

The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi

The Franciscan Sisters

The French Orphanage on Bleeker Street

The St Francis of Assisi French Orphanage on Bleeker Steet

The Little Franciscans of Mary

The Third Order of St. Francis

The Little Franciscan Sisters of Mary

There are two different versions to the beginnings of the **‘Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi’**, the newspaper accounts related to them at that time, and the history of the order referenced in the Catholic Free Press story called, Sacred History - **Little Franciscans of Mary** - By William T. Clew

Newspaper accounts during the 1890s referred to the **‘Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi’** as a group of young, oblate sisters. The ‘Sisters of St. Francis’ had eight sisters of the order and had two houses in New England. The head house was in a Fall River orphanage and the other at the South Worcester Orphanage. In June of 1890 the remaining Sisters of St. Francis discontinued their house in Fall River, MA and Worcester became their permanent house. Not being professional nuns of the catholic church became an integral part of the dramatic episodes that helped change the course of its history. The **Third Order of St. Francis** was never mentioned in any newspapers searched.

The story in the Catholic Free Press said, according to the history of the order two teachers at St. Anne’s Parish in the Manchaug section of Sutton, MA took simple religious vows and wore the habit of the **Third Order of St. Francis**. Father Brouillet asked these ladies to teach and care for the new school and orphanage he was building in South Worcester. He recruited more young ladies into the order, including an 18-year-old Marie Louise Rondeau who became the order’s first noviate, taking the name Sister Marie-Joseph. She would soon become the superior of the order. You can read the story in our PDF file called the ‘Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi’. The story also said that Fr. Brouillet sent some of these noviate sisters to an orphanage in Fall River, Ma. This could not have happened as he had no jurisdiction there.

Note: Only one newspaper clipping I found, dated August 5, 1891, affirmed this information when it talked about Sister Francis d’ Assisi, known as Julia Charpentier, who had come from Manchaug and once had charge of the South Worcester Orphanage.

Reverend Father Charles Zotique Durocher came to Worcester in late summer of 1889 from Ottawa, Canada where he was the purser of a college. He called upon Reverend Father Joseph Brouillet in a very destitute condition. Father Durocher told him he was very anxious to get something to do immediately, as his widowed mother was entirely dependent upon him for support. He listened to his story with a very willing ear and invited him to stay for a while in his house and gave Father Durocher money to send for his mother. Father Brouillet gave Father Durocher a place among his curates, at a salary of \$500 a year, and soon put him in charge of the orphanage as chaplain. He also gave Father Durocher a house nearby the new orphanage.

You've heard the stories – NOW
'Here's the Rest of the Story'

According to my merging of news articles and other historical references.

August 7, 1889, brings about **the founding of the South Worcester Orphanage**. This orphans' home was built at the corners of **Southgate and Grand** streets in South Worcester by the Church of Notre Dame for their French parishioners. St. Anne's Church and parochial school were already in this area. **Reverend Father Joseph Brouillet** asked the '**Sisters of St. Francis of Assissi**', a group of young, oblate sisters to take charge of the newly build orphanage and school. In August of 1889 we find the first of many eye-popping news articles about **Reverend Father Charles Zotique Durocher** who became the **first chaplain** of the new South Worcester Orphanage.

Everything seemed to be going well until the following year. Father Durocher began to grow careless regarding his duties as chaplain. Before this he went to Father Brouillet every day and asked his opinion regarding what should be done, and Father Brouillet gave him counsel in all these months. He began to furnish his home in an elaborate manner and sent the bills to Father Brouillet who refused to pay them, claiming they were Father Durocher's personal bills, and he alone must pay them. From August to October of 1890 Father Durocher's actions grew stranger to him.

More trouble ensued when Fr. Durocher tried to run the orphanage to suit himself. He turned over the property he received from Father Brouillet to the orphanage and made it responsible for the bills. He then encouraged the 'sisters' to

incorporate the orphanage without Father Brouillet's consent or knowledge and did other things that were in direct opposition to Father Brouillet's will. He finally tried to carry things with such a high hand that Father Brouillet discharged him. About this time, he learned that Fr. Durocher was expelled from the college, where he also has some trouble.

As time slipped into 1891 the discharged Fr. Durocher kept inciting the oblate sisters against Father Brouillet. This was an easy matter, as some of them were already dissatisfied with some of the pastor's regulations. They were not professional nuns, but novices referred only as a body of women banded together for charitable purposes. There was only one professed nun at the orphanage. An August 5, 1891, article said Sister Francoise d'Assissi nee Julia Charpentier was the Franciscan sister in charge of the South Worcester Orphanage. One of the actions to which the 'sisters' took umbrage was Father Brouillet's displacement of their first superior and putting at their head an older woman. Some of the 'sisters' went to Springfield to see the bishop, but he refused to settle the matter one way or the other, as they were not professional nuns.

According to the history of the order two women from Manchaug were the original sisters of the order. Apparently, they both were having problems with the situations unfolding at the South Worcester Orphanage. One day the Sister Superior didn't show up for Mass. Her habit was left on her bed, and she just left the institution behind. The bishop had to discharge the second who apparently had conflicts with the new novices so he could not allow her stay.

