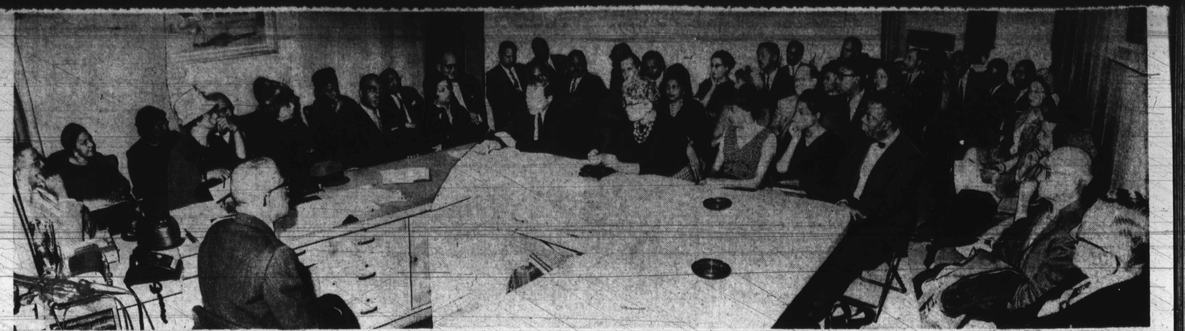

A CITY-WIDE NONPARTISAN VOTER registration organization meeting was held, recently, to map plans to register new voters and to preserve the voting rights of some 64,000 voters who were not accounted for in a door-to-door canvass by the Board of Elections. Dr. Carl Murphy, AFRO board chairman, was host and designated honorary chairman. Leader of 50 organizations attending the session were designated co-chairmen of the drive.

HISTORY WEEK SEARCH BARES:

GROUP OF LIVING, UNSUNG HEROES

By E. LEE LASSITER

If there was one thing I hated as a kid down home on the farm, it was a long-winded deacon or missionary sister who didn't know when to quit when he or she got to praying.

But now, nothing makes me sadder than the knowledge that the breed, which old-folk used to call a "who muff praying man," is dying out. And seemingly they are going to go without getting the recognition they deserve. Lassiter

Back in North Carolina church where I have been a member from age nine to now, they were very plentiful. In any old prayer service, you could find enough of them to keep a youngster mad for nearly six months.

* * *

AND RIGHT after the preacher had delivered an unusually stirring (meaning long and loud) sermon, and asked "Does anybody feel like praying," it was nothing to have two brothers light in at once and go a good twenty.

These were truly itchy-bottom times for youngsters, especially the very small-fry who were too curious not to watch and too bored to watch with any real joy. Older kids learned to cat-nap through this episode.

I know that at age 12 I knew it was safe to launch a good doze when whoever was conducting service said, "Brother Jones will you lead us in a word of prayer?"

Ordinarily, snoozing—sly or otherwise—could buy four knuckle-bones on the forehead real quick because parents then didn't have their hands hog-tied by any child psychology concepts. They were anything but permissive.

But even they had to conclude that we were just being reverent when you closed your eyes. This little wisp of wisdom came with age and so even to pre-teen Christmas, prayer time and siesta time were one.

* * *

A BODY OULD dream right comfortably too if he learned to cue his brain to wake him up when, after 20 or 25 minutes, Brother Jones would enter his finale by saying:

And Lord, when our work on this earth is ended,
And we've done going in
And coming out;
And we close our eyes
to wake no more;
Give us a happy lot
in your kingdom,
Where we can give your name
the praise. Amen

Now, only back home in Dixie country and maybe in a few of the off-street churches of the big city, can a few of these old-fashioned petitioners still be found. And this is the only hope really that before it is too late their contributions will be noted.

You remember how they used to be praying and say, "Lord, don't let us stand before you for no form nor fashion," meaning don't let us just go through meaningless motion, trying to be seen, looking cute, and sounding pretty?

Ironically, that is one of the things that is responsible for the death of the old praying man—form and fashion. When race progress brought the one-hour church service in, it squeezed the long prayer out.

