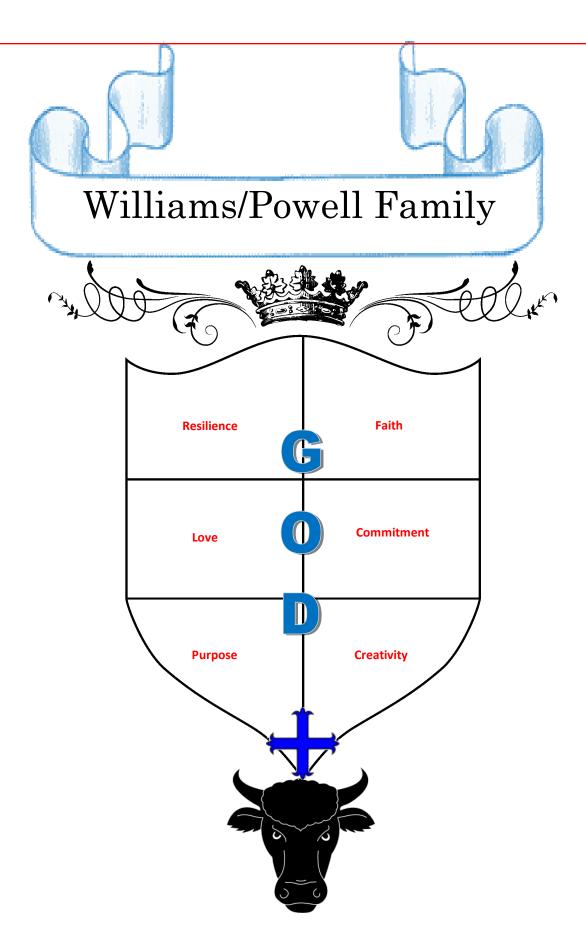
Leroy Williams



Charles Williams



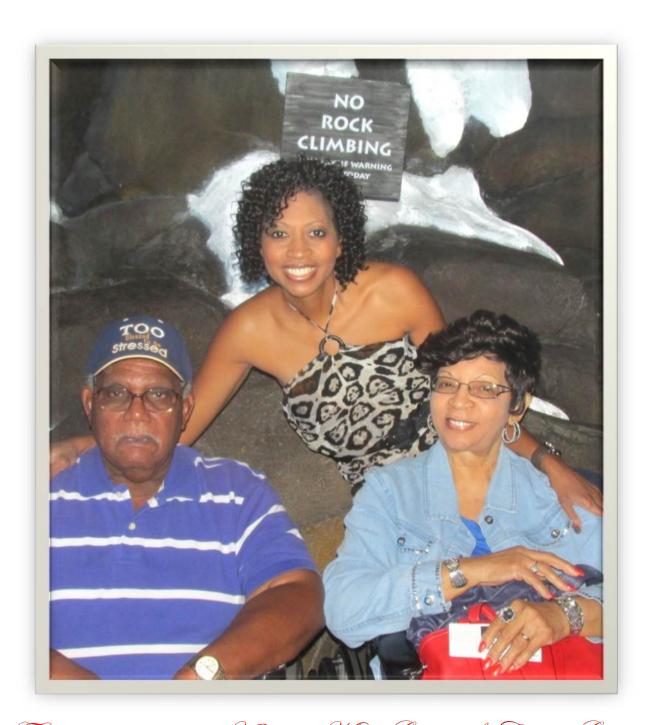
Harvey Williams



This is our Legacy... Continue it

This is our Family... Cherish it

This is our blessing... Honor it



This book is dedicated to Archivist, Mary Griffith & Charles Griffith

Photos & History provided by Mary Griffith

Angela Griffith-Newkirk Layout & Design



God gave us days to fulfill, occupy and make a difference, let us live our lives so that we can see

each other again and that glorious reunion in the sky.

May his peace be with you till we meet again.



IF YOU CONFESS WITH YOUR MOUTH
THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND BELIEVE
IN YOUR HEART THAT COD RAISED HIM FROM
THE DEAD, YOU WILL BE SAVED

ROM 10:9