In mid-January 1891 a scene was caused, when some of the women from the order decided to move their order to a new location on Bleeker Street, taking furnishings and things with them. Their work was well under way when they were stopped by Father Brouillet and Deputy Sheriff Jandron. Besides this abandonment of the orphans by the oblate sisters Fr. Durocher had also attached the orphanage to a lawsuit in hopes of recovering money which he claims was due him for extra work as chaplain of the institution. Many believed that Fr. Durocher and some of the younger women were at the bottom of the trouble. Court room scenes eventually played out over the following years.

NOTE: Other writings indicate that Fr. Durocher stayed with the revolting oblate sisters and became the chaplain at the new **Orphans' Home of Saint Francis of Assissi**, which lasted from 1891 through 1897.

In a January 15, 1891, news article Father Brouillet stated that the oblate sisters who left the institution would never be allowed to return. Those who

remained received the assistance of the ladies of Notre Dame Church, and he would provide for them in every way. He further said those who had departed broke a written agreement with him. When he established the orphanage, he placed these women in charge, promising to care for them while they lived, if they attended faithfully to their duties. They had only themselves to blame for their predicament. He continued to say the institution would not be allowed to break up keeping it under its present management until he could secure the services of the **Grey Nuns of Montreal**. (This is the first time the ‘Grey Nuns of Montreal’ were mentioned.)

On January 31, 1891, the Grey Nuns of Montreal arrived in Worcester. The doors to the orphanage were opened on February 1, 1891, and the Grey Nuns officially took responsibility of the orphans’ home. By the end of May there were 58 girls and 55 boys, the children’s ages ranging from 1 year to 12 among the boys, and 16 among the girls. There were only nine grey nuns to oversee these inmates with more ordered down from Montreal. The buildings were getting overcrowded and there was no play area for the children. New accommodations were already being planned.

It was reported in later years, and our book, that an agreement was readily made by all parties. Not so, as the controversy continued for many years, both in and out of court and the Catholic Dioceses. An article in March of 1895 reported about the opposition many French people of Worcester had against Father Brouillet. However, in 1896 a decision made by the Catholic prelate, Cardinal Sartolli said the St. Francis of Assisi French Orphanage on Bleeker Street was to disband and return to their headquarters at Bale St. Paul, Canada stating that their work conflicted with that of the St. Anne’s French-Canadian Orphanage at 133 Granite Street. The issue went all the way to Rome before the decree became final.

They were allowed to stay in Worcester to care only for the aged and not the young orphans who were transferred to the Granite Street Orphanage. They became known as the Petites Soeurs Franciscaines de Marie (**the Little Franciscan Sisters of Mary**). They regrouped and opened **The Franciscan Home for the Aged**, on Thorne Street opposite to Bleeker Street. The Little Franciscans of Mary persevered and continued to operate the home until 2000, when Sister Jacqueline Alix, administrator, retired. The sisters moved out of the home in 2006. Since 2009 it has been owned and operated by an affiliate of Landmark Solutions.

This story was posted in the Catholic Free Press

Sacred History

Little Franciscans of Mary

By William T. Clew

A memorial wall was unveiled June at the St. Francis Rehabilitation and Nursing Center to honor the founders of the center, the Little Franciscans of Mary, a religious order with its roots in Manchaug and Worcester. Superior General Francoise Duchesne, pfm, of the order's Mother House in Bale St. Paul, Quebec, Can., spoke to members of the order from Worcester, Maine and Quebec, priests from the Worcester Diocese, St. Francis Center officials, workers, residents, and friends.

In remarks in French, translated into English by Sister Rena Mae Gagnon, pfm, of Worcester, Sister Francoise said the theme of the gathering was "keeping the memory alive."

She said it was in Worcester that "the sacred history of the **Little Franciscans of Mary** had its beginnings in 1889. It is here that the foundresses, those 11 courageous women with generous hearts, placed the 'cornerstone' of the congregation. "In Canada, in Quebec and here in the United States they built a spiritual edifice which is still the pride of those who followed after them and all of those who spread the love of God in collaboration with the local churches through the education of youth, the loving care of the elderly and the compassionate care of the sick."

The establishment of the order was not easy. It was accomplished only after disagreements with a pastor in Worcester who first helped them get started, a bishop who first approved the forming of the order and then ordered them out of the diocese, the loss of the first two sisters around whom the order was born and a change in their mission from running an orphanage to caring for the elderly.

According to a history of the order, two teachers at St. Anne's Parish in the Manchaug section of Sutton sought permission from **Father Alexis Delphos, pastor of St. Denis Parish in East Douglas**, of which St. Anne's was a mission, to taking simple religious vows and wear the habit of the **Third Order of St. Francis**.

He granted that permission. They received the habit of the Third Order of St. Francis, took vows for one year and continued to teach. Father Delphos soon got

together with Father Joseph Brouillet, pastor of Notre Dame des Canadiens Parish in Worcester, who wanted to build a school and orphanage in Worcester. Father Brouillet also wanted a religious order to teach and care for the orphans and elderly people in the growing Franco-American community in Worcester. Thus began the Third Order of St. Francis.

He spoke to Mr. and Mrs. Remi Rondeau about recruiting their 18-year-old daughter Marie Louise. She became the order's first novice, taking the name Sister Marie-Joseph.

Father Brouillet recruited and trained new members of the order over the next year, according to a history of the order. He was Father Superior of the order. He named his assistant at Notre Dame des Canadiens, Father Zotique Durocher, as their chaplain.

