

## **The Beginning of St. Anne's French-Canadian Orphanage Worcester**

You've heard stories of how the St. Anne's French-Canadian Orphanage got started. Well, I have searched Worcester and surrounding area newspapers from the 1800s into the early 1900s and have found a plethora of articles about the orphanages of that time. I also noted many articles from the 1940s and after did not corroborate the newspaper articles that were printed during the actual historical timeframe. It is very interesting to see how historical inaccuracies have played out over the years.

As we read stories about history, we are blinded by what is the truth and what has been made up over time. Movies tend to fictionalize characters and give disclaimers. History books, believe it or not, have perverted many historic figures, making them into disturbing creatures or glamorous icons. You find when someone recalls an event from their past, they can get mixed up with what they really experienced and what has been embellished by family or friends.

Well, the story of St. Ann's Orphanage Worcester is no different and has many inaccuracies, both told and printed. Believe it or not, the early history mentioned in our book, 'The Ghosts of St. Ann's Past' also has ghostly misunderstandings. Read on and see what may be factual and what may have been unintentionally misrepresented.

It's always best to start at the beginning of any story. **Reverend Father Joseph Brouillet**, pastor of the Church of Notre Dame in Worcester, MA was the inspiration for a French-Canadian home for orphans and aged persons not able to care for themselves. Sadly, no early stories or references about him were found in local newspapers we searched, until September of 1883 when Father Brouillet was looking to build a new wooden school adjoining the parochial residence. Also, in September of 1883 Rev. Joseph Brouillet requested an addition to some wooden buildings on Portland Street. In December 1884 we find **Bishop O'Reilly from the Springfield Diocese** mentioned. On March 19, 1887, a 'Happy Birthday' celebration for St. Joseph and Father Joseph Brouillet was enjoyed by all. There was no mention as to his age or when he was born. Lastly, some 1888 articles talked about his involvement with the three Worcester parochial schools.

In the late 1880s Worcester had two major orphans' homes, referred more often as asylums. The **Children's Friend Society**, founded in 1848, opened the first orphanage in Worcester, the **Orphans' Home** at William and Chestnut streets before moving into a "comfortable house" on Pine Street. In the fall of 1863, they

purchased the property, built in 1848, at 821 Main Street, on the corner of Benefit Street. Today, the Children's Friend is an affiliate of Seven Hills and continues to serve children and families in the greater Worcester area. You can read more in our PDF file '**Children's Friend Society Orphans' Home**'.

In 1875 with the efforts of Rev. Bishop O'Reilly the **St. Paul's Orphanage** was build. The '**Sisters of Mercy**' were put in charge of the newly opened Catholic Orphan Asylum located at 34 High Street with adjoining buildings between High St. and Houchin Ave. It took on many names during the late 1800s including St. Paul's Orphanage, Sisters of Mercy Orphans' Home, St. Paul's Orphan Asylum, Sisters of Mercy Orphanage, Diocesan Catholic Orphan Asylum, the Catholic Orphanage, and St. Gabriel's Orphanage.

The **South Worcester Orphanage**, another Worcester institution emerged in 1889. It too took on many names before being incorporated as the **St. Ann's French-Canadian Orphanage of Worcester**. Many news articles posted the names as **South Worcester Orphanage**, the Orphanage of South Worcester, the Canadian Orphan Asylum, the French Orphanage of South Worcester, the French-Canadian Orphanage, and St. Anne's Orphanage of South Worcester.

Other smaller orphan homes sprang up in Worcester around the same time. The **Rose Petit Franco-American Orphanage** opened on Greendale Steet, then in 1902 moved its facilities to Hermitage Lane where 2 months later it burned to the ground. The infamous **Sisters of St. Francis of Assissi** opened the **Orphans' Home of Saint Francis of Assissi** on Bleeker Street as the result of a chaotic issue between Father Brouillet and the oblate sisters of the South Worcester Orphanage.

There are two different versions to the beginnings of the '**Sisters of St. Francis of Assissi**', 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 Assissi**' 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 Assissi'. 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' Assissi, 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**. A Newspaper clipping 1904-03-02\_5 mentions the purchase of land on Thorne Street opposite to Bleeker Street, thus encompassing the block. 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.

During this turbulent time, the Grey Nuns of Montreal were able to settle into their duties at the South Worcester Orphanage, incorporate the orphanage as the St. Ann's French-Canadian Orphanage of Worcester and managed to procure the Ellsworth Farm on Granite Street as the new orphans' home. The history has been documented in our book, PDF files, and now here and on our Facebook page with a numerous amount of newspaper clippings.

Notre Dame Church or Church of Notre Dame  
The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi  
The Third Order of St. Francis of Assisi  
The Franciscan Sisters  
The Orphanage of South Worcester  
The South Worcester Orphanage  
The Canadian Orphan Asylum  
The French Orphanage of South Worcester  
The French-Canadian Orphanage  
St. Anne's Orphanage, South Worcester  
The Sisters of Charity, Montreal  
The Grey Nuns of Montreal

**NOTE:** Pertinent information from newspaper articles is posted below in chronological order. Unless otherwise mentioned, they are from the **Worcester Daily Spy**. Copied clippings found in the newspapers have been placed in the photo album section of our Facebook page.

NOTE: There were NO photos found in these papers until 1922.

**1889-08-31 Notre Dame Church...** **Rev. Z. Durocher** will take the place of Father Marchand in this city and will be **chaplain** of the new orphanage and home for infirm people, which is **being erected at the corner of Grand and Southgate** streets, under the direction of Rev. Joseph Brouillet. The Franciscan sisters, several of whom have already arrived, will oversee the institution...

**1890-02-12 Building Addition** - A Story is to be added to the Canadian Orphan Asylum on Southgate St. where 100 Children are now located.

**1890-02-12 Benefit** –Two Orphans in French – A French company from out of the city gave “Les Deux Orphelines” to a large and appreciative audience last night at Horticultural Hall, for the benefit of the French Orphanage at South Worcester. The play was well staged and still better presented. (This was the first of many Benefit articles found in the newspapers)

**1890-04-20 South Worcester Orphanage** – Some Description of the work being done among the French People by the ‘Sisters of St. Francis’.

A Charitable institution which is doing good work in a quiet and unostentatious manner in this city is the orphanage at the corner of Southgate and Grand Streets, under the direction of the ‘Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi.’ The institution was founded August 7, 1889, by the ‘Sisters of St. Francis’ of whom there are but two houses in New England, one here and one in Fall River, the local house, which numbers eight sisters of the order, being the head house.

The primary object of the order is to care for orphans and aged people but connected with the South Worcester house is a parochial school of 110 pupils, including the orphans and children of the parish of Notre Dame. The former range in age from infants to children 16 years old, and at present number 75, but there is scarcely a day when there is not an addition to the ranks. The institution not only cares for orphans, but furnishes a home for aged women, of whom there are three at present, and foundlings find tender nurses in the sisters. The home is under the auspices of the Church of Notre Dame and derives its support mainly from the French people and kind-hearted neighbors in the vicinity.

