

Celebration of Life for



Deaconess
Mary Simpson

Sunrise

December 11, 1925

Sunset

July 14, 2016

Saturday, July 23, 2016 - 12:00 Noon

THE GREATER HIGHWAY CHURCH OF CHRIST

132 E. 111th Street

New York, New York

Bishop Liston Page, Sr., Pastor



"Hallelujah"

Reflections of Life

Mary Skinner Simpson is the fraternal twin of Martha Skinner Midget. They are the daughters of Carthene McCleese Skinner and James Paul Skinner. Mary's father was a strong Christian disciplinarian. Mother Carthene was a midwife, who was spiritually gifted with dreams and discernment. She was also the best cook in town. Mary's parents made a successful living as farmers. **THEY WERE NOT SHARECROPPERS.** They owned the land and profits earned on the farm.

The Skinner's primary source of income came from growing cotton. In addition to cotton, the farm produced apples, peaches, pears, plums, figs, grapes, pecans, peanuts, watermelon, cantaloupe, cabbage, kale and lettuce. Their livestock included chickens, pigs, goats, horse, mules and cows. Mary, along with her 12 brothers and sisters worked long and hard on their parent's farm. They never went hungry during the depression because they grew practically everything. When Mary was a child, there were no cell phones, no in-door telephones, no Internet, no television and no indoor plumbing. Their bathroom was called an "out house" because it was located outside of the house.

With her siblings, Mary climbed trees, and rolled around inside of a car tire. She played hide and seek, leap frog. Before television, their family gathered around the radio to hear the news or entertaining drama played out on the air.

Mary Skinner Simpson's Family History

Mary's mother, Carthene was the daughter of Dora McCleese, (affectionately known as Grand Dora). Grand Dora, born 1867, was the daughter of a slave. She established a successful boarding house and owned a general store in Columbia, North Carolina. Grand Dora's daughter (Carthene) assisted her mother by preparing meals for customers. James Paul Skinner, one of the boarders, married Carthene. They raised 13 children in Hertford, NC. Twins Mary and Martha represent 8/9 of 13 children. Grand Dora deceased around 1940.

Mary's father, James Paul Skinner, was the son of Molly and Hardy Skinner. Molly Skinner was born around 1967. She was as ambitious as Grand Dora McCleese. Molly Skinner was a midwife who owned a store, washed clothes for white people, cleaned homes for white people, and raised children for white people. She was respected by black and white alike. Molly Skinner obtained property which was passed down to her children. Molly Skinner died around 1952.

Mary and her siblings grew up in the church. The rule of the Skinner home: "If you do not got to Sunday school, you could not go outside and

play.” Mary and her siblings understood and practiced respect towards their elders. Since the land was owned by her Grandmother Molly, some of the elderly had homes on the property. Mary remembers Martha Page. She was the older sister of Grandmother Molly. Mary remembers Martha Page. She was the older sister of Grandmother Molly who was a former slave. Her slave story is as follows: Sometime in the 1880s, Martha’s master was looking for a baby to sell. Martha hid her infant daughter in the bottom of a dirty clothes basket to hide her. The miracle is that the baby did not make a sound. After searching her house, the master left to find another slave baby. The baby hidden in the basket was Emma Gallop. She was James Paul Skinner’s first cousin. Emma grew up to be phenomenal in her own right. After attending the 1906 Azusa revival in St. Louis, she purchased land and established a church that she pastored. Mary and her siblings were raised in her church. Both Emma and her mother lived to be over 100 years old.

Leaving North Carolina

Mary left Hertford, North Carolina for New York in the 1940s. She reunited with Rose Skinner Evans (her older sister) who was the first to move to NY. William Simpson, also from Hertford was a WW2 Veteran who became the love of Mary’s life. When Mary and William were married, they moved with his mother. After her two eldest were born, Mary and William were accepted to join the newly established Bronx River Projects (BRP). When they moved into the BRP, buildings were still under construction and Arnold was a baby. While raising her children, Mary worked as a domestic. (This was before the Civil Rights Movement.) She had four children: David, Arnold, Janet, and Clinton. Mary was also a volunteer worker for the school her children attended. Sometime after 1979, William and Mary moved to Teaneck, NJ. She eventually worked for the NY Hilton Hotel until her retirement. Mary lost the love of her life, William, who passed away in 2006. She is a virtuous woman who is blessed to have grandchildren and great grandchildren.

She had been a member of the Bible Church of Christ joining with her husband in 1977 under the leadership of Bishop Roy Bryant, Sr. She was a student at Bible Church of Christ Bible Institute where she completed several classes. In later years, being unable to attend her home church she attended Prevailing Rock Ministries Hackensack Pastor W. Spellman. She loved praising God, giving God the Glory and testifying of his goodness.

Left to cherish precious memories are: her children, sons, Arnold Simpson and Clinton Simpson, daughter, Janet Simpson White; her twin sister, Martha Williams, and sister, Dora Newell, Ilena Spellman (Pastor William); sister-in-law, Ella Mae Vaughn; eleven grandchildren; eight grandchildren; and a host of nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

May the blessing of the Lord Continue to make rich and add no sorrow to your life!

Order of Service

Prelude

Opening Hymn

Selection

Scripture Reading
Old Testament
New Testament

Prayer of Comfort

Selection

Acknowledgements & Remarks

Reflections of Life

Selection

Words of Comfort
Bishop Darren Page

Recessional

Interment

William C. Doyle Veteran Cemetery
Arneytown, New Jersey

I'm Free

Don't grieve for me, for now I'm free
I'm following the path God laid for me
I took his hand when I heard Him call
I turned my back and left it all.

I could not stay another day.

To laugh, to love, to work or play.
Tasks left undone must stay that way,
I found that peace at the close of day.

If my parting has left a void,
Then fill it up with remembered joy.
A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss,
Oh, yes these things I too will miss.
Be not burdened with times of sorrow,
I wish you the sunshine of tomorrow.

My life's been full, I savored much.
Good friends, good times, a loved one's touch.

Perhaps my time seemed all too brief,
Don't lengthen it now with undue grief.
Lift up your heart and share with me,
God wanted me now, He set me free!

-author unknown

Acknowledgement

The family of the late **Deaconess Mary Simpson** wishes to acknowledge with deep appreciation the many expressions of love, concern and kindness shown to their family during this time of bereavement.

May God Bless and Keep You!

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