Father Brouillet started an orphanage in 1889 in a three-story building at Grand and Southgate streets. Within four weeks it had 20 orphans and two elderly women needing complete care, according to a history of the order. Eight novices had to care for them and clean, cook and provide clothes, furniture and keep the building in good repair. Every day, two of them went out into the community to beg for money, food, clothing and other supplies. It was their only source of income.

They received support from the Franco-American community, from many in the city's large Irish community and even from some in the Protestant community. They built a two-story annex in the fall of 1889 to house and teach the growing number of orphans, thus stretching their funds even thinner.

The two women from Manchaug who had been the order's original sisters apparently were having problems. One, the Sister Superior, didn't show up for Mass one day. The other sisters went to her room and found she had left her habit on her bed and she was gone. The other apparently had conflicts with the new novices and the bishop would not allow her to renew her vows, according to the history of the order.

When it came time to pick a new Sister Superior, Father Brouillet's choice was turned down. Instead, the sisters picked Sister Marie-Joseph, now 19, the order's first novice. Father Brouillet then asked them to expand their ministry to an orphanage in Fall River and to an old farm in the Stoneville section of Auburn. There were only 14 novices to work at all three places and it proved too much. Two Sisters of Charity from Quebec eventually took over in Fall River. The

Stoneville farm lacked water and the buildings were in disrepair, according to the order's history, and some of the orphans were getting sick.

Despite Father Brouillet's opposition, the sisters returned to Worcester. The sisters wanted to incorporate their order. Their chaplain, Father Durocher, suggested that the talk to Bishop Patrick. T. O'Reilly, Bishop of Springfield, without informing Father Brouillet. Bishop O'Reilly had allowed Father Delphos in Manchaug to give the two schoolteachers their habits but when the sisters met with him he said he didn't know who they were. He said he had authorized the two women in Manchaug to wear the habit but had not authorized the founding of a new religious community in the diocese. He suggested that they join an existing order. He also said they had a right to be incorporated by the state.

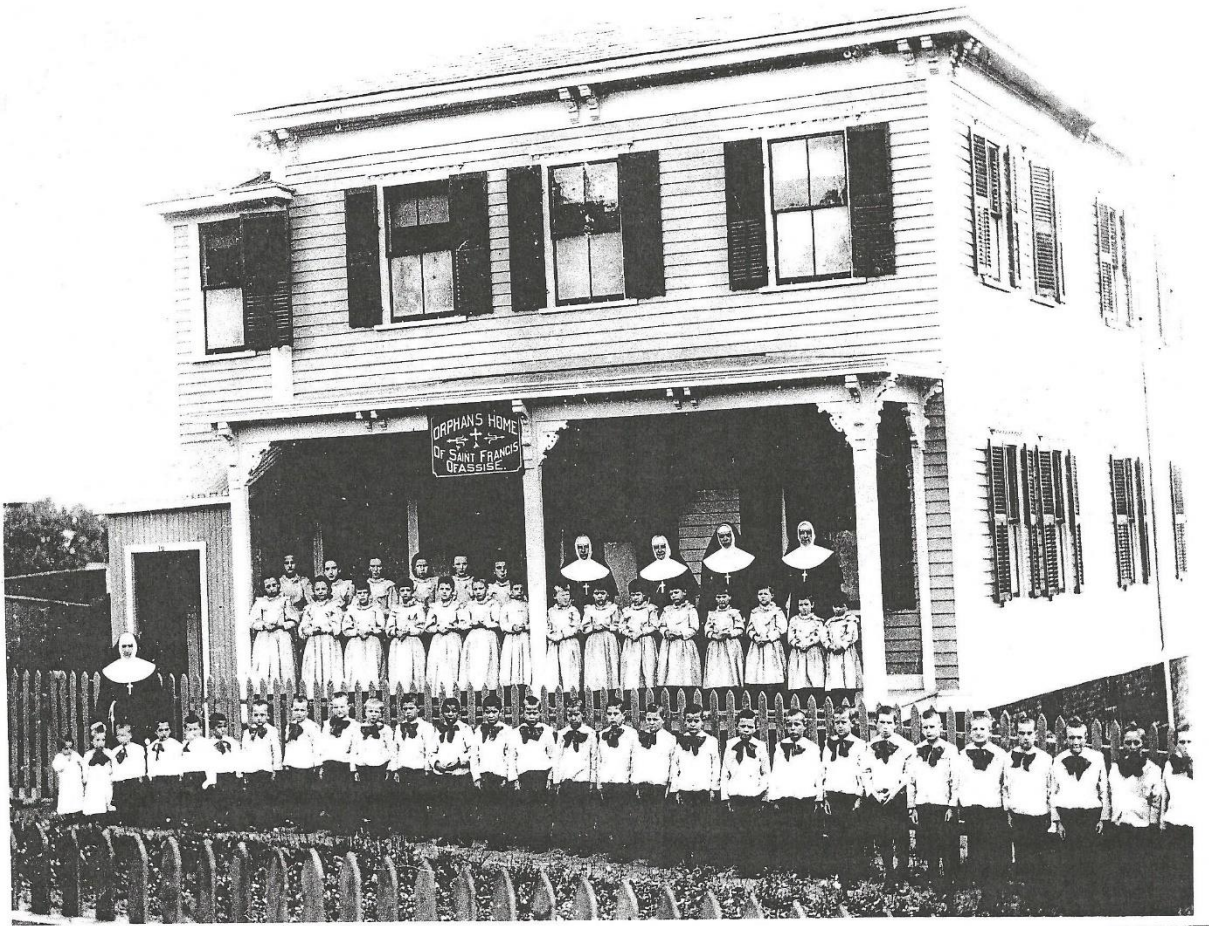
Their disagreements with Father Brouillet continued, but eventually a solution was worked out. They were invited to Baie St. Paul in Quebec by Father Ambrose-Martial Fafard, the pastor to care for mental patients in a parish there. Father Fafard became their Father Superior, helped them form their Mother House there and helped the sisters finish their novitiate and take their vows. They were officially the Little Franciscans of Mary. Because their Mother House was in Canada, the bishop accepted them into the Springfield Diocese as missionaries, with the provision that they care for the elderly instead of orphans, who were placed in the charge of the Grey Nuns.