The sisters, who are similar to “the little sisters of the poor,” go about the state seeking alms and aid for the orphanage, getting some assistance in this way. Although the orphanage depends for its existence on the French people, they are not the only ones who are benefitted by it, as there are children of other nationalities under the care of the sisters and a few Protestant children find agreeable homes there. Any Catholic child of the state will be admitted, and already there are inmates from Fitchburg, North Grafton, and other places. When children are sent to the orphanage from outside parishes, however, the parish which sends them is expected to contribute to their support. The children are kept until good homes are secured for them. Everything about the house is a model of neatness, and the dormitories are commodious and well ventilated.

The home has now outgrown its accommodations, and a few days ago the boys’ dormitory was changed into a neighboring building, meals still being served in the old house, and classes are held as usual. The Change, however, relieved the pressure only temporarily, and Rev. Joseph Brouillet has purchased a piece of land at Stoneville, where a permanent home will be built.

The resident priest of the house is Rev. Charles Z. Durocher, who also has charge of the French mission in South Worcester. Dr. M.F. Fallon is the attending physician...

**1890-04-20 The French Orphanage** – The Sisters of St. Francis will arrive from Fall River, Mass. after it was discontinued. The Orphanage of South Worcester’s local house of Sisters of St. Francis will become their head house.



**1890-05-29 A Story is to be added** to the Canadian orphan asylum on Southgate Street. There are now 100 children in the institution. J.G. Vaudreuil has charge of the improvements.

**1890-06-09 The Sisters of St. Francis arrive from Fall River** – The local house of the ‘Sisters of St. Francis’, which has charge of the orphanage at South Worcester, has been made the head house of the order in this country, and the other house in Fall River has been discontinued. The Fall River sisters arrived here Saturday afternoon and will make this city their permanent home. They will find plenty to do, as the orphanage has continued to grow steadily since it was founded, and the large number of children who are now being cared for demand all the attention they can get. Assistance is needed to carry on the work, and any charitably disposed persons will find that help in any way will be appreciated by the sisters.

**1890-10-24 The South Worcester Orphanage** Getting too big for one man to handle – Managed by the Oblate Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi – **To be vested in a board of trustees.** The property at the corner of Southgate and Grand streets has grown from one house to three and have 150 inmates, both orphans and aged people who are looked after by 20 oblate sisters. (Not Nuns)

**1891-01-14 The French Orphanage Conflict of Authority at South Worcester – Father Brouillet likely to come out ahead.**

Fr. Durocher came to Father Brouillet in late summer 1889 from Ottawa, Canada where he was the purser of the college. He asked to be his assistant as his mother was with him and needed money for her support. Father Brouillet gave him a place among his curates, at a salary of \$500 a year, and later put him in charge of the orphanage as chaplain.

He was given a house nearby and this he furnished in an elaborate manner, sending the bills to Father Brouillet, who refused to pay them, claiming they were Fr. Durocher’s personal bills, and he alone must pay them.

Trouble soon began when Fr. Durocher. tried to run the orphanage to suit himself. He turned over the property he had procured to the orphanage and made it responsible for the bills. He then had the ‘sisters’ incorporated 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. The latter claims that he has since learned that Fr. D. was expelled from the college, where he also has some trouble.

After his discharge Fr. Durocher. kept inciting the ‘sisters’ against Father Brouillet. This was an easy matter, as some of them were already dissatisfied with some of the pastor’s regulations. They are not professional nuns, but simply a body

of women banded together for charitable purposes. There is only one professed nun in the local house. - (NOTE: Sister Francis d'Assissi, known as Julia Charpentier) – One of the actions to which the 'sisters' take umbrage 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. This caused the scene of Monday night, when the younger women decided to move, and had their work well under way when they were stopped by Father Brouillet and Deputy Sheriff Jandron. Fr. Durocher has attached the property at the orphanage, to recover money which he claims is due him for extra work as chaplain of the institution. The writ of attachment was served by Deputy Sheriff Drennan, who put in two of the 'Sisters' as keepers.

The general feeling is in favor of Father Brouillet, the present superior claiming that Fr. Durocher and the younger women are at the bottom of the trouble.

**1891-01-15 Nuns Didn't Like Boarders** – Hence their revolt from Father Brouillet – The affair likely to be settled in court.

Things were comparatively quiet in the vicinity of the South Worcester Orphanage yesterday, the turbulent scenes of the last few days having been turned into a legal squabble, which will in all probability be settled in the courts.

The nuns 'sisters' who have left the place will never be allowed to return, and they are trying to make arrangements for opening another institution (at 10 Beeker St.). Those who remained received the assistance of the ladies of Notre Dame Church, and Rev. Joseph Brouillet says he will provide for them in every way. He further says those who have departed have broken a written agreement with him, and they have no one but themselves to blame for their present predicament. 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 all signed a written agreement to that effect, but he says he has not been able to find it since Father Durocher left. He says the institution will not be allowed to break up but will keep it under its present management until he can secure the services of the **GRAY NUNS OF MONTREAL**.

The nuns 'sisters', on the other hand, claim they were engaged to care for "orphans" and not "boarders," and in their new home, when it is established, none but orphans will be admitted.

Father Brouillet is anxious for a settlement, and yesterday the board of trustees went to Springfield to get Bishop O'Reilly to settle the matter one way or the other. They met the bishop, but he refused to interfere in any way. He said he did not recognize the women as sisters, and he never would. They would have to

settle their difficulty without his interference, as they received their charter of incorporation by misrepresentation, and he would have nothing whatever to do with them.

The affair has resolved itself into a question of ownership of the furniture in the orphanage, which is claimed by the corporation and Rev. Joseph Brouillet, in the name of Notre Dame parish. Father Durocher's attachment placed the property in the hands of the corporation, but it returned to the other side, yesterday, when an attachment was made, at the instance of J.G. Vaudreuil (Trustee), to recover money due him by Father Brouillet. This move is simply a matter of form to recover possession of the property by Father Brouillet.

**1891-01-16 Priest against Priest** – What is said by persons interested about the orphanage troubles – Fr. Durocher's character defended. **Here is part of the article.** The feeling regarding the affairs of the French-Canadian Orphanage on Southgate Street is still running high among the members of the congregation of the Church of Notre Dame. Rev. Joseph Brouillet, pastor of the church, told the story of his connection with Rev. Fr. Durocher, the chaplain of the orphanage, to a Spy reporter yesterday substantially as follows:

About a year ago he came to Worcester in a very destitute condition and called on me. He told me he was very anxious to get something to do immediately, as his widowed mother was entirely dependent upon him for support. I listened to his story with a very willing ear and invited him to stay for a while in my house. He sent for his mother with money I gave him and soon after I gave him the appointment as chaplain of the orphan's home. I did not really need the care of the home.

