

CELEBRATING JOHNSTOWN'S HERITAGE LEADERS

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2016



HERITAGE LEADERS OF THE 20TH CENTURY

2016 Heritage Leader Program Book VIII

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INTRODUCTION TO HERITAGE LEADERS 2016

In 2002, Bruce Haselrig, Yvonne Watkins and I, petitioned the Johnstown Unit NAACP, and its president, Dr. Clea P. Hollis, for permission to present a program to honor the elder citizens of the Greater Johnstown and their contributions to their families, churches and community. In our wildest dreams, we did not imagine the program would succeed and last until today. We thank our participants, families and the citizens of Johnstown for their support.

I have always regretted that the program started in 2001, because so many African Americans of the Johnstown Community who encouraged education, fought for inclusion in community politics, marched in the struggle for civil rights, fostered respect for those who were homemakers, and believed that serving God was paramount to living a quality life had passed on. They were unable to tell us about their failures and triumphs. The numbers are staggering. Then it came to my attention that there was a possibility that the committee could present a special look at one person, **Emily E. Gaines**, who in 1987 at age 106 was honored as the OLDEST LIVING PERSON IN CAMBRIA COUNTY. She was interviewed by Tom Lavis of the Tribune-Democrat.

The article appeared in Sunday, August 9, 1987. This is Her Story.

Claudia Jones



Emily E. Gaines at 106 years old

Mother Gaines, nearing 106, yearns for the old ways

By Tom Lavis

the Tribune-Democrat – Ebensburg

Emily E. Gaines said she would like to return to the old ways of doing things because she doesn't like all the modern conveniences people use today. That may not sound too surprising, but to return to the old ways for Mrs. Gaines means returning to the 1880's.

County's oldest

Mrs. Gaines, who prefers to be called Elizabeth or Mother Gaines, will celebrate her 106th birthday anniversary Wednesday and is the oldest person in Cambria County.

Mother Gaines resides at Laurel Crest Manor where she sat in a wheelchair and mesmerized listeners with tales of bygone days.

"I would go back today," she said. "We would roll the logs over to the fire so we could get the cooking started."

Can walk short distances

Anyone talking with Mother Gaines would have a difficult time in guessing her age. She speaks with enthusiasm, her hearing is good and her right hand is in constant motion to make sure she gets her point across.

Although she spends most of her time in a wheelchair she still is able to walk short distances with the aid of a cane.

Mother Gaines said she preferred a washboard for doing laundry and collecting rainwater in a barrel for washing and drinking.

"I remember making soap," she recalled. "We used to make it outside

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because the lye would burn your eyes.”

The former Emily Jane Elizabeth Johnson was born August 12, 1881, in Orange, Va., the daughter of William and Martha Johnson. She is the widow of George Gaines.

Followed mother's footsteps

Mother Gaines said her father worked as a head waiter and a steelworker and her mother was a cook. She followed in her mother's footsteps.

“I used to make homemade rolls that smelled so good that it would knock you over,” she said. “My other favorites were apple and sweet potato pies.”

Mother Gaines had several rules when she cooked either at home or for someone else:

“I didn't want people in my kitchen when I cooked because I was the boss. I didn't like people who came in and tasted the food with a spoon and put it back down. That isn't clean. When I tasted something, I always put the spoon in the sink.”

Worked hard

Mother Gaines said she worked hard all her life because she was self-reliant.

“I worked because when I became old or I became a widow, I would have something,” she said. “I don't want for nothing.”

She has been a member of St. James Missionary Baptist Church, Pine and Hickory streets, Johnstown for 80 years and credits her good health and long life to God.

“I feel proud of my age and I go singing and shouting God's name. He is with me,” she said.

Alice Parker, who lives in a nursing home in West Virginia, is the only one of Mrs. Gaines' 13 children who survives. She also has 28 grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Mother Gaines was proud of the fact that her grandmother lived to be 103.

Grandfather was a slave

Her grandfather was a slave, but she did not want to go into detail concerning the stories her grandmother and mother told her of his enslavement.

She would say only that he had to listen, never talked back and moved when he was told to do something or he would get a beating.

In fact, Mother Gaines was hesitant in talking about anything negative – world wars or even the Johnstown floods she has survived.

“I saw the wars, but I don't want to remember,” she said. “During the flood

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(1936), my house was full of water. I moved from Sherman Street to the top of a hill."

Although Mother Gaines is not in tune with the women's movement of today, she upholds some of the values that are advocated by supporters.

"If I was a young woman today, they'd pay me the same as men or else," she said. "I would fight for the right. Anyway, women do more work than men."

No preference for president

Mother Gaines, who was born during the presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes and has seen 20 other administrations come into office, said she had no preference for any one president. Frankly, she had little recognition of modern-day presidents but she acknowledged that Calvin Coolidge and Franklin D. Roosevelt were good leaders.

Although she said she doesn't have a special interest in politics, she does cast an absentee ballot during elections.

Mother Gaines said she never smoked or drank alcoholic beverages. Her favorite indulgences today, include extra strong coffee and hot biscuits. She doesn't like cars, but said she would never go back to the horse and buggy days.

I grew up on a farm and don't want nothing to do with horses or cows," she said.

Mother Gaines seemed shocked when asked whether she had ever been in an airplane.

"I've never been and never would," she said. "When I fly, I will be flying to heaven."