In Worcester the order had moved its orphanage from Southgate and Grand streets to Bleeker Street. When the change to caring for the elderly came, they moved to Thorne Street. (*Note: The St. Francis Home & Rehab Center is now located between Thorne, Plantation and Bleeker Streets.*) When it opened it housed 90 elderly people, according to a history of the order. The St. Francis Aid Society was formed to help support the home, which was named the St. Francis Home. It has grown over the years and its address now is 101 Plantation St. Its name is now the St. Francis Rehabilitation and Nursing Center. It has 137 beds, two secure dementia units, a rehabilitation gymnasium, and an adult health center. There also is a chapel where Mass is celebrated for residents and participants, according to the center.

The Little Franciscans of Mary continued to operate the home until 2000, when Sister Jacqueline Alix, pfm, administrator, retired. The sisters moved out of the home in 2006. Since 2009 it has been owned and operated by an affiliate of Landmark Solutions.

Despite their disagreements with Father Brouillet, the original sisters in the order had good things to say about him. Mother Marie Anne de Jesus, Superior when she resigned in 1908, wrote;

“Even though Father Brouillet makes us suffer so much, we must admit we owe him a great deal. Without him where would we be? Let us remember that because of him we have acquired much merit. Since he has been God’s instrument in entrusting this beautiful community to our care, let us cause him no grief or harm. Let us pray for him and abandon everything else to God.”



The Orphans' Home of St. Francis of Assisi - 1895

We found this one and only photograph of the Orphans' Home of St. Francis of Assisi in the St. Ann's Orphanage folder at the Catholic Free Press on Elm Street in Worcester, Ma. It was a very confusing find since we knew the sisters of St. Francis of Assisi were the first order to care for the South Worcester Orphanage before leaving in 1891 after a dispute. The initial publications we collected indicated they started a home for the elderly right after leaving the orphanage. But as we continued our search, we located many newspaper articles from the 1890s proving the Orphans' Home of St. Francis of Assisi existed between 1891 and 1897. The photo shows 28 boys, 21 girls and 5 sisters. We believe this photograph was taken in 1895 after we found two separate newspaper clippings stating there were 49 children/orphans in the institution during that year.

**These last pages have Clippings from the Worcester Daily Spy
Dating from the late 1800s to 1904.**

THE FRENCH ORPHANAGE.
THE YOUNG LADIES IN CHARGE TO BECOME PROFESSIONED NUNS.

The members of the local house of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, who, it will be remembered, started the French Orphanage at South Worcester, but who now have a similar institution on Bleeker street, are happy because the head house in France has opened a house in this country at St. Paul's Bay, Quebec. During the trouble between the sisters and Rev. Joseph Brouillet, the ecclesiastical authorities refused to interfere, as the young ladies who had charge of the orphanage were not professed nuns. The establishment of the convent at St. Paul's Bay will give them a chance to serve a novitiate, after which they will be professed.

Two members of the order are expected from France about January 1st, and four of the young ladies from the local house have gone to St. Paul's Bay to serve their novitiate. In view of the fact that they have already served a couple of years in the charitable work for which the order is established, it is expected their novitiate will be short. On their return to this city they will take charge of the local house, and others will go to St. Paul's Bay to serve their novitiate.

The orphanage on Bleeker street now contains 25 little waifs, and is an institution deserving of aid.

1891-11-30 Worcester Daily Spy

THE THANKSGIVING FUND.

Deputy Chief of Police Thayer Makes His Report.

Deputy Chief of Police F. C. Thayer, who had charge of the police fund for the poor on Thanksgiving day, has issued the following report:

Received from various persons acknowledged in the daily papers as received	\$422 00	
Paid for turkey and chickens	\$390 18	
Paid for truck team and labor	12 40	
Paid for vegetables.....	7 39	
Paid for baskets and paper bags	2 50	
Paid market for dinners sent direct to parties....	7 10	
	\$419 56	\$419 56
Balance in my hands	\$2 44	

Over five hundred good dinners were supplied, besides large donations being made to the French Orphanage on Bleeker street, furnishing good dinners to forty-nine children; also to Orphanage on High street.

1895 - Worcester Daily Spy

Generous Altar Boys.

The altar boys of St. John's Catholic Church performed a generous act yesterday. They enjoyed a sleighride to Cordaville Thursday, and, after paying expenses, had a little money left. With this balance the boys purchased a lot of nice fresh bread, which they sent by a committee to the orphanage of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi on Bleeker street, where the little waifs were thus given an opportunity to share in the good time.

