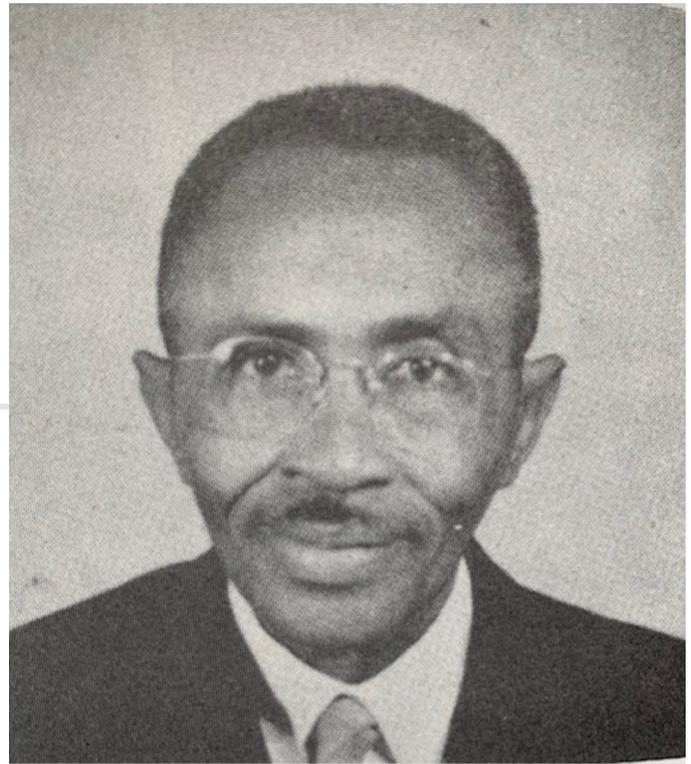


# Greenidge, Christopher M. (1894–1993)



## GLENN O. PHILLIPS

Glenn O. Phillips, Ph.D. (Howard University, Washington, D.C.), although retired, is actively writing, researching, lecturing, and publishing. He was a professor at Morgan State University, Howard University, and the University of the Southern Caribbean. He has authored and published numerous articles, book reviews, and books, including "The African Diaspora Experience," "Singing in a Strange Land: The History of the Hanson Place Church," "African American Leaders of Maryland," and "The Caribbean Basin Initiative."

Christopher McClennan Greenidge was a pioneering Barbadian colporteur and lay evangelist who established numerous churches and companies.

Greenidge sold thousands of Seventh-day Adventist books and magazines directly, impacting hundreds of baptisms in Barbados over a 60-year period (1918-1978). A very successful canvasser at the annual Harvest Ingathering campaigns, he often collected the most funds countrywide for dozens of years. He remained a layman, operating his own business until he turned it over in later years to his sons.

Christopher McClennan Greenidge was born December 22, 1894, the first son of Samuel and Sarah Greenidge of Rices near Bailey's Plantation, St. Philip.<sup>1</sup> He attended St. Martin's Boys School and became an apprentice engineer and mechanic at a neighboring sugar factory. He later moved to Bridgetown, the colony's capital, and worked as a clerk in a Roebuck Street store, often worshipping at the James Street Methodist Church. In early 1917 he attended the evangelistic crusade conducted by Elder Myron Butterfield and was baptized into the Adventist faith on September 15, 1917.<sup>2</sup> That same year he married Marie Louise Greene, and from this union came nine children.

Soon after becoming an Adventist, Greenidge became one of the most active, successful colporteurs in the region, selling significant amounts of Adventist literature over his country's extensive rural region, traveling mostly on foot and or by bicycle. His success was remarkable despite the very strong opposition he frequently

C. M. Greenidge

From Glenn O. Phillips, *Seventh-day Adventists in Barbados, Over a Century of Adventism, 1884-1991*.

encountered at the hands of many of the clergy and lay leaders of the mainline churches.

