

for President of the United States of America. Again, after the General had returned to the United States, Claude, as part of an influential group of Republican leaders, met with General Eisenhower to encourage and urge him to run for the Presidency.

Later, Claude worked tirelessly for Eisenhower's nomination and election and became his Campaign Manager in Alabama.

In this state he was considered to be the alter ego of the General, whom he so admired and ardently supported. Not only did he like Ike but Ike liked him and the two men became personal friends. During Eisenhower's eight years as President, Claude made numerous trips abroad at the President's request and was his representative at several conferences. All the while continuing to serve as leader of the Alabama Republican Party. He remained State Republican Chairman until 1962, a tenure of 20 years.

Once, after having attended a special dinner at the White House as a guest of President Eisenhower, *The Birmingham News* reported that Mr. Vardaman was the only guest from the south. And in wrote of him in his column "From Where I Stand":

"Claude is the only former Goodwater, Alabama, boy I know who has been in-and-out of the White House like a rich cousin."

Claude O. Vardaman was born on a farm in the Mt. Olive Community, near Goodwater, in Coosa County, Alabama, on July 29, 1903, the raised in a devout Christian home and attended church during his boyhood years at the Parkdale Methodist Church not far from Mt. Olive. He later attended Birmingham-Southern College in Birmingham and was a career employee of the Alabama Power Company.

He joined the First Methodist Church of Birmingham in 1926 and remained an active and faithful member until his death 66 years later.

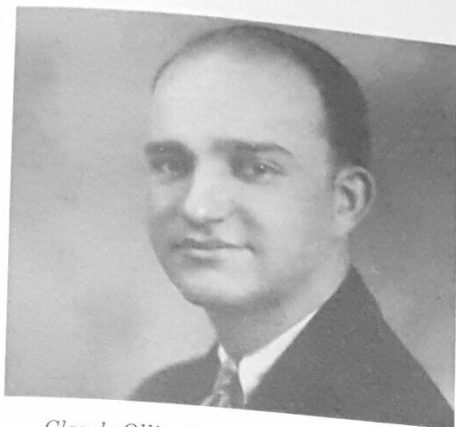
He was a worker in the church, an officer in its classes and a member of the Administrative Board for more than 50 years.

On October 14, 1926, he was married to lovely and talented Sue Malone of Birmingham, who devotedly assisted and supported him in his endeavors and shared in his many accomplishments. The couple had no children. Sue died February 27, 1998, and is buried with her husband at Oak Hill Cemetery in Birmingham. Submitted by: Edgar W. Francisco IV, 210 Sandtrap Way, Roswell, GA 30076. Sources: *The Birmingham News*, First Methodist Church of Birmingham, family records and personal knowledge.

## Dollar Vardaman

Dollar Vardaman was a prosperous farmer, lifelong resident and well-known citizen of the Mt. Olive Community of Coosa County. Dollar, known as "Doll" to his friends and relatives, was born at his father's home on the Old Plank Road in Mt. Olive in February, 1859, the third son of Peter Lafayette and Susan Matilda (Durham) Vardaman and grandson of Thomas and Annie (Vining) Vardaman.

Not much is known of Dollar's early life, however, he remained in the Mt. Olive Community and on January 8th, 1880, married Mary Jane Thompson, born in September, 1862, the daughter of James W. Thompson and Mary Elizabeth Lessley.



Claude Ollius Vardaman (1903-1992)

In September of 1907, when he was 48 years old, Dollar obtained title to 200 acres of land by "adverse possession" thus indicating that he had been living on and using this property for many years prior to this date. Since the land in question was adjacent to lands known to have been the property of his father, Peter Vardaman, it is believed that the land acquired via adverse possession had also been the property of his father. It is likely that, during his life, Peter had let his son live on and farm this portion of his property and it is after Peter's death in 1903 that Dollar obtained title to the property.

