



Founded in 1899

ALUMNI NEWS

VOL. 14, NO. 1

Education for Time and Eternity

A newsletter for alumni of Oneida Baptist Institute

January 2010

Ruth Britton Mobley Class of 1939



Ruth Britton Mobley with daughters **JoAnn Brandt** (left) and **Laura Nell Britton** (right)

Ruth Britton was born in Oneida, Kentucky on October 22, 1921, the daughter of **Tom** and **Nell Hignite Britton**. She had three brothers and two sisters. Tom L. Britton, Ruth's father, was one of the first students to enter the Oneida school and attended its first commencement in 1908. Britton was both a student of **James A. Burns** and one of his teachers for many years. In January, 1922 when **Thomas Adams** resigned as president, Tom Britton and two other local supporters subscribed enough money to keep the school running until the end of the year. He was well known to the citizens of Clay County, having taught both at Oneida Baptist Institute and at several Clay County schools for more than 20 years.

Britton's other accomplishments included serving in the Kentucky Legislature for four terms, being a banker with the Citizens Deposit Bank of Oneida as well as the County Extension Agent for Leslie County, writing

free lance articles for the *Lexington Herald*, *Manchester Enterprise* and the *Oneida Mountaineer* and convincing the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to re-open the Oneida Hospital in 1955.

Always a friend of Oneida Baptist Institute, one of many contributions Britton made to the school was obtaining a 100-year-old log cabin on Crane Creek which he had dismantled, moved and rebuilt on the edge of the school's campus in 1958. The log cabin would serve as a museum to honor and preserve the memory of Oneida's founder, James Anderson Burns.

Growing up in Oneida, Ruth attended OBI all 12 years. She lived just down the street from the school and was able to go home for lunch. Ruth recalls daily chapel services; the students sat on long benches--the girls on the right and the boys on the left. She became a Christian and joined the Oneida Baptist Church at age 13. In school, her favorite subject was English (grammar and literature). **Charles Goins** was president when she was in high school. Ruth remembers that he was strict but fair. Graduation ceremonies for the Class of 1939--ten girls and eight boys--were held in the old gym, which was located down under the hill from Anderson Hall.

One of Ruth's childhood memories is her maternal grandmother, **Elizabeth Burns Hignite**, living with them. When there was a death in Oneida, her grandmother would make the lining for the homemade coffin. If a woman had died, she would bathe and dress her. Ruth remembers that during the Depression her family helped families

who needed food and clothing.

After graduation, Ruth went to Eastern Kentucky Teachers College for two years. She returned home and worked for the Draft Board, sending young men to serve in World War II. In 1941, Ruth married **Joe Mobley**, (also an Oneida graduate) the day after Pearl Harbor. Mobley joined the Navy and was sent to Guadal Canal, Japan, where he contracted malaria. Ruth was able to join her husband while he recovered at a naval base in Mahave Desert, California. After his recovery, Mobley took officers' training and served as a naval officer until he was discharged at the end of the war.

The Mobleys moved to Lexington, Kentucky while Joe attended the University of Kentucky, where he earned his B.S. and M.A. degrees. They had two daughters, **Laura Nell** and **Jo Ann**. Mr. Mobley was asked to be principal at Oneida Baptist Institute in July, 1956. He served two years before returning to U.K. to work on his doctorate.

Both of Ruth's daughters have taught at OBI. Laura Nell taught art from 1975-1979. She and her students designed and put together the mural made of small tile pieces on the front hall wall in Sylvia Russell Hall. Jo Ann taught English I from 1971-72, and also served as Assistant Dean of Girls and Director of the Student Center.

Last summer, Ruth and Laura Nell came for Homecoming to celebrate Ruth's 70th anniversary of her graduation. Ruth, Laura Nell and Jo Ann live in Ocala, Florida. Ruth has one grandson who lives in Ft. Worth, Texas. □

OBI represented on Clay County Seal



If you haven't been to the new Clay County Administration Building in Manchester, stop by and view the County Seal designed by Clay County students **Ashley Napier** and **Tanner Hoskins**.

Represented on the seal are Oneida Baptist Institute, Red Bird Mission School, Bert T. Combs Lake, the old courthouse, voting precincts and the Daniel Boone National Forest. The green leaves represent tobacco, the black tiles stand for coal and the white tiles represent salt, an early industry in Clay County.

