



# The View From The Bluff

July 2017

SISTERS OF CHARITY OF OUR LADY OF MERCY

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINIA

**All American Prayers For The 4th of July** Americans are prayerful people. We pray in times of trial, and also in times of joy and thanksgiving. We pray privately before bed, as a family at the dinner table and as a nation at the inauguration of presidents. Prayer happened on this soil before there was an America by Native Peoples, and prayer continues today as new cultures and tradition from around the world arrive daily to enrich the spiritual tapestry of the United States. Happy, and prayerful, 4th of July.

Prayer at Dawn by Christopher Columbus

Blessed be the light of day And the Holy Cross, we say; And the Lord of the Verity And the Holy Trinity. Blessed be th' immortal soul And the Lord who keeps it whole, Blessed be the light of day And He who sends the night away.

Prayer by Chief Seattle

Earth mother, star mother, You who are called by A thousand names, May all remember We are cells in your body And dance together You are the grain And the loaf That sustains each day, And as you are patient With our struggles to learn So shall we be patient With ourselves and each other. We are radiant light And sacred dark --the balance-- You are the embrace that heartens And the freedom beyond fear. Within you we are born We grow, live, and die-- You bring us around the circle To rebirth, Within us you dance Forever.

I'm Going To Hold Steady - Harriet Tubman

I'm going to hold steady on You, an' You've got to see me through.

For Our Nation by Woodrow Wilson

Almighty God, ruler of all the peoples of the earth, forgive, we prayer, our shortcomings as a nation; purify our hearts to see and love truth; give wisdom to our counselors and steadfastness to our people; and bring us at last to the fair city of peace, whose foundations are mercy, justice and goodwill, and whose builder and maker you are.

What I Owe America by Eddie Cantor

Dear God... Please help me repay the debt I owe America, the land of the Free and the Home of the Brave. And make me able to help those who need help.

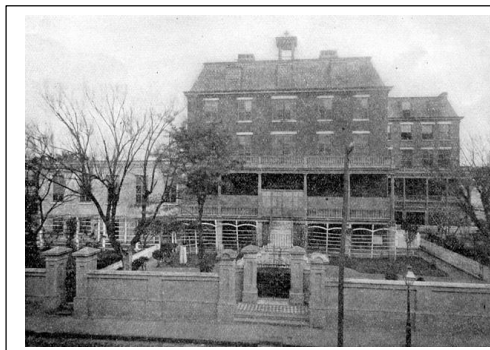
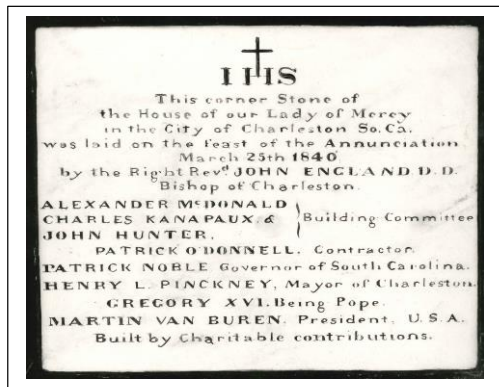
Elvis' Prayer by Elvis Presley

Send me some light--I need it.



# MOMENTS IN MINISTRY

## CARE OF ORPHANS



1830

The OLMs began caring for orphans in a rented house on Friend Street, and continued to do so when they moved to larger rented quarters on Beaufain Street, one door west of Coming, in 1834. As the number of Sisters increased and the number of children needing care grew, Bishop England saw the need for a larger residence.

1840

March 26, 1840 the Bishop laid the cornerstone of the building on Queen Street which became the OLM Motherhouse, Girls' Orphanage and OLM Academy. The Sisters moved to Queen Street on February 16, 1841. There were 10 professed sisters, 4 postulants, 20 orphans and 24 boarders.

1845

Bishop Ignatius Reynolds founded the St. Vincent's Ladies' Society to raise money and secure provisions for the orphans as well as to aid the Sisters in finding jobs for the children when they were old enough to leave the orphanage.

1848

Bishop Reynolds helped the Sisters acquire land and a house on the corner of Queen and Logan Street. The house became the Girls' Orphanage. The building which Bishop England had erected for the Community continued to serve as Motherhouse and Academy of Our Lady of Mercy. In 1852 the Bishop deeded all the property to the OLM Community.

1861

Charleston Fire on December 12 damaged the convent and orphanage rendering them uninhabitable. Thanks to the generosity of a Mr. Schachte the Sisters and orphans moved into a large house on the corner of King and Vanderhorst where they lived rent free until March 1862.

1863

In September 1863 during the bombardment of Charleston Sr. M. Joseph Kent, orphans, boarders and some Sisters moved to Sumter. Mr. Edward Lafitte gave them a house where they remained until the end of the war.

1866

The Girls' Orphanage on Queen Street was considered uninhabitable. Hence, the Sisters rented houses on Gadsden's Green in the western part of Charleston for the orphan girls under their care.