In 1906, exact date unknown, Mary Jane delivered the last two of her nine children by Dollar. Tragically, Mary Jane died giving birth to the twins and the babies also died. There was a most impressive funeral with both Mary Jane and the babies buried in the same casket - she holding one baby in each arm. While his two oldest children were adults and had already departed from home, this tragic event left Dollar with 5 minor children, ranging in age from 19 to 5, still at home.

Subsequently, on December 15, 1909, in Tallapoosa County, Dollar married Mrs. Ruth Epsie (Gunn) Andrews, widow of William Dempsey Andrews who had died in November, 1904. He is buried at the Hatchett Creek Presbyterian Church (Brownsville) Cemetery in Clay County. Epsie was born June 26, 1873, in Chambers County, the daughter of John W. Gunn and Ruth (Mitchell) McLain (widow of John McLain) of Chambers County.

Epsie had born 9 children by William Andrews and was pregnant with her 10th at the time of his death. All but one of these children lived to maturity. The last child was born seven months after her father's death and, although all of the children were still at home at that time, the two oldest, one boy and one girl, had left home prior to her marriage to Dollar Vardaman. Nevertheless, the combination of her 7 minor children, ranging in age from 16 to 4, together with 4 of Dollar's children (ages 19 to 8) still at home, made for quite a large household.

Subsequently, Dollar and Epsie would have two sons, one of whom, Albert D., called "Dee", born October 10, 1914, died on May 16, 1920, at the age of 5 from blood poisoning. The other boy, Frank, born in 1910, became a commercial truck driver and died at Tallapoosa, Georgia, as a result of a vehicular accident, Nov. 17, 1931.

Dollar and Mary Jane's children were:

John Wesley (Jack), born in October 1880; married Nonie Hobbie, daughter of Judge Henry Martin and Leonora (Jackson) Hobbie of Montgomery, December 18, 1912, at Montgomery. Jack was a prominent Montgomery attorney and at one time taught at Howard College in Birmingham. He died March 25, 1927, at Montgomery and is buried with his wife who died in 1925 at the age of 37 in the Hobbie burial ground at Oakwood Cemetery in Montgomery. They left one son, John Wesley, Jr. (Jack), born in 1915, who was raised by his Hobbie grandparents after the death of his parents, and later became a noted lawyer and prominent citizen of Anniston, Alabama.

Lou Ora, born June 18, 1882; married Bazwell Blount McClung, son of John Evans and Martha Ann (Blount) McClung of Sylacauga, October 12, 1902, at Hollins in Clay County. This family lived for many years in the Sylacauga area before returning to Mt. Olive in their later years. They had three sons and four daughters. Lou Ora died October 10, 1954, and is buried with her husband who died February 15, 1958, in the Mt. Olive Baptist Church Cemetery at Mt. Olive.

James Thomas (Jim), born Christmas Eve, December 24, 1886; married Mrs. Ida M. (Glasscock) Drake, November 20, 1920, at Birmingham in Jefferson County, AL. Jim and Ida lived in Birmingham where he was a career employee with the Drennan Motor Car Co. They had no children. He died August 28, 1958, and is buried with his wife, who died December 3, 1972, at Elmwood Cemetery in Birmingham.

William Moon (Ben), was born January 18, 1890 and married Mary Harriett Reynolds, April 17, 1918, at Birmingham. They lived in West End in Birmingham where Ben operated a Pan Am service station. They had two children. He died July 17, 1949, and is buried with his wife, who died September 14, 1975, at Elmwood Cemetery in Birmingham.

Charles (Charlie), born September 20, 1897; married (first) Myrtle Mamie Thompson and (second) Mary Bernice Routh, daughter of James Henry and Lena Pope (Stogner) Routh of Marshall County, AL. Charlie, a railroad fireman for the Frisco Railroad, died July 9, 1960, and is buried with his second wife, who died October 27, 1963, at Memory Hill Cemetery in Albertville, Alabama. Charlie had no children.



Claude and Ike in Washington D.C.