Everything went well until last August, which he began to grow careless regarding his duties as chaplain. Before this he came to me every day and asked my opinion in regard to what should be done, and I gave him counsel in all these months. From August to October his actions grew stranger to me, and finally, in the latter month, I wrote to Bishop O'Reilly and requested that Father Durocher be removed, the bishop answered that he left the matter in my hands. I told some of the prominent gentlemen connected with the management of the home, and the consequence was an investigation.

I think the removal of Fr. Durocher was a good thing for my orphans' home. I feel greatly pleased to think that I am no longer hampered by this man....

Councilman Alexander Bellsie, Jr. stated that he received a notice from Father Durocher last summer asking that he come to the orphan's home to make an appraisal of all the goods that were in the home. A Committee of three made an appraisal of all the household effects. As this work was going on Father Durocher was asked if Father Brouillet was aware of the proceedings, and he said, "Yes,"

very emphatically. As the work of ... progressed, I overheard him make the remark that a report of the appraisal should be sent to the secretary of state. I again asked him if Father Brouillet was aware if the appraisal, and he again said 'Oh, yes.' The answer he gave me deceived me.

The statement that has been published that **Fr. Durocher** is a man of loose morals in respect to his treatment of the young women at the orphanage is preposterous. He may be **addicted to the use of liquor**, but further than that he is entirely innocent of the charges concerning his morality that has been made,

The rest of the article talks about the impending court cases.

**1891-01-17 Bishop Too Ill to Talk** – First part states the bishop is too ill to go to Worcester to resolve the issue.

Fr. Brouillet has been criticized for putting the orphanage in charge of girls who were not members of any religious order. He says he did so with the consent of the bishop. He expects that a **colony of Grey Nuns from Montreal** will soon be installed in the orphanage housing 50 orphans.

**The following RED posts are also found in our book and history of SAOW.**

**Jan. 31, 1891** – Sisters Piche, St. George and... take possession of the 96 Southgate St. orphanage (Officially opened February 1, 1891, per comment in a May 29, 1891, Article)

**Jan. 31, 1891** – After disagreements with the Third Order of St. Francis, Father Brouillet invited the Grey Nuns of Montreal (The Sisters of Charity) to take charge of the orphanage. Reverend Mother Deschamps, Superior General, sent some sisters to take on this task. Sisters Piche, La Point and George have been mentioned in articles. They assumed the responsibility of the orphan home at 96 Southgate Street and the children left parentless in those poverty ridden times. The population of the orphans and deserted children quickly grew to 50. It was up to these sisters to take complete care of their charges. That meant feeding, clothing, caring, and teaching them. It also meant that the sisters had to find ways to raise funds for the clothing, food, and fuel by going house to house to solicit funds, etc. When the sisters put the children to bed, they washed the few cloths they had. The property was neither sanitary nor well-built. It was so damp after a heavy rain, they slogged about in rubber boots. They had to scrub the floors before the children could play on them. They were utterly dependent on the goodness of others. Many a day the children would want for food.

**1891** - The Society of Benefactors was organized. Within a year they would support the building of a new orphanage high on the hills of Granite Street for a cost of \$15,000.

**1891** - The order of Grey Nuns of Montreal (The Sisters of Charity) purchased Ellsworth Farm, comprising about 150 acres (confirmed by Worcester Map of 1896) located at

133 Granite Street. On this farm was a house and a barn. Building of a four-story wooden structure started immediately. It was typical to the style of other institutions of that period. It contained a school and was a complete and modern entity for its day.

**1891** – In addition to the three founding sisters, 10 more missionaries were later sent to help support the French-Canadian Orphanage of Worcester. Sisters Hedwidge, Lapoint, Kagle, Waters, Menard, Ursula, Damascus, McKenzie, St. Louis Gomzague and Lynch.

**1891-03-11 The French Orphanage – A Suit brought by Fr. Durocher Against the oblate sisters** – Rev. Charles Durocher, the priest who figured lately in the trouble with the French Orphanage of South Worcester, has entered a suit against the Oblate Sisters for \$165 in the central district court. This amount, he claims, was advanced by him to pay for the charter which was granted by the state so the sisters, and he also claims that he has never been paid. The institution will be defended by Col. W.S.B. Hopkins and F.A. Bellsie, and the sisters by A. Choquet.

**1891-03-26 Cloths for the Orphans – Donations for the Wards of the Grey Nuns of Montreal** – The Grey nuns who came to this city recently from Montreal are doing a great deal of work at the orphanage in South Worcester. A number of prominent businessmen have taken a lively interest in the welfare of the orphans. Among the contributions are 50 suits of boys' cloths, from L.P. Petit at the Globe clothing house, 20 pairs of shoes, from Levi Beaulieu, the Shrewsbury Street grocer, 30 pairs of shoes from Thomas LaChance, the Front Street Shoe Dealer.

The house is very nearly overtaxed, and the four sisters have three assistants to aid them in their work. But this work is so great that some new help will have to be added in the near future.

**1891-04-12 The Oblate Sisters – The French Orphanage finds new quarters on Benefit Street.** – The people in the neighborhood of Benefit Streets have been considerably exercised the past week over the establishment of a Catholic orphanage at **51 Benefit Street**, nearly opposite the corner of Glenwood Street. Some have claimed that it was a convent, and the affair has been the chief topic of conversation for the gossips in the neighborhood.

A Spy reporter called at the house last evening and was very cordially received. The building, which is a large brown double house and contains about twenty-five rooms, is neatly but plainly furnished, and will be used for the protection and shelter of unfortunate children.

The orphanage is to be run by practically the same woman who oversaw the South Worcester Orphanage at the corner of Southgate and Grand Streets, previous

to the trouble in the orphanage. After the trouble with Father Brouillet all but two of the seventeen sisters in the home seceded and hired temporary quarters on Orient Street, but the place was too small for the needs of the order and the society finally secured the present Benefit Street location where there is more room for the work. They moved in last week.

The Oblate Sisters are not nuns, but supposed they were in a recognized church sisterhood while they were at South Worcester. Then society has been incorporated and the objects are outlined in the chapter as follows: "In compliance with the terms of our charter, we make it a final privilege that our new home shall be a temporary refuge for destitute and neglected children. No child shall be admitted who is not destitute. Those who have friends and money need not ask for admission, for the room such children would take up is required for the purely destitute. Our home will be a refuge for the poor and friendless little ones who have been deprived of their natural protector through death or misfortune. Admission to the house shall be free and without distinction of creed or nationality, We will care for and instruct the children so admitted until they are restored to their relatives or provided with homes in good families.

The name of the house is to be **St. Francis Home (Orphans' Home of Saint Francis of Assisi)**. The sister superior in charge is **Sister Rondeau**, who was also in charge in South Worcester. (Note: This was not true as she was selected to be sister superior, but Fr. Brouillet rejected it.) One of the essential differences from the South Worcester Orphanage is that while that orphanage takes children as boarders, the Benefit Street home will take only those destitute.