1895 - Worcester Daily Spy

Forty-nine children from the orphanage of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi on Bleeker street enjoyed an outing at James C. Luby's cottage Wednesday.

1895 - Worcester Daily Spy

ORPHANAGE OF ST. FRANCIS.

The little children at the orphanage of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, on Bleeker street, spent a merry Christmas through the efforts of kind friends of the institution. In the morning, the sisters and their charges attended mass in their private chapel, Rev. Jules Graton, pastor of St. Joseph's Church, officiating, while the children sang hymns appropriate to the day. After the mass, the sisters set up a large Christmas tree and loaded it with the good things, and the toys which were sent in for the little ones by charitable friends. There are 49 orphans in the institution, and all enjoyed their Christmas, and were delighted with their presents.

1895 - Worcester Daily Spy

CHARITABLE FRIENDS.

Inmates of the Bleeker Street Orphanage to be Given an Outing.

The little orphans who are inmates of the orphanage which is maintained on Bleeker street by the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi are to be given an outing today by two friends of the institution, ex-Councilman John P. Fay and Mrs. James C. Luby. The outing will be held at Mrs. Luby's cottage, on the Shrewsbury shore of Lake Quinsigamond, where the ladies of the house have been busy for the past few days making ready for the entertainment of their little guests. Mr. Fay's part of the program consists in giving the little ones a ride in two of his large teams to and from the lake.

1895 - Worcester Daily Spy

Bleeker Street Orphanage.

The association formed for helping the Franciscan nuns, who have charge of the Bleeker Street Orphanage, will give their entertainment in Horticultural Hall, June 24, when a lecture will be delivered by Rev. Fr. Favfart, supreme director of the St. Franciscan Order of Nuns of Bale St. Paul, Canada. The remainder of the program will be made up of musical and literary numbers, which will be supplied by the orphans and local talent.

1896 - Worcester Daily Spy

ORPHANS MADE HAPPY.

The Little Franciscan Sisters had an abundance of good things Christmas at the orphanage, 10 Bleeker street. A Christmas tree loaded with gifts was enjoyed immensely by the children. The sisters wish to thank all those who remembered them during the entire year, especially at Christmas.

1896-12-27 page 5

A PARISH PROTEST.

The Notre Dame People Do Not Want to Move.

AN APPEAL TO THE BISHOP.

Who Refers Them Back to the Parish Priest.

Rev. Fr. Brouillet Severely Criticized for Keeping His Parishioners Ignorant of His Real Estate Deals.

The proposed sale of the Notre Dame Church property on Park street by the pastor, Rev. Joseph Brouillet, and the purchase of the old Fox mill property on Green street as the site for a new church, parsonage, convent and school, has aroused considerable feeling among the members of the Church of the Notre Dame, and this feeling resulted Sunday in a big indignation meeting to protest against the proposed transfer.

The meeting was held in St. Jean Baptiste Hall and was attended by about 300 of the leading members of the church. It was called to order at 12:30 by John B. Tougas and an organization was at once effected by electing Dr. F. D. Fontaine chairman and Herbert De Fosse secretary.

In taking the chair, Dr. Fontaine explained the object of the meeting, saying: "It gives me pleasure to speak at a meeting of the Notre Dame parish, but I would not have accepted it at this time did I not think it a duty under the present circumstances. This meeting is held in the interests of the great mass of the French Canadian people and the expenditure of large sums of money, have succeeded in building the church of Notre Dame at an original cost of \$22,000 and additional expenditures since then until the amount is considerably over \$30,000."

He then severely criticized Father Brouillet for negotiating the sale of the property without consulting the parishioners, and said it was time for people to call a halt. The first knowledge they had that such a trade was under way was when they read of it in the English-speaking journals published in the city, although the negotiations were under way for the past five or six months. He claimed that this was not using the people of the parish with the consideration that they, and said: "Do we, the parishioners of Notre Dame, wish him to buy that bog hole known as the Fox mill property, and soon again be called upon to pay another \$100,000 or \$200,000 for the construction of a new church? It is, fellow citizens and brothers, time for us to act. It is not merely a question of finance, but one of sentiment that should strike to the heart of every patriotic Frenchman of Worcester. To destroy this historic monument of our prosperity, to efface tender memories and historic scenes in and around that edifice and send us to that hole on Green street is something we must protest against. I would suggest that we appoint a committee of three to draft a set of resolutions, and to send them by delegates to the bishop at Springfield, who has no doubt been lied to as regards this matter."

This address was received with every demonstration of approval, and without further debate the suggestion was adopted, and the following committee was appointed to prepare the resolutions: Dr. F. D. Fontaine, Jos. Marchessault and George V. Douchard. While the committee was out, J. B. Beauger was chosen chairman of the day, and the meeting indulged in a general discussion of the all important question, those present resolving themselves into small groups for the purpose.

F. P. Tetrault tried to defend the action of Father Brouillet, but the meeting refused to listen to him, and he was greeted with cries of "Sit down!" and "Keep still!"