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My Secrets to living to 100

by Wilmer "Bill" Segars

August 2, 1907

- Have a relationship with God your creator, make him your best friend, talk to him daily. Share your worries and burdens with him, let his wisdom seep into your body he is the one,
Who has allowed me my 100 years?
- Work will end. You don't do too much physical work when you are 100, but you still can work on building friendships. Take time for your family. Your family can go on forever.
- Develop a hobby early in life something which interest you and you
Enjoy doing which never seems like work... this is your play time and even when you are 100, you still want and need to play!
- Read until your eyes grown dim, then get bifocals and magnifiers and then
Get someone one to read to you. Stay up on current events even at 100 there is a lot you can still learn
- Your health is most important. Get regular checkups. Go see your doctor don't be Embarrassed to tell him where it hurts. Don't be afraid of the C word I had cancer at 60 and I'm still here at 100.
- Don't eat too much Eat to live Don't Live to Eat Push yourself away from the table.
Be sure to have some good boiled dinners once in a while instead of that fried food!
Just enjoy your food
Now because things don't taste the same when you are 100
- Talk to people and be an active listener hear what those around you have to Say and let them know you care about what they are interested in. Share what You did well and some of your dumb mistakes. I'm 100 don't think I ~~did~~ not make some mistakes.
In life but remember to always leave people with hope.
- If you took a drink when you were young don't be afraid to take one later in life, of course
Do it in moderation. I still take a sip of Jim Beam now and then and I'm 100, but I never get drunk!
- Don't dwell in the past. You can't change it. It's a nice place to visit but it is no

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place to live! Look to the future and take comfort in where you are now appreciate every year of your life. I'm 100 and every day in the present is a blessing.

- Never hold a grudge or keep an enemy. It is not worth it. Love is the secret to a long life just think
Living to 100 I have outlived any enemy I might have had. When you are 100 you only make friends no one dislikes you at this age.
- Stay positive. Look for the good in everything and everyone around you. Expect the best, expect good things to happen for you, and to you!

"Even when you are 100, you only get out of life what you put in it!"

Wilmer "Bill" Segars
On the occasion of his 100th Birthday 2007

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Rev. MAURICE THOMAS WILLIAMS

Mt. Sinai Institutional Baptist Church

Over 51 years of holding a position in the Mt. Sinai Institutional Baptist Church Considered a highly effective communicator with emphasis on getting God's work done according to his purpose for this his Church. Particular attention given to detail and problem solving related to the church body.

CHURCH/RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE:

- Served as a Jr. Deacon in 1965.
- Became a Sunday School teacher for the intermediate class in 1967, now I am the Adult teacher,(teaching Sunday School for 49 years).
- Served as the church Financial Secretary in 1969 for several years under Rev. Dr. Fitzhugh Lee Lyons Sr.
- Was chosen to be a Deacon on Trial in 1974 under Rev. Dr. Fitzhugh Lee Lyons Sr.
- Called to the ministry at a young age 17, but accepted the call and licensed by the Mt. Sinai Institutional Baptist Church August 10, 2014 under the Rev. Calvin T. McCray Sr.; Dr. George Bailey, (Tutor).
- Ordained to the Gospel Ministry in June being the 14th day of 2015 under Rev. Calvin T. McCray Sr.; Dr. George Bailey (Tutor).
- Serving also as the Assistant Superintendent of the Church Sunday School for numerous years.

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- Chaired the organized committee in writing the church constitution which was adopted in February 2002

Instrumental in the spearheading of finding and the financing of our new church building at 351 Second Street, Conemaugh, Pa.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

Attended for several years continuing education classes with Allegheny Union Baptist Association (AUBA) Congress of Christian Education. Listed below are a few classes:

1. The Ministry of the Deacon
2. Church Polity and Administration
3. Assistant and Associate Ministers
4. Iron Sharpens Iron (Becoming men of integrity and responsibility)
5. Administering the Church School
6. Creative Ways of Teaching
7. Intergenerational Issues
8. The Church Covenant.

EDUCATION:

Conemaugh Valley High School

1969

University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown

(Drafting Certificate-Blue Print Reading and Drawing)

1970-1971

Company Sponsored Training Communication & Effective Communications

Customer Service Training

Linemen's Training & Line Construction Training Generation Graining (Fire Extinguisher)

Fire Warden Training

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ELIZABETH (POLLARD) ANDREWS

February 2, 1930

It's a Party! The DJ selects the music and Blurred Lines by Robin Thicke fills the room. Liz Andrews rolls on to the floor in her colorful long dress, gray head bobbing and walker moving left and right as she struts to the music. "Shouts of encouragement from family and friends fills the room! " You go girl".

Elizabeth "Liz" Pollard was born in Franklin Borough on February 2, 1930. Her father, Rev. Cromwell Pollard had migrated from Bishopville, South Carolina to work in the Plate Mill of Bethlehem Steel Corporation. Her mother, Lettie Lewis Pollard was born and reared in Camden, South Carolina. The Pollards raised 7 children: Shirley Bennett, Rev. James Lewis, Cromwell Jr., Elizabeth, Ruth, and Kenny. All are deceased except Elizabeth and Kenny. According to Liz, her parents taught all of them to "love everybody, even you enemies".

The Pollard family moved to Prospect where Elizabeth attended the Washington Street School. Reading and spelling were her best subjects. In the sixth grade, her teacher, Cecilia McCain called Mrs. Pollard to report that Liz had been naughty. After hearing the case, she gave the teacher permission to discipline her daughter. Elizabeth Pollard was spanked 6 times with a wooden paddle! Sewing and cooking were Liz's favorite classes at Joseph Johns Jr. High. By tenth grade the boys had caught her attention, especially Robert Andrews. "I liked him, Liz said. He was a working man and he told me that I would never have to work a day in my life." The rest is history. On October 18, 1947 at 384 Ebensburg Road, Elizabeth Pollard and Robert C. Andrews were united in holy matrimony.

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The couple had four children: Robert Jr., Calvin (deceased), Maxine and Roberta. There are also four grandchildren: Calvin Jr., Alfonso, Yolanda and Denise Williams. Liz raised Lavonne Salter and Jaleesa Baxter and Lavonne Salter. 15 great grandchildren complete the family circle.

Elizabeth is a loving and affectionate parent. She is known for calling all of her children "Baby" even though they are adults.

