FATHER DIVINE IN LONELY GRAVE?

THE ORIGINAL AND?—Inset, right, taken from an old Divine movement folder showing a portion of the first major "heaven" at Sayville, L.I., N.Y., is the "Father Divine" who left the Wayne County farm and timberland of his father, to become a member of the First Born Church of the Living God, in nearby Brunswick, Ga., and where the idea of taking on the title, "God," took root. He was Robert Gibson, who, the records show, died in Brooklyn's Unity Hospital in 1950. Left is the "Father Divine" of the 50's, shown with the "Spotless Virgin Bride," left, in matrimony in Washington, D.C., 1947. At the time, Robert Gibson was a patient in the Pilgrim State Hospital, Long Island, N.Y.

Headstone Bears Name Of Robert Gibson

By BOB QUEEN
(Philadelphia AFRO-AMERICAN Managing Editor)

PHILADELPHIA

An exhaustive check of leads by this writer since 1956 reveals conclusively that the mystery of the existence or non-existence of the original Father Divine ends in a grave in Silver Mt. Cemetery, Staten Island, N.Y.

The little man who conceived a unique and collosal religious organization and called himself "God" is presumably dead by all weight of the "evidence" compiled by the man who has claimed to be his blood

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son over a four-year campaign.

He departed this life on December 21, 1950, in the Unity Hospital, St. John and Buffalo Sts., Brooklyn, the New York borough where the great movement actually got rolling in the early 30's.

His death was obscured under the cloak of anonymity — the same dissolvement of identity that has been required of hundreds who have discarded name and family to enter the earthly "heaven."

However, he was buried under the name of his birth, a fact that has escaped every historian who

Father defies Cardinal on rights; picks exile

LOS ANGELES (UPI)— A Roman Catholic priest at odds with James Francis Cardinal McIntyre's approach to civil rights Monday began a self-imposed exile "as a gesture of protest, rather than be a part of the continuing evil of silence."

The Rev. John V. Coffield, pastor of Ascension Catholic Church, said he believed the Cardinal was sincere in believing colored citiens were making progress.

"He doesn't understand the deep hurt of the colored people," said Father Coffield, who said he had been "repeatedly reprimanded" for outspoken positions on racial and civil rights issues.

CARDINAL MCINTYRE, who last July was criticized by the Rev. William Duby, a young curate who demanded his removal as Archbishop on similar grounds, had no comment.

But the Chancery, speaking as the official voice of the archdiocese, reaffirmed the Cardinal, clergy and laity "are always and have always been united in their support of racial equality."

STRESSING THAT no administrative discipline has been imposed on Father Coffield, the chancery statement cited the reference to civil rights.

It said portions of the priest's declaration "demonstrate that those who concentrate excessively on a particular point, to the virtual exclusion of all other factors will sometimes find that zeal has produced an unbalanced approach which defeats its own purpose."

Father Coffield, 50, said he expected to go to Chicago and work in a south side parish. He said he expected to find a different attitude there.

SPECIFICALLY, the priest spoke out against Proposition 14, the controversial initiative which nullified most fair housing laws and bars Culpepper 2nd Division.

The nine surviving children of Mrs. Mandin are five daughters, Mrs. Margaret Stewart, 21, Misses Shirley, 23, Delores, 18, Juanita, 16, and Laverne London 14 and four sons, Warrenton Jr., 20, Bernard, 8, Anthony, 7, and Michael, 3.

legislative action in the future.

Priests in some Northern California churches spoke out from the pulpit against the measure, out Cardinal McIntyre made it policy to take no stand on the measure. Proposition 14 did pass.

Although Father Duby had petitioned the Pope to remove Cardinal McIntyre, Father Coffield said he thought the archbishop on the whole did "marvelous work in Los Angeles." The Cardinal's organization of parochial schools has been praised by most Catholic clergy and lay leaders.

* * *

BUT THE split with Cardinal McIntyre came on the issue of civil rights. He referred to an enforced vacation starting in July and continuing through November.

"Scarcely anyone knew of the shocking way I was forced out of California after I had spoken out against Proposition 14. . . I was hopeful that silent acceptance of the injustice to me and my parishioners would help defeat the proposition.

"I was wrong. I should have fought it openly. I want to have no part in the continuing silence and lack of repentance which is daily driving away many excellent people.

* * *

"ON SATURDAY, Nov. 14, I was ordered to maintain a silence on racism," said Father Coffield in a statement read yesterday to the 1,000 members of his parish at the masses.