After being out for some time, the committee, through Mr. Bouchard, made the following report, which was adopted without a word of opposition, although there were a few hands raised when the vote against the report was taken:

At a meeting of the Canadians of the Church of Notre Dame of Worcester at St. Jean Baptiste Hall, Sunday, March 10, 1888, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

Be it understood, that from English and French journals published in this city Friday, March 8, it is apparent that the Rev. Joseph Brouillet is about to buy the property called Fox mill, situated on Green street, this city.

Be it understood, that the said locality is unhealthy and misplaced and is a veritable swamp, and consequently the health of the scholars who will attend the schools which will be built there would be in great danger.

Be it understood, that from statements by the same journals, it is also apparent that the Rev. Joseph Brouillet is about to sell the church and grounds on which is situated the Notre Dame Church and the convent and other buildings.

Be it understood, that the Church of Notre Dame is a monument dear not only to the Canadians of this parish, but also to all the Canadians of Worcester.

Be it understood, that in all the aforesaid transactions not one citizen

has been consulted and that all has been done without the knowledge of the parishioners of Notre Dame.

Be it then resolved, that the parishioners, united in meeting, protest with all the strength of body and soul against such transactions and pray your highness to graciously stop all things on the way and render to him to whom justice is due that which is his right, that your faithful parishioners of Notre Dame do not cease to pray.

This protest was signed by 190 of those present and then Dr. Fontaine brought up the old question of the Franciscan nuns with whom Father Brouillet had some trouble a few years ago. He said that some malefactor, he knew not who, had caused an edict to be sent out from the bishop, ordering them to remove from the city. The young women who were affected by this edict came from the oldest and most respected French families in the city, and they have been persecuted, abused and cast down, and have been subjected to almost every injustice, but nevertheless they have persevered in their duty and now have 63 orphans at their home, where they are cared for without a cent of pay. These young girls, who by their grand work, have won the respect and sympathy of all intelligent persons, have recently been sent to Canada, where they received their regular orders. Since then they have received an edict excommunicating them if they did not leave the city immediately. They consulted a friend and priest, who told them to wait. He then sent the edict and a letter to Monsignor Satoll, the papal delegate, and three days later they received orders that Father Gratton of St. Joseph's Church would act as their spiritual director, and they were given permission to say the blessed sacrament in their chapel at all times. The vengeance of those who had already done them so much harm was not satisfied. Another letter has been received from the bishop telling them that they were not wanted here by the French people, and, I therefore, move that a committee of three be named to draft resolutions setting forth that we approve the grand and noble work of these nuns and further offer them our hearty support."

The same committee was chosen to draft the resolutions and they were adopted, the following, which were adopted:

"Be it resolved, first, that we, the French Canadians of Worcester, have learned with surprise that certain rumors have led your grandeur to believe that we have no sympathy whatever for the sisters of the Order of St. Francis.

"2d, that this assembly is of the opinion that the said nuns merit and possess the sympathies and approbation of the entire French Canadian population of Worcester by their self-sacrificing labors to help those who are poor and in distress, regardless of their race or creed.

"3d, that we, the French Canadians of Worcester, protest with all our strength against the calumnies and injurious reports against these holy women, and take this occasion to state publicly our appreciation of the work which they are doing day by day in this community."

Dr. Fontaine, John B. Tougas and Levi Beaulieu were then elected delegates to take the protests to Bishop Beaven at Springfield, and a collection was taken up to defray their expenses, the sum of \$12 being raised for the purpose. The meeting then adjourned subject to the call of the chairman.

The committee decided to lose no time and went to Springfield with the protests and returned in the evening on the 8:37 train. On their return Dr. Fontaine was seen by a Spy reporter, and said that they were well received by Bishop Beaven, who, when he heard their statements, asked if they had sent the petitions to Fr. Brouillet. When answered that he had not seen them, the Bishop told the committee to return to Worcester with their petitions and present them to Fr. Brouillet, as he was entitled to see them first, and he would send them to Springfield, when they should be given due consideration. Dr. Fontaine said he had given the protests to Fr. Brouillet, and had no doubt that he would send something from Springfield in a few days.

FATHER BROUILLET'S STORY.

During the afternoon a Spy reporter called on Father Brouillet, who had not then heard what his parishioners had done. When told, he said he was sorry they had not first come to see him.

I would much prefer to stay here, said he, but the people must put the church in proper condition. I would be the first man to be sorry to leave this place, but under the circumstances I am forced to do so. I will do whatever the bishop says. If he says stay here, I will be only too glad to do so, because it will be a great burden to make the change.

But something must be done. We need more room than we have here for school purposes. At present we have only a small yard for the girls of the school, and when the boys take their recreation in the summer, out of doors, the only place they have is the narrow alley between the church and Ballard's place, where they are forced to breathe practically the same air they do in the school rooms.

We must make provision for the children in the future, and as the parishioners did not seem willing to do anything, I had to do it myself. We have here about 23,000 feet of land and we need as much more to have things in a suitable condition. I have tried to procure the Ballard place, but the owners want \$35,000 for it, and

(Continued on Seventh Page.)

A PARISH FROTEST.

(Continued from First Page.)

that would help us only a little, even if we did purchase it.

When asked if he had been negotiating for the transfer without the knowledge of his parishioners, he replied that he was accountable only to his bishop, and he had consulted with Bishop Beaven regarding the purchase of new land, some months ago.