Smiles and laughter are part of Liz Andrews' persona. She always has a story to tell and she shared one with the writer. Elizabeth Andrews went to jail! As the story goes, she and some friends visited a "speak easy" run by Be Bop Borders. The joint did not have a license to sell liquor. The music was playing and the drinks were flowing and everyone was having a good time. And all of a sudden the police raided the place and took every one to jail. When Robert came to bail Liz out, Junior Jones told him, that if the police called your name while you were being arraigned and you did not answer, you would not have to pay a fine! Elizabeth Andrews, the daughter of a minister, did give her name. Robert paid the fine. If one were to believe Junior Jones, he was released without paying any money!

One of the Andrews' family fondest memories occurred in 1997. Robert and Elizabeth surrounded by family and friends celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary by renewing their vows.

On January 10, 2002 Robert Andrews Sr. died and a marriage of almost 55 years was ended.

As the daughter of a minister, Elizabeth has always attended church. She loved music and was taught how to play the piano by the late Connie McSwain Moore. She often accompanied her father, Rev. Cromwell Pollard when he preached. And when Connie, Pleasant Hill's regular pianist, was absent, Liz substituted for her.

As a lifetime member of Pleasant Hill, Elizabeth has worked tirelessly to support its ministry. She was president of the Kitchen Club from 1975 – 2000 and presently bears the title of Mother of the Church. Liz respected and supported all of the ministers at the church, including: Rev. Terry, Rev. Killebrew, Rev. Hickerson and especially Rev. Andrew Tilly.

At the 2014 Andrews Family Reunion, Elizabeth received the Age and Wisdom Award.

ELDER THOUGHTS AND ELDER WISDOM

Elizabeth Andrews is a registered voter and has voted for President Obama *in both elections. She feels that President*

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Obama has been hindered by Congress and can't "do anything"!

Favorite Song:

Religious: "Where can I go but to the Lord" This was also her sister Shirley and father Rev. Cromwell's favorite.

Secular: Blurred Lines by Robin Thicke

What is your favorite Scripture?

What advice would you give to young people today?

a. Respect your elders

At this stage in your life, do you feel content? "Yes, because you are glad to be alive and able to get around. The Lord has been good to me and I praise him daily." "I have had a wonderful life. I married the love of my life and we spent years together before the lord called him home.

What are you most grateful for?

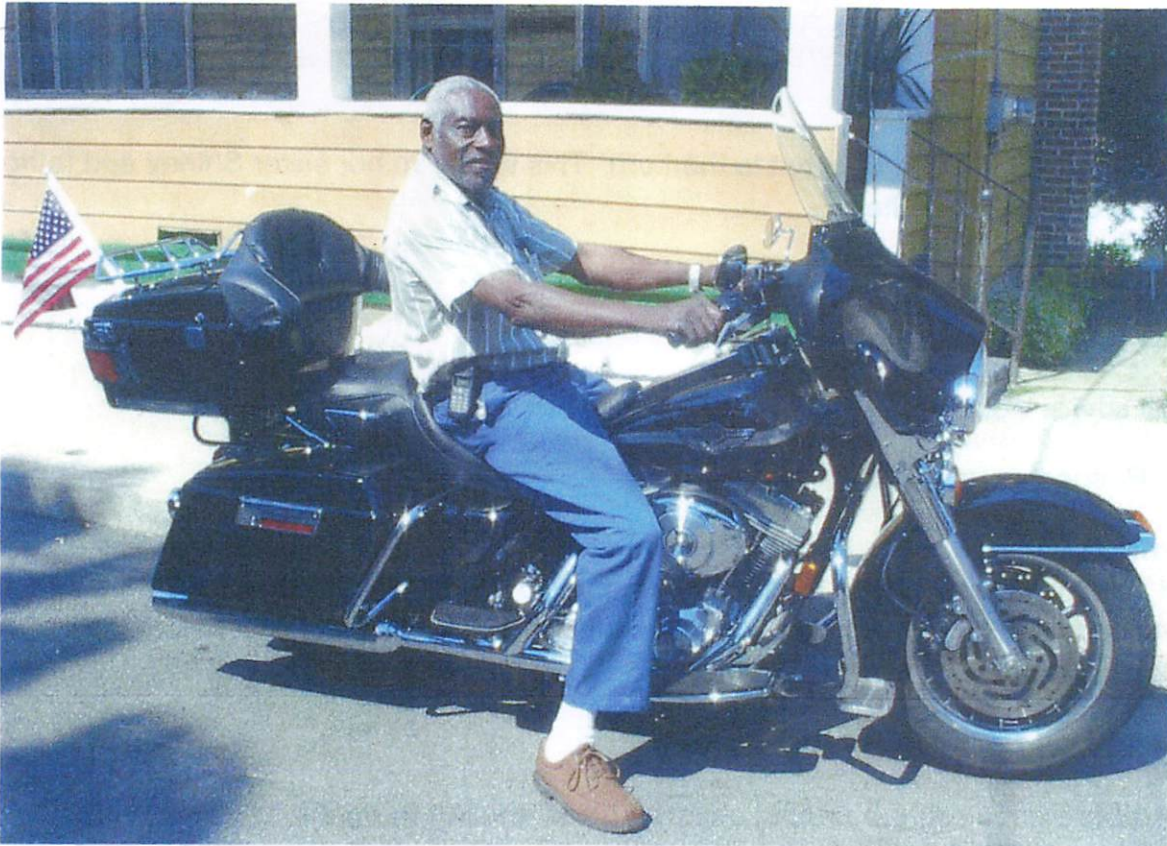
The Lord gave me 4 beautiful children and I spoiled them all.

Who are some of your best friends?

My friends are numerous. They have brought laughter, friendship and joy to my life. They take me to church, Bingo and anywhere I want to go. I am truly blessed that Daddy taught me to love everybody.

Ethel Carter, Mildred Jones, Lillie Ellis, Janet Watts, Laura Andrews, Kimberly Bennett and many more.

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Willie Bedell

July 7, 1930

According To the National Baptist Convention, the bestowing of the title deacon on a congregational member is an honor reserved for a few learned and loyal members. Willie Bedell has earned that honor. He was ordained September 30, 2005 in the St. James Missionary Baptist Church under Doctor Ralph E. Johnson, Pastor. He has also served his church as a member of the finance committee and as a trustee.