During his first extensive colporteur venture in 1923, Greenidge and another colporteur, Charles Gibson, covered the large northern rural area of Barbados, and held meetings with interested parties and families in the parishes of St. Thomas, St. Peter, and St. Lucy.<sup>3</sup> Some of their open air meetings were met with confrontation, but they moved on and continued because of the growing interest. In direct response to the growing interest, in 1923 the recently organized Caribbean Conference authorized Elders I. V. Miner and Charles B. Sutton to conduct the first rural evangelistic crusade in Barbados. Their efforts resulted in the first baptisms in this region and the formation of a company at Boscabel, St. Peter, and another at Pie Corner, St. Lucy.<sup>4</sup> Greenidge later joined with Samuel T. Jones, a teacher from British Guiana (Guyana). Guyanese Pastor William H. Lewis wrote an article in the *Field Gleanings* of July 1927 titled "New Church Organized," in which he shared that he had visited a congregation of about 32 in Checker Hall<sup>5</sup> to organize them into a church and found that Greenidge was responsible for the early establishment of this group of believers.

Greenidge also played a significant role in the establishment of another congregation in the late 1920s in northern Barbados, namely the Mile and a Half SDA Church in St. Peter. According to Colin Jordan and Alison Brome, Greenidge supported the initial interests of those who formed the nucleus of that congregation. They wrote, "Colporteur Greenidge was the main provider of literature to Oswald Walker and Garfield Bowen," who were both among the founding members of that congregation. They were both baptized on December 6, 1927, along with 15 others.<sup>6</sup> Greenidge was among the early lay leaders who helped in the evangelistic thrust of 1932 that produced the George Street SDA Church just north of Bridgetown in St. Michael. When this congregation later moved to its own edifice and was renamed the Government Hill SDA Church, he continued to serve that congregation for many years. In spite of his direct involvement and dedicated service in the growth of Seventh-day Adventism across Barbados, he remained a lay leader and operated his own business to support his family financially.

During the early 1950s, Greenidge continued to seek new opportunities to successfully plant another congregation just northeast of Bridgetown. Accordingly, when its congregation outgrew its original location, his efforts included expansion and relocation of the Dyrells Road SDA Church next to the Barbados SDA Secondary School at Dalkeith, St. Michael. The church was renamed the Ephesus SDA Church.

Greenidge married a leading Adventist registered nurse, Charlotte Mildred Haynes, on September 14, 1950. Together they continued to support the many church-based programs that they were involved with for decades. Although they were not officially employed by the local mission, they used their talents and many years of experience to effectively witness across the Barbadian society. This they did for more than 50 years (1920s-1980s) until they experienced declining health as they advanced in age.

In his twilight years in the early 1990s, Greenidge was featured in a widely circulated daily newspaper celebrating his 98<sup>th</sup> birthday, where he appeared in numerous photos surrounded by his children,

grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.<sup>7</sup> He passed to his rest on November 5, 1993, just weeks short of his 100th birthday. His funeral was held at the King Street SDA Church on November 16, 1993, followed by his burial at the Westbury Cemetery, St. Michael, Barbados.<sup>8</sup>

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## SOURCES

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## NOTES

1. "Eulogy" [Obituary], A Service of Praise and Thanksgiving for the Life of Christopher McClennan Greenidge, at the King Street SDA Church, Bridgetown, Barbados, November 1, 1993.
2. Ibid.
3. Glenn O. Phillips, *Seventh-day Adventists in Barbados: Over A Century of Adventism, 1884-1991* (Bridgetown, Barbados: Caribbean Graphics and Letchworth Ltd., 1991), 43.
4. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1924), 183.
5. William H. Lewis, "New Church Organized," *Field Gleanings*, September 1927, 3.
6. Colin Jordan and Alison Brome, "History of the Mile and a Quarter SDA Church," *The Milestone Magazine* 1, no. 1 (2007): 11.
7. "C. M. Celebrates 98th Birthday," *The Barbados Advocate*, December 23, 1992, 17.
8. "Eulogy."

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