The bishop agreed with him that something of the kind must be done, and gave him a limit of the amount of money he would be allowed to spend for a new location. He had not exceeded that amount in negotiating for the purchase of the Fox mill property, and the deal was satisfactory to the bishop. However, if he was told to stop the deal, he would try to do so.

No papers had been signed, but the parties interested had come to an agreement as to the price. He did not know the law as to its binding him, and he was prepared to say whether the matter would be allowed to drop.

When the reporter asked him regarding the action of the meeting concerning the Franciscan sisters, he said he knew nothing about the troubles which were referred to. He has nothing to do with the sisters, except that he has ordered them not to solicit alms in his parish. He has an orphanage of his own to support, and does not want the other sisters taking away from its support, but they persist in asking alms, contrary to his orders.

A TALK WITH THE NUNS.

A Spy reporter also visited the orphanage of the Sisters of St. Francis on Bleeker street, where the action of the meeting was received with surprise. The sisters said they had not been receiving much assistance from the French people, and were surprised at the sudden interest manifested in their welfare.

They acknowledged that they had had some trouble with the bishop, but said it was due entirely, they believed, to the fact that he did not know the character of the work they were doing. They were incorporated under the laws of the state to do their work, and therefore had a legal right to remain in Worcester, but they also wanted a spiritual right.

They had asked Bishop Beaven for permission to keep the blessed sacrament in their little chapel, and he granted their request last fall, appointing Fr. Gratton their spiritual director and Fr. Perrault of the Church of the Holy Name of Jesus their confessor extraordinary last October. That did not look much as if they were to be excommunicated, and they had no fear of that.

They have been in correspondence with Mgr. Satoll for some time, as to their rights under the church, and they received a letter from him, dated Feb. 23, in which he said: "It seems to me that prudence demands that you do not remain."

They felt that it was a misunderstanding all around, which has caused all the trouble, and when they are satisfied that they are not wanted in Worcester, they will leave. They have a work to perform, and if their labors are not fruitful in this city, they can go elsewhere.

FRANCISCAN SISTERS.

An Appeal From Bishop Beaven to Rome.

A Petition Asking That the Nuns Be Allowed to Continue Their Work in Worcester.

A most enthusiastic meeting of the French Canadians of the city was held Sunday afternoon at St. Jean Baptiste Hall, in the interests of the St. Franciscan Sisters who have been ordered by Bishop Beaven to cease their labors in this city and return to the mother house in Canada. The order has been doing much good in the city in caring for the orphans and teaching them, and they have built a large building on Bleeker street, where they have had under their charge a large number of homeless children. They have been ordered by Bishop Beaven to stop their work in this city because it is thought by the church authorities that their work conflicts with that of the Granite street orphanage, but the French residents of the city are endeavoring to have the order withdrawn and have petitioned to the propaganda at Rome. The meeting was called to order by N. P. Huot, who explained the cause for the meeting. He was elected chairman and Eerbert DeFosse was chosen secretary.

Dr. F. D. Fontaine, who has taken a special interest in the work of the order in this city, and who has done much to keep the order here, was called upon to address the meeting. He said that in his opinion Bishop Beaven had dealt with the nuns rather harshly. The bishop had said that the sisters were supported by a small group of agitators, but even if this was so in the beginning, the group has now grown into thousands. The matter had now reached the propaganda at Rome. Bishop Beaven's side of the trouble had been submitted weeks ago, but the reverend clergyman had misconstrued facts. Bishop Labrecque of Chicoutimi, Canada, the head of the St. Franciscan order, has left for Rome, and while there will attend to the interests of the nuns. Dr. Fontaine said that bishops understand bishops as lawyers understand lawyers, and consequently Bishop Labrecque knows how to act in the matter. When their own interests are involved, the bishops are always right, but when each had a different issue, neither is right. Bishop Labrecque wishes us to get up a petition and get it numerously signed, so that the authorities at the propaganda may see that the small handful of agitators has become the mass of the people.

When he had finished, addresses were made by P. T. Wilmot, S. Girard, L. J. Latour, J. E. Belanger, Pierre Hebert, and Herbert DeFosse. At the close of the speaking the following petition was circulated among those present:

PETITION.

It will humbly express the universal desire of the Catholics to keep in Worcester the Petites Soeurs Franciscaines de Marie, because they have proven by their regularity, zeal and devotedness that they possess all the qualities required to perform any kind of merciful and charitable work.

Those sisters have been established in Worcester on the request of one of the French pastors of the city. Many of them belong to Worcester and have their families amongst us. It is painful to see the bishop obliging our city fellows to leave their country, when we do not know anything in their behavior that may deserve such a course.

The community is incorporated under the laws of the commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Every one of the 400 persons who were in the hall signed the petition and many took extra copies to circulate among their friends. The petitions must be returned by Tuesday night, so that they may be sent on to Rome. The number of signatures which has been obtained up to the present is about 3000, and the committee hopes for a much larger number by Tuesday night. The friends of the order are hopeful that the propaganda will reverse the order issued by Bishop Beaven, and that the sisters may be allowed to remain in the city.

SATOLLI'S DECISION.

Friends of the Franciscan Sisters Hope it Will Be Reversed.