"I chose instead a self-imposed exile from the diocese as a gesture of protest against, and rather than be a part of, the continuing evil of silence."

In the chancery statement Monday, it was noted that Father Coffield "requested permission to be absent from his parish and from the archdiocese, and this permission was granted upon his petition."

Takes life as friends watch him

Standing with two friends, in the 2600 block 11th St., NW, an 18 - year- old youth turned a black Italian .22 caliber automatic pistol to his head and fired Thursday evening. The two confused youths watched the victim slump to the ground as they panicked and ran for help.

Several grocery buyers at a store as few feet away rushed to the scene when the sound of the bullet was heard and looked on helplessly.

Police said Leonard Bettis Green of 1226 Euclid St., NW was pronounced dead at Freedmen's Hospital at 7:10 p.m. less than 20 minutes after the incident took place in the 2600 block of 11th St., NW.

Police have been unable to find a motive for the shooting after questioning the two 18-year-old youths who were with the victim when the shot was fired.

Leonard, a former Cardozo High School student, had recently told friends he was planning to go back to school. He was employed as a jumper on one of the city's trucks.

Funeral services are being held today at 12:30 p.m. at the Brooks and Allen Funeral Chapel 1200 Florida Ave., NW. Burial will be in Carver Memorial Cemetery.

Stephney Goffney,

Funeral services were held Saturday at the Temple of Freedom Church of God for Stephney Goffney, 87, of 1417 Buchanan St., NW. Burial was in Lincoln Memorial Cemetery.

He was a native of Selma, Ala., and for more than 20 years he was an elder at the Church of God following his retirement in 1940 from the Bureau of Printing and Engraving. Mr. Goffney was a graduate of the Howard University School of Theology.

He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Marie Goffney, four sons, Andrew S., Lawrence J., Joseph M., and Watson T. Goffney, and a daughter,

—Crime roundup

(Continued from Page 17)

a housing project.

* * *

Chandler, a 33-year-old ex-football player, was freed on a plea of insanity in the Dec. 19, 1962 murder of his mother-in-law, Mrs. Evelyn Rogers.

* * *

Willie James Powers, 17, a Douglass High School student, was charged with fatally stabbing his stepfather, Pearley A. Powers, 39, 1000 block Vine St. during an argument.

FEBRUARY

Five children died in a fire at 1515 Leslie St. Their mother, Mrs. Hattie Williams, 29, and four other children survived the early morning blaze.

One of the four surviving children, a 10-year-old was later accused of having started the fire while playing with matches.

On February 19, dispondent husband, Leonard Carroll, 24, shot and killed his wife, Willie Louise, 20, as she slept, then killed himself.

* * *

They had been married for eight months. Police said the shooting took place at the home of the young woman's mother, Mrs. Dena Lovelace, 1826 Linden Ave.

* * *

On Feb. 24, suspended Patrolman Orlando J. Romeo was ready to stand trial on charges of bribery, but the prosecution wasn't because the star witness, Mrs. Mary Powers failed to appear.

She was found several days later and a terrible year for Ptl. Ernest D. Young began.

Mr. Young was accused of obstructing justice by harboring the witness to keep her from testifying. Also charged in the case was Chester W. Tawney, also a member of the House of Delegates.

He later resigned and was given probation before verdict.

* * *

Ollie J. Wilkins, 32, was found insame in criminal court and was sent to Perkins State Hospital. He was charged in the death by strangulation of his wife and two sons, Kevin, 8, and Kerwin, 2, in October 1963.

The body of his wife, Mrs. Doris Craig Wilkins, a Baltimore County school teacher was found in the second floor closet of her home in the 1100 block Seminole Ave. The bodies of the two boys were found in the bathroom in a tub full of water.

MARCH

Still unidentified is a year-old boy who was found on March 9 stuffed between dirty clothes in a clothes hamper in the basement of University Hospital. The medical examiner said the child died of pneumonia and malnutrition.

Also in March, Ellis Taylor, 25, 3000 block Lyndhurst St., was charge in the stabbing death of his pretty 24-year-old wife, Deanna.

Two months before the tragedy he had been released from the Army on a medical discharge after being treated at an Army Hospital for a chronic mental disorder.

* * *

During the months of March and April a record number of new born babies were found dead, one in a locker at Lexington Market, another in the incinerator of

Toward the end of March, Robert Williams, 28, unit block N. Kossuth St., shot and killed his estranged wife, Delores, shot her father, David Foss, 59, then killed himself in the 2700 block Presbury St.

