

Chapter 7



PASCALL'S SMOKEHOUSE

Philippians 4:13

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Tantalizing odors from Mary's kitchen floated through her open windows and wafted into the air all the way up and down North Fremont Avenue. Each day brought a variety of new and interesting dishes that Mary added to her menus as she exercised that “taste bud” God had so richly bestowed upon her at birth. All who passed by her house on Fremont would linger a moment just to enjoy the scrumptious smells coming from her cooking. Some even knocked on her door knowing the generous person residing inside would never let a body go away with an empty belly. Others knew exactly when to drop in for a friendly visit by the aroma rising from the row of golden brown pies cooling on the window sill.

Consequently, Mary's reputation for being an outstanding chef soon spread throughout her community and beyond. As a result, she not only worked for the McJemisey family, but was also hired by some local attorneys to prepare food for their parties and special events. If Mary tasted a recipe once, it would appear on her menu the very next day as an outstanding, uniquely flavored dish. It would not be a replica of the original, but a new and improved version intended to please. When her “taste bud” identified the missing seasonings, the new creation would receive raving reviews from the attendees at the catered events. Without a “taste bud” like Mary possessed, copying her recipes was not even a faint possibility. Chef Mary simply used everything she had in her bones, stirred it into a bowl and created one blue ribbon recipe after another. Mary's “taste bud” was not trying to concoct dishes that were pretty to the eye, but belly growling, mouth watering, GOOD!

When Grant returned from traveling as a cook in the dining car for the Frisco Railroad, he looked forward to the culinary dishes he would be experiencing that had been created in Mary's kitchen. He would compliment his soul mate and devour every morsel with gusto.

Over a period of time, Grant would consistently and patiently offer words of encouragement for Mary to open a restaurant of her own. He pointed out the number of employers she was satisfying with all those catered meals and how appropriate the moment was for opening her own enterprise. By this time, Mary's reputation for creating the best recipes in Springfield was well known all over the community.

At the conclusion of an extremely satisfying meal one day, Grant commented, "Madam Queen, it is time. If we build it, they will come." The response from Mary that particular day was, "Oh, all right. Let's do it."

Then, with a feeling of promise in the air, the two soul mates started down another path in their journey of life together expecting it to be filled with great adventures.

Pascall's Smokehouse

Creating the barbecue sauce, which was to be the hallmark for the restaurant, took 3 months. The foundation for Mary's beginning came from tasting a really bad barbecue sauce and using her innate "taste bud" to turn it into a success. Mary commented, "Salt, seasonings, pepper, garlic! Just enough, not too much! I tasted, smelled, added and subtracted for 3 months until I got it just like I wanted it. When touching it to the tongue would make me go crazy, I knew it had been created. It was a winner!"

She continued, "Then the final test was having Grant to taste it on one of his weekend's home. When he gave it thumbs up, we were ready to begin our building. The rest of the menu would be easy because of the delicious recipes waiting in the wings. After purchasing pork, chicken and beef from a local vendor, we put our hallmark barbecue sauce to the test. We washed the meat real good in salt, pepper and vinegar to sterilize and tenderize it at the same time. Now honey, remember not to put the barbecue sauce on the meat until it is almost ready or the sugar will make it burn. We both gave the final product thumbs up! We had a winner!"

The two then determined their serving sizes, prices and were in business. The initial menu was as follows:

Pascall's Smokehouse Menu

**Barbecued Beef, Pork, and Chicken
Cold Slaw
Baked Beans
Potato Salad
Mary's Homemade Pie**

Time To Build

Once the land was purchased, Madam Queen and Grant worked along beside a local carpenter in building their dream. While Grant hauled the cement blocks in his jeep, Mary loaded all she could carry in the trunk of her car. Back and forth they went carrying those blocks like two busy bees. Once the small rectangular shaped exterior was up and protected from the elements, they started on the interior. The walls were carefully painted a clean vibrant white that could be daily sanitized with ease. Mary knew to keep everything in ship-shape condition so the local food inspector never worried or stayed long, unless he had decided to enjoy their delicious barbecue. An open pit was the focus inside where they would barbecue all the meat items on the menu. A large slicing machine was purchased to assure a perfect serving size for every sandwich order. All the counters were covered with a shiny metal that remained sparkling clean for the customers. In addition, three bar stools and six tables would accommodate any customers wishing to eat inside rather than purchase their meals from the quick drive through window. Glass serving plates and utensils were selected for the inside customers and to go boxes for drive through window orders.

Grand Opening

After working hard all summer, Pascall's Smokehouse was ready for the grand opening. Mary ran ads in the newspaper announcing the location, hours and date for opening. Her reputation in the community far exceeded the impact from the newspaper ad. As they opened the doors at 11:30 am on the first day, they were packed. Gaining control of her throbbing heart, Mary soon calmed her thoughts and was able to deal with the brisk rate of business that just kept coming in. Mary explained her confidence in the success of the business by stating, "Both young and old alike came to eat in my restaurant. I was across town from Grahams, but my cooking was so good that I was not afraid of competition. My

food was made with love and mighty tasty. I was born to know how to tickle the tongue with flavors.”

