A photograph of a red ball, possibly a beach ball, partially hidden in a dense field of tall, green grass. The grass is vibrant green and reaches up to the top of the frame. The red ball is located in the lower-left quadrant, mostly obscured by the blades of grass. The text is overlaid on the upper half of the image.

WITHOUT *LOVE*,  
YOU'RE JUST  
A BALL IN  
HIGH GRASS!

*Written By: Colene Smyer Hank*



## Chapter 1



# Ninety One And Still A Prayer Warrior

**Ecclesiastes 3:1-2**

**“There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven; a time to be born and a time to die.”**

One spring day when the birds were singing their melodious songs and the fragrance of flowers filled the air with sweet perfume; it seemed that nothing could be added to enrich the moment. Life was good, and all was well with my soul.

However, I would soon be reminded that all our earthly wonders pale in comparison to the blessings showered down by God from His heavenly realm. It was soon to be demonstrated that the beauty of His eternal love could touch the human heart unlike any priceless earthly treasure.

As my feet happily led me down the hallway of Christian Health Care, beautiful words of praise to God began floating through the air like soft golden sunlight sifting to the forest floor. The beauty of the humble, tenderly spoken words halted my journey and seemed to suspend my steps in midair. As the magnificent words continued, it was soon obvious that I was hearing a prayer filled with such great love and adoration for God that the effect was more intoxicating than any fragrance or sound spring could supply. The sweet, gentle words seemed to act as a magnet, and draw my steps toward their peaceful sound.

As I entered through the doorway in search of the rich voice that was so magnificently praising God, I immediately saw a sea of white heads bowed in quiet reverence to their Father. After listening carefully for a brief moment, it appeared that the sound was coming from a far corner of the room. There in a wheelchair sat a beautiful, kind faced lady with her head bowed so low that she had the appearance of kneeling at an altar. Her hair was neatly braided, with her hands folded gracefully in her lap. It was apparent that this kind old soul was accustomed to frequent conversations with her God. Obviously, those two had an intimate relationship, filled with rich, vibrant love.



## Page 2

After hearing her final amen, I slipped quietly out into the hallway, possessing a heart filled with such warmth, that I vowed to make the acquaintance of that dear prayer warrior in the very near future.

Fortunately, one week later, I located her in the hallway, smiling and visiting with her friends as they all sat together in their wheelchairs. Walking quickly to her I exclaimed, "You pray the most beautiful prayers I have ever heard in my life." Her immediate response was, "I ought to, I have been doing it all my life." She then remarked, "My name is Mary Josephine Pascall, I'm 91 years old, and am wondering why the good Lord has left me here so long."

After hearing Mary, the prayer warrior, sending her praises up to God that wonderful spring day, there was no doubt in my mind that even at age 91, she was still living the life long destiny that the Great Creator planned for her during her journey on this earth. It was also obvious to the writer that Mary Josephine Pascall's mission had a firm foundation built on the greatest gift of all; LOVE!

Over the course of many months, it has been a pleasure to watch Mary's loving relationship with her fellow residents and caregivers. Her love has penetrated so deeply that she has been described as having touched many lives during her stay in residential care. It was because of witnessing this repeated behavior, that a strong desire to put it into words for all to read, grew into this story of her life. I knew, beyond a shadow of doubt, that since she had dramatically touched so many lives while sitting in a wheelchair, the souls she enriched during her earlier walk with God would be unbelievable, and a story worth sharing with others. And....so it was!



(Mary Josephine Pascall, the prayer warrior)



## Chapter 2



# **HALOED MEMORIES OF YESTERDAY**

**Romans 12: 10-11**

**“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love, give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.”**

### **Tattered Memories**

**It has been said that your childhood is but a closet filled with both tattered and peaceful memories on which your tomorrows are formed. Unfortunately, at age three, Mary's closet already had the beginnings of her first tattered memory after suffering the loss of both parents to tuberculosis.**

**Mary's childhood that began in the country, surrounded by loving parents, one sister Elizabeth, and two special brothers, Orville and Charles, would soon be torn to shreds by the loss of their loving father. This untimely death caused her family to be uprooted as they searched for a more suitable home. Thus, Mary went from being a country girl to a “townie” almost overnight, as her family moved into a rental property owned by a lady named Ella Thompkins.**

**Not only was the family in a state of grief, but had to learn how to survive in town, a dramatic departure from country living. Perhaps because of Mary's young age, her mother lived in constant fear that she would be stricken with tuberculosis like her father.**

**Consequently, as a precaution, a cow that had just delivered a calf, was kept in the backyard to provide a steady stream of milk for little Mary. It was felt that fresh cow's milk offered a natural remedy for preventing tuberculosis.**

**Therefore, when Mary required feeding, her brothers would carry her outside for fresh milk. After cleansing the cows utter, they would gently turn Mary on her back and touch her little lips to the cow's teat. Mary would nurse until her empty belly was full of the fresh warm milk.**



When recalling this happening in her life, Mary remembers her mother teasingly saying that all that sucking on a cow's teat had made her mouth big. As Mary recounted this bizarre story, she wrinkled her nose at the thought of that awful tasting "warm" milk that she endured throughout her childhood. The thought of that warm milk offends her taste buds even today at age 91. Although she looks at this with a sense of humor now, she recognizes how challenging it must have been for every member of the family. Desperate times called for desperate action.

Just as the sad family of four had begun their new life in the city, and were still reeling from their tragic loss, Mary's mother contracted the same terrible disease and died a few short months later.

Unfortunately, the loss of both parents, the greatest tragedy to be faced by a loving family, had been placed into the laps of four of God's precious children. The sorrows of life that toll the hearts most solemn bell were ringing loudly within the four tattered little souls belonging to Mary, her sister Elizabeth, and her two brothers.

At this point, it is almost impossible for the human mind to comprehend the impact of loss placed on the shoulders of these four little children. Troubled, burdened, and blue, each little heart must have been beating to the rhythm only the weak, lonely and down trodden recognize all too well.

Thankfully, our lord that watches over even the tiniest sparrow both day and night never takes His eyes off His children, either. At this sad, hopeless moment in time, He already had a safe haven planned for little three year old Mary.

### Hope Filled Tomorrow

While on a trip to visit her sister in St. Louis, Ella Thompkins, Mary's landlord, heard a voice speak to her in a way that called her to full attention and propelled her into immediate action.

**"GO BACK AND GET YOUR BABY GIRL,"** was the command Ella heard that important day in another city, several miles away from little Mary. The voice caused her to recall a promise she made to Mary's mother concerning her baby daughter. It was just prior to her mother's passing that Ella had vowed to receive little Mary as her own daughter.



Therefore, it was because of obedience to her God, the decision by a total stranger named Ella Thompson was to forever change the life of a little girl named Mary. At that moment, the human connection that establishes the glow in one's heart was turned on for an orphan girl, feeling alone, hurt and lost. Without delay, wearing a mind filled with joy and purpose, Ella returned to Springfield and immediately claimed Mary as her very own baby girl. From that moment on, Mary was received by an adoptive mother who would shower such unconditional love on her that it would fill that lonely, frightened little girl's heart forever.

Also, Mary will tell you today that it was because of her birth mother's kindness that relatives around the area took in her brothers, Orville, Charles, and sister Elizabeth to rear as their very own children. Although all four siblings were separated and lived with different families, they were all still in close proximity. Because of living in the same community, Mary, her brothers and sister stayed in frequent contact and remained close all their lives.

Shortly after Mary's mother had passed away, Ella Thompson, Mary's new adoptive mother gave her a little rocking chair that found a home on the front porch of the house. Mary spent many hours rocking and talking to her birth mother, wishing for her return. One particular day, Ella happened by and heard Mary deep in conversation with her birth mother. Placing her hand gently on Mary's shoulder, she softly and tenderly said, "I'm your mother now." These comforting words must have been so monumental to Mary that she held tightly to that little rocking chair as a priceless keepsake for most of her life.

### Portrait Of Ella

Mary described her adoptive mother, Ella Massey Thompson, as being a mixture of Black and American Indian, possessing an enormously strong emotional make-up, and being blessed with a straight, thick beautiful head of hair. Ella's family members were slaves and owned by white southerners on the large plantations. Many of them were brought directly into this country in the hulls of the large slave ships. Recently, when Mary learned that run away slaves fled to live among the American Indians; it offered her greater insight into her mother's heritage.

Today, Mary describes her mother as possessing "Come-Upins". This word was assigned to her mother because of her strong, determined, tenacious spirit.



The fact that Ella Thompkins was able to read remains a mystery even today to Mary. Her mother recognized the need and used what ever printed articles were available, thus, teaching herself the act of reading. Given the fact that learning to read is a very difficult process, it is understandable Mary still marvels at this happening.

In spite of all the hardships and disadvantages Ella endured personally, her heart remained full to overflowing with love and generosity toward her fellowman. Color was not an issue for Ella. She believed firmly that racial hatred was built around fear and would ruin a person's life unless released. Everyone was welcome in her home; a lesson Mary learned well.

In order to make a living, Ella was hired to do washing and ironing for several wealthy families in the area. Her income for this difficult work was a whopping three to four dollars per week. Each day, Mary would accompany her mother to work and wait until the laundry was completed. While her mother worked, Mary would play with the family's children and be included in all activities. She would even accompany the family members as they rode in a horse drawn buggy to attend social functions. Both Mary and her mother were served lunch at the table with the family. At the end of the day, mother and daughter would pay three cents to travel back home by riding the local street car.

After returning home around 5:00 PM, Mary and her mother would have their evening meal and then sit by the lamp and read magazines that had been given to them by friends. Mary loved sitting on the floor at her mother's feet as they shared this peaceful time together.

In spite of Ella's meager income, she was labeled as a smart, savvy business woman because she was always finding a way to improve her cash flow. As a result of saving her hard earned money, she started buying the empty lots all around her little home. When she had purchased a total of three lots, she hired a carpenter for ten dollars per week to build homes on each one to be used as rental properties. At the completion of this project, she had added twenty one dollars to her monthly income. Using this approach, she eventually owned a total of 7 homes purchased by funds from her job of washing and ironing for others.

Since Ella held such a strong Christian belief, she could be found worshiping in church every Sunday. Mary recalls her mother having a beautiful, strong soprano

voice that would carry for miles. She would sing her favorite song, “In the Garden” with such emotion that those around would feel truly blessed. Her singing was just another vivid example of the important space Ella filled in the minds and hearts of those living in the community. Her personality was always as big as life itself.

### Grandmother Arrives

Due to failing health, Ella's mother, Grandmother Moore who was called Mama by Mary, came to live with them. Mary adored this kind older lady and helped Ella with her much needed care. On day, Grandmother Moore noticed that her daughter Ella, in an effort to raise Mary properly, was disciplining her in too harsh a manner. She had been accustomed to brushing Mary's little legs with keen switches. As a result, Grandmother Moore boldly stated, “Don't you be spanking that baby. Listen to what she is telling you. Check to see if she is telling you the truth instead of switching her without reason.”

Consequently, from that day forward, the keen switches were thrown away and calm was restored. Mary does not hold any ill feelings against her mother because, in her mind, her mother thought she was bringing her up the right way. Her mother always loved her unconditionally, and having no children of her own, desired to improve.

When Grandmother Moore was ready to depart this earth, Mary was weeping loudly beside her bed. Grandmother opened her eyes and said, “Peeny Baby, you should not work so hard at this!” She then closed her eyes and took her last breath. This was her way of teaching Mary about death. She was letting her know they would not be lost from each other forever, but simply separated for awhile. After that, Mary chose to never weep at funerals, no matter how sad she felt. She made the decision to go to a private spot and grieve in her own way.

When Mary was just a little girl, she remembers how, not only Grandmother Moore, but Ella's entire family showed their love for her. Mary indicated that she must have been like a little strange dog they loved to play with and invite to their homes. She remembers visiting her cousins in Kansas City for extended vacations. Once, a lady and a teacher that lived next door to her cousins loved her so much they tried to take her away from Ella. They were so infatuated with Mary they showered her with presents, dresses, and excursions to Swope Park.



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**That behavior brought a protective Ella to Kansas City in a big hurry. No one was about to take her baby out of her loving arms!**



**Street car like Mary would have ridden on with her mother.  
(Courtesy of The History Museum for Springfield-Greene County)**



**Nellie Price, Mary's biological mother, standing in back.  
(Courtesy of Treshna Stephens, Mary's great niece)**



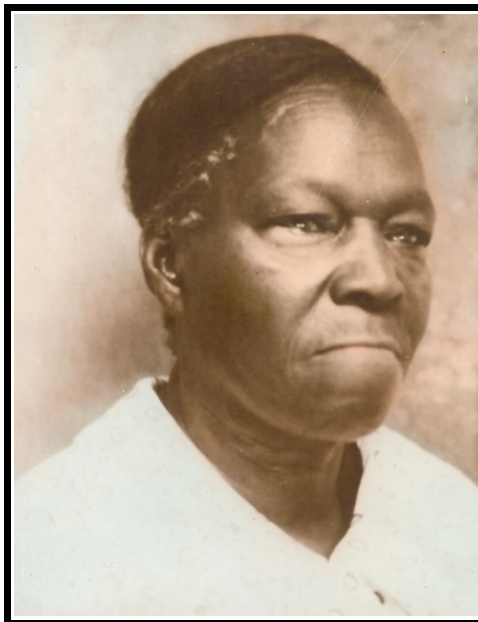
**Baby Mary on right with a cousin.  
(Courtesy of Treshna Stephens, Mary's great niece)**

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**Orville Price, Mary's brother with wife and children. Charles, Mary's other brother deceased.  
(Courtesy of Treshna Stephens, Mary's great niece)**



**Ella Thompkins, Mary's adoptive mother.**



**Grandmother Billings Moore, Ella's mother  
(Courtesy of Treshna Stephens, Mary's great niece.)**

## Chapter 3



# THE COLOR OF LOVE

Acts 10: 34

Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear Him and do what is right.”

### New Beginnings

The street car that carried three year old Mary and her adoptive mother Ella to work everyday passed homes with lights agleam, and whose dark silhouettes spoke of manicured perfection. As the street car windows framed one stately home after another, Mary's little face was pasted against the glass soaking in their awesome beauty. This picturesque landscape seemed worlds apart from the stop where her journey began each day. Although this prestigious setting was but a few blocks from Mary's neighborhood, the lifestyles of its occupants were worlds apart from her own. Strange that all the residents were human beings residing in God's vast universe, living in the same city, yet treated unequally because of structure and regulations brought about by segregation. Mary Josephine Pascall was a little girl feeling the chill of life's coldest moment due to the dark side of human behavior, brought on by the iniquity that lies deep within the heart.

It is said that a dream must precede each deed of greatness before entering as magnificent concepts within the windows of our minds. How then was it possible for a little girl born with skin declared as an unacceptable color to have a song of hope in her heart, or possess faith in the rightness of things to come?

Perhaps it was because our God made Mary so uniquely different that she thanked Him everyday for the privilege of living. He had given her a strong mind for learning, focused eyes to see His vision, sharp ears to hear His calling, and a gentle heart for loving others. These combined qualities offered Mary the potential for not only surviving the restrictions of her environment, but living up to her tremendous abilities.



Possibly, Psalm 31: 7 best exemplifies Mary's faith in the rightness of things to come through the following words:

**“I will be glad and rejoice in Your love for You saw my affliction and knew the anguish of my soul. You have not handed me over to the enemy but have set my feet in a spacious place.”**

### **Fun, Games, And Another Tattered Memory**

Everyone loved sparkling, happy Mary, who was so filled with joy that she attracted playmates like flies to honey. Her friends would gather to play hide and seek, jump rope or just shoot marbles to pass the time together. When Mary was a little older, her friends were invited to her basement for entertainment. Only one friend at a time was allowed to visit. She fondly remembers making clothes for paper dolls as well as cooking on the old wood burning stove with her friends Fannie Mae and Farrel.

When Mary was alone, she would read whatever printed material was available. Although her family could not afford newspapers, others would pass their copies around to the various members of the community. What a special time for Mary! She recalls spending many hours trying to read the newspapers that were too advanced for her level. Mary's love for reading was a value that was passed along by her adoptive mother, Ella.

Given all these treasured moments, it appeared that Mary's life was just settling down into a happy natural rhythm when a dark cloud appeared over her family. Unfortunately, Mary lost her step father, which brought another period of grief for her loved ones to endure. However, with the enormous inner strength and faith in God that Ella possessed, balance was soon restored to the home.

Since it was common for the members of Mary's community to visit the surrounding local churches, Ella soon met and married a man who lived in the nearby country town called Hartville. This union provided little Mary, then age 6, with a kind and loving step father that she still remembers with fondness.