1867

Bishop Lynch sent Sr. Xavier Dunn and Sr. De Sales Brennan to Washington, DC, to petition the US Congress for monies to rebuild the Girls' Orphanage. The Bishop established a Boys' Orphanage on Cannon Street west of Rutledge and assigned the OLMs to take charge of the facility

1869

thru

1900

Appropriations of monies from Charleston City Government from 1869-1900 helped the OLMs run the orphanage. The US Congress appropriated \$12,000 in 1871 and the OLMs built a two story building which connected to the Motherhouse on Queen Street.

1880

The Boys' Orphanage moved from Cannon Street to larger quarters at 173 Calhoun Street, the future site of Bishop England High School

1886

Charleston earthquake, August 31, badly damaged the Motherhouse and both orphanages. The Sisters and orphans lived in the open air under a tent until September 10. Mother Teresa Barry and Council decided it was useless to repair the Girls' Orphanage. They chose to add a brick wing to the east end of the Motherhouse. The cornerstone for the new building was laid on Aug. 31, 1887, the first anniversary of the earthquake.



## CARE OF ORPHANS



1900

The 15 year old contract between the OLM Community and City Council expired. It could not be renewed due to a provision in the 1894 State Constitution barring the appropriation of public funds to sectarian institutions. Thanks to Alderman Bernard O'Neil, a long-time friend of the Community, a new arrangement was devised.

1901

January 22, Charleston City Council approved legislation which created the City Orphan Asylum. In effect the Motherhouse and Girls' Orphanage became a City institution governed by a board of seven Commissioners chosen annually by the City Council. The Commissioners appointed all the staff and employees of the COA. The annual appropriation granted by the city was intended to provide food and clothing for the children. The OLM Community continued to be responsible for the maintenance of the property.

Under the new arrangement the Boys' and Girls' Orphanages were merged. The boys, brought down from Calhoun Street, moved into what was the Motherhouse. The girls continued to live in the wing that was built in 1887. Only those OLMs caring for the orphans could live in the facility. Hence, the OLM Motherhouse moved to 51 Meeting Street, site of the Academy since 1871. The Academy moved to the former Boys' Orphanage on Calhoun Street, site of the future Bishop England High School.

1964

At the General Chapter in June Mother Mary Charles Gibson informed the Community that the General Council had discussed the financial condition of the City Orphan Asylum with the Bishop. She stated, "The City appropriations cares for most of the children's needs, but all insurance, repair and replacement have always rested on the Community." She also said: "We simply do not have the finances to provide for the upkeep of the property." Hence, she sought the Bishop's approval to sell the property. The Bishop granted approval with the understanding that the money received from the sale would be loaned to the Diocese to build a Diocesan Orphanage.

1965

The Charleston Merchant's Housing Corporation bought the property. The buildings were demolished and townhouses constructed on the site. The 25 children, formerly living in the Orphanage, were placed with foster families throughout the county while the Diocesan Home was being built.

1966

The Charleston Home for Children, the Diocesan Orphanage, located at 1662 Ingram Road, opened on July 25 with a capacity to house 32 children. The first two children were admitted on July 28. The Home operated under the supervision of the Director of Catholic Charities and a Governing Board. It was staffed by the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy. Sister Miriam Beall, OLM, served as Administrator from 1966 until 1990.

1990

The Diocese closed the Charleston Home for Children. This ended the OLM's 160 years of caring for orphans.



**Circa 1932**

**The Duke Endowment Report which appeared in the Charleston Evening Post in 1933 included the following information about the City Orphan Asylum. “The population of the institution on December 31, 1932 was 73. In 1932, 79 children received care, 32 boys and 47 girls. There were 6 children between 2 and 6 years; 44 between 6 and 12 years, and 29 between 12 and 18 years. Ten children were admitted and 6 were discharged during the year. Income in 1932 amounted to \$14,578.23 divided as follows: Estimated value of Sisters’ services, \$4,560; City of Charleston, \$7,500; Knights of Columbus, \$100; The Duke Endowment, \$1,353.23; and general contributions, \$1,065. The average cost per child was 56 cents.” The article also notes that the children attend schools with other children, and participate in recreational activities with other children. The boys receive athletic training, 2 or 3 times a week from regular trainers. The girls are taught swimming in the summer at city swimming pools. The girls also are taught sewing and have coaches for basketball. Friends of the Orphanage provide other amusement for the children from time to time.**

**PHOTOS PAGE 2: CORNERSTONE FOR QUEEN STREET ORPHANAGE, EXTERIOR PICTURES OF QUEEN STREET, CHAPEL INTERIOR, TENT LIVING AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE.**

**PHOTOS PAGE 3: 1932 ORPHANAGE STAFF, SISTERS VINCENT CASEY, UNKNOWN POSSIBLY ISIDORE SOWERS, MARY JAMES WOODS, DELORES LAWLY, BARBARA BAKER, FELICITAS DOLAN, RITA DIXON, ANITA MAHONY. SISTER MARY CECILIA FERRO PRAYING ROSARY WITH CHILDREN. CLOSING OF QUEEN STREET ORPHANAGE 1964, SISTERS MARY CHARLES GIBSON, VERONICA HARTE, MIRIAM BEALL, MARIANNA KEHOE, de LOURDES EASSY. GROUND BREAKING FOR CHARLESTON HOME FOR CHILDREN. SISTER MIRIAM BEALL WITH CHILDREN AT THE CHARLESTON HOME FOR CHILDREN.**





BACKYARD OF THE ORPHAN HOME ON QUEEN STREET  
BASEBALL PRACTICE



SISTER BRENDAN LACEY ON A FIELD TRIP TO  
THE NAVY YARD WITH THE CHILDREN.