A colored federal agent in filtrated a westside dope ring and aided in the arrest and conviction of 16 heroin pushers.

* * *

The nude boy if pretty Mrs. Catherine Hale, 35, 2500 block Robb St., was found in a rear yard of 2500 block Garrett Ave., only few yards from her own home.

Police said she had been beaten to death and charged a 52-year-old steel worker with murder. They also charged Augustus Fallen, who d scovered her body and called police, with attempting to criminally assault the woman as she was dying.

APRIL

More trouble came to Del. Young in April when police charged him with receiving a stolen $625 electrocardegraph. He has not been tried for this offense.

* * *

Sen. Verda F. Welcome (D. 4th) was returning home after an affair at the Lord Baltimore Hotel. As she parked her car a few doors from her home five shots pierced the air, two striking her in the hip and heel.

The shots police later learned had been fired from a passing car.

Del. Young was in trouble again when investigators charged him with masterminding the assassination plot. However, he was later freed by a jury in Harford County.

Tried and convicted for their parts in the bizarre conspiracy to kill Sen. Welcome "For her legislative seat" were Charles Hall, 30, who was arrested in Little Rock, Ark.; James G. McCall, 38, 200 block Stricker St., and Harold (Pop) Williams, 67, 300 block Franklintown Rd.

Curtis King, 43, 1200 block Oakhurst Pl., the accused gunman in the plot has not been tried. A plea of insanity was filed and a change of venue has been gratnd.

MAY

Sixteen-year-old Patricia A. Carrington who had been missing since Nov. 3, 1963, was found crammed in a closet of a vacant house on May 3 by workermen who had entered the house by mistake.

The daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Carrington, 1240 N. Washington St., had left her home to attend Mass at St. Francis Xavier and never returned.

Charged with striking her hereby causing the girl's death was Garland T. Jones, 100 block N. Patterson Park Ave. Charged with being an accessory to the murder was George N. Adams, 23, 1600 E. Eager st.

* * *

On May 28, a 15-year-old boy was charged with setting his 5-year-old sister on fire. Juvenile authorities waived jurisdiction and the youth was tried before a jury in criminal court. He was acquitted.

JUNE

Earl Koger Jr., 4200 block Bonner Rd., was indicted by the grand jury on 31 counts of violating auto insurance regulations and false pretenses.

* * *

Louis C. Petty died after being struck on the head on June 22 during a scuffle with police.

Mr. Petty's death drew charges of police brutality from civil rights organizations who said the beating represented the use of unneccessary force by Patrolman Glen Russell.

Patrolman Russell was later cleared by the grand jury.

JULY

Windsor Grover King, 27, 100 block Avondale St., was beaten to death with a baseball bat on July 3, in the 2400 block Maisel Ct.

Police later charged Roscoe Williamson, 18, 2400 blo ckMaisel Ct. and Leonard Planter, 21, 1500 block Fayette St., with the murder.

* * *

"Too many problems—too many troubles. My wife has been good to me. I did the best I could," was a note wrote by Charles O. Dean, 37 2600 block Edmondson Ave., before he took his life.

Police revealed he drank rat poison and shot himself in the chest. His wife Mrs. Liveran Dean was on vacation—in Western Pennsylvania at the time.

* * *

Following soon after the death of Louis Petty, Vernon Leopold, 28, 300 block N. Parrish St., was shot to death in front of his home by a police officer during a scuffle.

* * *

Mack Williams, 40, Sparrows Point steel worker, was charged with the fatal shooting of Mrs. Inger Harris wife of Dr. William C. Harris 3303 Dorchester Rd.

At the time, Mrs. Harris was staying with Miss Odessa Quickely in the Dolfield Apartments. Police said the shooting occured on July 29. The motive, they said was jealousy.

Five children burned to death in a fire at 625 Mosher St.

"I put the kids to bed to take a nap and after that only God Knows what happened," recalled the mother, Mrs. Norma J. Clark, 31.

Only one of the children survived, Vernonia 10.

SEPTEMBER

In September a rumor spread that Baltimore would be the target of race riots. Civil Rights leaders met with Mayor McKeldin and Gov. Tawnes and the questionable riot never came off.

Three small children died in an abandoned refrigerator in the 2100 block Callow Ave.

Everyone, including high ranking police officials believed it was an accident, except the parents of the dead children and two Industrious Northern District policemen, Frank Will and Nicholas Wingrove.

Two youngsters, 13 and 9 years of age, were later arrested by the officers and charged with the death of Howard Hunter, 5, Marlene Kennedy, 8, and Doren Austin, 5.