* * *

A CONGREGATION today could sing through a modern chant two or three times before Deacon Brown-of-old could have gotten his handkerchief out of his back pocket and spread it on the floor to put his knees on.

So the praying man has bowed to brevity, taking the back pew inevitably reserved for those schooled in a lost art. And the churches, not noting the loss, are satisfied to substitute —A-men. Ah-men Ah-Ah-Ah-Ah-men. How brief.

But then time will ever take its toll. Add the effects of education and the race's eternal quest to act like white folk and the thin ranks of the prayer-poet is understandable.

You just can't conjure up the same kind of shouting spirit with Ph.D. words like "supplication and omnipotence," as Deacon Brown could just saying, "Lord we're calling on you because besides thee, there is no other."

You can't copy white people and chant the Bach Chorale or Guilmant's (Pastorale) and still have that old spirit that preachers used to say "travelled from heart to heart and moved from breast to breast."

STARK PROOF is seen of this when the current racial demonstrations are reported on television. A man leads a handful of protesters to the courthouse steps and starts to pray—the real soul-searching way.

The demonstrators start to answer back, "witnessing" to what he is saying. Boom. They're all in jail. Why? Because some white person, not knowing the way of the spirit, assumed they were "inciting a riot."

But if THEY don't know, "When The Saints Go Marching In," wasn't meant to be pawned off as Dixie Land Jazz, and that "When The Spirit Hits You, You'll Holler, Yes Indeed," is a revival tune, how are they to know that hand-clapping and hymn singing isn't rioting?

Of course, it doesn't cut the confusion when Ray Charles goes Hill Billy and calls it "Soul." Or when gospel singers take to the night-club circuit dressed like play-Boy Bunnies, calling themselves "Angels."

But only real lament here is that the old-fashioned praying man will vanish without being recognized for what he was — this race's greatest, most plentiful and most unsung poet.

* * *

I MEAN POETRY spelled: P as in Poe, O as in Omar, E as in Euripides, T as in Tennyson, R as in Rudyard, and Y as in Yeager.

For where these old deacons and missionary sisters didn't equal such scholars in precise grammar and meter, they easily made it up in well - turned phrases and pure and powerful word pictures.

As a token tribute to this breed of Christian, race spokesman, and poet—living and dead— we spotlight briefly during this Negro History Week Celebration, five of those who remain.

We hope you will be stirred to salute those you know.

MRS. HATTIE LESLEY, 68, Clingman Ave., Asheville, N.C. Member Hill Street Baptist Church, former church clerk and mission circle president.

FAITH IN GOD'S POWER

Our Father and our God,
The Ruler of Heaven and Earth,
We know your wonderful power;
You sculptured the Ocean's bed.
You flung the stars
from your fingers.
You hung the world on nothing.
We know you promised to hear us.
We believe you will hear us.
Help us to help others.
Let us not labor in vain.
This is our prayer. AMEN.

Deacon Rufu C. Woods, 79, Hill Street Baptist Church, Asheville, N.C.

GOD, GUIDE THE WORLD

All-wise God,
Our Heavenly Father.
We come, meek as we know how.
Asking they blessings, on us,
And on the world at large
Send thy Holy Spirit
Into the hearts of men.
Grant that thy people
May be able to overcome,
To transform the world,
In thy name. Amen.

Deacon Rufus C. Woods, 79, Hill Crest Apts., Asheville, N.C., Welfare Baptist Church.

PRAISE THEE, OH LORD

Our Father, Our God.
Thy name be praised.
You can heal disease.
You can save the sick.
You can save our souls.
Bless your name, Oh Lord.

Mrs. Virginia J..... 2D High-land Homes, Spartanburg, S.C.

TRUSTING HIM

We come as an empty pitcher
before a flowing fountain.
Praying that thou would send
your blessings from on high
Lord we know you're a doctor
who has never lost a case,
A general who has never lost
a battle.
We know you're able to fight
and front our every battle;
To strengthen us
where we're weak;
To prop us up
on every leaning side.
You're our water
when we're thirsty.
Our bread
when we're hungry
A battle-ax
in time of war;
A shelter
in the time of storm.