The sisters have now only four or five children but will probably receive accessions during the week. The location at 10 Benefit Street is not considered just what the society requires, as it is too probable that soon a house will be secured on the outskirts of the city, where the children may be cared for to better advantage.

**1891-05-23 The French Orphanage – Grey Nuns on the lookout for a site for an orphanage** – The Order of Gray Nuns, now occupying the buildings on the corner of Grand and Southgate Streets, will hold a fair next week, the proceeds of which will be used in the purchase of and to establish a new orphanage, as their present quarters are much too small.

During the past week many sites have been viewed, but no lot has been decided upon, though one near the late George Crompton's residence has been spoken of invariably. **It is a farm of 160 acres (Ellsworth)** and is well suited to their purposes. Another site near Holy Cross College and one near Jamesville have been inspected.

After the land have been bought and buildings erected, **the affairs will be managed by the sisters alone, and no priests or outside parties** will have the

slightest jurisdiction over them. At present there are about 125 Children and a few old men and women at the orphanage. It is intended when the new building is completed that it will accommodate about 500 children...

**1891-05-26 French Catholic Festival – Crowds Attend the Fair for the benefit of the French Orphanage** – Article about the fair.

**1891-05-29 Work of the GRAY NUNS** – A Glimpse at the interior of the French Orphanage (Southgate & Grand) – New location needed – Present Quarters Cramped – No Playground – A Meritorious Charity.

“I’m too young to be the superior. Don’t you think so?” said a demure little Gray Nun to a Spy reporter the other day, in response to a question as to who had charge of the French Orphanage at the corner of Southgate & Grand Streets. The newspaper man had been interested in the announcement that the Gray Nuns were looking about for a suitable site on which to build a new orphanage and had called at the present home of the Gray Nuns to find out a little of what work was being done there and what they intended to do in the future. A ring at the bell of the ramblings brown buildings now occupied, the property of Father Brouillet, brought an elderly French woman to the door. The superior was asked for, and the reporter was left in a rather sparsely furnished but absolutely clean reception room, while the doorkeeper sought for the sister. She came and in reply to the question. “The superior, I Presume?” answered in the opening words of this story.

**Sister Piche** is young and too charming to be thoroughly hedged in by social barriers of a religious life. Her severely plain, yellowish gray serge skirt and black and white wimple fail to hide her beauty, and the twinkle of her black eyes and her demure smile as she tells you that she does not speak English very well only add to the charm of this interesting little woman. “**There are nine of us here,**” she continued, “Sisters **Lapointe**, Kagle, St. **Georges**, Waters, Boiterin, Ste. Hegewige, Menard, Ursuel, and me. (NOTE: Sisters Lynch, St. Louis Gomzague, McKenzie and Damascus will soon follow) Just at present we have with us Mother Superior Deschamps, who has for 20 years been at the head of the Gray Nunnery at Montreal, and for 53 years has lived in the sisterhood.

We of course served a novitiate of five years there, before we came out. It’s a pleasant place there, somewhat different from our present quarters. There everything is divided into sections. There is an orphanage, a school for young girls and boys, a school that the young women of the city may attend and pay for their education, and a nunnery, where the sisters are educated. Here we only have the orphanage. We work under the supervision of Bishop O’Reilly, and the children are all from the diocese of Springfield. **The orphanage was opened February 1,**

**1891**, and now we have here 58 girls and 55 boys, the children's ages ranging from 1 year to 12 among the boys, and 16 among the girls."

A tour of the buildings was made with the superior, and as the various rooms visited, the superior explained the methods employed in the care and education of the little ones.

At the head of a flight of stairs, leading from the hallway out of the reception room, was a little office, and further along down the hall was a sewing room, where the mending for the little ones is done. This sewing is naturally large, for every week there are 225 little stockings to darn, besides keeping other clothes in repair. Out of this room is a hall which leads to the chapel, where services are conducted every morning and evening by Father Brouillet's assistant. From the same hallway a flight of stairs leads to the sleeping room for the girls. The whole floor is thrown into one large room, and fifty-four cots, white and soft, are ranged side by side. In each corner of the room is a cot curtained off, and here, four sisters sleep. By each sister are two cradles, where the smallest of the young pensioners sleep.

Once more going down onto the ground floor and out across a small courtyard, the boys' home is reached. They live in a separate house from the girls, and are every way distinctly separated, except that they attend church and school together.

The cots are arranged in the same way as in the girls' section, and a sister occupies a small room leading from and near to the youngsters to keep an eye on them during the night.

There are also three or four superannuated old women here who have outlived their usefulness, from the world's view, and now await their end with the sisters. They sleep in the same kind of cots, but enjoy a room separated from the children. A room in this building has been fitted up with benches and tables and is used by the children as a playroom during inclement weather.

Once more crossing the courtyard a visit to the kitchen was made. Supper was being prepared, and great pans were filled with white bread spread with jam. It was a truly appetizing meal and was doubtless appreciated. A room just beyond the kitchen was occupied by the babies, and they were making sad havoc of the great bowls of bread and milk. A glance into the dining room, with their long tables and benches, and the visit was over.

The superior, is continuing her conversation, said; "We arise every morning at 4:30, and wake the children at 5. They are dressed, and at 6 mass is held: then comes breakfast, and later school. One-half the day the children are taught in French, the other half in English. We are kept pretty busy, but it is pleasant work."

**Mother Deschamps is in the city** for a short visit only and is giving her personal attention to the selection of a new location. The present quarters are



entirely inadequate for the work, and aside from the cramped conditions inside the house the children have no chance to play. The only space available is the narrow and dusty courtyard between the two buildings. A farm is what the nuns want, and they have looked at **the Ellsworth place** with longing eyes. This farm comprises **of 120 acres**, and with the buildings is **offered at \$12,000**. It is possible that the purchase will be made, and if so, the present buildings will be used until such a time as sufficient money can be raised to construct an orphanage which will meet the ideas of the sisters.

The fair now being held in Mechanics Hall is given for the aid of the orphanage, and it is hoped that enough money will be raised in this way to make a first payment on the new place. Philanthropic might well investigate the merits of this French Catholic order. With what they are doing a wonderful amount of good, and the order in other cities is spoken of in the highest terms. Recently the Associated Charities have had occasion to use it as a home for three little children whose father's brutality drove their mother into an insane asylum and left them homeless and starving.

**1891-06-07 Pastor of Norte Dame Sued – A Lay Sister wants to Recover for Services – Miss Mary Rondeau, a lay sister** at the French Orphanage, sued Rev. Joseph Brouillet, pastor of Notre Dame Church, for \$300 for services rendered at the orphanage. Her mother testified that her daughter went to the orphanage, August 15, 1889, as a lay sister or assistant to the two professed nuns who oversaw the institution. Her daughter entered the orphanage in accordance with the request of Rev. Joseph Brouillet, who engaged to give her \$50 at the end of the year, besides her board and musical tuition, in return for her assistance in caring for the children. Before that her daughter had been studying music in a convent at St. Ours. When the year expired, she went to Rev. Joseph Brouillet for the stipulated \$50, but he opened the door and put her out.