OCTOBER

Margaret Young, 16, 1600 block Woodyear St., was found dead in the body of Wardell MacKall, 27, the father of three, who was identified as her boyfriend.

Police said Mackall shot the girl then killed himself with a 12-gauge shotgun.

—1964 was a year

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mittee investigated and a Baltimore AFRO story revealed caskets that cost $96.50 were selling to bereaved relatives for $637.50

JUNE

What is so rare as a steak in June? Certainly not fashion shows, art shows, concerts, testimonials and fund raising drives. The Morris Queen Chorale opened the month with their 10th Anniversary concert at Sharp Street Methodist Church; Cherry Hill residents turned out for a look-see at the latest fashions and the NAACP started selling tickets for their annual search for the prettiest kid in town.

* * *

Meantime, down in Cambridge, the well-known Co. B. 121 St. Bn of the 229th Transportation Division of the Maryland National Guard, was helping keep the Peace.

Two of the four US Naval Academy graduating cadets received ensign insignia and then hurried to the chapel for wedding ceremonies.

* * *

The Methodist Church voted to chuck the Central Jurisdiction which had long been the sign of segregation and integrate and the hour had come after four years.

* * *

The Tri-State Elks set their get-to-gether for Hagerstown, Md.

* * *

School 176 teachers took a tearful group to kneel at the Kennedy grave in Arlington National Cemetery and ask questions about the Eternal Flame.

JULY

The Long Hot Summer went to Mississippi and bad tempers and anger of resentment rose but a Baltimore mother witnessed the end of the world when her only son, Pfc. Everett L. Donaldson, was killed in a helicopter crash in Viet Nam

Colored Republicans returned from the Cow Palace mix-up and Goldwater victory to admit they had no part in the party any longer as them being run.

* * *

A headline told us what we already knew, "The Poor Pay More For Everything."

AUGUST

The 30th Annual Clean Block Campaign sponsored by the AFRO reported that the children who scrubbed the town so nice and clean from stem to stern would share in $1,900 worth of prizes.

* * *

"One out of every 20 U. S. citizens doesn't get enough to eat . . . ever", came another story on just how poor a poor man can get.

SEPTEMBER

Miss Saundra Harris, 4401 Vesta Ave. set somewhat of a record with the two-pound tomatoes she raised in her back yard.

* * *

"X" marks the spot where white backlash turned to "frontlash."

* * *

The largest number of school children went back for classes in such great numbers that it took until November to get an accurate count.

OCTOBER

Maryland's 20,000 plus teachers took off Oct. 15, 16, 17, to hold the State Convention.

* * *

On Oct. 10, the Graves quadruplets of Maryland were five years old and triplets were born to Cpl. and Mrs. William Whetstone.

NOVEMBER

Barry Backers became scarce as hen-teeth and harder to find.

The President's Poverty Plan revealed the fact that even poor people could not define what poverty is.

Baltimore gave LBJ 248,947 votes, remembered suddenly it would be Christmas and went on planning for Santa Claus.

DECEMBER

Christmas trees we used to get for 50 cents brought $4 with "no branches and no needles" as someone in Lexington Market said.

The NAACP celebrated its 55th Birthday.

* * *

The AFRO's Mrs. Santa got thousands of letters.

* * *

Dr. W. O. Bryson, business administration professor at Morgan State College and Advance Savings and Loan director, received the Small Business Organization's Man of The Year Award.

* * *

The 1,000 fans who followed the Colts to Cleveland for the football game merely "marched up the hill and back again."

Old timers keep repeating, when they speak of how hot it was Christmas Day (in the 70's)—: "A black Christmas makes a full graveyard."

—1964 Politics

(Continued from Page 17)

ward liberalism in race matters.

The decisive Goldwater defeat carried along the knocking out in an upset of Sen. J. Glenn Beall, a veteran of over 20 years in Congress, by the Democrats' young Mr. Tydings.

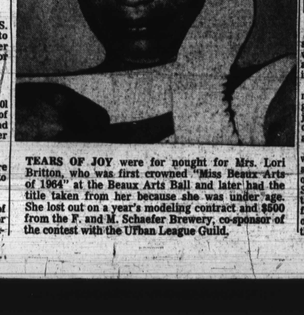
Sen. Beall, despite sharp warnings of loss of support in the colored communities, chose to endorse Sen. Goldwater and in turn enlist the support of his followers.

Mr. Tydings defeated him, riding on the Johnson sweep, by a two to one vote.