When asked if she ran out of food, she replied, “Oh no, honey. Since Grant and I were hearty eaters, we knew to order extra. And...if my customer asked for something I did not offer on the menu, it would become an item the very next day. We were there to please. Being congenial people, our intent was to always have satisfied customers. Even the slogan on our business cards sent that message with the words, PLEASE U BARBECUE WITH COME BACK SAUCE!”

It is well known the restaurant business requires hard work and extremely long hours. Thus, the doors at Pascall's Smokehouse would open at 11:30am and close at midnight. However, Mary's day would begin at 4:00am with pie baking at her home, located only a block away. Almost every morning as her lights in the kitchen went on; someone would be scratching on her window screen to get her attention. Again, due to the closeness of the community, everyone knew Mary's daily schedule. Therefore, the scratching fingers represented adults standing in line at her kitchen window waiting to order whole pies.

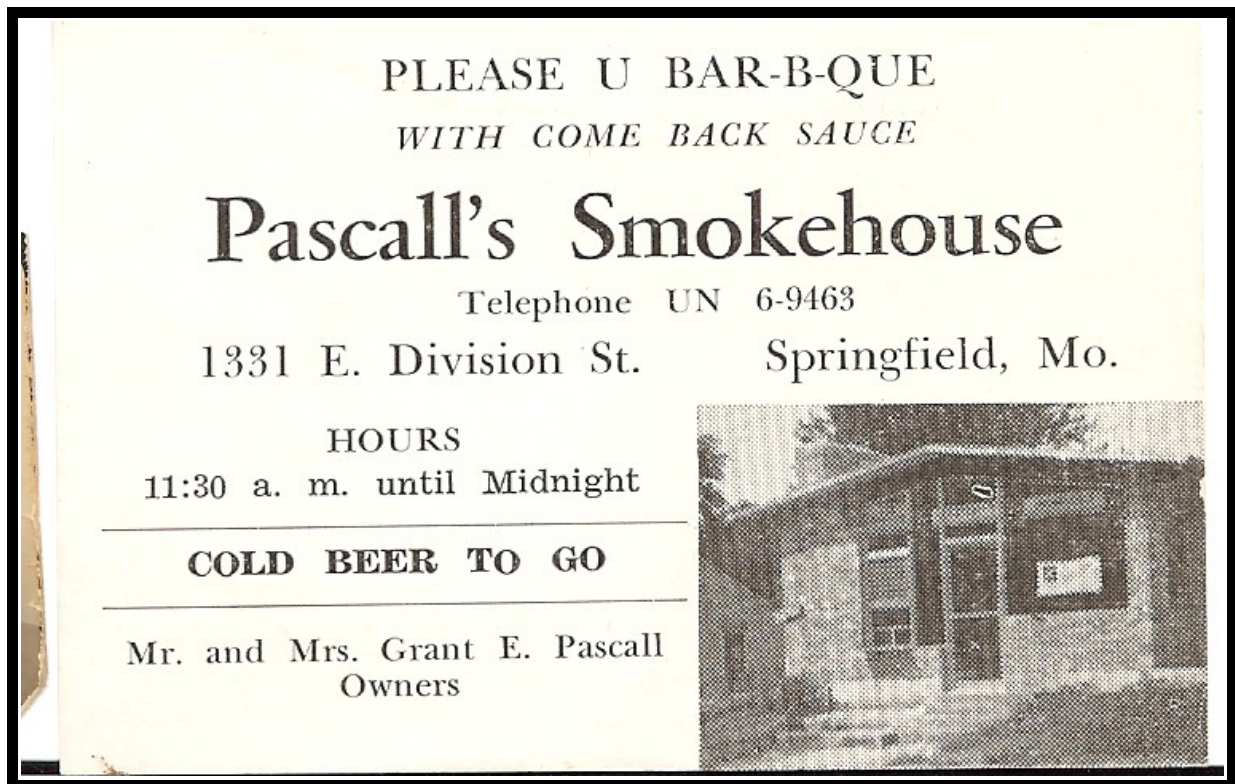
When asked if she made the pies from scratch, Mary smiled, pointing her finger, exclaiming, “Shut your mouth child! I would whip off 15 pies in just a short period of time with no problem.” She then clicked her tongue saying, “Your choice. Fruit or cream pies. But my banana cream pie was to die for! My pies were good because it was all about that tender crust. I would feel the way a crust should be by the touch of my fingers. That special crust would melt in your mouth. Uh huh, child. Lip smacking good!”

Welcome One And All

Pascall's Smokehouse became well known all over the community which meant a brisk daily business. One day, a man with white skin entered the front door asking, 'Do you serve people with my skin color?’

Mary quickly answered, “Why don't you put a sack over your head, touch your skin, then touch mine and see if there is any difference. One and all of God's children are welcome here.”

Before Mary closed her tired eyes each evening, she thanked God for the blessings He had bestowed on her as a successful restaurant owner. What Mary did not realize was the importance this fast paced restaurant would play in fulfilling God's destiny for her life. It was to not only be a place to serve delicious "Come Back Barbecue Sauce," to satisfied customers, but also generous helpings of love from the heart to any and all that entered her presence.



Business card from Pascall's Smokehouse
(Courtesy of Treshna Stephens, Mary's great niece)