In cross-examination, witness said that the girl was going back to St. Ours to continue her studies in music. A letter had been sent to Bishop O'Reilly about the matter, but she did not write it and did not know who did. While her daughter was in the convent, she had to take care of over 150 orphans.

The defendant testified that girls pay \$50 for the permission to enter the institution. They go there to see whether they would be willing afterward to enter the convent. If they could not do the work required of them there, they would not be fit for a convent. Rev. Joseph Brouillet's answer is a further denial. The court will give the decision next Friday.

**1891-06-13** A decision was handed down by Judge Utley in favor of the plaintiff, in the sum of \$56.87.

**1891-06-11 Death Her Only Relief – Carrie E. Clair** – Sad story of abuse from her husband, her being placed in the State Lunatic Hospital and her children being placed in The South Worcester Orphanage.

**1891-11-30 Young Ladies in Charge are to become Nuns** – The Sisters of St. Francis of Assissi have been informed that the head house in France has opened a house in the USA and at St. Paul's Bay, Quebec... The establishment of a convent will give them a chance to serve a novitiate, after which they will be professed and become nuns. The orphanage on Bleeker Street now contains 25 little waifs...

**1892-01-10 The French Orphanage Suits** – The three suits of the French Orphanage vs. Deputy Sheriff James Early and Rev. Joseph Brouillet, have agreed to refer the matter to an auditor for settlement.

**February 27, 1892 - An Agreement of Association was signed and notarized, incorporating the St. Ann's French-Canadian Orphanage.** (Some say in honor of the Superior, Reverend Mother Anna Piche, but Anne's Parochial School and church were part of the South Worcester location on Southbridge St.)

**1892-04-27 The New French Orphanage** – Arrangements are being made for the immediate erection of the French Orphanage on the Ellsworth farm on Granite Street. Ground will be broken next week, and the work will be pushed as rapidly as possible. It is intended to erect at first a small building, which will probably be ready for occupancy by August 7<sup>th</sup>. The property will be under the full control of the gray nuns. A committee of prominent French persons will be appointed to act as advisers in regard to awarding contracts. The deed of the estate has already been drawn up and will probably be signed tomorrow. It was sent to Montreal for the signature of the sister superior, Mary Deschamps, but she had already started for Worcester and the deed was sent back.

Enough money has been borrowed to finish the whole structure, but it has been through advisable to erect a small building at first then erect additional buildings as the demands on the orphanage show their necessity.

**1892-04-29 The Deed Signed** – The deed conveying the property known as the Ellsworth farm to the St. Anne's French-Canadian Orphanage was signed last evening. The property has been held in the name of Sister Marie Julie Rainault Deschamps of Montreal since June last. She will return shortly to Montreal as her local business affairs are now settled. Work on the new building will be commenced immediately.

**1892-06-08 Building Bids for the Construction of the New French Orphanage.**

Architects Fuller & Delano opened bids, which were remarkable close were as follows: Eli Belisle, \$25,745; J.G. Veaudriel, \$25,600; Urgel Jacques, \$25,500; Beaulieu & Bebo, \$25,350; J.A. Courtmauche, \$24,877; Peter Pacquette, **\$24,823. Mr. Pacquette was declared the contractor.**

**1892-06-09 Building Permit** – To P.L. Paquette, builder, Fuller & Delano architects, for the Gray Nun Orphanage Society, an orphanage, of wood, four stories, 110 by 60 feet and 48 feet high, on Granite Street, near Heywood Street.

**1892-10-31 Fair & Donations for the St. Anne's Orphanage** – Fair at Mechanics Hall and a donation of a Haines upright piano given by C.L. Gorham & Company. Noted in the paper on **1893-03-25** the proceeds for the piano raffle brought in more than \$2,000.

**1892-11-19 Fair & Donations for the St. Anne's Orphanage** – Expectations to clear \$10,000 from donations and the fair.

**1893-01-04 A Big Blaze in the Night** – Destroys Charles Baker & Co. manufacturing building on Foster Street. Included in the loss was \$1,000 worth of doors which had been manufactured for the new French Orphanage to the order of Contractor J.G. Veaudriel.

**1893-01-23 The new Orphanage of the Gray Nuns on Granite Street is ready for occupancy**, and Sister Deschamps of Montreal, mother general of the order, will come to this city tomorrow to receive the house on behalf of the order. The local sisters and their charges will move into their new home later in the week.

**1893-01-25 Will Move This Week** – Superioress General from Montreal Inspects St, Anne's Orphanage. Sister Deschamps, superioress of the Order of Gray Nuns, came to Worcester, yesterday, from Montreal for the purpose of inspecting the newly erected St. Anne's Orphanage on Granite Street. She was met at Union Station by Sr. Piche, superioress of the local community, who accompanied her to the residence of Father Brouillet, pastor of Notre Dame Church, where a short stay was made. The sisters then went to the orphanage at Southgate and Grand Streets, where Sr. Deschamps will remain as the guest of the community till the end of the week, when it is expected the 13 nuns, 140 orphans and six added women, who now occupy the South Worcester Orphanage will move into the spacious new building on Granite Street.

When the transfer has been made the superioress general will return to Montreal. The formal dedication of the new building by Bishop Beaven will not take place till next summer. NOTE: Date of move, **January 30, 1893**

**January 3, 1893** - The Grey Nuns, led by Mother Anna Piche, Superior, moved into the new simple four-story wooden structure. Fourteen acres of the massive site were utilized for farming. They were still very poor, and everyone worked the farm, tended the animals, made cloths, etc. to make ends meet. Yet, no one was turned away. St. Anne's Orphanage eventually prospered and grew. The farm was worked by the children, Grey Nuns and hired hands. It produced vegetables, poultry, dairy products, and pigs to feed the children, whose numbers would later grow to more than 250.

**1893-02-01 South Worcester French Parish** – Removal to the New Orphanage – Preparations for Rev. Fr. Pereault – The Gray Nuns, with the orphans and aged women who are under their care, took possession, yesterday, of the new St. Anne's Orphanage on Granite Street. The work of transfer was begun at 2:30 o'clock, when twelve carriages, loaned by members of Notre Dame Parrish, drew up in front of the old orphanage at the corner of Camp and Southgate streets. Rev. Fr. Brouillet and Mother Deschamps of Montreal, superioress general of the Order of Gray Nuns, had charge of the arrangements, and under their direction the 138 French and Irish parentless children, four French and two Irish aged women and 10 of the nuns who have them in charge, were driven over to the new building which had previously been accepted from the contractors by Mother Deschamps.

On arrival, the orphans were taken to the main hall, where they were given refreshments, candy, and sweetmeats in honor of the occasion. After eating the good things, the children sang some hymns, and were then taken to their new corridors and shown their respective cots before going to supper.

