

## HERMAN OUSLEY: THE MAN WHO KEPT THE STORY ALIVE

Every historic place has a guardian.

For Macedonia Church and Cemetery, that guardian was Herman Ousley.

Long before preservation became a movement, Herman understood the importance of remembering those who came before him. Born in Duluth, Georgia, in 1902, he was the son of William Ousley and Katie Ousley and the grandson of Robert T. and Laura Ousley. His roots were deeply connected to the land, the church, and the families whose stories continue to shape the Macedonia legacy today.

As a young man, Herman worked at Camp Gordon in Chamblee, Georgia, supporting military operations during an era when many African Americans contributed through civilian labor and service roles. He later worked at a country club in Brookhaven and served as chauffeur and butler for Judge John Slaughter Candler, brother of Coca-Cola founder Asa Griggs Candler.

But Herman's greatest work would not be found in the service of prominent families.

It would be found in the service of his own community.

### A BUILDER OF COMMUNITY

By the 1930s, Herman had become a respected farmer, builder, entrepreneur, and community leader in the Lynwood Park area of DeKalb County. He built homes, sold automobiles, and created Herman's Lake—a place where African American families could gather, celebrate, and build community during a time when segregation limited opportunities elsewhere.

His life reflected the resilience, determination, and self-reliance that defined so many African American communities throughout the South.

### A STEWARD OF MACEDONIA

Herman served as the cemetery sexton, deacon, and pastor of Warsaw AME Church, later known as Macedonia AME Church. When the original church structure was lost, Herman helped ensure its legacy endured by constructing the cinderblock church that stood as a beacon of faith and perseverance for decades.

He maintained the cemetery grounds, cared for the church property, and personally transported community members to worship services each Sunday. He understood that Macedonia was more than a church and more than a cemetery.

It was a sacred connection between generations.

### WHY HE CARED

We believe Herman's dedication to Macedonia was deeply personal.

His family history was buried there.

The people he loved, respected, and remembered rested within the cemetery grounds. Parents, grandparents, relatives, friends, and neighbors were all part of the story preserved beneath the soil of Macedonia.

By caring for the cemetery, Herman remained close to those who came before him. Every grave he protected, every path he maintained, and every service he attended helped ensure that their lives would not be forgotten.

His stewardship was more than maintenance.

It was an act of love.

#### CONTINUING THE LEGACY

Today, the Descendants of Macedonia Church and Cemetery of Johns Creek, Georgia, Inc. (DMCC) continues the work Herman began.

Our mission is to preserve the sacred ground where generations rest, uncover the stories hidden by time, and reconnect descendants with their ancestors through research, education, and stewardship.

The discovery of 177 additional burials reminds us that there are still voices waiting to be heard and stories waiting to be told.

Like Herman Ousley, we believe every life matters.

Like Herman Ousley, we believe remembrance is a responsibility.

And like Herman Ousley, we are committed to ensuring that Macedonia remains a place where history is preserved, families are reconnected, and future generations can learn from the courage, faith, and perseverance of those who came before them.

Because preserving Macedonia is not simply about protecting a cemetery.

It is about honoring a people, a community, and a legacy that helped shape America.