Displayed in a glass cabinet are pictures of several OBI alumni who were inducted into the Wall of Fame: **Squire Baker** '30, **Saul Goins** '43, and **Barkley Moore** '58. □

Mark your calendar for... Homecoming 2010

Oneida's founder and first president, **James Anderson Burns**, will be honored at Homecoming on June 26, 2010. An oil portrait of Burns will be unveiled and hung on the wall in the Melvin Davidson Chapel.

We did not follow any particular order when we began the process of having portraits made of Oneida's past presidents. That our very first president will be the last to be honored follows the biblical instruction, "the first shall be last."

In addition to recognizing alumni who will be celebrating various anniversary years, all relatives of James Anderson Burns will be recognized during the afternoon service in the chapel. Burns and his first wife, **Martha Sizemore** had six children **Myrtle**, **Dixie**, **Holly**, **Dugger**, **Robert**, and **Marvin**. In 1925, Burns married **Margaret Benner**. They had one son, **James**.

If you are reading this and you are a direct descendant of any of Burns' children or you know someone who is, please contact Alumni Director, **Myrtle Cooke**, with that information. □

Alumni notes

Hazel Ponder Burns '32 celebrated her 97th birthday at a party hosted by her daughter, **Sylvia Burns Robinson** '56 at her home in Manchester, Kentucky, on October, 31, 2009. Other children present were: **J.L. Burns** '53, **Ortis Burns** '57 and **Carolyn Burns Brown** '59. Also attending were Hazel's sister, **Evelyn Moore** and her brother, **Powers Ponder**.

Geneva Brownfield, a former volunteer staff member, celebrated her 90th birthday on November 28, 2009 in Murray, Kentucky.

Ed and Jerri Morgan, both '54, along with **Bill and Peggy Smith**, both '57, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversaries this past summer at Natural Bridge State Park.

Janie Bishop Campbell '62 Wasilla, Alaska, suffered a blood clot on her brain in June 7, 2009. She survived emergency surgery at Providence Hospital in Anchorage. Janie e-mailed on June 19, "Thanks so much for your prayers. I think I was on prayer lists around the world. I don't think I would be here had all of you not been praying for me. Right after my surgery I was in a coma. A nurse told my husband and son that it didn't look very good for me. I think God changed the outcome."

Rick Bennett '84 and **Christine McCann** '83 were married April 25, 2009 in Reno, Nevada. They currently live in Hampton, VA.

Lief Eric Rigney '90 was featured in an Agatha Christie mystery, *The Unexpected Guest*, at the Studio Players Carriage House Theater, Lexington, Kentucky in September 2009.

Sean '99 and **Laura Beth** '98 **Godbold** have a new son, **Owen Blakeley**, born Oct, 28, 2009. □

Dear Friends,

Homecoming 2009 was well attended, with over 400 folks registering. A portrait of Oneida's fourth president, **Charles Goins**, was unveiled by two of his grandsons, **Charles House** and **Charles Goins**. We were blessed again when **Clayton Arnett** '49 played "My Old Kentucky Home" and "Oneida Fair" on his harmonica. Nine members from the class of 1959, the 50th anniversary class, were each presented a print of Marvin Hall.

This year's Homecoming on June 26, 2010 will be extra special for me since my class—the class of 1960—will be the 50-year class. We learned recently that one of our classmates, **Joyce Rasnake Delgado**, died in November. The week of Thanksgiving I attended the funeral of **Doug Allen** '44 who was the farm manager when I was in school.

In Memoriam 2009 lists those that we know about who have died this past year. If you know of someone we missed, tell me and we will print additional names in the March *Alumni News*.

Sincerely,

Myrtle Webb Cooke '60
OBI Alumni Director

Phone: (606)-847-4111 ext. 268
Email: myrtlewebbcooke@yahoo.com

In Memoriam 2009

Mary Gay Shaw '27
 Enice Roberts Baker '28
 John Campbell '39
 Bertha Hurd '43
 Daisy Samples Schneider '43
 Doug Allen '44
 Geneva Patrick Scott '44
 Lotus Webb Abner '45-'48
 Ralph Jones '50
 Geraldine Osborne Noble '50
 Joyce K. Roberts '50
 Adna Burns Rose '50
 Willard Cayce '52
 Roy Gilbert '52
 Margie Smith Bowman '54
 Ray Brewster '55
 Rev. David Johnson '56
 Don Martin '56
 Tabatha Fields Conway '57
 John Mobley '57
 Lora Lane Baker '58
 Ralph Huffman '59
 Joyce Rasnake Delgado '60
 Sam Gibson '61
 Carl Ginter '63-'64
 Jerry Ledford '63
 Mike McMonigal '85
 Roni Wilson '89-'91
 David Judd '01
 Betty Hasty, OBI staff
 Evelyn Chandler, former staff
 Joe Tom Gregory, former teacher/coach
 Anna Lee McJilton, former staff