**The old Orphanage at South Worcester had been sold to Eli Belisle by Fr. Brouillet. The former will hand it over next Tuesday to Fr. Pereault, who is to be the pastor of the new parish.** It will be used as for a chapel and parochial residence and school. Rev. Fr. Pereault will arrive in Worcester from Turners Falls at 2;30 Tuesday, and will be met by Fr, Brouillet, who will accompany him to South Worcester, and at 3 o'clock benediction of the Blessed Sacrament will be held in the chapel of the old orphanage. There will be mass said there the following Sunday, and thereafter it will be the house of worship for the French Catholics of South Worcester.

**1893-02-08 Free City Water for Charitable Institutions** – The two big state lunatic asylums in this city would probably be considered charitable institutions, as

would the Old Fellows' Home, and the new French Orphanage, should this bill be passed without amendment...

**1893-03-10 The Orphan Fair** - .... A vote of thanks was passed to all those who aided or contributed to the success of the St. Anne's Orphanage 'Fair'... The net proceeds of the fair will be more than \$6,000.

**1893-05-3 The Gray Nun Orphanage Dedication** – The new building on Granite Street dedicated. – Bishop Beaven Performs the ceremony in the presence of a large gathering of priests and people. The ceremony of dedicating the new French Catholic Orphanage, which has recently been established on Granite Street, and is under the care of the Gray Nuns, was solemnized yesterday morning by Rt. Rev. Dr. Beaven, bishop of the diocese of Springfield. The exercises began at 10:30 o'clock, and by that time fully 1500 people were present on the spacious grounds in front of the orphanage.

The bishop and attendant clergy having taken places in the main porch of the building, with the neatly dressed orphans seated near and the general public in front, the exercises began with a sermon on "Charity," preached by Rev. L.G. Gagnier of Springfield. On the conclusion of the discourse, a procession was formed, which proceeded to the chapel of the institution, where the **sacrament of CONFIRMATION was administered to forty of the orphans**, the bishop being assisted in the ceremony by Mgr. Griffin and Rev. Robert Walsh.

The choir of Notre Dame Church, under the direction of J.A. Lavigne, rendered appropriate music during the service. When the children had been confirmed, Bishop Beaven dedicated the building, the ceremonies being almost the same as are usual at the dedication of a church.

This concluded the religious portion of the proceedings. Returning to the interior of the orphanage, the bishop was tendered a reception, during which **Lea Duprey, one of the little orphans**, read an address of welcome to the bishop, who responded by asking the mother superioress to grant the children a holiday. The request was granted, of course, to the evident delight of the parentless children.

Sisters Deschamps of Montreal, superior general of the Order of Gray Nuns, accompanied by three sisters from her convent, attended the exercises.

**The building cost some \$50,000** and is admirably equipped for its purpose, besides being located on a splendid site. There are at present 140 inmates, including a few aged people. The fair in aid of the orphanage, held recently in Mechanics Hall, resulted in a **net profit of \$6,533.63**.

In the morning at 8 o'clock Bishop Beaven administered to a large class of children in the Church of Notre Dame, Park Street.

**1893-06-24 Building Permit to P.L. Paquette** – Builder for the Gray Nuns Orphanage Society, a two-story wood and brick addition, 22 by 42 feet and 24 feet high, on Granite Street, near Wabash Avenue, for a laundry and sleeping rooms, in the Roman Catholic nunnery building there.

**1893-09-15 James Coilett**, a small boy, was found wandering about the street last night. HE has been at the **French Orphanage on Union Hill** but started out yesterday to find some of his relatives.

**1893-10-24 Statue of St. Anne** - At 2 o'clock next Sunday a statue of St. Anne will be placed on the Façade of St. Anne's French-Canadian Orphanage. A procession will be formed to escort it from the Church of Notre Dame to the convent, which is situated on what was formerly the Ellsworth farm on Granite Street and is occupied now by the Gray Sisters and their little charges.

A sermon will be preached, it is hoped by one of the Redemptorist Fathers from Ste. Anne de Beaupre, Canada, two of whom are now conducting the Novena at the Notre Dame. The Church of Ste. Anne at Beaupre has for many years been celebrated as a place where marvelous cures are preformed, and pilgrimages from distant parts of the country are formed through the summer months for the purpose of visiting the wonder-working shrine. It is said that the procession Sunday will to some extent resemble one of these pilgrimages.

**1893-10-28 A Statue for the French Orphanage** – A magnificent statue of St. Anne, eight feet tall, has been purchased by the people of the Church of Notre Dame for the French Orphanage on Granite Street, and it will be formally presented to the institution tomorrow afternoon. The people of the parish will meet at the church on Park Street at 2 o'clock, when they will form in procession and escort the statue to the orphanage, where the presentation will take place with appropriate exercises.

**1893-10-30 Statue of St. Anne Placed on the Façade of St. Anne's French-Canadian Orphanage.**

A notable day in French and Catholic circles, for it witnessed not only the presentation and dedication of the new statue of St. Anne at the Granite Street orphanage, but a miniature of those famous pilgrimages which have left their traces in history and literature and are at the present day of frequent occurrence in many parts of Europe.

The statue, which represents the saint regarding with admiration the Virgin Mary, to whom she has just presented a prayer book, was made in Canada, and is the gift of the parish of Notre Dame. It was escorted to its destination by a large

procession of members from the church on Park Street, and the line of march extended along Park, Washington, Bradley, Green, Vernon, Providence and Granite Streets to the orphanage, which was reached about 3 o'clock; but long before that hour the waiting rooms and corridors of the **great white building** and the spacious grounds adjoining it were thronged with men, women and children who had come on foot, on crutches, in baby wagons, on horseback and by carriage.

The wind blew sharply from the northwest and people were well chilled though by the time the procession appeared. It was headed by four mounted police; then came the guard of honor, Father Brouillet, pastor of the Church of Notre Dame, a great body of men, women and girls, the choirs of men and women from Notre Dame, the statue, and then more men and women. The statue was borne on a wagon, draped with blue and white, under a high canopy of the same. Gold and silver tinsel fringes hung gracefully from the pillars and draperies, and the whole was surmounted with a gilt cross.

From the windows of the orphanage the procession presented a picturesque appearance as it slowly wound along the curving avenue and paused before the main entrance. Here the choir, under the direction of M. Laligne, choir master of Notre Dame, sang several French and Latin in honor of St. Anne, the patroness of the orphanage and one of the patronesses of Notre Dame, many of the spectators joining in the singing.

The procession then moved to the rear of the orphanage, which afforded a very desirable shelter from the boisterous wind, and after more singing listened to a short sermon delivered by Father Carron of St. Anne Beaupre, Canada, one of the Redemptorist priests who have been conducting the novena at Notre Dame. He spoke in fervid words of the benefits to be derived from unswerving confidence in St. Anne and of the efficacy of prayers addressed to her. "Canadians," said he, "have especial reason to be grateful to her, for she is the patron saint of Canada, who is powerful to intercede and to gain favor at the throne of God.