### **Her Walk With God Begins**

At age 4, Mary was taken to Washington Avenue Baptist Church where she began her walk with God. Although a large pot bellied stove provided heat for those

gathered, most of the sparks that ignited the air came from the old spirituals that were sung. Even today, Mary's heart skips a beat when she describes the joy and exuberance shown as the congregation praised God in song. As the choir that sat on the platform facing the worshipers raised their hands and swayed at the sound of the first note, the entire church, as if on cue, joined them in making a joyful noise unto the Lord. No song could ever compare to Mary's favorite hymn, "What A Friend We Have In Jesus," which brought the house down every time. Even today, it is amusing to stand behind 91 year old Mary sitting in her wheel chair and observe the bounce in her braid when this hymn is sung. She would probably come right out of that wheelchair if a choir presented an old fashioned spiritual rendition of it. She will say today, "Honey, we knew how to sing to God. Nothing can ever come close to the way we sang that song. Oh, how I miss that music."

"What A Friend We Have In Jesus" is symbolic of the friendship Mary developed with her Lord that not only strengthened over time, but proved to be the solid rock on which she has stood all her life. She found her Savior to be an anchor; a peaceful and lasting place for her heart.

Young Mary fell hopelessly in love with music and made a contribution to those spirituals using her beautiful alto voice. Since Ella had a magnificent, voluminous soprano voice, her contribution added great depth to the moving of the Spirit at each service. It was due to her appreciation of music that she hired a piano teacher at a cost of fifty cents per month to give Mary weekly lessons. As a result, Mary became an accomplished pianist and later played for the choir and soloists in the community.

Once the emotionally sung spirituals stirred up the congregation, the old Baptist preacher took it on home. As he preached hell, fire and brimstone to the faithful church goers, Mary remembers several people talking in tongues and shouting. This was that old time religion that was filled to the brim as a display of love for God. History will state that it was during a time of praise to God that the hearts of black slaves on the plantations experienced a sense of freedom and felt their spirits soar like a bird as the Lord provided the wind beneath their wings. Hallelujah! I am free! I am free for a moment!

### Holiday Time

Christmas and Easter meant special programs at church where the congregation presented plays and recited speeches about the Lord. Easter was Mary's favorite religious holiday. As she grew in her faith, the thought of how Jesus chose to die for her sins first brought a bitter taste due to the suffering He endured, followed by an overpowering joy to her soul.

She also recalls getting a new outfit in the spring to wear at Easter service, dying and hunting eggs in glorious colors, and playing with all the visiting children that came to her home. Her mother, Ella, always set several extra tables for all the unexpected but welcome guests that would be sure to arrive for a meal and fellowship. Above all, Mary looked forward to the arrival of her brothers and sister who always spent the holidays at Ella's home. It offered the four children an opportunity to make up for lost time as they shared their hopes and dreams with one another.

Christmas was the time in Mary's family when everything was centered on the birth of Jesus as the reason for the season. The celebration revolved totally around the church as a time to sing beautiful carols in honor of our Savior's birth. One could only imagine a Happy Jesus listening and watching the Washington Avenue Baptist Church congregation swaying and clapping to all the old familiar carols. The Bible says to make a joyful noise unto the Lord, and they responded in kind. What a birthday party for our Savior!

At home, a beautiful cedar scented tree decorated with real candles on each bough was placed as the centerpiece of the room. Because of the threat of fire, Christmas morning was the one and only big moment when the candles would be lighted. Mary recalls vividly how the glow from the candles would flicker over the faces of her family, filling each grateful heart with joy and peace. Mary's little heart would beat faster when it came time to receive her gift. She knew she would be eating fruit and nuts, for sure. If another present was under the tree with her name on it, the contents would be a necessity such as shoes or clothing. Mary would always cross her fingers in hopes that the wrapping paper would not contain that AWFUL long underwear! How she hated to wear that long, scratchy covering on her body.



Church was so important in Mary's life that it became a place where her face could always be seen. Every Sunday, she looked forward to seeing her brothers, Orville and Charles because she knew the afternoon would be spent walking together. Their special time of fellowship was filled with jolly conversation and laughter as they walked to the airport and back. Mary will laughingly tell you that her brothers sometimes taught her mischievous behavior that occasionally got her into a heap of trouble with her mother.

When Mary remembers how she was taught to view the worth of money, it, too, was connected directly to the church. Each week as she was given one dime, she was instructed by Ella that the first half of it was to be placed into the collection plate at Sunday School before claiming the remainder for herself. As a result, of this teaching, Mary recognized the importance of earning money but never let it control her life.

At the Washington Avenue Baptist Church, a group called the Missionary Society played an active role in teaching others, including Mary, how to care for the younger children. Mary participated in this group most of her life and supported it later by becoming president.

### Segregation Restrictions

Since segregation limited people of color on the selection of places to frequent for entertainment, both the church and the school became the centers of activity for fellowship. One vivid example of the restrictions Mary and her community faced was choices of movie theaters. Landers Theater was the only one people of color were allowed to attend. Upon arrival, they were to purchase a ticket, enter through a side door, and climb all the way to the third balcony, out of sight to the white folks below. Therefore, members of Mary's community were closely acquainted and offered love and support to each other on a daily basis. It was such a unified group that every member accepted the responsibility of caring for the young and old alike.

### School Bells And Skin Color

Mary attended Old Lincoln School which was totally segregated, from grade one through six. She was a very bright student and looked forward to each day with sunshine and happiness. In addition, the fact that her brothers, Orville, Charles, and sister Elizabeth were also students there made Mary enormously happy.

Although Mary had found a loving home with Ella Thompkins as her adoptive mother, her sister and two brothers were not quite as fortunate. Consequently, Mary knew that her siblings were sent to school on most days without an adequate lunch. Everyday, Mary worried so much about her brothers and sister that she watched carefully as her mother packed her own bag, making certain enough food was included for all four of them. She would patiently assist her mother in loading enough cookies, meatloaf sandwiches, and milk to give all four of them full bellies. Under no circumstance would she be well fed at noon if her brothers and sister were to go hungry. She would stomp her foot and say, "If they go hungry, I go hungry." Therefore, little Mary could be seen walking down the street to school weighted down with an enormous lunch bag.

One day when Mary went to school, the atmosphere was buzzing with excitement because the students had learned that a new Lincoln School would be built and ready by the time she was due to enter seventh grade. As promised, Mary approached her seventh year walking toward the school with star struck eyes, possessing an excitement that had her heart pounding. She described the larger rooms filled with new furniture like being in heaven. The home economics room was sparkling with beautiful kitchen appliances and ready for instruction on cooking, which all girls were required to attend for a time of four years. Right next door, another room housed all the equipment necessary to meet the needs for instructing the young ladies in four years of sewing classes, as well. In spite of these two beautiful new rooms, and outstanding grades, Mary still loved English more than any subject.

Competitive Sports at Lincoln School required heavy travel for the athletes due to the restrictions of segregation. The teams were only allowed to compete with other schools of color which meant traveling several miles to Lincoln Schools in surrounding towns. Basketball was played at Lincoln School, while football games were held at the Drury College Stadium.

When Mary described her school attire, she broke into gurgling laughter, remembering her own struggles in this department. The style was for girls to wear their hair in braids with clothes pins fastened to each like berets. Of course wearing pants was not even a question, which meant that girls wore dresses or skirts, long cotton stockings, bloomers and shoes or boots that tied. Due to Ella's fear that Mary might be in danger of contracting tuberculosis, she was made to wear long handled underwear beneath her clothes. Mary loudly exclaimed, "You

heard me right! I was the only girl whose mother enforced the long underwear rule! I stood out like a sore thumb, was teased, and terribly embarrassed. Oh, how I hated that long, scratchy underwear that had the horrible button opening in the seat. That old underwear would come down all the way to my shoes. Stuffing the legs in my shoes under my socks to hide them, was a tedious, daily ritual from winter until spring.”

Mary continued on with passion by firmly stating, “One day, I reached my limit and slipped down to the basement level of the school when no one was watching. Working like lightning, I rolled those old scratchy legs up as high as possible so they would not show. Unfortunately, a while later, my mother entered the school unexpectedly and caught me dead to rights, without any possible excuses to dodge trouble. Having been caught red handed by my strong willed mother, I expected the wrath to descend like a bad odor. Instead, I received the shock of my life when I heard the words that came out of her mouth.”

Ella's strong voice sounded electric and disgusted as she loudly stated, “If this is what you are going to do, I just won't buy you anymore long handled underwear. It is just a waste of hard earned money!”

Mary laughed out loud and said, “Even the Washington Avenue Baptist Church choir in all its glory could have never sung a hymn that was more precious to my ears. Free! I was free at last from that terrible, ugly, scratchy, awful long handled underwear! Praise the Lord!”

### Prom Dates

The arrival of spring brought the usual junior and senior proms to Lincoln School, causing a flurry of activity for all the students. This meant a time of decorating and fussing over just the right outfit. Mary recalls her junior prom dress as being given to Ella by one of her employers. It was made of blue chiffon, had a short skirt, and felt like a cloud when she tried it on. However, the long gown her mother purchased in honor of the senior prom was her favorite. Although Mary felt beautiful and vibrant in it, her date arrived without any means of transportation, which meant that Mary was required to plod awkwardly along the sidewalk to and from the prom. She remarked that it was not a pretty sight to watch, but lived to tell about it.



When hearing this paragraph read aloud, Mary laughed and stated, “And that's not the end of the story. My old prom date, now age 89, called me yesterday and told me he had always loved me and had regretted not kissing me goodnight. Now that's carrying a torch, honey!”

### Mary's Beaus

Mary has been described as a tall, thin, beautiful young lady that certainly did not escape the eyes of the young boys in her community. She was never at a loss for dates. However, Ella did not allow her to keep mixed company unless at home under her watchful eye. When recalling the young man that was secretly her heart throb, she shook her head in disbelief at herself and remarked, “I had one boy that I like real well, but was too full of the devil to let him know. He eventually moved to Texas. Too late, because he is dead, now!”

### Tattered Memory

Although Lincoln School was segregated, it was sometimes necessary to travel to Central High School for literature and library work. Although the practice of this kind of trip was restricted at first, Mary was among a group that was allowed to take part in the program. It was on one of these trips that racial prejudice reared its ugly head. Mary was deeply saddened by hurtful remarks and gestures displayed toward her by others at the school. When recounting these uncomfortable moments, pain suddenly swept over her face like a dark wave on the ocean, totally void of light. As her eyes moistened, she sat quietly for a bit and then said, “It was as if they thought the color of my skin would rub off on their own.” When asked what she wanted to be when she grew up, Mary quietly replied, “I wanted so much to be a doctor. In preparation, I completed all the necessary classes in chemistry and biology. However, a lack of finances prevented me from starting on that journey.”

### We Shall Overcome

In 1935, Mary Josephine Pascall graduated from Lincoln High School as valedictorian of her class. Standing proudly in her cap and gown, she received the highest honor the school could bestow upon a student for such outstanding achievement. How proud her mother must have felt as she watched her daughter

walk across the platform to receive her diploma. Is there any greater thrill for a parent than to hear the voice of her child delivering the commencement speech as a reward for a life well lived? In spite of all the hardships, grief, and road blocks that entered the life of Mary Josephine Pascall, her faith in the rightness of things to come resulted in the ultimate success for a little girl orphaned and alone at age three.

Once again, Ella's belief that all men are created equal and are to be respected, brought Mary's life a new perspective. In fact, her mother felt so strongly about this point that no racial remarks were allowed in her home at anytime. Mary knew that the consequence would be a sound spanking if the rule was ever broken. Everyone, no matter the color of skin or race, was welcome in the Ella Thompkins home.

This wise adoptive mother had recognized early on that small seeds of hate fertilized by ignorance, racial prejudice, rudeness, and an absence of God's love would grow into a horrendous monster that would set up such a path of destruction that it would decay the very fiber of the human race.

Consequently, over the years, Mary experienced a stream of friends of every race and color knocking at the door of her home. One and all were invited to eat at the table with Mary and her family. It was at this crossroad in life that Mary was taught to be of service to her fellowman. Ella's tender heart held a special place for young children, a love that was transferred directly into Mary's entire being.

Food and laughter were always plentiful for family, friends and strangers alike. She dearly treasured the adult visitors spoiling her, and remembers how wonderful it was to have their children to be her playmates at these gatherings. Mary recalls life to be different when she was a girl because people cared for each other and had plenty to share. God's table, that welcomed all His children, was always full to overflowing with His blessings. Therefore, it was this example of respect for others along with an open door policy that provided Mary with the pattern she would faithfully follow all her life. Charity was ingrained into a young life that would serve as a model of behavior for years to come. Mary's learned behavior would provide a gift to be passed on to the future generations of God's people.

Today, when Mary expresses her opinions on race, she will first recall the history of the United States as it relates to all people. She will state that the American Indian was native to this country and all the rest of us are transients. She will add that some of us migrated here, while others of us were brought in as slaves. Finally, in a show of great humor, Mary will say, “I’m an IBW, meaning Indian, Black and White. My adoptive mother was a BI, (both Black and Indian), and had skin as black as tar.”

In her dramatic alto voice, she continued, “We have different countries and different colors of skin. Honey, when you start rotting, you rot the same way. You turn to ashes. The Bible states “Dust thou art and to dust thou shalt return.” All I want is for my spirit to be happy.”

In summary, the measure of a life well lived is not determined in Mary's mind by the color of hair or skin, but by the depth and endless flow of love for all God's precious children; a lesson Mary internalized and practices even today at age 91.

### PICTURES FOR CHAPTER 3



Ella washed and Ironed for families along this picturesque street.  
(Courtesy of The History Museum for Springfield-Greene County.)



**Washington Avenue Baptist that Mary attended is now a historical building located near the Campus of Drury College.**



**Historic Landers Theater where people of color could attend movies as seen in 2009.**



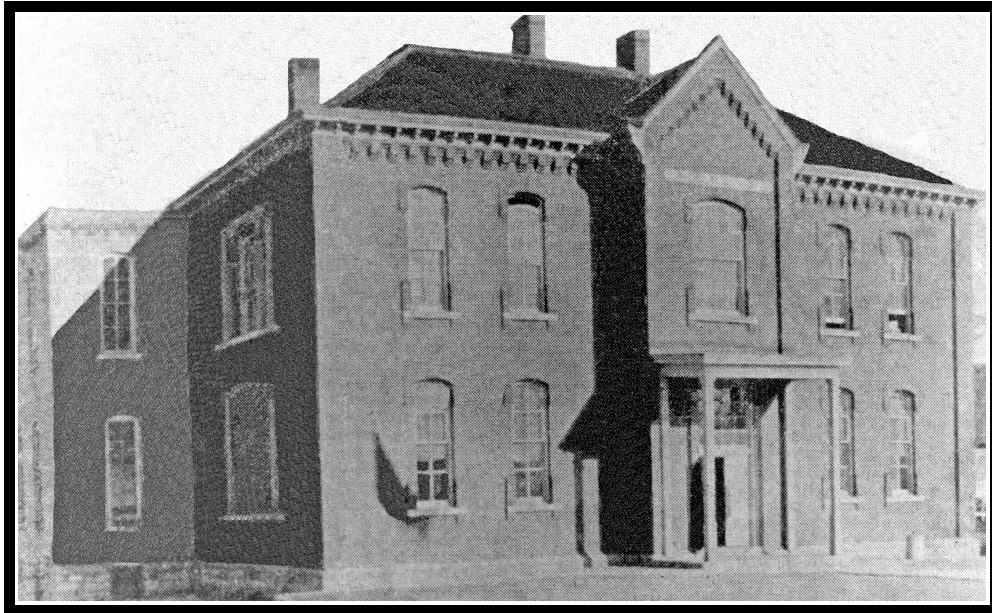


**Christmas tree as it would have appeared at Mary's home during childhood.  
( Courtesy of The History Museum for Springfield-Greene County)**



**Sunday school class in front of Washington Avenue Baptist Church old location.  
(Courtesy of The History Museum for Springfield Greene-County)**





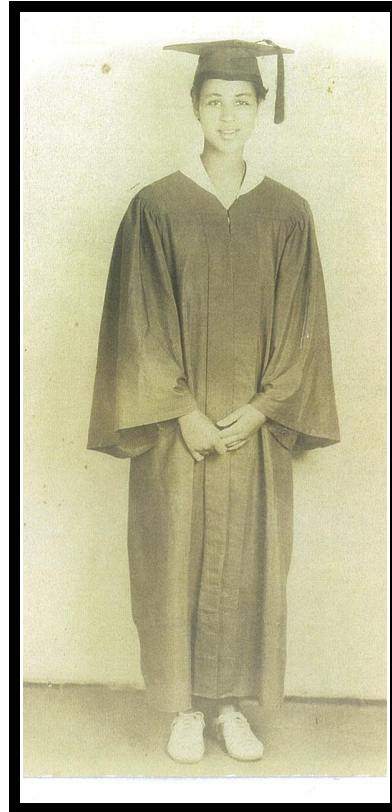
**Old Lincoln School (Segregated) where Mary attended grades 1-6.  
(Courtesy of The History Museum for Springfield-Greene County)**



