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Robert Fairley

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Bridges That Carried Us Over Project

Interview Summary

Interviewee:

Robert L. Fairley

Interviewer:

Belalia Mubashir

Interview Date:

October 2, 2014

Interview Location:

San Bernardino, CA

Length:

00:07:05

Interview Summary completed by:

M. Camacho Nuno, 2024

Description:

Belalia Mubashir interviews Robert Fairley, a pastor at the New Hope Missionary Baptist Church. During the recording for the Archiving Black History in Inland Empire Project, Fairley is asked about Jack Hill. The pastor explains since his family's arrival in San Bernardino and his 1950 baptism, Hill had gone to that very church. Hill was a devoted Baptist and, for Fairley, an ideal Christian set to go to heaven. Hill was very caring to others, both to his family and his congregation. During a picnic that was planned by the church, Hill gladly let his facilities be used as resources. He was very kind to others, especially his wife. When she became ill and died on a ministry trip to Greece, Hill stood by her side and remained loving and composed during the traumatic event. The interview ends with Fairley describing Hill as a consultant. The latter was always happy to lift others' spirits, including Fairley himself.

Subject Topic:

- Archiving Black History in Inland Empire Project
- Jack Hill
- The Baptist Faith
- Devotee
- Family Man
- Role Models
- Giving
- Loving Husband
- Encouragement
- Consultant

Spatial Coverage:

Name of Site (if relevant)	General Location/Address
New Hope Missionary Baptist Church	1575 W 17th St, San Bernardino, CA 92411
Brawley	City in California
Aegean Sea	Location in Greece

Temporal Coverage:

1950 - 2014

Key Events:

- Dr. Robert L. Fairley talks about Jack Hill and how his family came from Brawley, California.
- Having been baptized in the New Hope Missionary Baptist Church in 1950, Hill had been raised in that church.
- For Fairley, the impression of Hill was that he was a good Christian as well as being very open and caring.
- Hill gives his facilities as resources for the congregation's major picnic.
- When his wife became ill and died on a ministry trip in Greece, Hill remained by her side.
- Hill as a consultant, lifting people mentally and giving hugs.

Key Organizations:

- New Hope Missionary Baptist Church

Interview Index:

Media Format	Time (hh:mm:ss)	Topic Discussed
Digital Video	00:00:54 - 00:03:59	Fairley describes Jack Hill's relationship with the church.
Digital Video	00:04:04 - 00:05:57	Jack Hill stood by his wife when she became ill and remained strong after her death.
Digital Video	00:06:04 - 00:06:51	Fairley sees Hill as a wonderful consultant to others.

Related Materials

Additional oral history interviews are available from the Bridges That Carried Us Over Project at CSUSB, <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/bridges/>

Full interview transcript can be found below.

Interview Transcript

Start of Interview:

[00:00:00]

Q: Okay, today's date is October 2nd, 2014. My name is [Belalia Mubashir?] and I'm interviewing Dr. Robert L. Fairley for the Black -- for the Archiving Black History in Inland Empire Project. His name is spelled, first name, R-O-B-E-R-T, Fairley, F-I-R-L-E-Y.

ROBERT FAIRLEY: A.

Q: F-A-I-R-L-E-Y. We are interviewing here at New Hope Missionary Baptist Church in San Bernardino, California. Thank you, Dr. Fairley, for taking the time out to con-- to conduct this interview with us.

ROBERT FAIRLEY: You're very welcome.

Q: So tell us a little bit about Jack Hill.

ROBERT FAIRLEY: Jack Hill has been a member of New Hope [00:01:00] since 1950. He was baptized here. And his family kind of grew up in the church. He moved here with his family from Brawley, Brawley, California, where he grew up as an adolescent. And right after that, moved to San Bernardino and became a member of New Hope.

Q: And were you the pastor when he became a member?

ROBERT FAIRLEY: Oh no.