The statue was then removed from the wagon and placed at the left of the altar, in the little chapel, followed by the people. So great was the crowd that it must have been fully half an hour before the last in the procession could have reached the chancel steps. After venerating the relic of St. Anne, they recited the rosary. Father Brusio officiated at the altar, and the children of the school, under the leadership of the sister superior, sang several hymns and canticles, sometimes alone and sometimes accompanied by the congregation. The adoration and benediction of the blessed sacrament ended the ceremonies. It is estimated that nearly 1,000 people were present during the afternoon.

The following organizations of Notre Dame parish participated in the procession and ceremonies: St. Joseph Society, Dr. Fontaine president; Holy

Family Society, Mrs. Joseph Beauregard president; Society of the Infant Jesus: Children of Mary and Sodality of the Holy Angels.

**1893-11-13 Out and About – Entertainment** – An entertainment will be given tomorrow evening in the hall of the parochial school on Winter Street by the children of St. Anne's Orphanage on Granite Street on behalf of the home. The program consists of solo and choral singing, declarations and dialogues, banjo and guitar playing. The orphanage is a branch the great Grey Nunnery in Montreal, which readers of Howell's will remember as an interesting place to Basil and March in "Their Wedding Journey." The Montreal establishment covers several acres and shelters 2,000 souls. The sisters wear habits of a pale mode or snuff color which is not gray at all; over their shoulders is drawn a black handkerchief or small shawl, and on the head is a black bonnet drawn over a close-fitting white cap. The Worcester nunnery oversees 10 sisters, and it contains at present about 150 children.

**1893-11-21 A Brush Fire** – The fire alarm that was rung in from box 69 shortly before 6 o'clock last evening was for a brush fire in the vicinity of the St. Anne's Orphanage on Granite Street. The fire was quickly extinguished.

**1893-12-06 The French Orphanage** – The children of the Gray Nun's Orphanage, on Granite Street, had a very pleasant time yesterday. Friends of the Children and of the nuns remembered that Christmas must be observed in an orphanage as in the most opulent private home, and so, at their request, Santa Claus found time to go up to the big building on the hill and help to make its inmates happy.

**1894 - NO Newspaper articles found. (Aug. 2021)**

**1895-03-11 A Parish Protest – An Appeal to the Bishop** – This news article is very long (See it in the photo pages) – This article talks about the '**St. Francis of Assisi' Orphanage on Bleeker** Street caring for 63 orphans. The Franciscan sisters received an edict from the bishop to be removed from the city. They were allowed temporary stay while the papal delegate, Monsignor Satolli investigated. This is a good read and helps understand what was happening to them at this stage of their history.

**1895 – Harmony Club to Raise Money to Repair Ste. Anne's Orphanage** – Arrangements for the "Hurricane Diner" Thursday night will be used to repair damages at the orphanage.



**1895 – Work at the French Orphanage** – An informal gathering of between 50 to 60 of the leading Irish Catholics of the city was held at the French Orphanage on Granite Street, the meeting being held for the purpose of the Gray Nuns. The orphanage was thoroughly inspected, and the men and women who made up the party expressed great pleasure at the neat condition of everything, and especially the happy appearance of the children, who gave an entertainment for their visitors. There are at present 150 little ones in the institution, only about half of whom are being paid for. The institution needs funds with which to carry on the work, and yesterday's meeting will doubtless help to swell the treasury.

**1895 – Entertainment for the Children** – The Laurier Club gave a pleasant entertainment at the French Orphanage on Granite Street, yesterday afternoon, and made the little children happy by distributing useful presents and candy among them. The program of the entertainment included an address by President Joseph V. Maroi, solos by Miss C. Lapierre, Miss E. Muir, Mme. Josephine L'Esperance, Miss M.L. Goyette, a recitation by Charles Dupre and an address by Rev. Joseph Brouillet.

**1895 – Arrested for Trespass** – Peter St. Onge, Timothy Horan and Michael Marusky were arrested Sunday by Patrolmen Dillon and Boyle and locked up for trespass on the grounds of the French Orphanage.

**1895 – Pilgrimage to a Shrine** – Impressive Religious Ceremonial by French-Canadian Societies – The people of the Church of Notre Dame held a most unique and at the same time impressive service Sunday afternoon, it being an imitation of a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Anne de Beaupre in Canada. Rt. Rev. Monsignor Guay of Quebec, Canada has been at the church for the past two weeks conducting novenas for the men and women of the parish, and they culminated Sunday afternoon in a monster pilgrimage to the St. Anne's Orphanage on Granite Street, the big parade of more than 2,000 men, women and children attracting considerable attention as it marched from the Church of Notre Dame to the orphanage. The men's societies of the church assembled in the main auditorium at 2:30 and listened to a sermon by Monsignor Guay, while the women's societies were meeting in the basement. The long line was then formed and acted as escort to some relics of St. Anne de Beaupre, which were carried in a carriage by Monsignor Guay, who was attended by President John B. Simard of the St. Jean Baptiste Society, President Oliver Mondor of L'Union St. Joseph and President G. Charbonneau of the Notre Dame conference of St. Vincent de Paul. A mounted guard of honor rode on either side of the carriage.

The route of the procession was through Park, Green, Vernon, Winthrop, and Granite Streets to the orphanage. At the corner of Winthrop and Granite Streets the choir of Notre Dame Church sang a hymn or praise, and Monsignor Guay took his place at the head of the procession, which presented a most striking aspect as it marched along, all in line, reciting the rosary. When the orphanage was reached benediction was given by **Monsignor Guay**, who was assisted by Rev, **Joseph Brouillet and Rev. G. Bruso**. The veneration of the relics closed the exercises; the immense crowd coming up one after another to kiss the sacred tokens.

**1895-04-29 Catholic Church News** – Entertainment for the orphans at St. John's Hall on Wednesday, May 29<sup>th</sup>. – On Thursday, June 4<sup>th</sup> **first communion and the sacrament of confirmation** will be held.

**1895-06-05 Orphans Receive Sacraments** – Bishop Beaven Pays Official Visit to Gray Nuns' Orphanage - **First Communion** conducted for 35 inmates. The ceremony took place at 8 a.m. by Rev. Fr. Joseph Brouillet. – At 11 o'clock **Bishop Beaven** presided over the **Confirmation** of 45 boys and girls then gave a sermon in French. All were entertained to luncheon by the sisters in the refectory of the orphanage, and after the repast the orphans gave a pleasing entertainment in honor of the bishop's visit.

**1895-09-04 Building Permit** – To St. Anne's Orphanage, a barn, of wood, 34 by 76 feet and 34 feet high, on Granite Street, near Stowell Street.