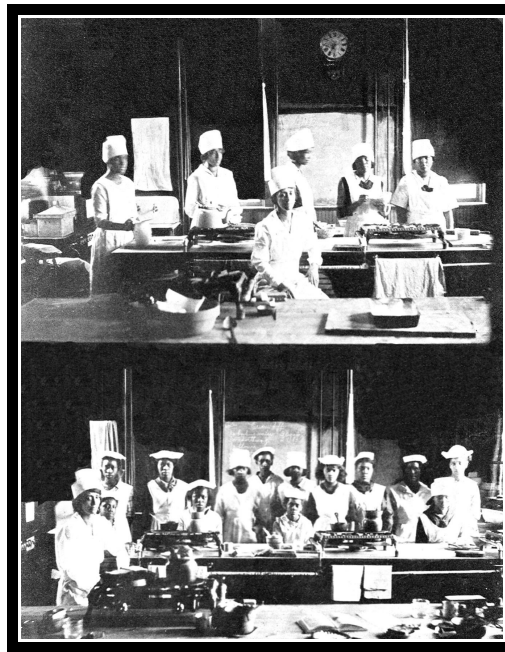
**New Lincoln School now located on Ozarks Technical College Campus**



**Mary at age 10.**  
(Courtesy of Treshna Stephens)



**Mary Josephine Pascall, Valedictorian 1935**  
(Courtesy of Homer Boyd)



**Cooking and sewing classes as seen in New Lincoln School (Segregated)**  
(Courtesy of The History Museum for Springfield-Greene County)

## Chapter 4



### **SILVER LINING IN THE PARK**

**Galatians 3:28**

**“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”**

#### **Silver Springs Park**

**Parks are places where friends can come and go, be merry, rejoice, and are never far apart in spirit. What better scene to rest the soul than on a grassy knoll, looking out across the vale. They are reunion spots where needy souls gather to laugh, love and share each others thoughts and dreams. And, most of all, they are settings where friends can talk and cry while reminiscing over lovely times gone by. In the recesses of the heart, parks serve as peaceful reminders of splendid moments that are counted as God's blessings, and will have a reserved place in our hearts until the good Lord calls us home.**

**For every season, there are poignant hours that are known as life's richest, most precious memories created in parks everywhere. These precious memories are treasured in our mellow years when we call upon the spirits golden bounty days for comfort during our idle hours. Without parks, yesterday would be lost forever, causing restless yearnings within our souls. As we revisit the seasons of our lives, we will find that a variety of parks in dramatic locations have provided the backdrop for many monumental celebrations.**

**Although little Mary, due to her skin color, had only one park she was allowed to frequent, the memories of her childhood created there are as fresh in her mind today as a spring breeze after a gentle rain shower. Silver Springs Park was a special place near her home where she listened to the noisy chatter of squirrels in graceful trees; a place that served as the foundation for her first memory of childhood. The sparkling water of Jordan Creek that flowed merrily through it caused Mary to anticipate the excitement of catching crawdads, fishing, or lazily**

skipping rocks creating ripples that traveled in circles across its surface. Its muddy banks felt squishy and soft under her little bottom as she sat for hours using its rich soil to create imaginary, tasty pies and elegant castles. Although it sometimes flooded, she would wait a bit and then return to its banks once again.

When the rays from the sun provided warmth to the cool spring air, Mary's favorite swing relentlessly beckoned her company in the park. Oh, how she loved to soar through the air like the birds that flitted overhead, or gaze at the soft wispy, floating clouds whose shapes changed endlessly. The imaginary animals she visualized in those beautiful clouds were enchanting as they came to life in her mind. She would deeply breathe in the fresh clean morning air that tickled her nose and whistled through her hair as her swing climbed higher and higher.

### Reunions In The Park

Silver Springs Park was a gathering place for reunions among friends and family members. Its quiet tranquility and soft glow would leap to life like a busy city awakening at the beginning of a new day when street peddlers started to sell their wares. Friends and relatives would congregate from near and far to celebrate a proud legacy, while creating lively memories for their tomorrows.

As the loved ones gathered, arms were laden with baskets of food that had been carefully packed with old time favorites. The air was filled with the savory odor of meat grilling on an open fire that tantalized taste buds as it was barbecued to perfection. As cloths were spread on the tables and the baskets unpacked, friends' arms were hugging each other with gusto while jokes and teasing laughter filled the air. The tables were groaning under the weight of deviled eggs, savory potato salad, biscuits baked to a golden brown, accompanied by homemade jelly and churned yellow butter, crispy fried chicken, sweet pickles, spicy baked beans, with freshly baked fruit and sweet potato pies waiting impatiently in the baskets for the final, "too full but I'm gonna have some anyway," sweet ending. As Mary would say, "Shut my mouth, child! That was good eatin!"

Possessing stomachs that were bulging and complaining, the noisy chatter subsided for just a bit before the singing and shouting started. The old spirituals were sung with such rhythm and movement that sweet old and young hearts in

attendance would always cherish this reunion as the best ever. However, with out doubt, the attendees would leave expecting next year's reunion to far exceed this grandiose celebration. As the old Baptist preacher would say, "Yes suh! Now that's the truth, I say!"

### Fun And Dancing In The Park

Other than attending church activities, Silver Springs Park was the place everyone always went. Mary will quickly let you know that her people simply were not invited anywhere else. Segregation set the standard by which Mary's style of living was governed. Other parks, movie theaters, restaurants, schools, and entire neighborhoods were simply off limits for people of color. Mary could not drink from the same fountain or share public restrooms with white folks, either. All this shameful, recorded history of racial prejudice was a part of America's landscape and greatly shaped Mary's childhood.

As a result, Silver Springs park became the central hub of entertainment for her entire community. Mary recalls with great fondness the first beauty contests where contestants wore an array of fashionable bathing suits and paraded around in front of judges. Not only was she asked to judge this big event, but took pride in the fact that she observed not only the physical appearance of each girl, but also the aura and happiness in her eyes.

Later on when a new modern recreational facility was built as the focal point of the park, it opened up the potential for year round entertainment. When Mary told about ballroom dancing being one of the additions on the calendar of events to the community, her face beamed with delight remembering the thrill of it all. Mary Josephine Pascall was well known to have dancing feet. She had learned to dance by watching her uncle and his girlfriend, and would then practice in private, allowing her natural rhythm to set her eager feet into motion.

Mary exclaimed, "Oh, honey! How I loved to ballroom dance! At the sound of the first musical note, I was ready to waltz, two step, Charleston and even do the Cha-cha. Believe it or not, I learned to do the Charleston by dancing with the foot of my bed. I was truly a born dancer."

She continued, "I can still feel the movement of the air gently kissing my flushed cheeks as I floated on graceful feet with my eyes closed." The beautiful music along with each carefully selected dress created a romantic atmosphere and a perfect evening for a free spirited girl like Mary. Her happy heart was lifted and transformed into a world of glitz and glamor at least for an evening.

When Mary compares ballroom dancing enjoyed during her youth with that shown on TV today, she shakes her head in disbelief. She will remark, "They kick their legs out those slits in the sides of their skimpy outfits and do a lot of jerking around. And, there's not enough material in those costumes they wear to make a handkerchief. Their movements are harder and more like an athlete as compared to our soft, floating romantic steps."

As Mary described her remembrance of a time when dancing feet caused her to float on the clouds with her soul lost in the melody and rhythm of the musical notes, it was obvious Silver Springs Park had been the setting for a silver lining in her life for at least a few magical moments. Today, at age 91, Mary will tell you that those dancing feet of hers were still floating to the music at the young old age of 80.

### Neighborhood Watch

Misbehaving in Silver Springs Park or anywhere else in Mary's little world was not even remotely a possibility. There were simply too many eyes watching her every move. Aunts, uncles, and friends of Ella Thompkins had taken on the responsibility of raising Mary with great determination and vigilance. It was due to their involvement that Mary would be taken to task by Ella Thompkins, her adoptive mother, for any unbecoming behavior. When remembering all these happenings in her life, she smiled and exclaimed, "My mother lived on my rear end!"

Without doubt, Mary knew that she would be soundly spanked due to any kind of misbehavior. However, she does have the opinion that her mother's chosen punishment was never done out of anger or with harshness of action. She will state that Ella Thompkins loved her as much or more than if she had been born to her naturally.



### Love Is In The Air

Silver Springs Park seemed to provide the background for many of the major decisions in Mary's life. The freedom she felt while swinging lasted a lifetime for Mary, and was to be the place where she met her soul mate. One day, as she was enjoying the thrill of swinging in the clouds after a busy schedule of caring for families and sick people, a handsome young man named Grant Edward Pascall took notice. He couldn't take his eyes off this pretty young woman who was totally engrossed in her own thoughts as she flew through the air. It was obvious to him that this young lady experienced a great thrill in swinging as high as possible.

Therefore, he knew the best way to approach Mary was with the offer of a plan to increase the height of her climb in the swing. This cunning boy named Grant talked her into letting him stand up in the swing beside her and pump with all his might. He guaranteed that she would soar to a higher level than ever before.

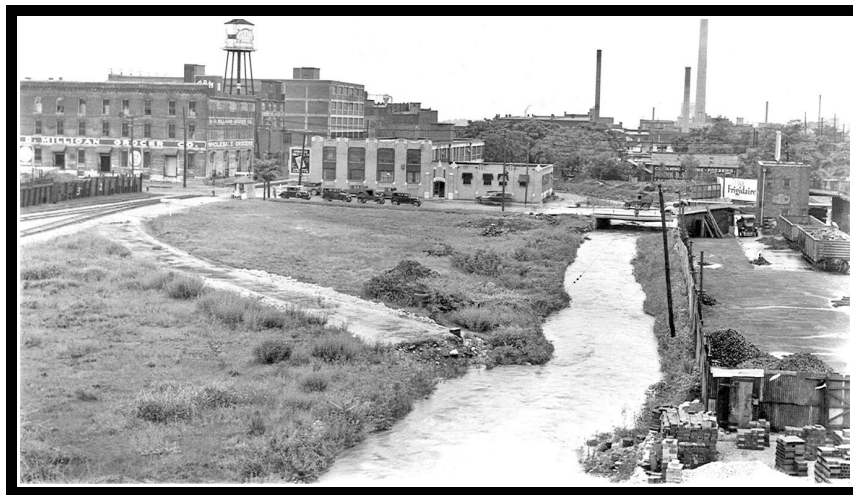
Thus, it took only a little time of sharing that swing together for Grant Edward Pascall to take a real shine to happy, pretty Mary. He also quickly realized that if he desired to see her, it would be necessary for him to attend church, where Mary spent most of her time. Since Grant had a job with the Frisco Railroad that kept him on the move, sparking with Mary usually occurred at holiday time.

All these challenges did not prevent the two young people from getting closer and closer to the altar. When Grant came to town, they made the most of their time together by meeting in the park or going to the fair. Mary will tell you they were "crazy in love" with each other and were married by the Justice of the Peace in 1943; a union that lasted for 61 years.

Mary and Grant were together for only a short time when the drums of war called a madly in love young husband to a foreign land to defend his country. This represented another challenge in the life of the newly married Mrs. Mary Josephine Pascall. Since her mother, Ella Thompkins, had taught her how to land gracefully on her feet in all circumstances, Mary would soon figure out what exciting adventure would fill her time as she waited on the man of her dreams to come home.



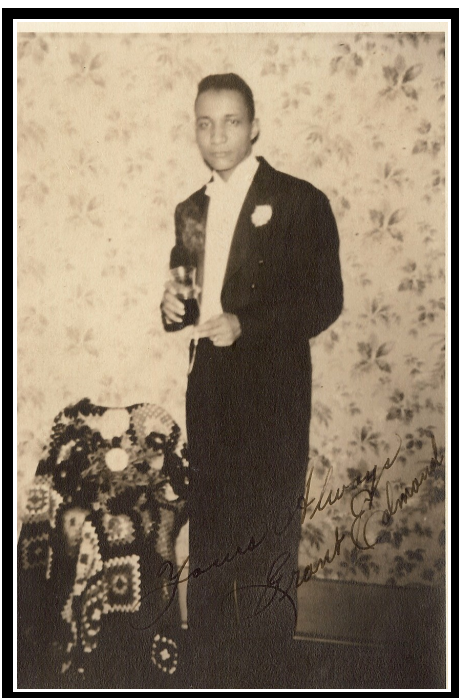
**Words in a Thursday morning addition of newspaper show the ugliness of segregation.**  
(Courtesy of The History Museum for Springfield—Greene County)



**Jordan Creek floods its banks.**  
(Courtesy of The History Museum for Springfield—Greene County)



**Example of ballroom dancing attire worn by Mary and her friends.  
(Courtesy of The History Museum for Springfield—Greene County)**



**Grant Pascall ready to ballroom dance.  
(Courtesy of Treshna Stephens)**



**Grant and Mary Pascall (Newly Married)  
(Courtesy of Treshna Stephens)**

## Chapter 5



# DOWN COUNTRY ROADS

Psalm 67: 7

“The earth has yielded its fruit; God, our God has blessed us”

### Love Letters

There are times when our paths wind through dark valleys where sunlight seems but a distant memory. It is at these moments of darkness that our faith in God is stretched to unimaginable limits.

Mary and Grant Pascall, a newly married lovesick couple had been startled out of heavenly bliss by the ugly side of a country at war. Her husband was now a soldier, fighting a battle on foreign soil for his country. However, it was Mary's firm belief that the Great Shepherd held them both in the palms of His hands, which assured her that Grant would return safely home once again. Mary also knew that her Heavenly Father was only a prayer away, which strengthened her faith during the low moments she would experience. It was in this spirit of trust that Mary moved forward with love in her heart and inner peace restored to her soul.

Since there was not a week that passed without letters being exchanged between the two lovebirds, the mailman knew with certainty that he would be stopping at the mailbox out in front of Mary's house. The content and frequency of these letters would serve to dim the loneliness and narrow the distance for the two young people.

### Down Winding Roads

The motor of the 1935 Plymouth car purred steadily as it carried Mary, two dogs, her mother, step father, and Grandmother, (called Mama) farther and farther away from the city to start their new lives in the country. It was due to a \$10,000 insurance policy on Grandmother Moore's son, who had been killed in war, that the family was able to purchase a 40 acre farm located close to a river. The family

members were excited at the prospect of being self sufficient from what they grew on their very own farm. They had spent many hours planning vegetable and flower gardens as well as deciding on the necessary livestock needed to assure a bountiful harvest to feed the entire family. Mary who was known to be an enormous animal lover, perked up at the thoughts of the array of pets that would be hers for the spoiling.

Glancing out the rear window of the car, Mary noticed the familiar noises and buildings of the city were gone, replaced by only faint silhouettes in the distance. As she sat thoughtfully recalling the happenings of her short time on earth, she was amazed at the numerous changes that were brought about by all the exciting and sometimes tragic twists and turns in her life. While waiting for her beloved soldier to return from war, she would be going back to the life of a country girl once again. Strange, she thought, how life seemed to go in circles and still present totally different views.

Lost deep in her own thoughts, busily painting a mental picture of her future, a large bump in the road jarred her into the present surroundings. The landscape had suddenly changed into a pastoral country setting that presented a totally new face. Large stately oak trees with wild grapevines cascading up and down their textured trunks offered a graceful gesture of welcome as their delicate leaves stirred the morning air in a way that refreshed the soul. The fragrance of yellow honeysuckle growing over the barbed wire fence added an intoxicating perfume that drew Mary's soul back to the peaceful life of the country once again.

Although it had been 17 years since being a country girl, Mary had a feeling down deep inside that this move would offer another exciting page in her young life. Given Mary's uncanny ability to make the best of every circumstance life presented, there was no doubt in her active mind this adventure would be recorded as another exciting chapter in her precious memory bank.

### The Arrival Home

As the 1935 Plymouth leaned toward the ditch making its way around the final curve in the road, all eyes were suddenly fixed on a small white ranch style house that was soon to be called home. The small dwelling appeared to be smiling and motioning to the little group, anxiously anticipating the tenderness of their touch as they painted every board of its frame with loving kindness. The air was filled

with the promise of hope that overflows the heart from the joy and beauty of the new life it brings.

