

Orphelinat St. Anne, Worcester

En 1889, Mr. Brouillet, cure de la paroisse Notre-Dame de Worcester, organisa un comite laiue pour recourir les orphelins et confia ceux-ci a des institutrices seculieres. Deux ans plus tard, avec l'approbation de Son Ex. Mgr. P.T.O'Reilly, eveque de Springfield, notre tres honoree Mere Deschamps, sup. generale acceta de continuer cette oeuvre.

1891, 31 janvier, les trois fondatrices, nos Srs. M.A. Piche, sup. S. Georges et Poitevin prennent possession de l'etablissement, simple residence privee sise au no. 96, rue Southgate. Cinquante orphelins y sont deja reunis—Quelques mois plus, on ache au prix de \$15,000.00 la ferme Ellsworth situee sur la rue Granite. L'entrepreneur, M.J.G. Vaudreuil, y commence immediatement la construction d'un orphelinat dont le personnel prend possession le 30 janvier 1893. Outre les trois fondatrices, dix missionnaires vinrent a Worcester au cours de 1891. Nos Soeurs Ste. Hedwidge, Lapointe, Kagle, Waters, Menard, Ste. Ursule, Dumas, McKenzie, St. Louis de Gonzague et Lynch.

Excerpts from Newspaper October 13, 1925

Father Brouillet, curate of Notre Dame in 1889 rented two houses on Southgate St. for the purpose of sheltering orphaned and deserted children of his, and other Worcester parishes. For about 4 years, this was maintained on a small scale, housing an average of 25 boys and girls and offering these a temporary school. In January of 1891, the Grey Nuns from Montreal, Canada, were called with the approval of the then Bishop O'Reilly, to take charge of this orphanage. When the Sisters came, the group was increased to 50 orphans, and complete care, and even the raising of all necessary funds, appears to have been left to the Sisters. Mother Piche, the Superior, was well-known, as was her assistant Sr. LaPointe, who with but two other nuns were forced not only to care for the children, instruct them in school and in their religious habits, but to solicit funds from house to house. Poor and miserable was the lot of these early Sisters. They were often in great need of food, clothing and of fuel. The Sisters had to put their children into bed in order to wash their few clothes. The house was neither sanitary nor well-built. It was so damp that after a heavy rain, the good Sisters sloshed about in rubber boots and had to scrub the floor before they could allow the children to play thereon. These dear Sisters appear to have been both beset by poverty and dependent upon the charity of their friends. Once they were without bread. The little ones all knelt down and asked the Almighty God to have pity on them, that they might not starve. Later, in the day, there came a man with a whole wagon-load of bread. He was a baker and said he had forgotten to salt that day's bread, and would the good Sisters please accept it? They all cried for sheer joy, and were far too hungry to note the lack of mere salt.

Society of Benefactors organized in 1891. The officers were H. Bouchard; J.C. Rocheleau; J. Marchessault; A. Belisle; Jr., C. Caron; W.F. Grenier; A. Nault and S.D. Dubois. Within a year they purchased the Ellsworth farm, high on the hills of Granite street. They built an orphanage which should contain its own school and be a complete and modern, entity and this was opened January 1893.

1904. Gift of Wood Home.

In 1904, Mrs. Bowman Wood, whose house was next door to the orphanage, was so impressed by the work of the sisters, that she presented her home to them. This house was added to the main building and is still here at the very right of our buildings. It was about this time that the sisters added their own chapel also. These buildings were to serve them for many years. The Ellsworth farm had been maintained as such. To this day there are 147 acres, about 14 of them are used for raising vegetables.

1920. the great barn burned causing a loss of \$16,500, so they built another. No matter how much their friends tried to aid them, to find themselves without any financial reserve. All these years personal solicitation, from house to house had been carried on. Many came to the Orphanage with personal gifts for the children and some gave small donations, but the orphanage was huge and hard to heat and there were many mouths to feed.

1923 Fellow-member of the Community Chest, so its support was assured through the contributions of Worcester people made through the annual Golden Rule Drive. It was thought at that time that the Sisters might have had to give up the orphanage, except for the Community Chest.

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In 1923 New Dormitories:

The Board of Public Safety claimed that wooden buildings were not safe quarters in which to house children. so the foundation of a new fireproof brick building began. They borrowed \$160,000.00 from a local bank The new building stands back of the original wooden house. It serves as a dormitory, the school and chapel being in the front or older building.

1922: Orphans Friend Society, known in French as "Ami de l'Orphelin". Five Catholic parishes in Worcester wholly or partly composed of French people are represented in this society, the membership of which includes both men and women.

Mother Anna Piche, was the first Superior and foundress of this mission. Later she was named 17th and 19th Superior General of the Grey Nuns of Montreal.

Today they have swimming pool and playground near the house. Facing the orphanage is one of the most beautiful grottos of Our Lady of Lorges and St. Bernadette to be found in New England.