Mrs. Mary Gilliam, 329 Beacon St., Spartanburg, S.C.

REVIVE US LORD

Lord Send Us, A Good
old timer Revival,
Like we have lived
When sinners came trembling.
When the saved were not ashamed.
When men were really reborn.
Lord make us like
our sainted mothers, fathers.
Who could sing and shout,
'til angels caught the echo
and joy bells in heaven rang.

CAMERAS CHURNED and Godfrey Cambridge, young comic, did his bit as Morgan State College students enjoyed it all. The Cambridge show shot at Morgan will be seen nationally on a forthcoming Jack Parr Show. Cambridge fell in love with the Morgan campus while here for a personal appearance in "Gone Are The Days" and wanted to do his bit at the Baltimore institution.

Comic Godfrey puts Morgan on Parr Show

By RALPH MATTHEWS JR.

Godfrey Cambridge, gifted young actor-comedian, blazing the television trail for minority comics hacked out by Dick Gregory, did 35 minutes of brazen, disturbingly funny dialogue on location at Morgan State College for an upcoming Jack Paar TV show.

Performing in Murphy Fine Arts Auditorium for an audience predominantly of students, Mr. Cambridge was caught on video-tape by a TV camera crew and highlights of his act will comprise his guest appearance on the Paar show, seen locally Fridays at 10 p.m.

Paul Keith, director of the Paar show, told the audience that Godfrey had preferred a campus location and had been impressed with Morgan during a recent visit to Baltimore.

Thus Morgan Staters saw free much of this controversial comedian's act that some 34 major colleges throughout the nation will pay to see come fall when Cambridge tours Big 10 and Ivy League campuses.

SOMETIMES GENTLE, sometimes bitter, Cambridge did several of his favorite monologues.

He made scathing fun of one of his favorite targets, the colored middle-class, who "when they move into an all-white neighborhood, are not afraid of their white neighbors, or rocks thrown at their windows, or burning crosses on the lawn . . . the only thing they are afraid of is that another colored family will move in next door. Some of us don't like others of us, you know."

He did a portrait, dripping in bathos, of an Uncle Tom urging his more militant associates to try "friendship" on white people.

He had his Uncle Tom explain that "I picketed way back in 1938 and got a splinter in my hand that was so bad it infected my whole arm and I ain't picketed nothing for no reason since. Picketing can be dangerous."

* * *

CAMBRIDGE'S SATIRE covered the racial spectrum; he made fun of television commercials for whites only, colored Americans who go back to "their roots and redecorate their apartments in African motifs. My wife got so carried away she bought an ivory tusk sofa and if you think sitting on one of those is easy, well..."

He did a biting version of the Tony Curtis-Sidney Poitier film of a few years back, "The Fugitives."

Two men chained to each other escaping a Southern posse. In the film, the men discovered they were bound to each other by the chains of brotherhood.

Cambridge revamped "The Fugitives" to end with the colored prisoner on a Northern-bound train, extending a hand to the white prisoner, saying "I reached out to help him, his hand touched mine but slipped away and with the dogs and sheriffs behind him, I could only think of our tradition of Americana and say to my blood brother, . .Bye, Baby "

On Florida, Godfrey said: "They have white swimming pools, black swimming pools. I was feeling warm so I plunged into the black pool. The only difference is that black pools have no water and the diving board is higher."

* * *

ON THE colored middle-class: "They are ashamed of what they come from. This cat in an ivy league suit goes into a grocery and orders a pound-and-a-half-boiled-and-I-don't-want-anyone-to know so he whispers to the clerk, "wrap it up" and after that, whispers "now put handles on it."

"If he meets someone on the way home from the store, he explains 'this is my bowling ball!' Did you ever. see an oblong bowling ball with handles?"

The student audience was generous with applause and enthusiastic.

As with any entertainment fare based on controversial themes, young Cambridge garnered some mixed reaction.

One faculty member, female, objected to Cambridge's delineation of the difference between "white" hair and "colored" hair. "I didn't go along with him talking about my hair!"