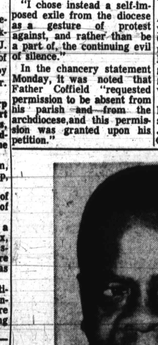
There were a number of lesser political activities of note.

Gov. Tawes insisted on a hike in the state income tax, and then called a special session to repeal the measure when finally convinced it was not needed.

The City Council in Baltimore, as always, had its controversies. This time more pronounced was a still-going factional fight.



TEARS OF JOY were for nought for Mrs. Lori Britton, who was first crowned "Miss Beaux Arts of 1964" at the Beaux Arts Ball and later had the title taken from her because she was under age. She lost out on a year's modeling contract and $500 from the F. and M. Schaefer Brewery, co-sponsor of the contest with the Urban League Guild.



Bishop Harrision J. Bryant
first from Baltimore in 20 years

4 children die in Chicago fire

CHICAGO (UPI) — Four small children died Saturday when fire swept a South Side apartment and trapped them in their bedroom.

Four other children and a mother were injured. One girl was hurt when she jumped from a window. The others suffered from burns and smoke inhalation.

Police said the fire started when Charles Bingham arose at 8 a.m. and tried to pour oil into a living room stove. Some of the oil spilled onto the floor and caught fire. The flames engulfed a bedroom off the living room where the four children were sleeping.

* * *

THE DEAD were two of Mrs. Bingham's children by a previous marriage, Charles Edward Louis, 6, and Margaret Louis, 9, and two of Mrs. J. M. Bingham's grandchildren, Theresa Johnson, 3, and Donald Johnson, 1.

The Johnson children were the son and daughter of Mr. Lauralene Johnson, 20, who was visiting her mother during the holidays. Mrs. Johnson escaped with a third child, Rhonda, 4.

Jamesetta Louis, 18, was hurt when she jumped to safety. Mrs. Erlena Bing-

YOU KNOW BECAUSE YOU READ THE AFRO THE AFRO-AMERICAN, JANUARY 2, 1965

FATHER DIVINE IN A LONELY GRAVE?

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sought to sift the cloudy background of a man who became a byword of the century.

'Robert Gibson'

His name was Robert Gibson, 60, at the time of his death, born in Wayne Co., Georgia, on a farm near the banks of the Satilla River, that flows down through the timber country from Big Satilla Creek and empties into the sea. He was the son of Hardy Gibson, who bought 80 acres of land from a white landowner for $216.70, that is still in possession of his heirs.

The "blind alley" in checking out the lineage of the man known over the years as Father Divine, was the name originally applied to him, "George Baker." Every piece of alleged documentary evidence could go no further than recite the name "George Baker," and supply a vague location of his birth such as "somewhere near Savannah." The searchers had fallen approximately 70 miles short of the mark.

'George Baker'

It was known to this writer some years ago that the leader whose followers gave him the mantle of absolute divinity, did have children and a family. It is obvious that the name "George Baker" was also a pseudonym, possibly an organizational "red herring" across the trail, although one surviving daughter by coincidence only, carries the name "Baker" by marriage.

There were countless deadends in the eight-year search, such as the lead that was followed in Mobile, Ala., where an informant claimed that Divine's children were living as virtual orphans — one of them retarded. It was a blank.

Then a national magazine carried an article citing the claims of an aged Richmond, Va., woman who contended she was his mother — a nebulous claim that could not be substantiated with known facts.

But the five children of the man who went out from the Pentecostal First Born Church of the Living God, in Brunswick, Ga. and migrated just across the Florida state-line to Fernandina Beach, Fla. are all living testimonies to the identity of Robert Gibson, as the original Father Divine.

They are Mrs. Amanda Russell, of 156 Thatford Ave., and Mrs. Etta Baker, 164 Thatford Ave., both of Brooklyn, N.Y.; Gus Monroe Gibson, 2218 Stonewall St., Brunswick Ga.; John Wesley Gibson, a clergyman and taxi operator, of 129 W. 115th St., New York City —and the splitting image of the original Divine; — and the son given the name, "Jesus Emanuel" of 330 S. 11th St., Philadelphia.

Emanuel is the key that unlocked the door to a fantastic mystery, who was twice arrested in the Quaker City on charges brought by the Divine officials growing out of picketing — and was acquitted. His campaign to clear the waters as to the true identity of Divine, began in November, 1961.

But a strange occurrence took place just three weeks ago when Emanuel picketed the Broad and Catherine headquarters with a blow-up of a certificate issued by the State of New York, permitting the name "Robert Gibson" on certificate of death No. 156-50 324095, to include, "Also known as Father M. J. Divine" — The followers merely stared from the windows.

