



## Jesse Clopton James

February 29, 1924 - April 11, 2019

Jesse Clopton James was born on February 29, 1924, in Florence, Alabama, to Edward Newman and Ira Belle Denton James. He passed from this life into the arms of Jesus on April 11, 2019, living over 95 years and celebrating 23 birthdays.

The oldest of six children, Jesse grew up in the East Florence community of Sweetwater where in high school he worked at the local fertilizer for 15 cents an hour. He recalled, however, that the hardest work he ever did was in his mother's large garden where he also fed the hogs, milked the cow, and on Saturdays drew water by hand out of the 104-foot well.

Working at the fertilizer plant provided some opportunities for the young engineer-to-be. He would collect small discarded wires to create many devices including electrical motors, relays, and solenoids. He once developed an anti-theft device for the family's 1941 Chevrolet, which sounded the horn if the car was disturbed before disabling the unit with a switch under the dash. His father would forget about the alarm and finally, being embarrassed too many times, ripped it out completely. Jesse also built and installed a circuit that turned on the family's porch light when the doorbell was rung.

Jesse, or Clopton as his family called him, graduated from Florence's Coffee High School in 1941. He served in the Army Air Corps at the onset of WWII. While training to be a fighter pilot, he developed a serious illness, was hospitalized for months, and was honorably discharged. With combat survival rates for fighter pilots fairly low at the time, that illness may have worked to his future children's advantage.

Jesse attended Auburn University, earning BS degrees in electrical engineering in 1945 and in engineering physics in 1946. While at Auburn, Jesse went out for football at the urging of the coach for more players as (so many men were gone during the war years). After getting mowed down by the first team for two weeks, Jesse decided he had done his duty and retired from football.

On September 27, 1947, Jesse Clopton married the love of his life, Barbara Brown Hayman in Jemison, Alabama. Together they were blessed with four children: Jeb Stuart, Jerry Hayman, Emily Caroline, and Barbara Kate.

Jesse received MA degree in nuclear physics in 1950 from Rice University and a PhD in electrical engineering and physics in 1958 at Georgia Tech. During these years, he worked for Southern Research Institute in many areas of analysis, design, and experimental fieldwork, as well as for the US Navy and Army.

Jesse had an extensive and distinguished career. Following graduation from Georgia Tech, he moved the family to Lexington, Massachusetts to join MIT's Lincoln Laboratory. In 1961, MIT moved the Jameses to El Campo, Texas, where for nine years Jesse's research group did ground breaking study of Venus, Mars and the sun. In the 1960s, he was the first to discover liquid water below the surface of Mars using radio waves. He loved his time in radar astronomy and once remarked to a reporter that "Astronomical radar studies may help to explain how God created the universe. A description of astronomical bodies is to many people as much a thing of beauty as looking at the stars from the heart of Texas."

In 1970, MIT sent the James family to Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands where Jesse helped develop the government's anti-ballistic missile system. While on Kwajalein, he became an accomplished scuba diver and sailor, once sailing solo hundreds of miles across open ocean in a small boat to visit isolated islands. Following years in the development of our nation's defense with MIT, McDonnell Douglas, and Teldyne Brown Engineering, he managed the Harvard Radio Astronomy Station near Fort Davis, Texas.

Jesse wrote many chapters for technical books and authored 22 papers in scientific journals. He holds 12 patents plus another invention involving a stealth technique for planes and missiles for which a patent cannot be issued due to security classification.

He finally retired at the age of 82, but continued to work at tree farming and woodworking, with (many family and friends enjoying fine furniture pieces lovingly created by him). He did extensive family tree research before the age of the internet, visiting countless courthouse records and graveyards to write many volumes on the family tree. At 92, he authored and published 'The Bible: Two Proofs and Two Mis-Translations' in which he argued for his strong belief that the Bible and proved science agree.

Above all his scientific accomplishments, Jesse believed that faith in God was the most important thing. He spent years teaching Bible classes and was involved in a Christian

prison ministry. He credited all his life's success to following Christ and his greatest desire was that his family also lives a life devoted to Jesus.

Jesse Clopton loved family reunions and is now enjoying a heavenly one with his father, mother, sister Vera Viola, brothers Malcolm Wallace, Bryson Lemoine, Edward Ira (E.I.), granddaughter Natalie Caroline, and the many aunts, uncles, cousins, and their spouses who passed before him.

He is survived by his wife of 71+ years, Barbara, brother Graham Farris James and wife Clara, son Jeb and wife Laurie Ann, son Jerry and wife Laurie, and daughters Emily Barkley and Kate Bernsen. Jesse is also survived by 9 grandchildren and so far 11 great-grandchildren, along with many nephews, nieces, cousins, great nephews and nieces, and all their spouses.