.Willie Bedell was born in Walden, Georgia on July 7, 1930. His father, Robert Bedell was a farmer. He has one sister, Billie Jo Hobb who resides in Georgia and a brother, whose whereabouts are unknown.

The family moved to Johnstown in the early forties. The climate was so different from the South that Willie wrote to a cousin that he had to wear two pair of shoes at the same time in the winter; regular shoes, then cover those up with some rubber ones!

Willie attended Hudson Street Elementary School, Cochran Junior High School and graduated from Greater Johnstown. He majored in the Industrial Arts Curriculum.

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From 1944 until 1953, Willie did maintenance work for the Johnstown Window Cleaning Company. Years later, he took some post graduate courses at the Greater Johnstown Vocational-Technical School where he concentrated on Buildings and Maintenance.

After High School, Willie was drafted into the United States Army. Willie studied reconnizant and combat engineering. His army experiences gave him an opportunity to live in Germany from 1953 to 1955 while he trained as a demolition expert!

Upon his discharge from the service, Willie returned to Johnstown and went to work for the Bethlehem Steel Corporation. He spent 38 years in the mill performing such duties as laborer, cinder man, welder and etc. In 1993, Willie retired.

When Willie was growing up, teenagers had 3 meeting places: school, church and the local soda shop. This is where the young folks hung out! Perhaps he met and courted a young teenager, Margaret Walden of Prospect. They were married at her home on Gray Avenue in Prospect. The couple are the parents of 4 children. Kim, Willie Jr., (Frank), Marcus and Keith (deceased). Seven grandchildren and four great grandchildren complete the family.

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ROSALIE (PORCHER) GORDON

March 29, 1929

Rosalie Porcher was born March 29, 1929 to Julius C. Porcher, Sr. and Laura (Brown) Porcher in the former Pennsylvania Cambria Hospital. She has 4 siblings: Pearl Porcher Jackson, Rev. Julius Porcher, Jr., James Porcher and Verna Porcher-Carter.

Her father, Julius was a native of South Carolina and her mother, Laura was born in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. According to the family history, Laura's father, James was a descendant of the Black Crow Indian Tribe.

Rosalie grew up in Franklin Borough where she became good friends with Bernice Williams. She attended Franklin School System where she enjoyed mathematics. She graduated in 1950.

On June 14, 1949, Rosalie married John T. Gordon (Sonny Boy) of East

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Conemaugh. It was a simple, but elegant ceremony at the Porcher resident. After the ceremony, John and Rosalie went to the Home of John's parents on 38 Nutmeg Court in East Conemaugh where they would live for several years. A crowd of well-wishers waited in the alley to catch a glimpse of the newlyweds. One of the highlights of the event was when John picked his bride up and carried her over the threshold. The crowd burst into cheers. "The only time you ever saw that was in the movies, Sonny Boy," someone shouted.

John and Rosalie had two children; Arlene C. Gordon Moore and Linda Gordon. There are 4 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren.

To help supplement the family income, Rose worked as a domestic in Westmont and cleaned department stores in the city. Her last job as a Dietary Aid for the Conemaugh Memorial Hospital was more permanent and better paying.

Both John and Rosalie were active members of the Mt. Sinai Institutional Baptist Church.

Rosalie stated that her most memorable moment was seeing her granddaughter Nikki graduate from Penn State University.

Rosalie is a member of the Mt. Sinai Institutional Baptist Church. When she was younger, she was an active member of the choir and the Kitchen Club. She also was a member of Franklin Coke Plant Club and the Conemaugh Chapter #55.

ELDER THOUGHTS AND ELDER WISDOM.

Rosalie is a registered voter and voted for President Obama in both elections. She believes Obama did well by passing Obama Care, but failed in trying to pass Gun Control.

FAVORITE SONG:

Religious: Walk in the Light and Precious Lord

Secular: Too Young by Nat King Cole

Favorite Scripture: Matthew 19:19

What advice would you give young people today?

Always keep a smile on your face. Love every one

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What makes you laugh uncontrollably?

My great granddaughter mimics me talking to my husband. "Son, Son what do you want to eat."

At this stage in your life do you feel content?

Yes. I look over my life and it has been so good. Now, at my age it is hard to remember things. Sometimes I am a little slow in getting around, but I love my family and friends. I may not remember your name, but I will always give you a SMILE!

What are you most grateful for?

My family, "Seeing them doing so well".

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GLORIA M. HARRIS JOHNSON

FEBRUARY 23, 1931

Gloria Harris' fondest memories of her childhood occurred while she was growing up in East Conemaugh. At various times, the Harris' family lived in row houses on Pear Court and Melon Court. These were row houses that branched off of Chestnut Street. Chestnut Street was home to many Black families from the early thirties to the 1977 Johnstown Flood. The area represented what many historians describe as a Village. (A community that provided physical, emotional, and spiritual support for one another. Families often invited their children's playmates to sit down and eat a meal or chastised them when they were involved in disputes.) Among Gloria's friends were Erline Watts and Dorothy Moore. The Harris family also lived in a home owned by Marion Mickens on Chestnut Street. The building was heated by a wood/coal stove. Somehow the fire got out of control and severely burned her mother, Bertha. It was this incident, in 1939 that tore the family apart. Her mother was sent for care, to the County Home and the 5 children were placed in the Cambria County Children's Home in Ebensburg, PA. They would remain in the Home until they were adopted, or taken in by a family or reached age 18.

Amos Harris was born in Virginia. He lived and worked at various times in Sparrows Point and finally came to Johnstown where he was hired by Bethlehem Steel Corporation as a brick layer. During this time he met and married Bertha Moore from Little Washington, PA. Bertha Moore had 2 brothers that Gloria remembered fondly. One was Bill Moore, who lived in New York and Jimmie Moore, a singer with one of the

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many black orchestras of the era. According to Gloria, his voice was comparable to that of the famous Billie Eckstein!