Claims he is son

A photograph taken when Emanuel was approximately 12 years of age, with Father and the first 'Mother Divine,' known as Sister Penny, during a trip to Krum Elbow-On-The Hudson, clearly substantiates his "blood son" claim. He was the only child taken into the Divine movement, but was also swallowed up by rules and regulations that rent family ties — but it was his mother who gave him the name "Jesus Emanuel," a simple derivation of Biblical lineage, the "son" of the man his followers called "God."

These revelations pose searching questions. "Why the surviving children never before spoke out, or allowed his death to place him in the realm of oblivion?" Who is the man the public has known as Divine all these years? Could a man who ruled out the natural process of death among his followers really die?

It is also clear that the mainstay of the movement, who bore a name alive, with little hope of holding a living individual in perpetual existence. Built on a solid platform of humanitarianism and uncanny fanaticism to a form of religious expression, plus the normal tendency to forget little physical details of an individual over two decades — The name "Father Divine" still lives.

Here begins a phantasy steeped in intrigue all under the shadow of the powerful Divine movement that spread across the nation and into the hinterlands of Europe and South America.

'Peace' key word

It has never been any hidden secret in the South Georgia county of Wayne, or in adjacent Brantley County, where all of the children of Robert Gibson were born, that the latter, son of Hardy Gibson, went off and became "Father Divine" and made the phrase "Peace! It's Wonderful," more popular over an era than "Give me liberty or give me death."

No one down in the Satilla River basin cared — Historians had turned the spotlight away from Wayne County and the name "Baker" rang no bells to a rising Wayne Co. generation busy cutting down trees for use at the Brunswick Pulp and Paper Co., a firm that along with the Union Bag and Paper Co., of Savannah, supplies over 30 per cent of America's paper bags.

The timberland of the Gibson farm still yields enough to handle the taxes. The families of J. W. Wainright, white—the latter still living—who sold Hardy Gibson the land, are still prominent names in Wayne, Co.; the colored families of H. P. Easton and Marion Brown, whose lands join the Gibson tract, still reside there and all have long known of the identity of Father Divine.

The Gibson 80 acres are now split by Georgia State Highway 159, but within a stone's throw, the house where Gibson raised his family, and the little country school house the youngsters attended still stand as weather-beaten reminders before Robert left the farm and went to Brunswick.

Joining the First Born Church of the Living God, the idea was born that was to electrify the world in years to come and Robert Gibson began holding meetings in various homes. He did not hold any clerical status in the Brunswick church.

* * *

GIBSON is traced from Brunswick to Fernandina, Fla., where he met tall and attractive Penneth Lou Harris. Possessed of a rich mixture of Indian blood, she was later known in the movement as "Sister Penny." It was in this town perched on the northern tip of Amelia Island, and recently flattened by the full hurricane "Gladys," that title, "God" — and also ran Robert Gibson assumed the into trouble with the Fernandina sheriff.

The period of time was around 1924, and there was much astir in the community over this new evangelist whose doctrine required the dissolvement of marital relationships and family ties. So magnetic was his personality, that many of the more stable Fernandina residents feared a complete collapse of domestic solidarity, as converts rushed to his meetings, and forthwith went to the law enforcement authorities.

'Run out of town'

A cousin of Penneth Lou Harris, now living in Philadelphia, present at the time, said that Gibson was "run out of town" by the sheriff—and along with him went "Sister Penny." Moving back across the mouth of the Satilla River, the new self - styled "God," apparently held marital propagation as his own privilege, for the five Gibson children were born in Brantley County, Ga. Some time later they wound up on the elder Handy Gibson's land where they romped in the woodlands and attended school.

When Gibson decided to move his doctrine abroad, he and Sister Penny left with one child, by car — The youngest called "Jesus Emmanuel," leaving the others on the Gibson homestead.

Despite previous reports as to pausing in Baltimore and other points enroute north, Gibson and Sister Penny made a bee - line for Brooklyn, N.Y., Where he set up his first mission in a house on Osborne St. and Liberty Ave. The new doctrine and the name "God" was as stimulating in Brooklyn as it was in Fernandina and while the growing congregation listened nightly to the exhortations of this small dynamic man against even matrimony and blood kinship as symbols of immorality, young Emanuel played alone in the upstairs apartment.