Will Bowling '01, after getting his B.S. and M.S. degrees at the University of Kentucky, has taken a job as a wildlife biologist with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Forest Service. Will's territory is southeastern Kentucky. He is currently residing with his parents, **Ronnie and Gloria Bowling**, both OBI class of 1977.



Lizena Davis Powell, OBI '28, celebrated her 100th birthday on Tuesday, December 1, 2009. In attendance were her son, **James Lawrence Powell** and his wife **Joan**, grandson **Dirk Robert Powell** and his wife **Christine**, and granddaughter **Marla Ann Powell**. Also enjoying the celebration were grandchildren **Kemar Powell Pickering**, **Amelia Rose Powell**, and **Sophie Jo Powell**. Lizena Powell has many fond memories of OBI. She arrived with \$5 in her pocket but that was enough for **Mrs. Russell** to admit her. She lives at **Freda's Residential Care Facility** in Santa Maria, California, near her son.

Anderson Hall Renovation

The oldest building on our campus, Anderson Hall--named for **Elizabeth Anderson**, who provided the funds to build it--was constructed in 1911. Mrs. Anderson had heard **James Anderson Burns** speak in 1908 at her church, Madison Avenue Baptist Church in New York City. She followed him to the elevator and asked, "Mr. Burns, what is it you want?" He replied, "I want a farm for our boys." The following day Burns received a check for \$5,300 from Mrs. Anderson with a note saying, "Here is your farm." Several years later when the school wanted to build a new building to house the single women teachers and a Domestic Science classroom, Mrs. Anderson gave the \$11,000 needed for this building.

For almost 100 years Anderson Hall has served us well in providing a home for faculty, visitors, and many of our presidents. By 2007 a major renovation was needed. President **W. F. Underwood** '63 gave this responsibility to **Dan Nichols** '94, OBI's Construction Coordinator, with the understanding that the work would be done primarily with volunteers.

Visitors may think we have a boarded up, abandoned building on our campus, but it is really Anderson Hall--a work in progress. According to Nichols, when he and a group of volunteers began the renovation they found a very sound structure which could withstand the removal of all walls, floors, ceilings, etc. At the present time, Anderson Hall has been

completely gutted and steps have been removed. Floor joists have been replaced using lumber cut from the trees on our farm. As for Anderson Hall's future, Nichols said when the work is completed the building will be good for at least 100 more years.

The projected completion date is 2011 or perhaps 2012. The downstairs will retain the large living room with fireplace, the kitchen, two bedrooms, and two bathrooms. The smallest of the downstairs bedrooms will be used as a library/reading room and will house some of our older books. The upstairs will have five bedrooms, each with its own bathroom. The upstairs sitting/T.V. room will be made back into a balcony. The four columns at the front of Anderson Hall will be replaced, as will all of the outside siding. The new siding will resemble the lumber that was originally used in constructing Anderson Hall.

What can we, OBI's alumni, former staff, and former students do to help facilitate the renovation of our oldest building for future generations to enjoy? Most all of us could help financially. If you would like to help, please designate your contribution for Anderson Hall Renovation. No amount is too small.

Myrtle Webb Cooke '60
 Alumni Director

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www.oneidaschool.org

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More pictures from Homecoming 2009



Alumni watched the basketball game between the odd and even years' players.



The afternoon service in the Melvin Davidson Chapel



**Goldie
Sizemore
Combs &
Audrey
Fields
Farmer,
both class
of '48**



Hymn sing at the Oneida Baptist Church

**Vera Meredith
Embry & Opal
Burns Robbins,
both class of '60**



**Herbert &
Mildred
Bishop Byrd
'45 enjoyed
lunch in the
main dining
room.**

**Fred Arnett '69,
Judy Ash-
more Arnett
'60 (standing),
Roosevelt
Arnett '53-54,
Margaret Burns
Arnett '59-61
and Robert
Arnett '54.**