The Franciscan Sisters have been notified by Cardinal Satolli, through Bishop Beaven, that they must give up their orphanage on Bleeker street and return to their headquarters at Bale St. Paul. The news has stirred up the French-Canadians of the city greatly, as they believed that that question had been settled, and that the sisters would be allowed to remain. The decision of the Catholic prelate is the result of a difference between the supporters of the Franciscan Sisters and the Gray Nuns, who maintain an orphanage on Granite street.

Many of the influential French residents of the city have interested themselves in behalf of the Franciscan Sisters, whom they consider the more worthy organization, and have interceded with Cardinal Satolli, but have received no satisfactory answer.

A meeting of friends of the sisters was held Sunday afternoon, but no action was taken in the matter, as a reply from Cardinal Satolli said that he was about to leave the country, and his successor would soon arrive, and that if he chose to reverse Satolli's decision well and good. Accordingly the committee decided to await the arrival of the successor, and then plead for the Franciscan Sisters.

Should the decision be against the sisters remaining in this city, some of them will go to Chicopee Falls, and the remainder to Northampton. Sister Mary Rondeu, superior of the orphanage, will leave for Bale St. Paul today to confer with the head of the order relative to the situation.

THE BLEEKER STREET ORPHANAGE.

A Movement Started to Raise Money for the Franciscan Sisters.

Many of the prominent French residents of the city met Sunday afternoon in St. Jean Baptiste hall and organized for the purpose of aiding the St. Franciscan sisters who have charge of the orphanage on Bleeker street. The sisters have under their charge many orphans who, were it not for the home furnished them on Bleeker street, would be homeless. The expenses of the home are, therefore, necessarily large, and as the home is supported almost entirely by charitable people the French residents are determined to raise a large sum to help support the worthy object.

For this purpose the meeting was called Sunday, and Dr. F. D. Fontaine, who called the meeting to order, explained the work of the sisters and outlined a plan which he believed would result in a large sum being realized. It was decided to organize, and the following officers were elected: President, N. P. Huot; 1st vice president, L. J. Latour; 2d vice president, Joseph T. Dupre; secretary, Herbert De Fosse; treasurer, Levi Beaulieu.

A committee of 15 (five from each parish) was then chosen as follows: Notre Dame parish—Dr. F. D. Fontaine, F. Gagneau, J. B. Belanger, William Courchaine, Joseph Jacques; St. Joseph parish—Edward Rochette, Joseph Bruneau, Edward Faquette, P. Herbert, A. Larose; Holy Name parish—E. Riopel, Clovis Carron, W. F. Grenier, Augustus Charbonneau, Joseph Forrest. It was then decided to enlarge this committee so that every part of the city might be covered by some member and thus insure a greater success for the project. For that purpose the committee was asked to withdraw and each delegation from the three parishes present ten additional names from its parish.

The following were then added to the general committee: Notre Dame—F. Marcoux, Thomas Lechance, H. F. Normand, E. H. Belisle, Dr. L. L. Auger, Edward Chaquette, F. Goyette, J. Rivard, J. G. Vaudreuil, F. Y. V. Latour; St. Joseph—Urgel Jacques, F. Y. Lucier, J. A. Marchesseault, A. H. Fontaine, Joseph Grenier, A. Lemar, A. Loisan, A. T. Lamoureux, P. Fontaine, M. Jolicœur; Holy Name—Dr. Barnard, A. Ouillette, Godfrey La Bonte, Euseke Riopel, T. Trombley, Joseph Grandier, Frank Blanchard, W. De Fosse, P. J. Wilmot, Andrew LaJole.

It was decided to hold an entertainment on the evening of June 24, at which it is hoped a prominent man from Canada will deliver an address. It is the intention to invite the different French societies to attend in a body. The next meeting of the general committee will be held Thursday night, when plans will be arranged for carrying out the scheme.

THE ORPHANAGE BENEFIT.

A Great Audience at Horticultural Hall—Fr. Fafard's Address.

The French Canadians celebrated St. John's day quietly, the only entertainment being that held in Horticultural Hall in the evening for the benefit of the Franciscan Sisters' Orphanage on Bleeker street. The Garde Lafayette went to Providence, where the Canadians celebrated on an elaborate scale.

At Horticultural Hall an excellent musical and literary entertainment was greatly enjoyed by a large audience. Many of the numbers on the program were encored, and not a few of the artists were presented with beautiful bouquets. A delegation of the orphans contributed a few numbers, which were among the pleasantest on the program.

The principal number was an address by Rev. M. Ambrose Fafard of Bale St. Paul, Quebec, the head of the Franciscan order. Father Fafard's appearance had more than ordinary significance, as by his presence he demonstrated that the local order is recognized by the head of the order, a fact which was disputed a short time ago.

In his address, which was on the French in America, Father Fafard dealt harshly with the A. P. A., who opposed the erection of a statue to Pere Marquette, the missionary, in Washington. The local Franciscans, he said, were recognized by the head of the order, and he would defend them against any accusations to the contrary. These remarks were received with great applause.

Among those who contributed to the entertainment were the following: Regis J. Clotier, Nellie O'Connell, Eva Mondor, Alberta Foisy, J. B. Lucier, Amanda Lucier, J. Faure, Louise Olivier, C. Lafrepiere and the Misses Hunt.

Many of the French societies of the city attended the entertainment in a body, among which were the L'Union St. Joseph, Societe Literaire of St. Joseph's parish, L'Union Canadien, Ward 3 Naturalization Club and Ward 4 Naturalization Club.