Jesse Clopton and Barbara were faithful members of the church of Christ all of their married life, even helping to found a congregation in Massachusetts. In recent years the couple worshipped at the Madison Church of Christ.

The funeral service will be 11 am, Monday, April 15, 2019 at Madison Church of Christ, Madison, AL. The interment will be 3:30 pm at Rock Creek Cemetery, Colbert County, AL.

Memorials may be made to Agape Adoptions of North Alabama, 103 Mountain Brooke Blvd, Madison, AL, 356758.

# Cemetery

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## Rock Creek Cemetery

633 Co Rd 33

Russellville, AL, 35653

# Events

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**APR** **Funeral Service** 11:00AM

**15**

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Madison Church of Christ

556 Hughes Road, Madison, AL, US, 35758

**APR** **Graveside Service** 03:30PM

**15**

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Rock Creek Cemetery

633 Co Rd 33, Russellville, AL, US, 35653

# Comments

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“ Shortly after the US Government formed the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) from its' predecessor the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization, the contractor community supporting MDA was challenged with developing a highly sophisticated integration and test approach to prove the technical maturity of our National Missile Defense (NMD) system. As anyone might imagine our test methodology called for a rigorous trial of laboratory processes each NMD component migrated through individually, then tested collectively as a family of systems. As components were deployed additional system level testing took place culminating with a live fire test utilizing the Kwajalein Missile Range (KMR). Throughout the entire process we found Jesse's knowledge of KMR radar extremely valuable and he made a significant contribution in helping us demonstrate the early capabilities of the NMD system. I found him extremely collegial and always willing to share his expertise when needed. For this we considered him brilliant. I have many fond memories of working with Jesse James. Prayers to his family. Sincerely, Mike Good

**Mike Good** - April 23, 2019 at 03:57 PM

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“ I will greatly miss this good and honorable man, and am thankful to have experienced his influence on my life.  
- Tony Hoover

**Tony Hoover** - April 19, 2019 at 08:10 AM

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“ Trudy Craft-Austin lit a candle in memory of Jesse Clopton James



**Trudy Craft-Austin** - April 18, 2019 at 11:54 AM

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“ Mrs. James, Jeb, Jerry, Emily, & Kate... I have fond memories from long ago of Dr. James. You, family, friends, and the community has lost a man of faith and many accomplishments. May he Rest In Peace

**Mike Steele** - April 16, 2019 at 09:25 PM



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“ I have known Jesse several years at church. While on the Church trip to Charleston SC Historical District several hears ago he and Barbara were so energetic in taking in all the sights they kept us younger folks struggling to keep up. It was obvious to everyone around him he was an accomplished personality. You did not need his resume to tell that. People gravitated toward his wit, humor and knowledge. When he spoke in church everyone listened at his pure Biblical logic that foretold of the truth.

I had no idea he was such an accomplished scientist in his field or that he was so advanced in academic circles, nor that the most critical elements of our defense industry kept him so much in demand after his attempt to retire in 1982 that he was unable to do so until he recently became sick and could no longer participate. His list of advanced accomplishment there were phenomenal, long and too numerous to mention here.

Our community has lost a great friend, our country lost a great pillar, and our church lost a great Disciple of Christ. No wonder God kept him working among us so long.

He will be greatly missed. You can't replace folks like Jesse Clopton James.

BTW I don't know where his family got his middle given name. Whether it was after his ancestors, but Clopton is a very old Surname in Old Northern Alabama.

C. Wayne Austin

Cecil Wayne Austin - April 16, 2019 at 07:36 PM

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“ Love's Journey was purchased for the family of Jesse Clopton James.



April 15, 2019 at 08:02 AM

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“ From Edward Louis James and family purchased the Enduring Grace for the family of Jesse Clopton James.





“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Jesse Clopton James.



April 14, 2019 at 03:06 PM

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“ I remember Mr. James as such a sweet, kind and spiritual man. My family loved him and I remember him from Kwaj and reunions and visiting on our way to Germany. He also rebound a book for my dear mother Marjorie as it was falling apart and was written about ack-ack women of England during WWII. Such a great and inspiring man. He will be dearly missed. Love from Sandie-Hirst Beymer.

**Sandra Beymer** - April 14, 2019 at 02:50 PM



“ The world lost a great and inspiring man when Clopton was called home . I admired him soo much and appreciate all the work he did and especially his work compiling The Rock Creek Documents etc. Clopton was a cousin of my husband Doyle Mills. What a gift he was to mankind and great servant of our Lord. may sweet and happy memories flood your hearts and help in someway ease the pains of parting. Love and sweet blessings. shirley Mills. (Ps is there anyway I might obtain a copy of his book The Bible Two proofs &Two mistranslations?)