Amos and Bertha settled in East Conemaugh and started their family. Seven children were born: William, Gloria, Russell, Harold, Lewis, Lawrence (who died at birth) and Ruth who died in infancy.

After her mother's tragic accident, Gloria age 8 and her siblings were taken to the Cambria County Children's Home in Ebensburg, PA. During her stay, she was housed in a dormitory with other children. They ate in a dining hall, attended school at the facility and worshipped at the First Christian Church in Ebensburg. A number of other African American children lived in the "Home" along with Gloria and her brothers. They were Ruth and Arthur Dorsey Jr., Charlotte and James Twyman and Arnold and Ted Johnson. At age 18, the residents were declared adult and able to leave the facility. But if a family chose to adopt or take the children into care, they were released. Two of her brothers left the Ebensburg Children's Home on age, one brother was taken in by a family from Philadelphia and the other came to live with Gloria after she was married.

In 1944, Gloria left the Ebensburg Children's Home to live with her aunt and uncle, Sue and Emanuel Davis. They raised her, along with their own children: Dodie, Bertha and Millie.

During the next few years, she attended the Johnstown School System. First, Joseph Johns Jr. High, where she renewed her friendship with Arnold Johnson; and later, Johnstown H.S. graduating in 1950 with a major in the Commercial Arts program. One of Gloria's fondest memories was attending the YWCA with other African American girls. They were members of an all-Black Club led by Effie Smith and Gertrude Sawyer.

At the same time, Arnold joined the Boy Scouts whose Scout Master was Johnnie Ebron! Arnold dropped out of school and began to work for The Johnstown Window Cleaning Company owned by Mr. Spiegel.

Gloria and Arnold were married on April 3, 1949. The newlyweds roomed with a couple on Grant Street. Later they lived with Mr. and Mrs. Rex Braxton on Sarah Place. Both had a strong work ethic and immediately set out to create a home for their family. Arnold worked in coke plant and later, the blast furnace. On his off hours, he continued to work for Mr. Speigle; cleaning offices, businesses, schools, hospitals etc. This effort paid off when he created his own business; The Johnson Cleaning Company on 620 Franklin Street. Gloria worked in the organization and also added to the family income. She had earned a reputation as a baker. Her sweet potato pies, tea cakes were legend so she began to sell them out of her home for more than 12 years. Eventually they purchased their own home at 736 Sarah Place.

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Arnold Jr. (2/24/1950) and Arlene Lesley (7/14/1953), both now deceased, were born during this time. Unfortunately, the Johnson's marriage did not last. Gloria relocated to Florida to live with an older brother, a diabetic.

While there, she supported herself by working in the circulation department of the Miami Herald, and as a clerk at Eckerd Drugs.

Gloria finally returned to Johnstown in 1989. She has suffered through a number of personal tragedies, the loss of her children and all of her brothers. She finds solace in working in her church, Trinity United Methodist; Pastor Valerie Conrad. She is a member of the Pastor's Parish Committee, Staff-Parish Relations Committee and Worship Committee.

She is also a member of the Eastern Stars, Prince Hall Affiliation years and the Red Hatters for 20 years. Gloria continues to work part time for the Thrift Drugstore on Scalp Ave

ELDER THOUGHTS AND ELDER WISDOM

Are you a registered voter? Yes

Did you vote for President Obama in the last elections? Yes.

In your opinion what has President Obama done well during his two terms as president? Foreign Affairs.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE SONG?

Religious? How great thou Art by the Gaithers.

Secular? Classical Music

What is your favorite Scripture: Psalm 23

What advice would you give to young people today? "Go to church; Serve God. Be a better person; Get an education; Get an education; be Honest. Help your fellowman in any way that you can."

Name something that you can share that made you laugh uncontrollably, even when you think of it now?

All the men had nick names in my youth. "Hooker Boy, Jitter Bug, Sonny Boy, Buster, Rooster."

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At this stage do you feel content? No.

Explain why? I am all alone with no family.

What are you most grateful for? I am grateful for a long life and for God being in my life.

I am the only one left in my family and I miss growing up with my brothers and having a family.

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CAROLYN G. (MILLER) KING

August 28, 1931

Deaconess, Pastor's Steward, Choir member, Weight Watcher's Leader, Hospice Volunteer, Water Walker at the YMCA and much more, Carolyn G. (Miller) King believes in serving others and staying active!

Carolyn was born at home in Dale Borough on August 28, 1931 to Theodore R. and Peachie Miller. She has 3 siblings: brother Adonis, Sisters Renee (Miller) Triplin and Ursala (Miller) McKenzie. She attended The Dale School System where she took the commercial course; majoring in shorthand and typing. During her senior year, Carolyn worked for the principle, Mr. Crawford and gained invaluable experience.

Growing up in Johnstown during the forties, Carolyn and friend Genevieve Grayson enjoyed the typical activities of most Johnstown teenagers. She was active at her church, Cambria AME, joined her friends at Joe Davis" on Bedford Street to listen to the latest records, eat ice cream sundaes and of course meet those handsome teenage boys. Norman King of Franklin Borough was one of those young men. Carolyn's passion was roller skating. She was a regular at Skateland on Bedford Street or on the rink in Westmont. Her skilled twists and turns earned her numerous awards.

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After graduation from Dale High School in 1949, Carolyn's first job was working for Dr. Moses Clayborne, a local African American physician. Her primary duty was to help patients dress for their examination. In 1950, a friend, Betty Veney told Carolyn that the government was recruiting typists to work at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. The test was given in Tunnelton, PA. She and Betty took the exam and passed! And so it was that four girls from Johnstown, Carolyn, Betty, Dottie and Barb packed their bags and caught the Greyhound to Washington, D.C. They boarded at the home of a Black family. Two women were assigned to a bedroom. They were responsible for cooking their own meals, doing their laundry and cleaning their rooms. From Monday through Friday the girls took a 20 minute trolley ride to the Pentagon. Once they arrived, each was assigned to a dignitary. Their job included taking notes, transcribing and typing documents. On the weekends, Carolyn and her girlfriends would go to the beach and the bars. Carolyn was homesick with so much time on her hands. At one point, she began to work at a biracial confectionary store. Then she started coming home every other weekend. One of the rules in the Miller household was this. If the children worked, they had to give their parents 1/3 of their earnings. She taught her own children the same principle. So even though her job was in Washington, D.C., Carolyn gave her parents their due. She even taught her children the same principle.