VOL. LIII

JANUARY 31, 1965



**MOTHER MARY CHARLES** (top left) mother superior of the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy assists in the move from the Orphan Home on Queen Street as the order vacates the City Orphan House after 125 years. — (Post-Courier Photo)

## Orphans' Home Closed; New One Planned

Charleston — Seven Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy, an order living at the City Orphan Home on Queen Street here consistently since 1840, were the last to leave on January 16th. The building was the first mother house of the order.

**THE SISTERS** remaining at the house until Jan. 16th were asked to do so by the building's insurers. They were: Mother Mary Charles, mother superior of the order who had moved in only recently from the motherhouse on James Island to help close the home; Sister Marianna, acting superior at the home; Sister Miriam, first counsel and Sisters Bernice, Madaleine, Anthony and Veronica.

The order was founded in 182 by the Most Rev. John England, first Bishop of Charleston, to educate youth, care for the orphan and nursing the sick.

**ORIGINALLY** housing only girls, the institution facilities were re-arranged to receive boys (previously housed on Calhoun Street in 1901). At the same time the City Council ratified an ordinance to establish the City Orphan Asylum and the home became a city-endowed institution. It actually has been receiving annual appropriations from the city since 1885.

The home is reported by the Duke Endowment to be the third oldest institution for the care of children in the Carolinas.

"We simply do not have the finances to provide for the upkeep of the property," Mother Mary Charles said in explanation of the move.

Most of the sisters share a sadness at leaving the home, but everyone is happy about the prospect of the new orphanage.

Most of the nuns will be moving to the Convent of Our Lady of Mercy, for teaching sisters, on Legare Street. One Sister will continue her studies and one will move to St. Francis Xavier Hospital. Seven to nine sisters regularly lived in the orphanage but only two had full-time responsibility for the children.

**THE 20 ORPHANS**, formerly occupying the orphanage, are being cared for by foster families throughout the county. They will remain with these families until

See Orphan's Home, page 2A

## Orphans' Home

Continued from page 1A

completion of the new facilities next fall.

Plans are under way for a new multi-building orphanage to be built on a 3½ acre lot next to the recently completed Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent DePaul Convent at Highway 171.

P. O. Box 3345

Phone 795-3351

Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy  
Fort Johnson Road  
Charleston, South Carolina

### FINAL CELEBRATION AT THE OLD CITY ORPHAN HOME

On December 17<sup>th</sup>, the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy, with Rev. John Duffy, Director of Catholic Charities, and members of the Board of the City Orphan Home, entertained the boys and girls of the Institution at a Christmas party. Although the entertainment was a festive affair, there were overtones of sadness. Never more will there be happy gatherings at the old "Home" on Queen Street. Before the beginning of the New Year, all the children under the care of the Sisters had been placed in foster homes, awaiting the completion of the new Diocesan Orphan Home now under construction on a site in Charleston Estates, North Area.

The old building on Queen Street, the cornerstone of which bears the name of the revered Bishop England, and the date "1840" will be razed to make room for much-needed city dwellings.

To many Charlestonians and to others who have been associated with the work of the old City Orphan Home on Queen Street, its disappearance will definitely mark the end of a long and fruitful era of service to the needy.



CHARLESTON HOME FOR CHILDREN, WEST ASHLEY

**FRONT**

Pettit Motor Co  
Playground Trophy  
Midget Baseball  
League. Won by the  
City Orphan Asylum  
1931, 1932, 1933.  
Presented to Mayor J.  
Palmer Gaillard with  
affection and gratitude  
The Sisters, Boys and  
Girls of the City  
Orphan Home 1964.

**BACK**

Presented to the  
Sisters, Boys and Girls  
of the Charleston  
Home For Children  
with best wishes on the  
occasion of the  
dedication of the home  
November 13, 1966. J.  
Palmer Gaillard, Jr.  
Mayor.

An artifact we have in our Archives which is inscribed on the front and back with a very interesting inscription! Given to the Mayor at the closing of the City Orphan Home and he gave it back to OLMs at the opening of Charleston Home for Children.





Brother Wayne Fitzpatrick, M.M., Sr. Ann Billard, O.L.M., Sr. Mary Hopkins, O.P. speakers at the Elder Religious and Diocesan Priests 2017 Conference



Mother Emanuel 9 Memorial Unity Walk



Becky Crichton, RN, OLM Motherhouse nurse, at the conference



Bumblebees nesting in birdbox by COJ



Debbie Blalock an OLM Partner In Charity candidate with Sr. Carol Wentworth, OLM at the Unity Walk

Sr. Ann Billard and Becky Crichton at the ERDP Conference