At the far corner of the yard, the delicate blooms of purple lilacs were preparing to permeate the air with their rich, explosive perfume. Oh, how Mary loved to open her window inviting the fresh, gentle breezes of spring to saturate every inch of her bedroom with their sweetness.

Every member of the family stood with squinted eyes, peering across the 40 acres of land that now belonged to them, envisioning Mother Earth bursting forth in a dramatic blanket of wild flowers; a beauty yet unseen.

The busy hum of honey bees called their attention to an orchard filled with fruit trees whose branches were thickly draped with feathery pastel blossoms. This magnificent haze of delicate pink and white blooms brought the promise of a truly bountiful harvest. The crispy red apples would provide not only spicy golden brown pies, but sauce to accompany their succulent pork roast dinners. They almost felt a need to wipe their chins in anticipation of the juice that would ooze from the large yellow and white peaches with each and every delicious bite. The blushing red cherries that were soon to fill their baskets would make the best cobblers this side of the Missouri River. The harvest from this beautiful orchard would not only provide fresh fruit for the season, but also fill numerous glass canning jars to tantalize the taste buds when the snow was flying.

A rectangular shaped patch of brown earth, soon to be their garden invited them to change into old jeans, dawn their old straw hats, and start digging in the dirt with their rusty old hoes. The horse that had pulled their buggy as a way of getting around the city would now be hooked to a plow.

The feel of the newly turned soil would soon be filtering through their fingers like bread flour through a sifter. The seeds they had purchased in the city would shortly be poking their heads up through the rich black dirt toward the shimmering rays of sunlight. Yes, that little basement that ran the full length of the house had shelves that would rapidly be crowded with an array of colorful canned goods.

Of course, no vegetable garden would be complete without rows of beautiful red, yellow and orange dahlias that would be placed in fruit jars to brighten every



room of the house. Pink sweet pea vines were already trailing along the sides of the garden and on the banks of the road. With great excitement, Mary also spotted a carpet of lavender violets growing under a canopy of budding trees. What fun it was to search for the ones that had a velvet splash of dark burgundy petals and add them to a spring bouquet that seemed to herald the arrival of a new season.

“This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it,” was a scripture that came to Mary's mind as the group made their way toward the little white house. It was getting toward evening which meant it was time to wind down for a much needed rest. What a lovely day this had been for everyone! That evening, Mary looked toward the heavens softly murmuring a prayer of thanksgiving for the blessings that God had showered down on all of them. When her sleepy eyes closed, she could hear the “peepers” down by the pond adding their final serenade as an appropriate ending to a perfect day.

### A New Day

The gentle patter of rain dancing on the window panes caused Mary to open her eyes at the break of day. The first blush of light was just starting to chase the lingering shadows across her bedroom wall which announced the first full day of her life as a country girl. Mary listened to the singing of the birds ignoring the gentle spring shower as they continued to build their nests in the tall trees surrounding the house. As she lay quietly for a few moments, her mind started processing the financial needs she would be facing as a newly married lady. Quickly, she realized the \$50 that Grant received from the US Army would only serve as part of what she would need in order to function. This time for thought motivated Mary to get up and immediately explore the possibilities for work around the community. Consequently, in her usual style of facing challenges, she obtained a job earning \$20 per week at the local country station pumping gas. Although she was aware that a large hunk of time would be taken out of each day, there would be enough daylight left when she finished for completing her share of work on the farm.

### Animals For The Spoiling

Although Mary busily pumped gas for added income, she approached her evening

farm chores with eagerness and great enthusiasm. After all, it was the time when she was allowed to freely spoil all the animals around the farm. In Mary's mind, they were all God's creatures and were worthy of her undivided attention. She never met an animal she didn't love. Or did she?

Later when trying to recall an animal she didn't think worthy of becoming a pet, her face became animated when exclaiming, "A snake was never welcome as one of my pets. I would not get close enough to let them become friendly because I thought they were from the devil. All they ever saw of me were the tracks I left behind as my feet carried my screeching body rapidly away."

As Mary started the evening ritual, her two dogs and numerous cats never left her side. They recognized the love that radiated from their master's being and stayed within range to receive as many strokes as Mary's hands would deliver. While her parents milked the cows, Mary fed the cats in an unusual manner. The cats would sit in a row behind the cows eagerly awaiting their feeding ritual. Mary would squeeze the cows' teats and aim directly at each cat's mouth with amazing accuracy. The cats would take turns opening their mouths, in what appeared to be a synchronized rhythm, catching each delicious squirt of the fresh warm milk. Loud, satisfied meows could be heard as a show of thanks. Mary then continued her chores by gathering eggs, scattering chicken feed, giving the horses fresh hay, and slopping the noisy, hungry pigs. By the end of the evening, an animal parade of dogs, cats and pet chickens could be seen walking in a line right behind Mary, as if she had become the piper.

### The Magic Of Summer

The fields on the small farm offered pristine places colored with the beauty of summers green. The lively little brook could be heard in the distance as it flowed over smooth rocks on its journey to the great beyond. Its water was crystal clear and reflected the happy faces of Mary and her friends as they baited hooks with wiggly worms and dough balls in hopes of catching dinner. There was nothing as tantalizing as fried fish in an old black skillet over an open fire. Somehow, a campfire made everything taste extra special. The raucous laughter and idle chatter sometimes gave way to peaceful, quiet thoughts as they all sat on the bank patiently waiting for nibbles on their lines. To pass time, they would look skyward and spot a buzzard floating effortlessly among the white cotton clouds in the azure blue sky. Then as daylight turned to evening, the blinking lights from the

fireflies filled the darkness with a special magic. At this moment in time, the friendly group would revert back to childhood by catching the blinking fireflies and placing them in a clear glass jar. The one with the brightest blinking jar won the contest hands down! They would then use them as lanterns that made the evening even more majestic.

Although the summer days would heat up and cause a body to sweat in all the humidity, cranking a freezer of homemade vanilla ice cream while sitting under the maple tree, made for a cool refreshing sweet ending to a perfect day. When Mary arose the following day to find the lard buckets setting on the back porch, she knew it was time for a walk through summer's woods in search for blackberries. Unfortunately, as much as she enjoyed the delicious blackberry cobbler, all this picking meant dealing with stickers, chiggers and ticks. Itching and scratching would soon be in order.

### Autumn Arrives

Although a desire for the lazy hazy days of summer to continue forever was an unspoken hope, it was merely a dream. Suddenly the beautiful velvet rose bade its final farewell as its soft petals fell upon the faded green grass. Summer on the 40 acre farm had reached its conclusion and was giving way to the crispness of autumn. Jack Frost would soon be painting the green country side with the fiery red, orange and yellow colors of fall. The daisies in the fields had long been replaced by golden rods and purple asters.

The smell of burning leaves and fresh apple cider filled Mary's nostrils as she gathered the remaining harvest from the season. Soon, the long hours of daylight would be replaced by the, never ending, dark days of winter.

### Postcard Countryside

The earth on the 40 acre farm had yielded its bounty and God had richly blessed Mary's family. The wood and coal bins were full and ready to make the ranch style home toasty and warm during the cold days and nights of winter. Winter meant fires and more fires! Mary's winter outfit would always include cotton stockings, shoes that laced or long boots, heavy coats, hats and that AWFUL LONG UNDERWEAR, if chosen!

The rectangular shaped brown patch that had become their garden had produced a bountiful harvest that now filled numerous canning jars that resided on the basement shelves. The little patch of ground had provided food for the family that would last through the winter.

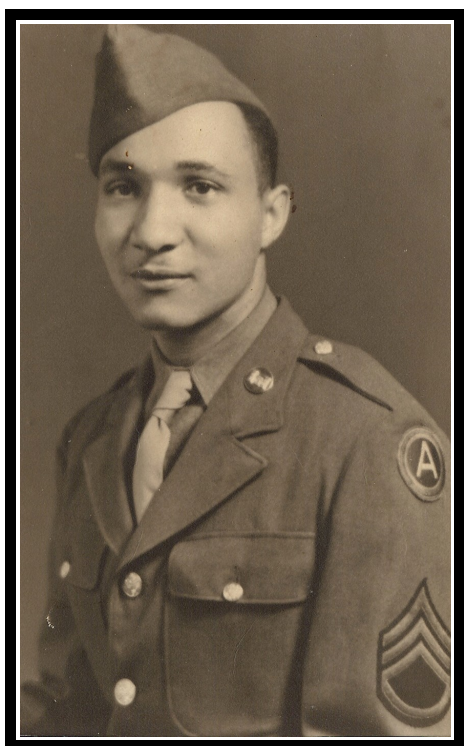
One morning, Mary awakened to find gentle snow falling outside her window. It soon covered the ground, barren limbs on the trees and evergreen boughs. When it ended, the light from the sun's rays made everything take on the appearance of sparkled icing. The frozen pond and brook in the distance appeared to be made of glass that reflected the images of light like a new shiny mirror. The brilliance of the sun had invaded the frozen glint and created a truly splendorous moment.

As Mary stood looking out her window at the beauty and majesty of the first snow on the farm, she quoted a scripture that seemed to fit from Psalm 66: 5, "Come and see the works of God, awesome in the deeds done for us." God's handiwork had created a country postcard as far as the eye could see. The first year of her return to being a country girl would soon be coming to an end. Reflecting back on the blessings the entire family had received, there was only one empty spot in Mary's heart that caused worry and sorrow. Grant Pascall, her beloved husband and soldier was still fighting for his country and would be absent for three more years.

Even though the cold of winter had arrived in Mary's life, she knew beyond a shadow of doubt that the purple and yellow crocus bulbs she had planted would soon poke their heads up through the snow as a calling card announcing good things to follow. Before long, their announcement would proclaim the arrival of a spring when her soldier would be home for good. At that point, her life would do a complete reversal from country girl back to "city lady" once again.



Horse and buggy like Mary's family owned for city travel. Horse then hooked to a plow.  
(Courtesy of the History Museum for Springfield—Greene County)



Picture of Grant sent to Mary in one of her letters.  
(Both pictures courtesy of Treshna Stephens, Mary's great niece)



Grant on duty during war.





**Mary, pictured in foreground, enjoying a day of fishing and picnicking on the farm with friends.  
(Courtesy of Treshna Stephens, Mary's great niece)**

## Chapter 6



### Madam Queen

Psalm 47:1

**“Praise the Lord!  
For it is good to praise the Lord;  
For it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful.”**

#### Meet Me In St. Louis

The spring of 1947 that had unfolded its spectacular display of flowering blossoms, gentle rain showers, and sun-warmed breezes on the Thompkins farm was now generously yielding to the sights, smells and sounds of summer. Large noisy June bugs were flying in the air with reckless abandonment, crashing into window screens, brushing the family's straw hats, and even landing on the noses of Mary's cats and dogs.

The result from 4 years of blood, sweat and painful elbow grease on behalf of the entire family, caused the little forty acre farm to respond with a bountiful harvest that far exceeded their wildest imaginations. An example of these blessings could be seen in the fresh green peas that were being hulled by Ella to accompany the new potatoes that had just been brought in from the garden.

Mary Josephine Pascall's sun kissed face, now the color of budded wheat, glowed with the picture of health as she darted to the mailbox in search of another faithful letter from Grant. Finding it there, she anxiously ripped open the envelope and quickly scanned the pages for any important news.

**I'M COMING HOME! MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS!** These big, bold words seemed to jump right off the page into Mary's throbbing heart. As she tried to absorb the meaning of the powerful message, it suddenly dawned on her that her soul mate, the love of her life, was safe and already in route to his home state of Missouri.

The squeals and laughter that bubbled out of happy Mary's mouth could be heard all over the countryside. Alarmed, the dogs started fiercely barking, her cats ran and hid under the porch and the chickens cackled loudly in the barnyard. Mary looked up to see her protective mother, Ella, running down the driveway with a hoe. Since snakes were the only thing Mary feared, Ella was coming to her rescue.

After reading Grant's directions in detail, Mary learned that she was to meet him in St. Louis where he would go through a mustering out ceremony. This was when the US Army would check Grant both physically and mentally before releasing him from duty.

That evening, the little farm house was filled with an atmosphere of praise and celebration to the Good Shepherd for bringing their loved one home safely. When assessing the emotions she experienced on that June day in 1947, Mary's 91 year old face took on a reflection of the joy she had felt as a response to the life changing news she had received. She remarked, "Honey, I was out of this world, CRAZY, with excitement."

All those nights when she lay awake in bed to find her groping fingers clutching only empty air, were over. Full to overflowing with joy and anticipation, the night before her departure seemed to be endless. As she repeatedly rolled over and looked at the clock, it appeared as if the hands were moving in slow motion, or had completely frozen in place.

Finally, when the soft light of first dawn broke through her window, Mary leaped from her bed with out stretched arms ready to embrace all the joy that life had in store for her soul. Since her husband Grant was home, Mary believed that every happiness and promise were hers to pursue. It was time to close the door and turn the key on the life of a country girl. Although Mary did not know what waited around the next corner, the dreams her heart had carefully stored during the long four years of separation were hers for the living. She was now Mrs. Mary Josephine Pascall, city lady!

As Mary drove the four hours to St. Louis, her mind was crowded with a million questions and thoughts. Would Grant look and act the same? Did the horrors of war forever change him? Would he still think she was pretty and special? What would his face look like when he spotted her in the distance?

As the crazy in love newly married couple embraced in a long, overdue, emotionally charged greeting, all questions were immediately answered. At that moment, they were the only two people in the world.

### City Life

Once Grant settled into the life of a civilian again, he continued his career with the Frisco Railroad as a chef in the dining car. The requirements of his position meant extensive travel as the train moved around from city to city. Since Mary was already familiar with Grant's work habits, she soon adjusted to her surroundings in St. Louis, where they were to live for two years. Since Mary had a car, everything would be fine. Oh, how she loved her car. She exclaimed, "There wasn't anything in the whole world like my car. Now honey, driving was different then because the cars were not chewing on each others bumpers like they do now."

Sometimes, if Grant was furloughed in another city for a long weekend, Mary would jump in the car and meet him for a romantic excursion. (Mary clicked her tongue loudly as a gesture of fond remembrance when recalling these rendezvous.) Once when she had just arrived for one of those meetings in a strange city, a group of ladies approached her saying, "We just love.....your husband!" Mary not taking kindly to the greeting replied, "And I just love....your husbands, too!" The ladies quickly received the message that Grant was off limits and proceeded to move along.

As the young couple adjusted to each other, they soon discovered they possessed equally strong personalities. Having been under Ella Thompkins tutelage since age three, Mary was a very forceful, opinionated young woman. Therefore, when a dispute erupted, Grant would say, "Have it your way, Madam Queen." This was a name he assigned to Mary throughout their 61 years of marriage. She will openly admit that after an argument, it would take walking only half a block before she realized that she was as much to blame for the disagreement as Grant.

### Home Sweet Home

After being transferred to several different cities, Grant finally received word that they could return to Springfield. Since Mary's family still lived there, the news was received with great relief and excitement. Although the travel had brought

great adventure into Mary's life, there was no place like home. Upon returning, Mary and Grant moved into one of the rental homes belonging to her mother, Ella. Since she was so familiar with her surroundings, Mary immediately landed a position as housekeeper for the McJimsey family; owners of the Springfield Leader and Press Newspaper. As housekeeper, Mary was responsible for meeting the needs of the entire family which included two girls and one boy. It was in their home that she prepared her first meal for a dinner party. Mary was so nervous that she can recite the menu even today. It included:

Fried Chicken  
Greens with Salt Pork  
Biscuits  
Mashed Potatoes  
Gravy  
Creamed Pears

Since it was the custom to have a medium sized breakfast, large noon meal and a light dinner, she would prepare the two main meals and leave a light fare before going home for the evening. Mary had become so accepted and appreciated by the family that she continued to bake birthday cakes for the McJimsey children even after they had left home. On each child's birthday, a cake would arrive all the way across the country from their friend Mary.

### Soul Cooking

Mary describes soul cooking as using all you've got in your bones and stirring it all up into a bowl. To Mary, it was more than cooking with your senses. She declared, "Child, I was born into this world with a 'taste bud" that was handed down through my mother's people. Grant Pascall married himself a full blown cook. When you are born with a "taste bud" you can eat food, name the flavors in what you taste and dream about seasonings that are missing. No one can teach it to you, child. God just blesses you with the gift."

Mary remembers, even as a small child, accompanying her mother to the wealthy families' homes and studying their menus while tasting their recipes. While her mother did their laundry, Mary was committing their menus and flavorings to memory. She recalls her mother and grandmother sitting in the kitchen watching her cook on the old wood stove with its water reservoir on the side at age 16. She

believed being able to prepare a meal on one of those old stoves made you a born cook.