While working in the capitol, Norman King would often visit. And on one of these visits, while they were at the beach, he proposed and of course, she accepted. They were married in 1951 at First Cambria. The couple decided to live in Dale. Carolyn and Norman were blessed with 4 boys: Norman Jr. and Theodore both served in the marines, Kevin, a graduate of Slippery Rock University and is a manager for the Kroger's grocery chain and Rodney, who trained as a Seabee in the Navy.

The Kings were blessed with 8 grandchildren, 11 great grandchildren and 5 great great grandchildren. The role of wife and mother, chief cook and bottle washer took its toll on Carolyn and soon she began to gain weight. A program known as Weight Watchers gained national attention. The company formed a chapter in Johnstown. In 1972, Carolyn joined the program and lost 40 lbs. During her visit, Carolyn would often help weigh in participants and offer encouragement. She was paid \$5 for every one that she weighed. The chapter leader noticed her interest in the program. Soon she was offered a job by the franchise. Because of her inherent shyness, she refused. Later, Carolyn thought it over. She took the job, but prayed before every meeting. Eventually her class had a total of 100 participants! Carol was a Weight Watchers Consultant for 30 years and she still follows the program!

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In 1994, Norman passed. It was then that Carolyn volunteered at the Memorial Hospital for their Hospice program. She worked primarily at the Lee campus: visiting patients, reading the Bible, talking and praying with them, giving them comfort where ever she can. Carolyn's "motto" is that she is a child of God and she will do his will.

Carolyn King's work for the Lord is ongoing at historic Cambria A.M.E., the oldest Black Church in the Johnstown Area. Among her many duties are: Preacher's Stewart, secretary for the Ministry of Kindness, Choir Member and Deaconess.

ELDER THOUGHTS AND ELDER WISDOM

As an informed citizen, Carolyn voted for Barak Obama in both elections

FAVORITE SONG:

Religious- All music

Advice to young people: Put God first in your life and wonderful things will follow.

Laughter: Playing monopoly with my children always brought me joy.

Contentment: "At this stage in my life, I am very content, because my God has promised that he would always take care of his own; and I belong to him.

What are you most grateful for: Knowing Christ; my four wonderful sons; my sisters and my brother, my pastor and his wife and my church family, my friends and the many years I have volunteered in the Conemaugh Hospital Hospice Program where I visited and prayed with patients.

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LEOLA THOMAS MATTOCKS

NOVEMBER 8, 1929

When Leola Mattocks testifies about God's grace and mercy, she has a plethora of memories that justify her faith. She was born on November 8, 1929 in Eufaula, Alabama. Her parents, Lealer and Johnny Hoskey already had one son, Hosea. The family lived with Lealer's parents who were trying to survive the difficulties of farm life during the 30's, 40's and 50's. At very early age, Leola had to help with all of the household chores: cooking, milking cows, churning butter, washing clothes on a wash board, pressing clothes with flat iron as well as working in the cotton fields. Her grandparents were strict task masters. Attending school was all but impossible with all the many chores they had to do to eke out a meager living during the depression. Yet, she managed to attend the Spring Hill Elementary School up to grade 8. Leola recalls walking with her mother at about age 2. She fell down and broke her little finger. She was not taken to the doctor and the finger healed, leaving a distinct mark around it.

Leola's mother moved to Columbus, Georgia and began working as a housekeeper for wealthy families. The children were left with her grandparents, until Leola was about age 6 or 7. Eventually, Leola and Hosea went to live with their mother in Columbus, Georgia. They stayed for a short period, then returned home. At a later time, Leola visited her Mother and got a job as a live in housekeeper and stayed

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until she was 15 or 16. Suddenly, her grandfather died. Leola, Hosea and her mother returned back to the farm.

In the meantime, some of Leola's relatives had migrated to Johnstown to work in the steel industry. Her uncle John Thomas was hired to work at the Franklin Steel Mill. He returned to the homeland and encouraged Hosea to leave the south. Jobs were plentiful in Johnstown. He left the farm and followed his uncle to Johnstown. He was hired by Bethlehem Steel Corporation to work in the mills in Franklin. Finally Leola's aunts, Mattie Long, Margaret Davis and Effie Gosha encouraged her to come to Johnstown and she accepted. Leola arrived in Johnstown in 1951 and stayed with her Aunt Mattie on Railroad Street in Conemaugh. At first she was able to get a job doing day work. Later, she was hired by the Bergman's in Westmont as a live in housekeeper and worked for them for 29 years.

Meanwhile, Leola started dating Odell Mattocks Sr. On March 24, 1953, Odell and Leola went to Maryland to recite their marriage vows. The couple lived on Pear Court for a short period. Then relocated to a row house behind the ball field on Chestnut Street in East Conemaugh. Odell's 2 children by his first wife, Rebecca, Odell Jr. and Dottie visited their father periodically. At one point, they decided to live with their father and stepmother and attend the East Conemaugh School System. Dottie was homesick for her friends and returned home to live with her maternal grandparents, but Odell Jr. remained, finished school and even went to college.

Leola and Odell often returned to his hometown in North Carolina. During one visit, Leola was talking to one of Odell's great nieces, Vivian (who had more than a dozen children). She said boldly, "You have all those children, why don't you give me one?" And she did! Leola has reared Annette from age 3. Today, Annette is an attractive young woman; a graduate of Conemaugh Valley H.S.; gainfully employed and living on her own.