However, his mother carried him along on the trips up the Hudson and Long Island, where the followers of "God," who now called himself "Father Divine," trafled him like a true Messiah. Lost in the mad shuffle of family anonymity practiced, Emanuel reached his early teens and went to live with a woman in Brooklyn — where he grew to manhood and until he came to Philadelphia in 1960.

Emanuel was not with his parents when the movement moved from the Osborne and Liberty address, to the big ex-mental-hospital frame abode in Sayville, L.I., the "heaven" or expansion as to physical facilities — and still believed to be the "second he's."

Following Emanuel's picketing of the Philly HQ's, late in 1961, a most unusual notice appeared in the Jan. 27, 1962 issue of "The New Day," as follows: "Important Notice-Sayville — As of today, no church cars or guests will be permitted to visit Sayville, L.I. (72 Macon St.), without permission. This applies to times when Father and Mother Divine are personally at Sayville and all other times. The management. Thank you Father and Mother."

Movement grew

The Divine movement made progress in growth that can be classed as cataclysmic,

DIVINE FAMILY—The first Father and Mother (Sister Penny) Divine, who left Fernandina Beach, Fla., in the late 20's to launch one of the most unique religious organizations in the world, are shown at left, in an early portrait. This Divine, according to an AFRO exclusive story, left Wayne Co., Georgia, as Robert Gibson. Meeting Penneth Lou Harris in Fernandina, the couple had five children, three of whom are shown above. Center is Elder John Wesley Gibson, the splitting image of his father, of 129 W. 115 St., New York City, and a taxi operator; Jesus Emanuel, of 330 S. 11th St., Philadelphia, Pa., and Mrs. Amanda Gibson Russell, of 156 Thatford St., Brooklyn, N.Y. Not shown are Mrs. Etta Gibson Baker, of 164 Thatford St., Brooklyn, and Gus Monroe Gibson, of 2218 Stonewall St., Brunswick, Ga.

DEATH SITE — Above is the Unity Hospital, St. John and Buffalo Sts., Brooklyn, N. Y., where Robert Gibson, who this AFRO exclusive story identifies as "Father Divine," died on Dec. 21, 1950. Hospital officials interviewed stated that the deceased entered on Dec. 20, suffering from a chronic asthmatic condition. He was buried in Silver Mt. Cemetery, Staten Island on the day after Christmas. The name "George Baker" generally applied to Divine as his original name only led to "blind alleys" in an eight-year search for a genuine background on the little man who made the phrase, "Peace It's Wonderful," a national byword.

PAST AND PRESENT—One of the key factors in the claims of "Jesus Emanuel," right, shown in one of his nearly five years of picketing Divine facilities, is the photo reprint, left, showing the easily recognizable young Emanuel with his mother in the thirties embarking for a day of picnicking and worship at the Krum Elbow estate on the Hudson. Emanuel, who left the kingdom in his early teens to live with

and became the widespread organization that the world came to recognize as thousands of followers forsaken old both their earthly names and belongings to dwell within the movement's multi-million dollar complex of properties across the nation. But what happened, as the Divine tide rolled, to Robert Gibson?

At first using road-show tactics, with one-nighters in westcoast cities — Divine and his followers packed the old Elks Home on Fowler St., in Trenton, N.J., around 1928, with crowds unable to gain en entrance—the movement gathered new converts with amazing rapidity. Also noticeable, due to his doctrine of God's "one race, hundreds of white followers were likewise absorbed into the "kingdom" with many moving into the administrative bracket of a mushrooming religious empire.

White persons of immense wealth, yet susceptible to the doctrines of a little colored man from the banks of the Satilla, emptied their coffers at his feet — with many alert enough to shake off the compelling mesmerization and serve as "faithful" watchdogs. At least five moved to the ranks next to the Divine throne and Sister Penny assumed the title, "Mother Divine."

* * *

THE MOVEMENT graduated into a "business" with vast real estate holdings, spearheaded a gigantic chain of restaurants and hotels and other retail and personal services that flabbergasted all economists during a devastating depression by charging ridiculously low prices. It had spiralled into something Robert Gibson wasn't really seeking, and his opposition marked the beginning of the end of him as a man — but not as a name.

Sister Penny, mother of his five children, and who had fled her Fernandina home with him with the sheriff on his heels, was the first to vanish from the Kingdom —into what many termed oblivion, but may well be the next astounding revelation in a sea of mystery around the Divine past.