**1895-10-23 Announcements** – A dramatic and musical entertainment for the benefit of the Gray Nun's Orphanage is to be given at St. John's Hall on Winter Street Tuesday evening, October 23<sup>rd</sup>. – Entertainment by the Orphans - A successful entertainment for their benefit before an audience which filled the hall to overflowing. The program was given by the orphans themselves, and their speaking, singing and tableaux were greatly enjoyed.

**1895-11-18 The Rival Orphanages – An Old Difference of Opinion Among the French Catholics.** – This article is about who will support St. Anne's French-Canadian Orphanage OR the **Franciscan sisters**. Fr. Brousseau asked those in favor of the Franciscan sisters to leave the meeting.

**1895 – Christmas at the Gray Nuns' Orphanage** – The orphans in charge of the Gray Nuns on Granite Street had a religious as well as a merry celebration of the day. They attended mass in their chapel, at which Father Bruso officiated, and in

the afternoon, they attended vespers, after which they had their Christmas tree, the little ones all getting presents from **Father Brusso**, who presided at the distribution.

**1896 – Only Three newspaper articles were found about SAOW** - Each were about a benefit for the orphans held at St. John's Hall on Temple Street.

**1896-07-13 – 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, Quebec. The news has stirred up the French-Canadians of the city greatly, as they believed that the 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 Grey 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 the city, some of them will go to Chicopee Falls, and the remainder to North Hampton. 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.

**1896-09-28 – Franciscan Sister – An Appeal from Bishop Beaven to Rome – A Petition Asking that the Nuns be allowed to continue their work in Worcester** – They have been ordered to stop their work because it is thought by the church authorities that their work conflicts with that of the Granite Street orphanage. A petition has been signed by 3000 people and will be sent to Rome. They are now mentioned as the Petites Soeurs Franciscaines de Marie (**the Little Franciscan Sisters of Marie**). The orphanage is still being operated at the end of 1896.

**NO Newspaper articles were found between the years 1897 thru 1900**

**1901-08-17 Building Permit** - To St. Anne's Orphanage, A. Lamouseuy, builder, a one-story wooden piggery, 24 by 100 feet, on Granite Street, estimated cost \$500.

**1901-09-16 Death of President McKinley** – Father Brouillet, pastor of Notre Dame Church – Masses being held around Worcester – **Rev. Father Joseph Rioux, chaplain of St. Anne's Orphanage**

**1901-12-21 The Sacred Heart Review** – Posted that there were 235 children at St. Ann's Orphanage, Worcester.

<http://newspapers.bc.edu/cgi-bin/bostonsh?a=d&d=bostonsh19011221-01.2.4>

**1901-12-23 Christmas Day** – To be celebrated at the orphanage by a midnight mass Tuesday night. After the mass, as the children leave the chapel, they will be given bags containing Christmas presents, given by friends of the institution.

**1901-12-25 Christmas** was ushered in at the orphanage.

**1901-12-29 Monies raised and divided amongst: Sisters of Mercy Orphanage, Sisters of Charity (Gray Nuns) at St. Anne's Orphanage, St. Francis Home for the Aged on Bleeker St. and Mt. St. Joseph Industrial School at Millbury.**

**1902-10-12 Two Tons of Coal from an Unknown Friend** – The Grey Nuns wish their thanks extended to the generous donor.

**1902-11-03 The Daisy Social Society Rummage Sale at 34 Bartlett Place** – Proceeds to St. Anne's Orphanage.

**1903-04-12 Brush Fire** in the back of St. Anne's Orphanage at 7:50 p.m.

**1903-06-18 Confirmation of a Class of Forty-One** – 20 boys and 21 girls were confirmed by Bishop Thomas D. Beaven at 2:30 p.m.

**1903-07-29 Brush Fire** at 10:15 yesterday morning near St. Anne's Orphanage. The fire was put out before any damage was done.

**1903-11-29 To the Editor of The Spy:** A few days ago, having incidentally occasion to visit the St. Anne's Orphanage, Granite Street, kept by the 'Sisters of Charity' (Grey Nuns), I was really astonished at the organization of this establishment: order, cleanliness, the most perfect harmony reigned everywhere. But that which surprised me still more was the very healthy look of the orphans,

the light of which shone on the young faces. I admired their good behavior and their natural ease, generally possessed only by children surrounded with the love devoted parents. To say that my astonishment redoubled would be saying little, when to my many questions the good nuns answered that their only means of subsistence was the slight board of a limited number (many are kept entirely free of charge), by the industry of the sisters and the charity of the public. But, I retorted, I thought Mr. X... and Mr. X... extended a very helping hand, and that you were fully protected: those certain collections, revenues from bazars, banquets, etc., were handed to you. No, they answered, we receive no such revenues. Our orphanage is perfectly independent in that sense and has, I assure you, no special workers, or benefactors. Still, I insisted, "Does not the French-Canadian congregations: such as the parish of Notre Dame, St. Joseph's, the Holy Name of Jesus, and the Holy Family make but one congregation?" Certainly not, they replied, each parish is independent of each other and consequently has no connection with us, as I have already said, ours is an isolated work.

One of the religious asked my permission to offer me a paper bag. This is, she added, to help us procure bread for the orphans. We pass a certain quantity to our charitable acquaintances, who are kind enough to fill them, and on Christmas eve we collect them. I accepted the bag and read those lines which are printed on each: "The 225 children in the home wish you a Merry Christmas and happy New Year and beg you in return to remember them. The joy which fills our hearts at the approaching anniversary of our Infant Savior emboldens us, in His name, to ask our dear friends to remember us in their bounty, and we will give them all we have in return: Our prayers, God never forgets the prayers of the little children." I was deeply touched. Of all the occasions which call on our benevolence this one which presents itself but once a year seems, does it not? This one to be the most appreciated, the most sought.

The neglected class that she succors are they not the most interesting, the worthiest of our pity?

Orphan! Is there a heart hard enough not to soften at the single idea which this word represents? To be deprived of the sweet kisses of a mother and tender caresses of a father, abandoned, alone and without protection, "for the struggle of life." These poor unfortunates ask our help. Then let us be generous. Such an act will live in the memory a souvenir in .....that time cannot blot out and letting that time ... the year 1904 that I wish to all the benefactors of SAOW good and exceptionally happy. - A FRIEND

**1904** - Mrs. Bowman Wood, a local widower, was so moved by the work of the children and the Grey Nuns that she gifted her home to them with the stipulation it be used for religious purposes only. The house was moved and attached to the 4-story wooden structure. A picture from 1893 shows the new 4-story white building standing alone and a 1904 picture shows the combined house and 4-story white building. Confirming this action was a 1963 newspaper article stating, "The house was then added to the main building and served as a dormitory for the sisters." The Grey nuns also build their own chapel in the newly attached building.

Since there are so many newspaper clippings, I cannot take the time to retype each one of them here. I will set up Albums on Facebook to house all the clips. This, and other PDFs will to be put in the PDF Tab on our website

[www.saorphange.com](http://www.saorphange.com)