Later on, Mary acquired cook books from the McJimsey family and changed the recipes to satisfy her own “taste bud.” Describing in detail she explained, “Honey, we could not afford measuring spoons, which caused me to season food with a pinch of this and a handful of that. As I did this, I used my fingers, nose and eyes to get it just right. My favorite big bowl would then rest right on my hip as I stirred up the best lip smacking recipe you can ever imagine.”

She continued, “The first bread recipe I learned to make was hot, soft brown, melt in your mouth biscuits, fresh out of the oven. Now honey, don't peep in that oven door during the first 10 minutes of baking them or they're gonna fall flat.”

### Yeast Monster In The Garbage Can

Mary had been tasting and eyeballing hot yeast rolls for a bit and finally decided she was ready to try them on her own. Given her enormous success using that innate “taste bud”, she approached the first attempt at making yeast rolls with confidence. After mixing her ingredients together and forming the dough into nice round shapes, she allowed them 30 minutes to raise double their size.

Nothing happened! She then finished the story with a show of great humor and drama by stating, “Those little round buggers had done absolutely nothing but sit right there looking back at me in defiance. So, feeling dejected and succumbing to defeat, I carried that mess to the back door and dumped it into the garbage can. Firmly placing the lid down, I vowed to go back in and make me some of those tasty hot biscuits that would melt in my mouth. A while later, I returned to the garbage can to dispose of something and found the lid all the way up to the handle on my screen door. When I banged the door into the lid, it almost scared me to death! I punched that yeast dough down, slammed the lid and vowed to have greater patience the next time. From that lesson came the most delicious yeast rolls you can put into your mouth.”

### Trouble With Meat Recipes

Choosing meat dishes for Mary's table sometimes presented difficulty due to her love for animals. When asked if her infatuation for animals continued during adulthood, she exclaimed, “Hush your mouth girl! I loved animals so much it was



hard to kill and eat them. How can you kill something that has been following you all around the yard? When I went hunting with Grant, if an animal came close, I would just shoot straight up in the air and it would run away. Grant probably knew he would have a hard day as a hunter if I went along.

Once I tried to wring a chicken's neck for dinner without any luck. After twirling it around for a while, it just walked off in a wobbly state, turned around and looked at me like I was crazy. Other people brought me the chicken ready to fry. When you bit into my chicken, it was crispy on the outside with an explosion of moisture on the inside. I've eaten squirrel, rabbit, fish, turtle and frog legs, but don't be thinkin I'm gonna eat possum or coon.. Possum is nothing but grease and coon is just too cute. Once I hung the clothes over a line to dry and looked out the window to see a raccoon jumping from sleeve to sleeve, eventually pulling my day's wash down on the ground. It was so funny.”

### Mary's Pets

Pets were welcome guests at Mary's house and actually described as thinking they were human due to receiving so much spoiling from their master. Cats, dogs, and even chickens followed her every step. When she planted a garden, she made sure to include enough for all her welcome four legged friends to graze on at will, without ever being chased away.

One of Mary's favorite pets was a little black wire-haired poodle called Gigi. It has been reported that on many occasions, Mary was spotted driving down Fremont Avenue with Gigi draped around her neck. The humorous aspect to this sighting was due to Mary's dark Afro hair style. Her hair and Gigi's coat looked so similar that differentiating the two was impossible, thus, creating the illusion of a strange creature driving behind the wheel.

Once, Grant happened to be walking near Jordan Creek when he spotted a tiny animal desperately swimming in search of dry land. As the shape swam closer, he realized it was that of a very small piglet. Grant reasoned this little cunning pig had escaped the slaughter house located up stream a short distance away. Given this fact, he felt strongly the little piglet was deserving of a safe harbor. Therefore, he waded into the water, scooped it up in his arms and carried it home to his animal loving “Madam Queen”.

Of course, the moment Mary laid eyes on the little homeless animal, she squealed louder than the piglet. Wrapping her welcoming arms around it, she started thinking of where it would live. After feeding it and naming it “Woo-Woo”, Grant and Mary worked together making it a home on the back porch.

Day after day, Mary loved and cared for little “Woo-Woo”; spoiling it with the tremendous flow of affection that only she could offer. As a result, she had a new member in the parade of pets that followed her every step. Squeals and oinks were added to the array of pet sounds already filling the air in the Pascall back yard. As a result, out of happiness, that spoiled little piglet appeared to grow larger by the moment.

Therefore, it dawned on Mary one day that the home they had provided for “Woo-Woo” no longer fit. They now had a piglet that had turned into a large pig almost over night. Since pigs loved mud more than anything to keep cool, they were out of city options. It was time for her prized pet to move to the country where her friend's farm was located.

Sadly, with tears streaking down her face, Mary waved goodbye to her friend “Woo-Woo” as the truck drove him down the street and out of sight. Realizing he might end up on someone's table in the form of a pork roast, she elected to never see her pet again. It would break her heart to know he had become someone's dinner.

Observing animal behavior was a fascination that remained strong throughout Mary's life. During the storms, her pets would hide under the covers with her for security until the thunder ceased. However, the most incredulous discovery to Mary was noticing how much their expressions and behavior mirrored her own.

### Food For Thought

Having eaten so many delicious meals prepared by his soul mate, the expertise she displayed in the kitchen did not go unappreciated or unnoticed by Grant. Consequently, well into their journey of life together, he gave Mary some food for thought by saying, “Madam Queen, I think you should consider opening a barbecue restaurant of your own.” Mary appreciated this flattery but put it out of her mind and went on with her busy schedule.



**Mary sitting on steps with Grant  
(Courtesy of Treshna Stephens)**



**Mary and Grant on rendezvous in Wichita, KS.  
(Courtesy of Treshna Stephens)**



**Mary pampering pets.  
(Courtesy of Treshna Stephens)**



**Mary and Gigi, her poodle.  
(Courtesy of Treshna Stephens)**

## 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.

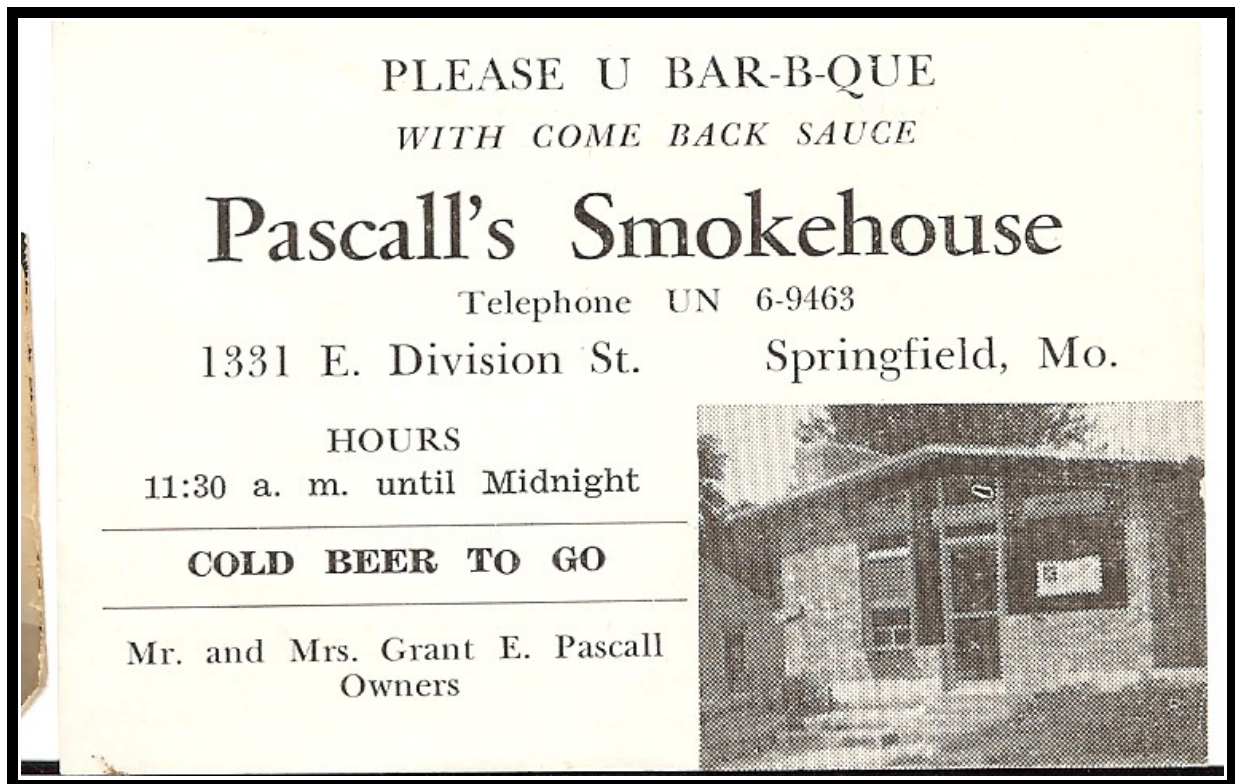
When asked if she made the pies from scratch, Mary smiled, pointing her finger, exclaiming, “Shut your mouth child! I would whip off 15 pies in just a short period of time with no problem.” She then clicked her tongue saying, “Your choice. Fruit or cream pies. But my banana cream pie was to die for! 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)

## **Chapter 8**



### **“Aunt Jo”**

**Romans 13: 9**

**“Love thy neighbor as thyself.”**

**In Psalm 136, the sentence, “His love endures forever,” is repeated 26 times; a strong indication of how deserving God is of our continuous praise for His endless love that never fails. To Mary, God's endless love was never more evident than when Jesus died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, offering a free gift of eternal life to all that would receive it. Additionally, in 2 Timothy 2: 13, God also promises to be faithful even when we are faithless, a covenant Mary strongly believes and trusts.**

**These Bible scriptures are so precious to Mary that every daily prayer from her lips includes the words, “Thy will be done.” Her recognition of God's promised faithfulness and covenant of loyal love have caused her to follow a clearly marked path in her daily walk on earth. How could she not reach for the hand, or follow in the footsteps of a Heavenly Father whose love would be hers for a lifetime and beyond? With the promises and examples from Jesus, how could she not love her neighbor as herself?**

**After all, God had heard the cry of a 3 year old orphan and provided a place of safety and love for her in Ella Thompkins' generous heart. Due to this warm harbor offered a little girl left desperate and alone, Mary will say today, “The love I was shown during my childhood and beyond was not mine for the “keepin, but mine for the givin.”**

**Thus, in preparation for the new name, “Aunt Jo,” Mary will tell you that she started hearing the voice of God, called the Holy Spirit, so clearly after she was married that it was immensely startling. Many times when driving her car, she found it necessary to pull to the side of the road, turn off the motor, and simply sit and listen. His voice would speak to her frequently, guiding her every footstep.**

Her first remembrance of hearing His voice was at age 25, when she says she was just full of herself. Mary described it by saying, “I thought I was so cute, but was not cute at all. There is a good cute and a bad cute. I would party with friends, drinking and cursing right along with them as if I belonged there. But one day when I started to show anger to others, a strong voice appeared in my head saying, “They are people just like you. Forgive them!”

After that, Mary received guidance from God's voice, the Holy Spirit, everywhere she went; while sitting on a river bank, cooking in the kitchen, or during her dreams at night. Without her full recognition, Mary's relationship with God was becoming more intimate as each day passed. He was patiently and loving preparing her for a name change that would remain with her for many years; “Aunt Jo.”

Thus, it was through her success as owner of Pascall's Smokehouse that she would be given the opportunity of sharing her enormous love with others; especially children. As Mary cooked and pleased a huge base of satisfied customers, it would become clearer to her each day that the journey on this earth was not about self, but God The Father and his destiny for her life.

### Successful Business Woman

As Pascall's Smokehouse became known for that delicious “COME BACK SAUCE” that Mary's “taste bud” created, the faces of new customers could be seen daily. Word of mouth was spreading the news like wildfire. In fact, it became necessary for Mary to increase her staff just to handle the steady flow of orders.

Since Grant had every confidence in “Madam Queen's” ability as a savvy business woman, he had decided to return to his long time position with Frisco Railroad. He was also astute in realizing that two strong personalities trying to call the shots would not be beneficial to the business.

Therefore, the little restaurant that opened with only two people soon was being staffed with additional employees. Not only did the increased staffing make things easier, but also gave Mary more flexibility with her schedule.

Consequently, it was due to this flexibility that Mary was able to spend valuable time with the customers; especially the children. Since children have an uncanny built in radar to access the human heart, they were drawn to the love that radiated from Mary like flies to sugar.

Also, given the fact that Pascall's Smokehouse was on their route from school, Mary would look up everyday to find happy eyes and sweet little faces desiring her attention. They would tenderly ask, "Aunt Jo, do you have a treat for us?" Thus, from that day forward, Mary's name became "Aunt Jo" to the children throughout the community. In addition, word soon spread that "Aunt Jo" had an endless supply of bubble gum, sweets, and laughter that were free for the asking to every child, regardless of skin color. Therefore, if they did not find "Aunt Jo" at the restaurant, they would knock on her door at home.

When "Aunt Jo" was at home, she always made it a point to be a friendly neighbor to everyone. Thus, the Browns that lived next door to her had children who were crazy about their "Aunt Jo," too. Their affection for each other was so great that one became her god child; a strong bond that has been passed down to each generation. Even today, the descendants of this family visit her at Christian Health Care and carry on the feeling of kinship.

### **"Aunt Jo's" Playground**

When friends of the Brown children came to play in their yard, "Aunt Jo's" property automatically became their playground, as well. Also, many of the children were enrolled in child care at the Boys and Girls Club located directly across the street from "Aunt Jo's" home, which made stopping off at the Brown/Pascall backyard a fun and natural daily happening. All this activity made the two combined yards resemble the school playground at recess. As community members passed by, it was a common occurrence to see "Aunt Jo," along with her dogs and cats, right in the middle of the activity.

It all started when "Aunt Jo" look up and saw little children from the Boys and Girls Club standing on the sidewalk behind the fence watching all the activity in her yard. However, they did not have to remain on the outside looking in for long before receiving an invitation from Aunt Jo to join the fun.

Thus, it took only a short time before she was totally involved in their lives on a daily basis. As a result, each morning as the parents were dropping their children off before work, “Aunt Jo” could be seen out in the middle of the street directing traffic. She was not about to allow her precious children to be in danger of the passing cars. Also, many times, the children at Boys and Girls Club were the recipients of freshly baked treats that “Aunt Jo” delivered in person.

Over time, “Aunt Jo's” endless supply of patience and love penetrated deeply into the lives of the children and family members, as well. There was not a child that went unrecognized or unloved by this precious lady. Since not all the children received proper care from their parents, some would arrive hungry as well as unclean. However, it did not take long for “Aunt Jo” to come to their rescue. Rather than simply hold her nose and offer them food, they would not only leave with full bellies, but be bathed; wearing freshly washed and ironed clothing, as well.

All this volunteer work not only touched lives of many children and their parents, but also was valued highly by the staff. Therefore, as a result of the precious time given so freely, Mr. Calvin King and Mrs Kenyon, administrators at the Boys and Girls Club, showed their appreciation by organizing a special time of recognition called, “Josephine Pascall Day.” God's blessings of gratitude showered down freely on the life of His child that had distributed love, the greatest gift of the Spirit, in abundance to children in need.

### In The Good Old Summer Time

Even though school was over and summer vacation had arrived, children were still being dropped off for child care at the Boys and Girls Club, which meant the continuation of fun at the Pascall home. When Mary shopped for groceries, she would always buy extra supplies for all her guests. Her friends have indicated that “Aunt Jo's” cupboards were not only full, but bulging with food for her children.

One incredible treat the children loved was the two freezers of homemade ice cream and a large sheet cake she always set up on the front porch. Everyday felt like a birthday party because of her delicious treat and lively spirit.



On other days, small groups of children were invited to an all night camp out in “Aunt Jo's” backyard. She would park her camper in front of her back door to be used as their tent. Then, to assure everyone behaved properly, she would sleep all night on the floor in the door way supervising all the giggles. All the children were very clear about “Aunt Jo's” rules and knew to obey them without question. Otherwise, there would be a full accounting in private with their friend, a meeting that would be conducted using tough love. When describing her method of discipline, she commented, “I made them mind, but I also made them laugh!” They understood that she fully intended them to show manners and use proper English at all times. Her goal was to help them develop the background necessary for functioning in society as respected and successful citizens.

### Love And Patience Abounds

Once, her four year old niece, Treshna, needed to recite a poem for an Easter program. Although everyone felt she was too young to accomplish this task, “Aunt Jo” had the opposite opinion. Possessing great determination, she sat her niece in the middle of the kitchen table and worked tirelessly on the memorization of the poem. Later, when the audience heard Treshna's sweet little voice recite the poem perfectly and with great flair, their hearts turned to mush. Furthermore, as she concluded with a very proper curtsy, the listeners broke into deafening applause. It was through “Aunt Jo's” faith , love and encouragement that a miracle took place in that four year old child's life as she remembered all her lines and gave a flawless recitation.