Leola's most memorable life experiences are: Her marriage to Odell Mattocks (now deceased). During the 1977 Johnstown Flood, the family had to leave their home and take refuge at the Mt. Sinai Institutional Baptist Church.

She accepted Christ as her personal savior under Elder John Smith.

Leola is a devout Christian. She was a member of the Church of God in Christ and now Grace Fellowship in Nanty Glo for the last 14 years. She has served in a number of positions including Secretary, Elder and YPWW president.

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ELDER THOUGHTS AND ELDER WISDOM

Leola Mattocks is a registered voter and voted in the last 2 national elections.

What is your favorite song?

Religious; I have decided to follow Jesus

Secular: none

What is your favorite scripture?

Psalm 91 and 92

What advice would you give to young people today?

Stay out of trouble, Go to church and get saved.

Name something that made you laugh uncontrollably?

Leola and dog were afraid of lightning and Odell would tease them, because if lightening flashed while they sat on the porch, Leola and the dog would make a dash for the screen door and run into inthe house.

One evening, the couple were sitting on the porch and a severe storm occurred. Thunder boomed and lightning flashed.

Odell was lighting a cigarette. The dog and Odell went one way and the cigarettes another!

At this stage in your life do you feel content? Yes.

Explain Why? Because I have God in my life.

What are you most grateful for? To be alive. The day God saved me.

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JULIA EVA YOUNG NASH

November 24, 1929

Prior to the Women's Movement of the '60's, it was not unusual for couples to have large families. During this campaign season, one contestant, Kathleen McGinty in her TV ad talks about her parents; her father, a policeman and her mother who worked outside the home, raising 10 children. Within the African American Community of Johnstown, large families were common. Every Mother's Day at Mt. Sinai Institutional Baptist Church, special recognition was given to Mothers with 10 or more children. Matthew and Gersilee Thompson=10, Alberta and Howard Scott=10, and the Stephens family with 12 always received a standing ovation. When Julia and Sam Nash migrated to Johnstown from Virginia with two children: Earl and James; it was possible but not probable that they would have a large family.

Julia Young was born on November 24, 1929 in Goochland County, Virginia to Rebecca and Jessie Young. Two other children completed the family. They were (Louie) James Tyler II and Phyllis Tyler. Growing up in Goochland County, Julia was surrounded by a number of relatives on both sides of the family who were fascinated by how well the young girl could hold a conversation. In fact, she talked so much that her uncle William Young nicknamed her Polly.

Polly attended Primary and Junior High School in Chapple Hill, Virginia. She

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attended Central High School, and completed the 11th grade.

According to Polly, her most enjoyable classes were sewing and Home Economics.

One of Polly's best friends was her cousin Chris. They did everything together.

Their favorite hangout was a place owned by Dick Spooner, a night club called B55

They often went to Dick Spooner's Place. It was a place for teenagers one could meet some good looking boys.

Polly's maternal grandfather was a man named Jesse Young. He was a railroad porter. According to her, he and his girlfriend spoiled her rotten. So she grew up knowing that she was somebody special. Julia Young was known as the "little rich" girl.

It was during these happy fun filled teenage years that Julie Young met Samuel Nash. On June 16, 1947, Julia and Samuel E. Nash exchanged their wedding vows and became man and wife. Two children later, the Nash family moved to Johnstown, Pennsylvania to make a better life financially for their family. Sam Nash sought employment in the Steel mills. The family increased from 2 children, to ten: Samuel E. Nash, James

Nash (deceased), Jerome, Marilyn, Melvin (deceased), Debbie, Derrick, Brian, Dale and Mark. Among them they have 20 grandchildren, 23 great grandchildren and 5 great-great grandchildren.

Polly and Sam joined The Mt. Sinai Institutional Baptist Church. To supplement the family income, she worked for 32 years cleaning the Swank Building, while raising her children.

Some of the most memorable moments in Julia Nash's life were: raising 10 children and watching each one graduate from high school; Home Coming in Conemaugh and watching all her children being baptized together by Rev. Fitzhugh Lyons and Dec. Paul Bennett.

ELDER THOUGHTS AND ELDER WISDOM

Julia is a registered voter and voted for President Barack Obama in the last 2 elections. The best thing he has done? Survived.

What has he not done? Improve race relations.

What is your favorite song?

Religious: Rough Side of the Mountain

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Secular: Got to give it up by Marvin Gaye

What is your favorite Scripture: Psalm 23

What advice would you give young people today?

Stop the violence, give up the guns and drugs, empower their lives with education and mostly, give their hearts and lives to our God.

Name something that you can share with us that makes you laugh uncontrollably.

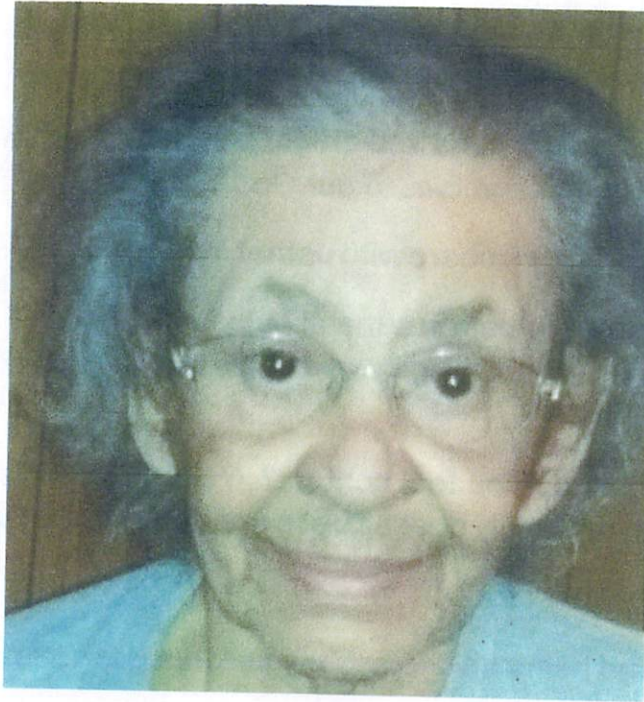
All the children had to take a bath in a metal bath tub. My son, Earl poured an entire box of surplus milk in the tub thinking it was bubble bath. He said, I was only trying to help!

