

**In 2015 Rosie & I requested the following article be published in the Catholic Free Press. Unfortunately, our request was denied. So that it does not go to waste, we are providing it here for all to read.**

Earlier this year a door from my past opened that had been closed for over 60 years. All these memories came pouring out. I wasn't even sure they were real. My husband recently passed away and my brother and I started to talk about our childhood. The time we spent in an orphanage resurfaced. He had a newspaper clipping of him and a girl from November 1954. It said that they were from St. Ann's Orphanage in Worcester, Mass.

Our mom had divorced an abusive husband and we were no longer a family. My brother and I were sent to an orphanage and our younger sister stayed with relatives. We were told we were placed at St Ann's Orphanage as 'Boarders' to be taken care of and protected from the abuse we had endured. Our mom worked in the Worcester area and would be able to visit us more often. I guess at the time it all made a lot of sense to her. When we left the orphanage we were not allowed to talk about this time in our lives. It was best forgotten. My mother grew up speaking French as we did. But we were no longer permitted to speak it. As time passed we eventually forget how to speak French. What a shame.

We realized we both had these strange memories from our youth. I wanted to be reassured that our memories had some reality to them. So I asked him to help me find out about the orphanage. To our dismay there was very little to find. We searched websites and read some stories past residents of St Ann's Orphanage had posted. Some of their recollections helped rekindle our own memories. As we talked it came apparent what we needed to do. It was not to bring up the past but to know who, what, where and why things happened to us during the two years we had lost.

It was decided. We had to take a road trip into our past. First we drove to 133 Granite St. to see what was there. The buildings of Mount St. Ann were falling to time and disrepair. It is now called the Christian Charities of Worcester Youville House. Signs indicated it was about to be demolished. It deeply saddened us to see the Grotto across the street. To our dismay it has been corralled in a black, wrought iron cage, left to rust and fall prey to the elements. The face on the small statue of St. Bernadette had been battered.

We stopped by the Worcester Public Library and took pictures of newspaper clippings. That's when it all came gushing forth. Photos in those newspaper clippings enforced some of our deepest, most personal memories. That was it! "God is sending us on a mission." The library personnel gave us some leads. Upon returning home we made phone calls around the Worcester area. Considering St. Ann's Orphanage was a major institution in Worcester for nearly 100 years we were surprised at the lack of information. Our best lead came from the Catholic Charities of Worcester County. Noreen Landry was able to confirm the date of our entry into the orphanage. A later trip to the Catholic Free Press gave us the hope we were looking for. The photos and newspaper clippings provided to us paved the way.

Indeed, God had sent us on a mission. It seemed he was pushing me to find answers. We started searching the internet for anything related to St. Ann's Orphanage in Worcester. We again were disappointed in the results. We came across some blog sites where past residents of St. Ann's Orphanage had posted some tidbits of their time there. Some had foggy memories like I did. They too tried to find out about their pasts to no avail. This was no longer about me. My brother and I decided to gather as much information and pictures that we could and- set up some kind of web page on Facebook.

Since starting the Facebook Page in May 2015 we have collected many pictures and newspaper articles of St. Ann's Orphanage and Mount St. Ann. We even went to Canada to the Grey Nuns Archive to get some information and select photos for digitization so we could provide a large photo history dating back to 1893. That in itself has a gold mine of memories. Looking at yourself, or your grandparents or great-grandparents photos you never knew existed brings out emotions you didn't know existed.

Along with photos and newspaper articles we have managed to put together a comprehensive history timeline and added our own touch by posting articles we have written or stories others have shared with us. So far we have added items on a weekly basis so that each time someone looks in they will have something new to view. We do ask that if someone wants to post pictures or tell us their story that they email them to us at [St.AnnesOrphanage.Worcester@gmail.com](mailto:St.AnnesOrphanage.Worcester@gmail.com) so that we can properly review and resize/crop photos if needed. You can find us on Facebook by searching St. Ann's Orphanage Worcester

Rosalie Massie Blackburn (Rosalie Theresa La Fontaine)

Joseph Massie (Lester Otto LaFontaine) – Residents of St. Anne's Orphanage 1945-1955