Today, at age thirty, Treshna will tell you that she was always under “Aunt Jo's” feet; an act which formed the Christian principles she draws upon today as an adult and mother. In fact, those around Treshna describe her personality as being identical to that of “Aunt Jo”; a fact she holds close to her heart. Consequently, like “Aunt Jo”, she has already been assigned the name, “Mrs. T” by children in the neighborhood. While recognizing it as a compliment, she also is fully cognizant of the enormous responsibility that comes along with receiving this torch of love.”

### Musical Notes Of Love

There appeared to be no limit as to the length and depth of “Aunt Jo's” love that was extended to the children in her community. When she spotted an opportunity

to touch the life of a child, her mind became creative and the reach of her hand tender and warm. One example of this extension of her love was demonstrated through her ability to play the piano. All the years of piano lessons her mother, Ella, had provided for her daughter were used for the glory of God, as well. Not only did “Aunt Jo” enjoy playing the piano at home as a way of relaxing, but offered to give music lessons to several children in the community totally free of charge. She would spend countless hours sitting beside little children that were interested in learning to play the piano and instruct them patiently. Her little students were then invited to return to her home and practice their lessons at anytime. Later, when “Aunt Jo” purchased an organ, the opportunity to learn this musical instrument was extended as well.

### Holiday Time Arrives

Since God's love continuously poured out of “Aunt Jo's” heart like fresh sparkling water from an underground spring, holiday time was no exception. She never had to deck the halls or listen to the music of the season to get into the spirit because God's love was a never ending spring that flowed from her heart and penetrated deeply into the souls of young and old alike. Therefore, it was well known that no reservations were necessary at “Aunt Jo's” house. There was always a place set for one and all at her table at Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter.

No matter the holiday, young and old alike knew that “Aunt Jo's” home would have tables placed all over the house, set and just waiting for the arrival of her welcomed guests. The aroma of fried chicken, potatoes, gravy, greens, hot rolls, cranberry jelly and golden brown fruit pies would be wafting in the air as friends came down the street to “Aunt Jo's” house. Therefore, the Pascall home was always the liveliest spot in the community because of the joy and grand celebration that would be in full swing most of the day. It is also important to note that her soul mate, Grant, took a very active role in her mission when returning home from his work at Frisco Railroad; support that was recognized and cherished. Many members of the community compared the celebrations to the loaves and fish in the Bible. This precious lady had the ability to keep the hot delicious food with an enormous spoonful of God's love flowing, without danger of ever running out! “Love thy neighbor as thyself” was a scripture that Mary was reflecting through her remarkable generosity of spirit.

**Thread Of Love Continues**

Year after year, “Aunt Jo” fulfilled God's destiny for her life by touching the lives of great numbers of children throughout the community. Although she never had children naturally, her wonderful spirit of “givin and lovin” was constant to one and all. Since she was taught to be color blind to race, her home and business were like a melting pot of personalities. When people who knew “Aunt Jo” the best are asked to give an estimate of the children whose lives she touched, the response is always the same. They just shake their heads and shout, “Hundreds!”

Today, the walls of her room at the nursing home are adorned with hundreds of photographs depicting faces of her precious children. The depth of her love penetrated so deeply within the hearts of those children frequenting her yard that even their family members, several generations removed, have been introduced to “Aunt Jo.” It is a very common occurrence to witness a steady stream of guests walking down the halls of Christian Health Care searching for their “Aunt Jo's” room. Instead of possessing the small stature of a child, they now are adults with graying hair, in search of their best friend; still desirous of being in her presence where the radiance of love continues to brightly shine.

When speaking with anyone about the impact she had on the lives of others, her reaction is so humble it is startling. She does not see her accomplishments as being much at all. She will look puzzled as to why her behavior appeared to be unique.

Once when she spoke to the writer about this fact, she said, “Honey, I didn't do anything special. I was always satisfied, no matter the circumstances and wanted to share all I had been given with others. God has richly blessed me all my life. If I was in a drought, there was always living water to drink. If I was sweating from the heat of life's challenges, He brought a cool breeze to my soul. If I was hungry, His manna from heaven gave my spirit energizing nourishment. All is well with my soul. His will be done.”

“Aunt Jo” will tell you the still small voice that has been her constant companion is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Once she recognized God had a destiny for her life and was eager to use her in His work, there was not a moment without His mighty presence. God was just waiting for her to recognize the love she was shown as an orphan throughout her childhood was not hers for the “keepin” but

for the “givin”; a lesson she learned well.

After this lesson was learned, the floodgates of heaven were opened and a rush of His mighty love penetrated every part of her being. After feeling this rush, her cup was always full to overflowing with the greatest gift of all; His love. Mary Josephine Pascall, known as “Aunt Jo,” then experienced God's supernatural activity that ignited her life with purpose.

### Endless Flow Of Love Continues

As the seasons of “Aunt Jo's” life continued in an almost synchronized rhythm, wondrous miracles abounded everywhere in the lives of her precious children. The everyday gestures of love that appeared so common place in the mind of God's obedient servant were becoming stepping stones toward a bright future for many of these little souls. With the changing of every season, the promise for a better tomorrow, replete with warmth, light and hope, filled the air all around Fremont Avenue.

The passing of time that felt like only a moment to “Aunt Jo” brought the departure of her special children as they launched their journeys down the pathways of life. One day, as she sat quietly in a time of reflection and prayer, remembering each child by name, the sound of tiny knocks at her front door interrupted these bitter sweet thoughts. Opening the door she heard, “Aunt Jo”, do you have a treat for us? Can we play in your yard?” In anticipation of the answer, their little faces had looks of eager radiance, while wearing enormous expectant smiles; a sweetness that always struck at the core of “Aunt Jo's” heart.

This was to be the pattern of “Aunt Jo's” life that continued day after day throughout the seasons of time. Children arrived and all too soon, took wings and flew to the far corners of the earth, possessing the foundation of skills necessary for building productive lives. Perhaps while in the process of seeking their fortunes, the gift of God's love experienced through “Aunt Jo's” touch would be passed on to others.

Is it too much to imagine the doors belonging to the departed children being opened to the sounds of little knocks all over God's vast universe? Is anything too hard for the Lord? Hallelujah! Praise God! His love endures forever!

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**A young Mary (right) with her charges.  
(Courtesy of Treshna Stephens)**



**Children playing at Aunt Jo's home  
(Courtesy of Treshna Stephens)**



**Treshna and her brother playing with Gigi.  
(Courtesy of Treshna Stephens)**



**Treshna, the child helped with poem.  
(Courtesy of Treshna Stephens)**



**Mary Josephine Pascall Day held at Boys and Girls Club across the street from her home.  
(Courtesy of Treshna Stephens, Mary's great niece)**



## Chapter 9



### **“Mama Jo”**

Isaiah 46: 4

**“Even to your old age and gray hairs  
I am He, I am He who will sustain you.  
I have made you and I will carry you;  
I will sustain you and I will rescue you.”**

#### **Faith In Eternity**

**No matter what divergent paths or different roadways one chooses to trod, only God knows what waits just around the bend. The fact that our Heavenly Father is aware of what awaits each of us and has an infinite plan for our journey, should provide a quiet, deep, unflinching faith to meet each trying hour.**

**Although “Aunt Jo” had a heart that was overflowing with love, she was not immune from the trials and tests of life that also knocked loudly at her door. However, the confidence and calm serenity that comes only through prayer would be present when she faced whatever life might hold. No matter what waited around the bend in life, her faith in God meant that dawn would follow night.**

#### **The Hardest Test**

**Sometimes, although desirous of holding onto our glory moments of the present, the length of life is not in our control. Over the years, Mary Josephine Pascall, now known as “Aunt Jo”, had enjoyed the outstretched arms and warm embrace of her adoptive mother, Ella Massey Thompkins, with such depth that the hidden pain suffered in childhood had been healed and replaced by deep shining pools of love.**

**Therefore, when it became obvious that her mother's health was declining, Ella was invited to spend the rest of her life under her daughter's watchful eyes. Moving in with her daughter seemed to please Ella so much that each day together was counted as a blessing.**



During the day, it was necessary for both Grant and Mary to continue working, which meant being away from home. At first, Ella was able to function well with this arrangement and all was peaceful and calm. However, things changed dramatically one day when she simply was no where to be found. After a long and frantic search, the family finally located Ella walking on the busy railroad tracks, totally unaware of her surroundings; a condition that was to be constant.

Today, Ella's disease would be labeled differently, but then was diagnosed as being mentally insane. After thoroughly searching for a possible solution to the problem, there was no other choice but to move her to an institution located in Fulton, Missouri. Even though the distance was great, Grant and Mary would faithfully visit her every possible moment.

Unfortunately, as the disease progressed, the mother Mary knew so well became closed into herself, totally unaware of her surroundings. The long goodbye labeled as Alzheimer's today, deeply saddened a daughter that held such immense love for her mother.

Today, Mary recounts the passing of her mother as one of the saddest times of her entire life. As Grant and Mary departed the institution after each visit, they could hear Ella's beautiful soprano voice singing 'In The Garden'; her favorite hymn. As she raised her voice in praise to God, the words would vibrate throughout the facility and down the lane in front of the entrance. These beautiful notes that flowed so powerfully from her mother's voice became permanently imprinted in Mary's mind.

Thus, the haunting strains of that song are present in Mary's mind even at age 91. However, each time the replay of the song ends and the quiet becomes almost deafening, she knows they are not lost from one another forever, but are only separated for awhile. Soon, both of their voices will join God's choir of saints and angels and the notes they sing will be for all eternity. They will have a permanent home "In The Garden" of the New Jerusalem.

### The Clock Ticks

As silver strands appeared in Grant and "Aunt Jo's" hair, they knew it was time to pass the running of Pascall's Smokehouse Restaurant into younger, more energetic hands. Although they tried unsuccessfully to rent the restaurant, it

became necessary to sell to a man that had arrived from Kansas City. Even though they both felt a strong attachment to a business they had started from scratch, its success meant allowing another person's capable hands to determine the best course. Consequently, the hard work that had begun as only a dream to the Pascalls, today, is called Cross Town Barbecue; a well know and successful restaurant.

### Life Goes On

The lives of Grant and Mary Josephine (Aunt Jo) Pascall settled into a peaceful harmony; a time to thoroughly enjoy one another. Although they continued to work hard, they always stopped to enjoy hobbies and laughs together. Since Grant was an avid hunter, he not only enjoyed the sport, but delighted in the beauty of the countryside.

Therefore, they purchased property located east of Springfield and named it The Pea Patch. Since the sight had a house and an enormous pond, it became the hub for family and church picnics, alike. Today, Mary and her great niece, Thresna, will go into fits of laughter as they recall the memory of a relative who chose to sit at the top of a hill, too close to the edge, and precede to roll chair over head like a big red ball until reaching the bottom down by the water.

After watching two strong male relatives use great effort and patience to return her safely to the spot at the top of the hill, all seemed calm and back to normal; at least they thought. Mary remarked, "We would have labeled the incident as an unfortunate accident had she not chosen to sit in the same chair, too close to the edge again. Not learning her lesson, she repeated the performance of rolling chair over head all the way to the bottom. Honey, at that point, it had become pure, unadulterated foolishness!"

Mary continued, "It was an absolute miracle that she ended up unhurt although as mad as a hornet. We all watched her walk off in a huff, lips puckered in a circle mumbling well, well, well, to herself. Child, I'll bet every muscle in her body was complaining as she got out of bed the next morning."

As the people who were picnicking at the Pea Patch arrived and departed, a sign that read, "POOR BUT PROUD" located above the gate brought a smile to their faces.

### Dancing Feet Still Alive

Although the Pascalls lived a humble life of simplicity in every way, the joy of ballroom dancing soon called them back into the world of romance and grace. The thrill of floating together as they moved across the floor never failed to draw them. They could almost hear the tapping of shoes beckoning them from their closet. Then, they would excitedly adorn their bodies with whatever fancy clothes and jewelry they possessed, and slip quickly into those “already tapping” dance shoes. Live bands and a singing group called The Philharmonics would beckon them to the American Legion Hall or the Ritz Club located on old Route 66. The lively music and dancing at these two halls made living through the depression easier for everyone. Mary's friend, Homer Boyd exclaimed, “I was just as poor at the beginning of the depression as at the end. It didn't bother me a bit! We just kept singing and dancing through it all.” Each time the music started, the Pascalls would float effortlessly into the clouds of romance together; a habit that would last a lifetime.

### A Time For Every Season

All up and down Fremont Avenue, the seasons came and the seasons went, covering the earth with a splendor that only God could create. Each spring filled the air with promises of hope and, in perfect time, surrendered to summer with a peaceful, elegant departing grace. Then in a beautifully written orchestration, the last days of summer were cooled by the crisp frosty air of autumn, turning the landscape into fiery colors of red, yellow and orange. Against this dramatic backdrop, somehow finding its way through the misty air came the surprising caress of the first snowflake that would playfully dance upon the faces of the two soul mates, Mary and Grant Pascall, as they embraced the day with their usual untamed enthusiasm.

Thus, this was the rhythm of the pendulum of life, repeating itself year after year; the order and wonder of the business of an ever changing earth. For the “crazy in love” young couple, time seemed to pass unseen; as the flow of birth and death arrived noisily and departed quietly.

Without notice, the sound of the dancing shoes that once beckoned loudly from the closet, faded softly and vanished completely into the distant horizon. The gray that appeared around Mary and Grant's temples gave testimony to a willing spirit, minus the agility of the once gliding feet.

Without fail, the changing of the seasons stirred within the heart of the great hunter, Grant, a yearning to walk the wooded hillsides in search of the wild game he had always provided for their table. Thus, it was due to this unrequited yearning that he packed his jeep and traveled the winding country roads with his friends to enjoy the hunting trip of his life. Unfortunately, this was to be the final hurrah for the great hunter.

One morning, just as the hunting party was starting the day, Grant was stricken violently by an affliction that left him totally incapacitated. As a result, Mary was startled to see his friends pull into the driveway transporting a gravely ill Grant. Sadly, the diagnosis from the physician indicated that Grant had suffered a massive stroke. Strange, how the morning air at the time of his departure seemed fresh and lively, but had ended in causing worry along with life changing pain all around.

Although Mary was well trained in caring for people who suffered from ill health, the effects from the stroke were challenging. In spite of the difficulties his stroke presented, they faced each day with smiles and grateful hearts. However, providing daily care for Grant proved to be such a daunting task for Mary, that after 5 years, she too, succumbed to a stroke that affected her ability to walk and restricted the use of her right side. As a result, Mary and Grant had no other option but to move into a health care facility. Thus, Christian Health Care became their new residence of choice.

Due to the seriousness of Grant 's condition, it was necessary for the couple to take up residence in separate rooms, a change that was accepted, but presented an enormous adjustment. How does one face separation from a soul mate who has been a loyal partner for over 60 years? How is it possible to have your world turned upside down at age 88 and keep a stiff upper lip?

When observing the attitudes in this society, hearing the cries of the afflicted seem all too common place; blaming God for their lots in life. Thus, a pattern of

depression and self pity become the greatest enemy of the soul; causing a deterioration of both mind and spirit.

When Mary Josephine recounts their arrival at the nursing home, she admits openly that they were faced with an enormous life changing challenge. After all, two healthy, vibrant people had suddenly been reduced to needing caretakers for surviving each day. This new life style change would certainly rock Mary to the core of her being and test the faith she had always proclaimed in her Glorious Father. The happy song of her life had ended, and was being replaced by the falling of a deafening quiet upon every aspect of her existence. How would she loosen her grip on the precious memories locked deeply within her breast?

Perhaps, a powerful quote from the Talmud, the authoritative body of Jewish traditions answers the dilemma by stating, God says to man: “With thy very wounds I will heal thee.”

The faithful Christian who had lifted up the cares and concerns of others all her life to God in prayer, now needed to allow His mighty arms to hold her in a tender, comforting embrace. Romans 12:2 best depicts the course of direction Mary decided to take by saying, “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”

Thus, Mary devoted much time each day in quiet prayer with her Heavenly Father. In addition she followed her words with a time of quiet meditation, listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, in a short time, a peace that passes all understanding which comes only from God, filled her heart and mind with a new, vibrant hope to begin each day. Her Heavenly Father knew she was at a cross road in life and would never leave or forsake her. He would provide the courage to face whatever the future held.