At this stage in your life, do you feel content? Yes. I can care for myself and I can hear even though my family doesn't believe it. I hear what I want to hear.

What are you most grateful for?

My faith in the Lord and being able to see my children grow into and become adults.

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HILDA GRIFFIN ROEBUCK

JANUARY 8, 1931

For years, the residents of Conemaugh Borough could set their clocks by the movements of Hilda Roebuck. Dressed in her starched white uniform, white stockings and neatly polished white shoes, she left her home on Steele Street to perform her duties as a Nurse's Aide at the former Mercy Hospital. Hilda was smart, efficient and worked well with her patients; a valued employee. After working for years, Hilda received her Practical Nurses License. With her obvious intellect and love for her craft, Hilda and other African American women of her generation performed well in the Nursing professions. Yet they were not permitted to enter into nursing programs of any hospital in the Johnstown Area that granted a RN (Registered Nursing Degree) until the late 1950's.

The daughter of Love and Hattie Griffith, Hilda was born in Cincinnati, Ohio on January 8, 1931. She is the only one living in her family. Her parents, 5 sisters and 1 brother are deceased.

Some of Hilda's most memorable moments as a teenager were; walking across the hill to Woodvale to attend the Circus, playing sports, especially softball, sled ridding in

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the winter and stopping at Mrs. Richardson to get her homemade cookies!

In summer of 1948, Hilda married James E. Roebuck Sr. They had one son, James Jr. "Fig" who is deceased; 2 grandchildren, 3 great grandchildren and 4 great great grandchildren.

ELDER THOUGHTS AND ELDER WISDOM

Hilda is a registered voter and voted for President Obama in both elections.

What is your favorite song?

Religious

Amazing Grace

Secular

Songs by P Diddy

What is your favorite scripture? The Lord's Prayer

What advice would you give young people today?

Go to school and get an education

At this stage in life, do you feel content? Yes

What are you most grateful for?

My family: grandchildren, great grandchildren and great-great grandchildren and being able to spend time with them.

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JOHNSTOWN BRANCH NAACP HERITAGE LEADERS PROGRAM

{PAST HONOREES}

2002-2014 (alphabetical order)

FANNIE ANDREWS GENEVIVE
ANTHONY
EVELYN BANKS
FRANCES E. BANKS ELOISE
BARNETT
SHIRLEY R. BENNETT
GUY J. BROCK, JR.
GERALDINE CARR
CATHERINE CASHAW
GEORGE CASHAW
VIOLET (SIMMS) CLAYTON
ETHEL J. COOK
MARY L. (HOLIFIELD) COX
ANNA M. DAVIS
Ethel Addelle McLeod Davis
RUTH DAVIS
KENNETH DEMPSEY
ELIZABETH (JOHNSON) DORSEY
LORENE EDWARDS
LEAH (PRIDGEN) FLOYD
IRENE GLOVER
ANN GORDON
EDITH (SPEIGHT) GORDON
PAULINE H. L. GORDON
ESTHER GRAY
BEULAH (WHITE) GREEN
Jessie Mae (Haselrig) Crawley-
Grigsby
ELDER CORDY GUNBY, SR.
FRONNIE ALLEN GUNBY
ELIZABETH (RICHARDSON)
HARDISON
MARTHA AGNES (BERRY)
HARRIS

LEROY HEMPHILL, SR.
RAYFORD HEMPHILL
Bertha Mae (Mickens) Hill
JESSE (JOHNSON) HILTON
ALBERTINE (CARRUTHERS)
HOFFMAN
O'NEIL (JOY) HOLMES
BLANCHE HOPPER
RUTH JACKSON
WILLIE MAYBERRY JACKSON
LOUISE FRANCES JEFFERSON
MELVIN JEFFERSON
FRANCES M. JOHNSON
NORMAN LEVI JONES, JR.
ROY B. JONES
Thelma Odessa (Braden) Morris
SARA JANE CLAYBURN-JOY
CALLIE B. KING
NEHEMIAH HENRY LEFTWICH
CARRIE E. LIGHTFOOT
JAMES S. LIGHTFOOT
VIOLA MAE MAYES
ANNIE JO McCray
BISHOP JOSEPH McGauley
ROBINA (ELLIS) MEADOWS
CHARLES MICKENS
BOBBIE LOU (NEAL) MILLER
LULA M. MIMS
CONSTANCE (MCSWAIN) MOORE
EMMA JANE PARKER
DOROTHY AGNES PERRY
IDA C. PRIDGEN
JACQUELINE PRIDGEN

SYNESTA PRUITT
CICERO M. RICHARDSON
JOSEPHINE (POPE) RICHARDSON
MATTIE ROBERTS
ISABEL ROBINSON
ETHEL MAE (MCNAIR) SABIR
MAGGIE (Grant) SEGARS
WILMER J. SEGARS
Bernice M. (Williams) Simms
RACHEL SIMMS
THOMAS SIMMS
CHARLES SIMON
VIOLA (WILLIAMS) SMITH
KATHLEEN (BROWN) STEWART
ALICE DOROTHY TAYLOR
EDGAR THOMAS
MARY E. THOMAS
GERSILEE THOMPSON
MARY ELIZABETH TROUTMAN
ELIZABETH TULLIS
JOHN TULLIS, JR.
ANNIE BELL (FARRIOR) TWYMAN
ALBERT W. VAUGHN
JOE WALLS
RUTH (WALTON) WHITEHEAD
EARL WILLIAMS
Ernest L. Williams, Sr.
ELIZABETH WILLIAMS
ROSE (GETHERS) WILLIAMS
CHARLENE WILSON
ALVENA WRIGHT
MELDA YATES

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This Booklet was compiled by:

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