**shirley mills** - April 15, 2019 at 08:25 PM



“ The world lost a great and inspiring man when Clopton James was called home. I admired him so much and appreciated all the work he did and especially writing and compiling the Rock Creel Documents. Clopton was a cousin of my husband Hiram Doyle Mills Jr. What a gift he was to mankind and a great servant of our Lord. May sweet and happy memories flood your hearts to help on someway ease the pains of parting. I love and care about you all Love and sweet Blessings Shirley Mills. (Ps is there anyway I might obtain a copy of his book, The Bible Two proofs &Two mistranslations? thank you

**shirley mills** - April 15, 2019 at 09:32 PM

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“ I grew up hearing my mother, Roberta Rutland, talk about her cousin, Clopton. (Her mother, Elton Denton Mills, and his mom were sisters.) Mom had a lot of cousins, but I'm convinced he was her favorite. As I got to know him as an adult, I understood why.

When my mom and dad died of cancer 5 days apart in 1975, my siblings and I ranged in age from 26-17 (I was the youngest). I remember we received a card from

Clopton, with a check enclosed and instructions to divide it equally among the 4 of us. He worried that funds might be tight until their estates were settled, and wanted to make sure we were okay. My sisters, brother, and I were so touched—what a sweet final act of love for his dear cousin, Roberta, to help care for her children. Three years later, when I was 20, I was in a bad car wreck with a jack-knifing tractor trailer. He somehow got word of it and sent me a gorgeous bouquet of anthuriums directly from Hawaii, with a hand-written letter. That was long before ProFlowers, so getting exotic flowers was unheard of. My heart was so touched by his kindness—again.

Through the years, I always loved seeing Clopton at family gatherings (unfortunately, usually they were funerals).

I was thrilled several years ago when he sent me a CD of the book he wrote of the Denton Family history complete with the family tree—it is amazing! I have printed it out in its entirety, and treasure it.

I am also a big fan of his recent book comparing his astronomical findings to the teachings in the Bible. I've bought several and given them to friends and family. Clopton and I exchanged letters several times about his books, and I saved the letters he sent me. I consider them treasures as well.

We cannot be sad for Clopton—he has entered his Heavenly Home! But, my heart is sad for his sweet wife, Barbara, and the rest of his family. I will miss him as well. What a dear, sweet, brilliant man!

**Charlotte Rutland Bryant** - April 14, 2019 at 10:28 AM

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“ The Ciampa Family purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Jesse Clopton James.



**The Ciampa Family** - April 13, 2019 at 04:02 PM

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“ Tom Barkley purchased the Magnificent Life Spray for the family of Jesse Clopton James.



**Tom Barkley** - April 13, 2019 at 03:48 PM

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“ 1 file added to the album LifeTributes



Sandra James - April 13, 2019 at 03:35 PM

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“ 85 files added to the album LifeTributes



Morrison Funeral Homes - April 13, 2019 at 03:29 PM

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“ Jesse was a wonderful, loving friend. I met him at the Texas Normal Singing School in Abilene, Texas. He and I collaborated on several songs. I will miss being with him. I really loved that man. Marilyn Pineda

Marilyn Pineda - April 13, 2019 at 03:00 PM

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“ Guiding Light Bouquet was purchased for the family of Jesse Clopton James.



April 13, 2019 at 02:55 PM

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“ Clopton was such a classy guy. My Dad, Raymond James and his first cousin really thought a lot about him. I can remember all my life him saying "he helped put a man on the moon". I have asked Clopton about that and he did not go into detail but he did say he was a sun scientist and that he studied the sun. This is undoubtedly the best obituary I've ever read. We were always talking about the family tree and he has really helped me a lot. Clopton, you have passed your final test and now you are

home. God Bless

Phillip R James - April 13, 2019 at 02:41 PM

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“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Jesse Clopton James.



April 13, 2019 at 01:48 PM

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“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Jesse Clopton James.



April 13, 2019 at 01:33 PM

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“ I knew he was a smart man, but didn't know the extent of his accomplishments. Mostly I remember all the Sunday lunches we enjoyed together at the Madison building. We were Sunday lunch regulars, just like Jesse and Barbara, and I miss those times.

Sandra Moore - April 13, 2019 at 12:56 PM

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“ Barbara, sending you my love and prayers for peace and comfort

Rejetta Balentine - April 13, 2019 at 09:58 AM