### Healing A Broken Heart

Thus, it was in this spirit that God prepared Mary to face the departure of her soul mate, Grant, only one short year later. The love of her life, a loyal partner for over 61 years, had now departed, leaving her totally alone. Mary will tell you that out of a need to be alone, she sought quiet coves in the nursing home to grieve for her precious husband. In those moments of sadness, Mary repeatedly asked

herself if it would be possible to face this long, dark night of her soul.

However, sometimes it is in the dark of our night seasons that we don't know with whom we are struggling until the light begins to dawn. One thing the Bible teaches is that God invites us to cry out to Him allowing our sorrows to soar up to the heavens. He is always waiting anxiously to comfort His precious children when the storms of life threaten to engulf them in murky deep currents.

Therefore, it was necessary for Mary to confront her worst fears and share them with her best friend, Jesus. Was she afraid because of being alone, without any family? Missing Grant caused a deep void during the day and a heart filled with sorrow throughout the long nights. Thus, it was during this time that Mary lifted her voice in many anguished prayers to her faithful Friend. When reciting the verses of her favorite hymn, "What A Friend We Have In Jesus," glimpses of dawn began to shine through the night. Without doubt, Mary knew the answer would be found by resting in the hollow of His hand where her broken spirit could be healed. Romans 5: 5 describes Mary's approach in separating herself from the past and embracing the future with these powerful words, "Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings; because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope."

Over time, the theme of God's destiny for her life began to emerge with a strength that was noticed by everyone she met. After all, she believed the love she had been shown as a little orphan girl was not hers for the "keepin" but for the givin!" Although she now had salt and pepper hair and a new address, her mission still lived deep within her heart. Therefore, her old habit of never meeting a stranger started to surface with great drama. Her watchful eyes observed the needs and personalities of her fellow residents and caretakers, as well. She offered laughter to the sad faces, peace to the angry, encouragement to the downtrodden, sympathy for the challenged, and gratitude to her skilled caregivers.

### Revival Of Spirit

As Mary became more acquainted with the residents living around her, she repeatedly shared her deepest concern. In a serious voice she explained the depth of needs she witnessed by stating, "There are so many people living here that need

to be taken under our wings. After we gently pull them to our bosoms, we need to protect and nurture each soul as we float along with them.”

She continued, “When I came here, I knew I could make a difference because a few of the residents reminded me of my children. Some felt they were way above others and chose to look down on the helpless. My mother used to say those that are considered to be way above others are called “kissin” cousins, with the lowly being labeled as “kickin” cousins. The attitude you bring to life determines who wants to be around you. If you are easy to love, people will feel it and gravitate toward you. Be careful! One day you may think you are a “kissin” cousin and be surprised to see your name on the list of “kickin” cousins.”

Recalling her arrival she commented, “When I look back, I thought I would be here about 7 months, but am now in my 7<sup>th</sup> year, instead. I am so thankful I have a home. The food is not prepared by my own taste bud, but is nourishing to the body. The people here love me with all their hearts and are doing the best they can for everyone. I am excited about almost everything. My cup is always close to over flowing, no matter my circumstances. If I have only one slice of bread, it will always be divided among those around me. Most of the people who live here know that I love them and don't mind my setting them straight. When you look way down deep in each heart, hate is not what you see, but love instead. Fear causes a person to react with hurtful actions toward another.”

Thus, it was in this spirit that Mary Josephine Pascall approached life without her soul mate, in a strange place that was to be her final earthly address. As she took part in the activities, God's love that had poured so freely from her heart all her life continued to radiate everywhere. If a fellow resident had lost the ability to use her hands, Mary's fingers were automatically there to offer assistance. Today, it is a common occurrence to see Mary playing bingo cards or moving dominoes on her behalf as well as others. The ease with which Mary Josephine interacts with her fellow residents as she moves about in her wheel chair is astounding. Her voice can be heard tenderly encouraging the ones that are without the ability to reason any longer as she wheels herself to the rooms of the bedridden residents for a chat.

Melody, Assistant Activity Director, has indicated repeatedly that Mary has no idea of how many lives she has touched over the years. No matter her circumstances, she just keeps living her destiny and delivering God's precious love to everyone she meets. When facing adversity or a challenge, her enormously



creative mind swings into immediate action. This is evident by the manner in which she communicates with a gentleman that has no ability to speak. Recognizing his desire to communicate, and the joy that exudes from his sparkling eyes, she has designed an extremely unique manner in which to carry on a conversation with him. Resembling two doves sitting on a wire, she nods her head and blinks her eyes at him, and he returns the favor in kind. They will sit for a bit each day, using this method of communication, oblivious to everyone around.

Another special friend asks for his gurney to be pushed beside Mary's wheel chair, knowing she will make a face and click her tongue at him. In response, he will raise his gnarled hands into a fist, pretending to take a swing at her. This routine always produces gurgles of playful laughter between them.

### God's Magnetic Love

Consequently, day after day as Mary's dedicated care takers tended to her every need, the love that permeated every fiber of her being overflowed into their hearts as well. Thus, it took only a short time for one of her caregivers, Paula Williams, to assign her the name change God had planned for Mary during this season of her life; "Mama Jo." Her new name was indicative of the wisdom she now possessed in relating to others at this point in her journey.

Therefore, one and all at Christian Health Care know her today by the name, "Mama Jo," only. It is truly remarkable to note that during the unfolding of every season in Mary's Christian walk that each name God assigned to her matched with absolute perfection.

### Humor Abounds

A quote from Proverbs 15: 13 best describes the personality "Mama Jo" possessed that caused the dark clouds to disappear from the sky all her life. "A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken."

When one takes measure of a life well lived, its depth will be connected directly to the ability to savor each day's blend of flavors, no matter the outcome. The remedy for loneliness and longing for the good old days is a faith that smiles.

Thus, Mary Josephine, now called “Mama Jo,” began each day with a prayer, followed by honest work, a bit of play and an enormous bundle of love to share with all. Humor abounded from her entire being in the form of cleverness, laughter and fun. It took only a short time in her presence to identify the twinkle in her eyes that announced the arrival of a joke, humorous story, or teasing remark.

Once at Christmas time, she asked the Activity Director, Tammy, what she would like Santa to put in her stocking. Since staff members were not allowed to accept gifts, Tammy quickly replied, “Absolutely nothing. We are not allowed to receive gifts from residents.” However, “Mama Jo's” desire to give was not curtailed a bit as she continued to hammer the question home on a daily basis. One day as a show of humor on Tammy's part she stated to “Mama Jo”. “A million dollars would be great!”

Therefore, on Christmas morning, Tammy was mortified to find a present addressed to her from “Mama Jo.” Before Tammy could refuse to open it, “Mama Jo” assured her the contents would not break the employee rule at all. Inside the package, Tammy found one million dollars in play money; a gift that was so treasured that even her own children and grandchildren were not allowed to touch this rich precious endowment.

Another time, when “Mama Jo's “ humor arrived in full bloom was on April Fools Day. As Debbie, a staff member, was preparing to start her daily task of cleaning each room, she was carefully loading her cart with all the necessary supplies. “Mama Jo” came rolling down the hallway with joy in her heart and that twinkle in her eyes. Stopping her wheel chair beside Debbie's cart, she seriously stated, “Oh, Debbie! One of your wheels is coming off!” Quickly dropping to her knees, Debbie started inspecting each wheel with great concern in order to prevent an accident. When she was ready to scrutinize the final wheel, “Mama Jo” gleefully called out, “April Fool!” This brought laughter throughout the day for everyone.

### Dark Clouds

Even when 'Mama Jo's” day arrived with cloudy skies instead of sunshine, her faith that smiles overcame the darkness and worry. Recently when she suffered a second stroke and was rushed immediately to the hospital, the sense of humor and

joy still surfaced with the attending physicians, nurses, and all staff members. Word soon spread among them that “Mama Jo” was a real character. When a young student learning to be a speech therapist was attending to Mary's needs, he was making great efforts to be sophisticated and extremely professional with all his conduct. Before departing her room the evening before her release, he continued the professional dialog enunciating each word carefully. As Mary listened to every word her expression was absolutely priceless. That devilish twinkle started to dance in her eyes which indicated the young man was just about to be leveled.

She held up her hand and stated, “I will make you a deal. When I get to heaven, I'll wait for you at the gate. Then when you arrive, I'll give you a good “spankin.” He totally lost his composure, burst into laughter and commented, “By the time I get through misbehaving down here, I will have earned that spanking for sure.”

### Good Deeds Are Contagious

When one considers how rapidly the footsteps of good deeds spread throughout the universe and penetrate within the hearts of others, it is truly a mystery that only God comprehends. The quiet touch of gentle hands accompanied by a tender smile enters the deepest recess of the human soul; unlike the penetration of any living organism on the planet. Only the righteous deeds delivered with love, serve as the healing balm and courage needed to face the obstacles and foes of daily living. That is why our God patiently offers ample preparation for each of us to dawn His full armor in becoming servants to those in need.

Mark 10: 43-45 states: “Whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be a slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”

Our Heavenly Father fully recognizes that far more than just spontaneous reactions are needed to satisfy the hunger of the human soul. It is easy to overlook the waves of changing emotions in facial expressions or identify sadness settling softly into liquid brown melancholy eyes.

Allowing God to mold us into His mighty instruments soon changes every part of

our beings. Instead of focusing inward, our eyes will soon be scanning the horizon like brightness streaming from a light house across the vast space of ocean waters. We will be fully conscious that it is not about us, but all about God's destiny for our lives. It will become abundantly clear that we are here at our Creator's pleasure and for His divine purpose.

As Mary Josephine, now called 'Mama Jo,' had walked along the curved paths and climbed the highest mountains of her life, God had been molding her like a clay jar, turning her into His masterpiece. The lives she would touch on her journey were already planned in advance of her entrance into this world. God makes no mistakes and is surprised by nothing.

All these truths were evident in the reaction of the residents and staff members when "Mama Jo" returned from the second life threatening stroke. Even though she needed to be placed in a different room, her faithful friends knew when she returned and quickly located her new address. It was a common occurrence to see sixteen or more visitors at once trying to get a glimpse of her face, making sure she was on track for recovery. There was a constant flow of feet and wheel chairs moving in and out of her bouquet filled room. "Mama Jo," in her usual humble style, could not imagine what all the fuss was about.

At another time, while on an excursion to the Springfield History Museum of Greene County for a private meeting, that humble spirit sprang forth again. Mary knew the gracious staff at the museum would be receiving her as a VIP so she could look at photos from her past and asked the writer the most precious question. As she was being wheeled down the hallway toward her transportation, she inquired, "What have I ever done in my life to deserve this special day?"

It was a pleasure to be a spectator at this private meeting as she joyfully reviewed pictures of people from her past and recalled their names with ease. At the end of the meeting when jazz music performed by The Philharmonics was played, the braid on the back of her head started to sway in perfect time. The group surrounding her marveled as she sang right along in perfect harmony. Her playfulness and humor won the hearts of everyone around. Later, when arriving back at Christian Health Care, it was truly amazing to observe the welcome home greetings from her friends. Word had already preceded her return of this spectacular celebration at the museum.

### **Reminiscing With Friends**

**Proverbs 17: 22 best describes the key to the steady stream of visitors that constantly flowed through all the seasons of “Mama Jo's” life with these words. “A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones.”**

**While “Mama Jo” was still regaining her strength from the second stroke, two long time friends, Homer Boyd and Alfred Culp from her old neighborhood, stopped in for a time of rejoicing together. Although the light in her room had been dimmed in preparation for a nap, the arrival of these two friends turned the space into a live field of electrical energy. Forget the nap! Mary sat up with an enormous smile on her face and began the conversation as if their time together was only yesterday. Since both Homer and Alfred still sang in a group called The Philharmonics, they broke into a lively rendition of “All Shook Up!”**

**Not about to be left out, “Mama Jo” sat up even higher on her pillows, wiggled that braid on her head and joined right in. Their merry hearts certainly acted like medicine for the three of them and all who passed in the hallway. Everyone who happened by would pause, smile approvingly and nod; gestures that added evidence to how contagious a cheerful spirit is to others.**

**As the conversation among the three friends took on a more serious tone, “Mama Jo” assured them that she was content with her present surroundings. She was making sure neither of them felt sympathy regarding her need to recuperate in bed for awhile.**

**Again, the musical friends, Alfred and Homer, broke into the song “Any Place I Hang My Hat Is Home,” which fit the situation perfectly. Mary's voice joined them within seconds, which meant all was well.**

**As the last note ended, Mary continued, “I'm here and I don't regret it because I know there is something left for me to do. Besides, this address is just another earthly stop, not my eternal home. It's God's timing, not mine. I will go when He wants me. All in His good time!”**

**Suddenly, her friend, Homer agreed by sharing his near death experience with Mary. After having a heart attack and touching the shores of heaven, a voice**

asked him, “Why are you here?” Homer answered, “I think this is where I am supposed to be.” However, the most crystal clear voice Homer had ever heard in his life commanded, “You go back. When I get ready for you, I'll come and get you myself.”

Later, after being asked what God looked like by his friends, Homer boldly replied, “I did not look. I became a Christian through faith, not sight! When I finish with my earthly assignment, I'm out of here! Don't cry for me because I know where I'm going and who is coming to get me!”

After the two faithful visitors bade a happy farewell, and the light was once again dimmed in their old friend's room, the setting sun signaled the end to a perfect day. As Mary rejoiced over the blessings these two friends had delivered, her heart was bursting with love; full to overflowing. She did not know when the benediction of her life would come, but still felt a calming assurance that only God could provide.

Even though her health was failing, entering into the gates of heaven meant total renewal in the form of a new body; fullness and eternal life that only the arms of Jesus could deliver. All was well with her soul! His will be done! Hallelujah! Amen!



Mary and Grant ready to dance. Grant the Great Hunter. Mary training her pet dog.  
(All three pictures courtesy of Treshna Stephens, Mary's great niece.)



**Mary providing health care.**



**Mary and Grant bragging on size of fish caught.**

**(Both pictures courtesy of Treshna Stephens, Mary's great niece.)**



**Grant after stroke wearing mickey mouse ears.**



**Mary after stroke (middle picture)**



**Treshna and family on the day  
Mary decided in favor of nursing  
home care.**



**Cross Town Barbecue as it appears in 2009.**





**Eddie Nickoles and Mary shaking their fists at each other in fun; an everyday occurrence at Christian Health Care.**



**Mary and Tammy, Activity Director at Christian Health Care.**



**Melody Assistant Activity Director and Mary at Christian Health Care.**



**Payton Herd, age 7, reading The Icky Sticky Frog to Mary, age 91. Shows how much Mary still loves children.**

## **Chapter 10**



# **PRAY WITHOUT CEASING**

**Psalm 55:17**

**“Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry  
aloud, and He shall hear my voice.”**

### **Foundation For Prayer**

**It is written in the Bible that we should pray without ceasing; which indicates the importance of a purposeful daily prayer life for each and every one of us.**

**1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18 states, “Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.”**

**To Mary Josephine Pascall, prayer holds the key to unlocking the gates of heaven; thus, the reason for this chapter. It is critical to note these words were written at her request, as a way of bringing others to their knees in a prayer of praise to God.**

**Even at age 91, Mary still follows the habit her mother, Ella, instilled in her life everyday regarding the importance of prayer. Her mother was consistent in laying the foundation for her daughter's prayer life by patiently kneeling with her at bedtime throughout her childhood. The prayer Mary and her mother always repeated together began with, “Now I lay me down to sleep.” Today, because Mary prays for others, she believes the words “Now I lay me down to sleep” mean that God wraps His mighty arms around more than just herself.**

**Consequently, every morning when Mary's eyes see the light of day, her voice is lifted up in prayer to her Best Friend; a conversation that continues from morning to evening as she moves around the nursing home in her wheel chair. Then, at bedtime, before her eyes are closed in sleep, she raises her voice to God in a prayer of thanksgiving for the guidance He has provided throughout the day; ending with “Thy will be done.”**

Prayer was such an important part of our Savior's life that He took time and found solitary places to spend in communion with His Father. Mark 1: 35 serves as an example of this action by saying, "In the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed."

Again in Luke 6: 12 it reads, "Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God."

### Mary's Advice

Even though Mary Josephine Pascall is now in the sunset of her earthly life and is no longer knee deep in the hurried steps of society, she is still extremely cognizant of the flurry of activity and hectic pace that surrounds her existence.

Therefore, due to the news media and daily contact with caregivers, she is acutely aware of the complexities faced by the human race today. When speaking about the future of people on this earth, her face resembles a patchwork quilt of worried emotions.

Although Mary recognizes the necessity of the array of communication systems in society, she is still extremely concerned by their impact on the emotional and spiritual health of the entire human race. She takes note of young and old alike walking around with cell phones appearing to be glued to their ears on a permanent basis. If they are not talking or sending a text message to someone, their eyes are checking the time in an effort to take advantage of every second. Also, just by simply glancing out her window, she can observe the fast pace and tailgating of cars as they speed by on the busy highway.