Q: (laughs)

ROBERT FAIRLEY: Oh no, I've been his pastor for the past 22 years.

Q: And what was your first impression of him?

ROBERT FAIRLEY: He was quiet, committed to the Lord and to his family. My impression of him was an ideal Christian man.

Q: So, would you recommend him for heaven?

ROBERT FAIRLEY: Oh, without question.

Q: (laughs)

ROBERT FAIRLEY: Without question, yes.

Q: Why?

ROBERT FAIRLEY: Because he has made worship a priority in his life. And doing things that would be apropos [00:02:00] and in line with what the Bible says a Christian is.

Q: How would you describe his relationship with the church?

ROBERT FAIRLEY: He's a very open person, a caring person, and very, very helpful in many, many areas. He's an ideal Christian man in that he led his family very, very well. He cared about them, and he brought that into our fellowship. As you know, we need Black men who serve as role models, and he has been exactly that. And we'd get more men working with their families, staying with their families, caring about their children and their family members to the degree that he wants them educated. He did that, and he even worked three and four jobs to do it.

Q: Oh wow, I didn't know that. So, how involved was he with the church? Was he [00:03:00] in any groups, or --

ROBERT FAIRLEY: Yes, he worked with our church in a number of areas. One, with our anniversary committee, we have an anniversary committee, where we put on a major picnic every year for the whole congregation. Because of Jack's expertise, he not only gave advice on how we might do that, but he also made his facilities available so that we could do the cooking in his house because he had all of the cooking -- had all of the facilities to do that with.

Q: And how would you describe Jack Hill to somebody who did not know him?

ROBERT FAIRLEY: A very quiet, dignified person who was always supportive, always helpful. Quiet, but very hospitable, outgoing person. Very quick to give you

a huge, or smile, or whatever he felt that you might need, he would do that.

[00:04:00]

Q: How -- can you tell me a story about Jack Hill? Does any story come to mind that personifies those traits?

ROBERT FAIRLEY: Oh, Jack Hill is also a part of our travel ministry. And he has traveled with us abroad on a number of trips. And one I can recall so vividly, because with his wife with him, and several of his children -- his wife became very ill while we were in Greece, and we were in the Aegean Sea, very near the island of Patmos. And Jack was very supportive in that he stood very close to his wife, held her hand through the final days of her life. And he not only stayed close to her and with her, but he made arrangements for her [00:05:00] when she passed away, even aboard a ship, and even, I think we were in Athens, where he made arrangement for her to be put away, and then ultimately to be brought back to the US. He was there every step of the day. It was an ultimate -- ultimate sense of dedication and commitment. And that's what I remember more than anything else. That's how you should stand by your family, and with your mate, and he did it. And he put her away, very, very nice.

Q: That's a great story.

ROBERT FAIRLEY: And even without even falling apart, he didn't fall apart. He maintained his composure. I'm not saying he didn't cry, and he did not feel burdened. But he took his responsibility seriously.

Q: So he had the strength to be the head of the household?

ROBERT FAIRLEY: Head of the household, and he was there for his family. He was there to console them.

Q: So you know, [00:06:00] we're going to be doing this video for on archiving purposes.

ROBERT FAIRLEY: Yes.

Q: Is there anything else you want to say?

ROBERT FAIRLEY: Jack Hill, in addition to what I've already said, was also an ideal church member, but he has always served as a wonderful consultant. Now there are certain people you meet who will not share with you their own expertise in how they feel about things. You asked him, he was very open and very quick to do that. And what I love about him is that I start at the door each Lord's Day, after I've preached, he does not fail to come through -- come through that door to encourage me, and to hug me. As a man, he hugs me and encourages me. And he's done that every Sunday that I've ever preached in this church.

Q: That's great. Well thank you so much, Dr. Robert Fairley, for the interview.

[00:07:00]

ROBERT FAIRLEY: You're very welcome. Thank you so much for coming.

End of Interview:

[00:07:05]