A senior commented: "I loved him explaining the way Hollywood and TV have been stereotyping colored Americans."

A freshman said "He's even more bitter than Dick Gregory."

IN AN informal chat with the audience after the taping, Cambridge said that he had planned to do the telecast at Howard University but a Morgan drama student told him the Baltimore school was more racially "aware" than the District school and therefore more receptive to Cambridge's humor.

"That decided me," said Cambridge. "I wanted to do this one for my soul brothers so here I am."

Talking to the AFRO afterward, Cambridge said, "I fell in love with Baltimore when I came here in December to do the AFRO Mrs. Santa Fund premiere of "Gone Are The Days." People are more down to earth here and they know the truth won't hurt them."

Onstage, Cambridge included a bit satire on the old-line snobbery of Washington's colored middle class.

"I went to this party in D.C. with (actor) Orson Bean, he's white, and the hostess said joyously "Oh how do you do Mr. Bean" and then she looked at me and frowned, "Yes what do you want?"

"And I was supposed to be the guest of honor. Well, everyone else drank out of crystal and I ended up with a jelly glass."

Offstage, afterward, Cambridge said, "That jelly glass bit has some basis in fact. We have a lot of class and social snobbery in our own backyard and the way we treat each other is just as important a target for the humorist nowadays as are the outward forms of prejudice."

GODFREY CAMBRIDGE chats with group at Morgan State College during break in filming of Jack Parr Show.

MR. WOODS MRS. LESLEY

DOUGLASS'S GREAT-GRANDNEPHEW, the Rev. J. Wayman Henry, pastor of the Allen AME Methodist Church, in the 1100 block Lexington St., reads a book, one of the first written by his great-grand uncle FrederickDouglass. The book, an autobiography of his life, was written by Douglass in 1855. The Rev. Mr. Henry, recalled how his mother and other relatives told him of the famed Mr. Douglass.

Birthday Tributes 1

BEASLEY — A birthday tribute in remembrance of my mother and my grandmother, ELLA MAE whose birthday was February 10 and who passed away December 13, 1949:
We do not forget you, nor do we intend
We think of you often, and will to the end;
Gone and forgotten by some you may be,
But deep in my memory you ever will be.
DAUGHTER — KATHRYN
GRANDDAUGHTER — ELZE-NOR.

McRAE — A birthday tribute to the memory of my brother, EARL C. McRAE, who passed away January 1, 1961, on his birthday, February 14th:
You're not forgotten, brother, dear,
Nor ever shall you be.
As long as life and memory last,
We shall remember thee.
YOUR SISTER—
JANIE McRAE GOODEN
NIECE—LEANA FERRELL.

Vital Statistics

MARRIAGES

ANDERSON —SHARP — Arthur, 22, 1040 Valley St., hospital worker; Mary 21, 1707 Gwynne Falls Pkwy.
WHITFIELD-WINFOLL — Robert L., 19, 728 Newingtod St., helper;
HENDRICKS - BOOKER — Druel, 22, 1424 Lanquin St., maintenance man; Elsie L., 20, 1212 Jefferson St.
WILSON-JONES — John D., 20, 2315 Braddish Ave., student; Janet S., 18, 2726 Calverton Heights.
ROBERT - THOMPSON — Victor, 18, 1411 N. Linwood Ave. US Army; Carol J., 16, 1831 Milton Ave.
POWELL - ADAMS — Nathaniel J., 18, 1 N. Pennsylvania St., helper; Sonjia, 16, 2118 N. Wolfe St.
GAITHER - RAYNER — Donald E., 21, 2317 Garrett, greens keeper; Mary, 18, 2001 N. Hilton.
COLVERT — TAYLOR — Joseph Edward, 21, Gettysburg, Robert; Pauline, 20, Mt. Royal.
HARRIS — PINKNEY — Leslie, 22, 2018 Twyn Farms mission, Texas; E., 21, 610 Cheraton.
MINOR — ROBINSON — Roosevelt, 22, 1945 W. Fayette, paint mixer; Darlene, 22, 1938 W. Fayette.
MARTIN — PIERCE — Robert L