In short, Mary Josephine believes this society to be in desperate straits unless dramatic changes are made throughout the world. She also notices advertisements on TV regarding the latest equipment designed to keep individuals connected using the most current advancements in technology. These commercials make her wonder if people know that prayer is the only way to stay connected to God; the source for insurance called, "ETERNAL LIFE."

Mary Exclaimed, "People do a search on their computers and think they are experts on every subject. Events and happenings are analyzed on TV by a panel

of specialists, repeating themselves over and over. People are in such a hurry that stopping and figuring out the facts relating to the real issues of life is not even a possibility. Thus, apathy sets in regarding almost everything; a condition that allows a select few individuals to make the decisions for all.

Remembering back to childhood, Mary recalls a lady named Mrs. Henry who was known to walk from house to house being a servant to all. She literally became the hands and feet for Jesus. Mrs. Henry and many others came together as a united community and prayed for those facing problems and challenges.

Mary continued expressing her concerns by stating, “Time will pass unnoticed all too soon by people maintaining this hectic pace. Then what happens when the cell phone of life loses its juice because of illness or death? What will they have to say for themselves, then? It has been stated that the only thing we take with us from this life is the footsteps we leave behind for others to follow. Where will our footsteps lead the children of tomorrow? Will their lives be filled with a new and exciting hope for things to come? Will they know how to stay connected to their Heavenly Father; the life source for all eternity?”

As Mary's voice increased in volume, she stressed, “Unless people bow down on their knees and pray without ceasing, hope will not even be a fleeting possibility. We need to PRAY, PRAY, PRAY!”

After much thought as to the absence of prayer in the lives of others, Mary determined that many people are simply uncomfortable with the act of prayer itself. They feel shy about praying in front of others and are at a loss for words that express their feelings.

Mary continued, “Then, when they thumb through a “How To Pray” book or hear an important person deliver an eloquently spoken corporate prayer, this serves to substantiate their feelings of inadequacy and confirms their decisions to remain silent.”

### Conversation With God

In an effort to help people be comfortable with praying, she spoke in an animated manner by saying, “Honey, they need to remember that prayer is simply a conversation with God; a time to listen and speak with Him. If you do all the

talking and no listening, you will never learn about your Best Friend. When I pray each day, I start by offering praise and expressing my love to Him. Honey, He loves me even when I am unlovable. Can you beat that? Then, I shut my mouth and listen with my ears. Sometimes, ideas go through my head right then, or later when I am going about my business. At other times, people will say something directly to me that I know is a message from my Lord. Better yet, when I read my Bible, some words appear to jump right off the pages at me and almost give me a scare. However, I just end up laughing right out loud because I know it is just His way of talking to me!”

With a crescendo of excitement building, Mary's voice vibrated around the room as she exclaimed, “Think about being loved so much that your Heavenly Father takes the time to seek you out!” (At this point, Mary clicked her tongue and smacked her lips loudly as a show of gusto.)

Continuing, she explained, “Next dear heart, I ask God to forgive my mistakes. Now shut your mouth child and don't be telling me you are perfect, for I know better. Just fess up because He sees what you're doing both day and night. Don't be afraid because He loves you. Just like I felt when my poodle chewed on my socks. I didn't much like the holes, but it didn't stop me from loving that little ball of fur!”

“Last, I tell Him my problems and ask Him for advice. Honey, don't forget your friends because He wants to help them, too. Finally, I sing Him a song to make His day better!”

Mary Josephine Pascall has talked with her Heavenly Father so much that others easily spot their comfortable relationship. They have communicated with each other so frequently over the years that Jesus has become Mary's most intimate friend. Therefore, a day is not complete without having an intimate conversation with each other.

In conclusion, Mary makes one last point by stating, “Don't forget to tell people that God already recognizes the sound of their voices and how they pronounce words. So, tell them to pray to Him just like they're talking to me! Then, dear child, our Lord will answer in His own time, not theirs. Now don't be “givin” up. Have faith and wait. I'll be “prayin” for you.”



**2 Chronicles 7: 14 adds support to Mary's advice by stating, "If people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."**

**AMEN!**



**Mary Josephine Pascall bowed in prayer; a common sight others witness daily.  
A PRAYER WARRIOR TO BEHOLD!**

## Chapter 11



# **REFLECTIONS OF A HUMBLE SPIRIT**

**Matthew 18:3-4**

**“I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”**

### **Humility Defined**

**When we view society as it exists today and compare it historically to yesterday, it appears that mankind has truly crossed every abyss and elevated itself to unimaginable heights; or so it seems. Given the information highway with its latest technological developments, the ability to travel throughout the world, along with the advanced scientific research on how the human body functions, one would think a perfect, infinite society has been born; or has it?**

**Thus, in the process of drawing a conclusion as to the accuracy of these statements, one must define the word eternity as being infinite; duration without beginning or end. Therefore, without calling on all the master minds in this world, it is clearly obvious that these developments and discoveries by mankind do not fit within the definition of the word, eternity. All these things are material and will disappear when each of us takes our final breath of air; which is a reality for all mankind.**

**Further, in Matthew, Jesus compares our earthly lives to the grass of the field which is here today and gone tomorrow. However, after being warned by Him that life on this earth lasts only a moment, He follows by opening the door of opportunity for choosing eternal life. This offer to live forever also is accompanied with a complete instructional guide called, The Holy Bible; His Word.**



**In Isaiah 66:2, we all are told explicitly what behavior God values with these words: “This is the one I esteem; he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at My word.”**

**Our Heavenly Father, with theses words, is sending a clear message on the importance of living a life filled with humility, behavior built on a modest sense of ones own importance. Pure and simply, this means our daily lives will reflect an unassuming, unpretentious attitude, without egotism, boastfulness, or vanity. Our behavior will send a clear message to others through actions that life is not about self or things of this world, but God, instead. It will be abundantly clear to others that God is the center of our universe with the goal of our journey being based on His destiny for our lives. This means that we will fall to our knees in heart felt obedience to our Heavenly Father.**

**Philippians 2: 8 shows us that Jesus set a clear example for His children to follow through His own actions of humility. Paul describes the actions of Jesus by stating: “And being found in appearance as man, He humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross.”**

**After internalizing God's desire for us to live a humble life followed by a clear focus on the definition, most of us question our abilities to comply. However, before we succumb to defeat, it is important to point out that when we spend each day trying to humble ourselves the Holy Spirit will react to our openness as an invitation to dwell in our hearts and minds. Thus, acting as our Holy Counselor, he will teach us even greater humility which will develop within our souls the ability to bear with one another in love.**

**Consequently, it has been noted that Christians who are devoted to being a servant to others will have hearts and minds fueled by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. They will be the least judgmental of their brothers and the most willing to meet life's toughest challenges. They will be filled to overflowing with a faith that smiles and a belief that all things are possible in Christ Jesus.**

**Thus, it is believed there is no greater gift that adults can teach the children of tomorrow than demonstrating loving actions to others through a humble walk. This was a lesson well learned throughout the writer's childhood due to the manner in which her parents displayed these behaviors. Her earthly father, a country minister for over 60 years, left behind a poem containing such rich words**

of humility that it is worth sharing with all.

My Home

It may look tattered worn and ragged  
This place where we abide  
No frivolous joy or gaiety  
To warrant our happy pride.

You may search this wide world over  
All under heaven's vast dome  
In all earths joy and splendor  
You'll find no place like home.

Without the costly velvet rugs,  
No gold or carpets fine  
Walls simply painted with white and gray  
In that humble home of mine.

A place where we can meet with God  
And all His blessings share  
A place where love shall rule supreme  
Through peace, joy and prayer

You may search this wide world over  
And no matter where'er you roam  
In all earths beauty bright and fair  
You'll find no place like home.

(Written by : Reverend Payton Smyer)

Mary Josephine Pascall and my earthly father had in common, a modest sense of self importance and shared all their blessings with others in need. Early in life, both started hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit offering guidance for each step of their earthly journeys. They also accepted the scripture from Philippians 2:13: "For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose."

Therefore, when they were on their knees with faces lifted toward the heavens, they were praying in unison, “Here I am Lord, the child You created for Your purpose. Though I've fallen short because of self will, I believe You love me. Although your voice is not always clear to my sinful ears, and confuses me, I vow to follow You everyday of my life. You are the Way, Truth, and my Light for all eternity. Amen.”

As Mary's life has unfolded on the pages of this book, it is apparent that, although left an orphan at age three, she proceeded to climb the highest hills and face the darkest valleys of her life with a faith that smiled. The recognition early on that her Father, Almighty God, was the Great Creator of her life filled her with a sense of direction and purpose beyond measure.

Thus, Mary dared to be different in the face of segregation; a time in history that forced restrictions on every part of her being. She soared like an eagle above the ordinary ideas and sameness that were acceptable in the eyes of society. On this journey where deviating from the norm meant learning from mistakes and admitting to shortcomings alone, she courageously lifted her arms to the light and moved forward one small step at a time.

Consequently, there were places where she found herself walking in what appeared to be barren waste land, producing only violent shudders deep within her being; a time when the season of hope and promise belonged in the past. As she fought her way toward hope, cobwebs like gossamer veils appeared to dim the light causing her to stumble and fall; groping her way toward an answer. There all around her was a cold fog of confusion, doubt and fear.

However, her saving grace each time was the self realization that nothing was too big or impossible for her God. Through the act of humility, Mary felt the indwelling of the Holy Spirit with such force that she often found it necessary to pull her car to the side of the road and listen with full attention. No matter her circumstances, He was always there patiently waiting for her to focus and calm her senses.

Over time, God poured His divine love into every fiber of Mary's being; causing her to open her spirit like a budding rose lifting its velvet crimson petals toward the open sky. As Mary's loving Father carefully molded her into a vessel of love,

it was apparent that He cared more about who she was as a person than where her feet were walking at the moment. Fortunately, our gracious God in all His wisdom knew that once He molded her into the person He desired, everything else would fall into place.

Thus, as the seasons of Mary's life unfolded, God's blessings of love poured from her heart into the lives of old and young alike. Whether at work or play, God used her gentle touch to minister to others in need; regardless of age, gender or race. Our amazing Heavenly Father's plan of forming Mary into His vessel of love gracefully flowed into the destiny He had planned for her earthly journey long before she was born.

As a result, Mary's mission mirrored the Apostle Paul when in 1 Corinthians 9:19 he said, "Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible."

### God Chooses The Common

Many times when individuals read in the Bible about the mighty people God used for service in His kingdom, they fail to relate it to their own personal lives. The perception of the giants in the Old Testament such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and David are viewed as vastly different from people today; drawing no relationship to self. Yet, when you focus closely on each person, even though chosen by God for specific reasons, every one of them sinned in the eyes of their Father. Yet, the common thread that wove itself through all their lives was the respect and loyalty they displayed toward God. No matter how far off course in thought or action, they bowed with great humility at the throne of God.

In other words, they were human beings just like each of us, making mistakes on their journeys. They, like all of us, forgot at times that life was not about them, but being obedient to God, instead. There were times in their lives when they tried to handle things on their own rather than pray and listen to what God wanted them to do at the moment. Today, like then, we must ask ourselves how many times our Father has patiently watched us fumble around being independent, having all the answers, knowing we were not only on the wrong path, but in a totally unrelated location. Yet, He was still there when we finally figured out we were lost and without hope.

Mary openly admits to being imperfect like the giants described in the Old Testament and paving the highway of life with one mistake after another. She will say, "Honey, the Lord never left my side even when I was sure all the right answers came from my own head instead of His. I was living life loudly, without thought toward the consequences. I thought I was so cute until I found myself down and out, sitting in a ditch. But do you know what child? The good Lord never left me. His hand was always reaching for mine!"

### Still Kicking At Age 91

When Mary enters a crowded room, she is fully cognizant that, by far, at age 91 she is usually the oldest person present. Sometimes when remembering the friends and loved ones long departed, admittedly, it causes a strange feeling to descend upon her entire being. After all, she finds herself the only living soul belonging to a generation that has already bade their farewells; a lonely position, indeed.

Today, when Mary addresses the reason for being among the last in her generation to depart this earth, she will say, "I'm here and I don't regret it! I am certain beyond a shadow of doubt there is something else for me to do. I don't know what it is yet but my Father has the answer. We live. We die. We go to heaven or hell. It is in God's time, not ours. We go when he wants us and where He wants us; all in His time. I don't grieve about anyone now for it is the will of God they are gone. The thing for me to do is to get myself ready and God will take care of the rest. His will be done."

### My Precious Child

As Mary sits in meditation, looking out toward the woods behind the nursing home, she appears peaceful and resolved. Each morning as the first rays of sunlight announce the beginning of yet another day in her 91 years of living, she greets it with joy and a promise to do her best until time for her departure. Using the one hand that still works, she turns to a scripture in the Bible that causes a gentle smile to cross her face in hopeful expectation of things to come. With her low crisp voice she reads from 2 Timothy 4: 7-8: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on

that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing.”

Throughout Mary's journey, God has never taken His eyes off her coming and going. At the beginning, He found a most uncommon choice as a loving parent for a three year old orphan girl; an adoptive mother who had been Mary's landlord. When it was time to find her a soul mate, Grant was there with love to assign the name “Madam Queen” which fit her personality like a glove. Then when God had filled Mary's entire being with love, she poured it out freely into the hearts of children of every race and color; who then nicknamed her their “Aunt Jo.” Last, when in the sunset of her years, wearing a body severely affected from a stroke, her fellow residents at the nursing home changed her name to “Mama Jo”; a perfect title for this season of wisdom.

Thus, from the beginning of her journey forward, God acted as a loving Father, never letting her out of His sight. He had designed a destiny built for Mary based on love and guided her every step of the way toward achieving this goal. He still knows her better than she knows herself and has eyes that never leave the calendar of her life.

As a result, it isn't any wonder that Mary faces each day with such confidence. All that is required for her to witness the depth of His love is to read the following verse from Psalm 116: 15: “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” This scripture fully assures Mary that her Heavenly Father has carefully chosen the time He will call her into His presence.

In conclusion, it is the writer's belief that when Mary Josephine Pascall enters the Pearly Gates, a warm crystal clear voice of authority will greet her by saying, “Welcome to your eternal home “My Precious Child”; a name He assigned to her from birth.

Last, as the curtain closes on the final chapter of Mary Josephine Pascall's earthly journey, the richness and depth of each season act as an inspiration for all God's children. When you the reader ponder the highs and lows of a life well lived, it will be obvious that through it all, Mary's humble spirit allowed God's love to serve as the energy source that fueled her with endurance and courage to face unimaginable conflicts and yet dream unthinkable thoughts for a brighter tomorrow. In doing so, Mary is leaving behind enormous footsteps for others to follow; each shaped by a humble spirit.



Without question, the resounding message she would like to leave as a guide for each of us to use on our walk with God is, **“WITHOUT LOVE, YOU'RE JUST A BALL IN HIGH GRASS!”** AMEN!



**MARY THE PRAYER WARRIOR COMMUNING WITH GOD; A COMMON OCCURANCE THAT SERVES AS A WITNESS TO ALL MANKIND.**



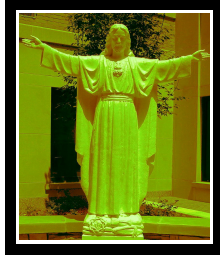
**“Without Love, You're Just A Ball In High Grass” from Sunset Embers Collection**



**\*\*\*\*ALTAR CALL\*\*\*\***

# **WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS**

Written by: Charles C. Converse & Joseph Scriven



**What a friend we have in Jesus,  
All our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry  
Everything to God in prayer!  
O what peace we often forfeit,  
O what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry  
Everything to God in prayer!**

**Have we trials and temptations?  
Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Can we find a friend so faithful  
Who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.**

**Are we weak and heavy laden,  
Cumbered with a load of care?  
Precious Savior still our refuge  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?  
Take it to the Lord in prayer,  
In His arms He'll take and shield thee  
Thou wilt find a solace there.**



# A WOMAN OF HONOR

**NAACP FREEDOM FUND BALL AWARD**

**Presented to Mary Josephine Pascall on May 15, 2010  
for her life time achievements.**

**AMEN!**



**MARY JOSEPHINE PASCALL**

***In November, 2010, Mary Josephine Pascall cast her crown at the feet of Jesus. As she departed this earth, people from all over the Springfield community streamed to her bedside to say their final farewells. The writer and her power of attorney witnessed Mary with a smile on her face as she joyfully took wings and soared on the wings of angels to heaven. "WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS!"***

**AMEN!**