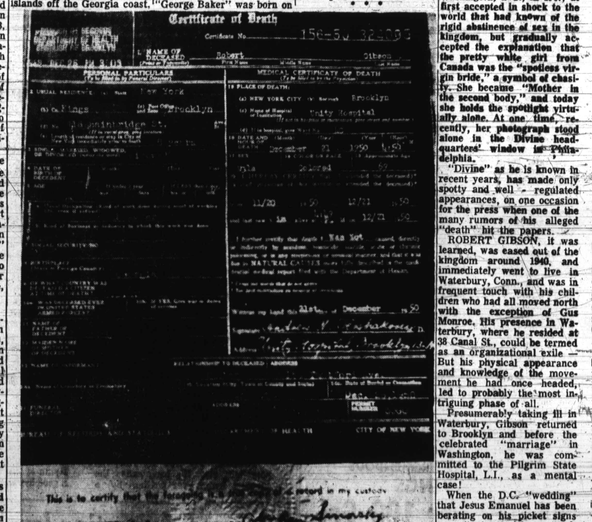
* * *

THE 1959 — last edition — of "Who's Who in Colored America," lists Divine as "Divine, Major J. (Father Divine nee George Baker), religious leader; born, Hutchinson's Island, Ga., about 1874, son of Joseph and Mary Baker; married, Edna Rose Ritchings of Montreal, Canada, 1947."

With the name "George Baker" already discarded, the names "Joseph a n d Mary" as "parents," are closely associated with the Biblical parents of the Messiah.

Hutchinson's Island, Ga., could be one of the scores of islands off the Georgia coast, but it didn't manage to rate a place on the Encyclopedia Brittanica world atlas map.

Some sources say Hutchinson's Island is one of several small chumps — one of which spoke above the surface of the Savannah River that follows the Georgia-South Carolina boundary, 314 miles long, and nearly 70 miles north of the Satilla, it holds no record for width among American rivers — And as one historian states "George Baker" was born on a rice plantation on Hutchinson's Island" — such an inhabited large piece of land appears geographically impossible.



CHECKED OUT — The death certificate issued by the Brooklyn, N.Y., Dept. of Health, for Robert Gibson, 69, of 415 Bainbridge St., reveals the link between the deceased and his father, The Late Handy Gibson of Wayne Co., Ga. — the latter whose properties are still in possession of the five children Robert left as heirs. The exclusive AFRO story reveals that Gibson left his father's farm and migrated to nearby Fernandina Beach, Fla., and was chased out by the sheriff because his assumption of the title "God" disrupted the community. Meeting pretty Penneth Lou Harris, later known as "Sister Penny," the couple returned to Georgia, and after having five children, moved to Brooklyn and established the first "heaven" at Osborne and Liberty Sts.

1947 'Marriage'

These vague portions of a biography, one of the few in that publication that enters into a discourse on the subject's idealogy, are characteristic of the cloud over Divine's past.

* * *

IF FATHER DIVINE passed away in 1950 as the records show, under his true name, Robert Gibson, one would give serious question to the near straight years of anniversaries of the wedding of the "Bride and the Lamb" — those years when Divine reigned, led incredulous followers and outsiders who made pilgrimages to his kingdom.

What was termed the "marriage" took place in Washington, D.C., in 1947, at first accepted in shock to the world that had known of the rigid abstinence of sex in the kingdom, but gradually accepted the explanation that the pretty white girl from Canada was the "spotless virgin bride," a symbol of chastity. She became "Mother in the second body," and today she holds the spotlight virtually alone. At one time, recently, her photograph stood alone in the Divine headquarters' window in Philadelphia.

"Divine" as he is known in recent years, has made only spotty and well - regulated appearances, on one occasion for the press when one of the many rumors of his alleged "death" hit the papers.

ROBERT GIBSON, it was learned, was cased out of the kingdom around 1940, and immediately went to live in Waterbury, Conn., and was in frequent touch with his children who had all moved north with the exception of Gus Monroe. His presence in Waterbury, where he resided at 38 Canal St., could be termed as an organizational exile — But his physical appearance and knowledge of the movement he had once headed, led to probably the most intriguing phase of all.

Presumeably taking ill in Waterbury, Gibson returned to Brooklyn and before the celebrated "marriage" in Washington, he was committed to the Pilgrim State Hospital, L.I., as a mental case!

When the D.C. "wedding" that Jesus Emanuel has been berating on his picket signs as a "put up" job occurred, Robert Gibson from Wayne Co. Georgia was well contaiude in this mental institution.

Lived in Brooklyn

Spending nearly two years in Pilgrim State, Gibson retained in this mental institution.

(Continued on Page 16)

another family, resided in Brooklyn until he moved to Philadelphia four years ago to wage his campaign to "have the truth known."