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The Banks Working As a Team

by Wardine Waddell

The two-story green house stood quietly at 302 E. Washington St. in Champaign, unaware of its visitor. But Mrs. Ida Banks knew I was coming. After knocking twice, she appeared at the door and motioned me to the dining room table. I sat down and began my 30 minutes of light questions.

There is nothing extraordinary about the quiet, demure 80-year old black woman. Yet there was something warm and striking about her modesty—her dedication to her husband and to the church—a quality deserving of praise.

Mrs. Banks, the former Ida Clements, was born in Monticello, Georgia. She married Dawson Banks, Sr. back in 1917. In 1925 they moved to Champaign. She and her husband now own and have resided at their present address for about 26 years.

For 40 years Mrs. Banks has been a member of the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Champaign. She has been active as a missionary for 35 years. She also belongs to the Helping Hand Club, an organization of women which raises money for the church.

Mrs. Banks' dedication to helping others, however, does not stop here. She is also a member of the War Mothers Club. The club, she says, was organized around 1943, just before World War II had ended. She says the Champaign-Urbana unit concentrates their efforts on helping veterans at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Danville. She says they give parties for the men. . . served cookies, punch, and provided gum and cigarettes.

"We would take them books to read and give them clothes. But we don't take clothes anymore," she recalled. Looking beyond her

Mr. and Mrs. Banks on their 50th anniversary